

**2008 Allotment Permit/Lease  
Renewal  
Environmental Assessment**

**Pocatello Field Office**

**Environmental Assessment  
ID-320-2008-EA-136**

**United States Department of Interior  
Bureau of Land Management**

**Pocatello Field Office  
Pocatello, Idaho**

**May 8, 2008**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background**

There are several authorities<sup>1</sup> which mandate or allow the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to issue grazing permits/leases that authorize livestock grazing on public lands as part of multiple-use management of natural resources. As a consequence, land use plans (LUPs) for the BLM have established grazing allotments and grazing allocation decisions. Pertinent decisions guiding livestock grazing within the Pocatello Field Office Area (PFO) and which guide livestock grazing on allotments described in this environmental assessment (EA) are listed in the Pocatello Resource Management Plan (PRMP, 1988), or the Malad Management Framework Plan 1981 (MMFP). The PRMP is supported by the *Pocatello Environmental Impact Statement (1988) (PEIS)*. The Malad MFP is supported by the Bannock-Oneida EIS (1981).

In addition, and in accordance with 43 CFR 4180-Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration, allotments must be meeting or making significant progress towards meeting the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health (ISRH) and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (GLGM). The PFO is mandated to complete the EA, Permit Renewal and ISRH/GLGM process on all of its allotments by 2009. The majority of the PFO's allotments have gone through the permit Renewal process. The allotments considered in this EA represent a portion of those remaining to be processed before 2009. They have been evaluated using the Appendix B Rangeland Health Assessment (RHA) and Determinations of whether the allotment is moving towards or meeting rangeland health standards have been made for each allotment.

The subject BLM lands comprise 0.3 % (15,705 acres) of the regions approximately 5,142,000 total acres of lands and 2.6 % of the 613,800 acres of BLM lands in the PFO. The majority of these allotments contain small (less than 640 acres) isolated parcels of public land, with no or limited legal access, and are located on steep slopes, with rugged, mountainous topography.

### **Type of Action**

Reissue livestock grazing permits/leases for a term of 10 years.

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<sup>1</sup> (a) The Taylor Grazing Act of June 28, 1934 as amended (43 U.S.C. 315, 315a through 315r); (b) The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) as amended by the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 (43 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.); (c) Executive orders transfer land acquired under the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of July 22, 1937, as amended (7 U.S.C. 1012), to the Secretary and authorize administration under the Taylor Grazing Act.; (d) The Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 (43 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.); and (e) Public land orders, Executive orders, and agreements authorize the Secretary to administer livestock grazing on specified lands under the Taylor Grazing Act or other authority as specified. [43 FR 29067, July 5, 1978, as amended at 49 FR 6449, Feb. 21, 1984; 49 FR 12704, Mar. 30, 1984; 50 FR 45827, Nov. 4, 1985; 61 FR 4227, Feb. 5, 1996]

### **Purpose of and Need for Proposed Action**

**Reissue grazing permits and leases that authorize livestock grazing on the subject allotments with Terms & Conditions and Annual Indicator Criteria that would ensure that resource conditions on the allotments continue to meet or move towards meeting ISRH. (See Table 1 Allotments/Permittee/Lessee List)**

The BLM issues grazing permits and leases, hereinafter referred to as permits, for a term not to exceed 10 years. Grazing permits authorize a permittee to graze alone in one or more individual allotments or graze in common with other permittees in one or more allotments.

This environmental assessment (EA) is being completed pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act to assess the environmental impact of any necessary changes in livestock grazing management practices required to meet or move towards meeting the standards for rangeland health.

### **Location of Proposed Action**

The allotments analyzed in this EA are listed in **Table 1**. They are scattered throughout the PFO and are located entirely or partially in Bannock, Bear Lake, Bonneville, Caribou, Franklin and Oneida counties in southeastern Idaho. **See Allotment Maps, pages 19 - 35.**

### **Conformance With Applicable Land Use Plan**

Issuance of grazing permits is in conformance with: (1), the PRMP 1988, and The Record of Decision (ROD) which states respectively: “manage 217,728 acres for grazing” (pg. 25) and “provide 29,969 AUM’s of livestock forage in the short term” ROD pg. 2. (2), The Malad Management Framework Plan 1981 (MFP 1981), Summary – Livestock Forage which states: “allocate 55,202 AUM’s of forage by class of livestock for each allotment within an established season of use”.

### **Relationship to Statutes, Regulations or Other Plans**

The following regulatory provisions are relevant to this EA: (a) The Taylor Grazing Act of June 28, 1934, as amended (43 U.S.C. 315, 315a through 315r); (b) The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) as amended by the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 (43 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.); (c) Executive orders transfer land acquired under the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of July 22, 1937, as amended (7 U.S.C. 1012), to the Secretary and authorize administration under the Taylor Grazing Act.; (d) The Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 (43 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.); and (e) Public land orders, Executive orders, and agreements authorize the Secretary to administer livestock grazing on specified lands under the Taylor Grazing Act or other authority as specified. [43 FR 29067, July 5, 1978, as amended at 49 FR 6449,

Feb. 21, 1984; 49 FR 12704, Mar. 30, 1984; 50 FR 45827, Nov. 4, 1985; 61 FR 4227, Feb. 5, 1996]; Code of Federal Regulations 43 Part 4100.

## **PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVE(S)**

### **Proposed Action: Reissue Grazing Permits with Administrative Changes to Terms and Conditions with no changes in Numbers of Livestock, Season of Use or Grazing Preference.**

The Pocatello Field Manager would reissue grazing permits to 20 permittees to authorize grazing on public land within the 20 allotments identified in Table 1.

### **Description of Proposed Action**

Reissue a total of 20 grazing permits with a total preference of 2,177 Animal Unit Months (AUM's) of which 2,171 are active AUM's, 6 are suspended AUM's within 20 allotments totaling 15,705 acres. **Change the grazing permits Terms and Conditions in accordance with current administrative policy. Add Annual Indicator Criteria to ensure allotments continue to meet ISRH.**

### **Changes in Terms and Conditions**

A. The following terms and conditions would apply to all permits.

*Areas of isolated public land may be grazed concurrently with private lands.*

*Salt and mineral supplements shall be placed at least ¼ mile from watersource(s) to improve livestock distribution.*

*In connection with allotment operations under this authorization, if any human remains, cultural, archaeological, historical, paleontological, or scientific objects and sites are discovered, the permittee shall stop operations in the immediate area of the discovery, protect such resources, and immediately notify the BLM Authorized Officer (AO) of the discovery. The immediate area of the discovery must be protected until the operator is notified to resume operations by the AO.*

*In connection with allotment operations under this authorization, if special status species of plants or animals are discovered, appropriate measures, if needed, will be taken to protect them.*

*Maintenance of all BLM range improvements within the allotment(s) included in this permit will be the responsibility of the permittee.*

*It is the responsibility of the permittee/lessee to install and maintain wildlife escapement ramps in all watering facilities and troughs that occur on the BLM lands within their allotments(s) or are part of a BLM range improvement.*

*By accepting this grazing permit/lease, the permittee/lessee agrees that the authorized officer or his representatives and contractors shall have the right of ingress and egress over lands controlled by the permittee/lessee for the purpose of achieving the management objectives and orderly administration of public rangelands under this grazing permit/lease.*

*The allotments shown on this permit/lease shall meet the requirements as described in 43 CFR subpart 4180 – Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and the Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration.*

*Any changes in management will be based upon resource evaluations and analysis as scheduled and completed by the Field Office Manager.*

**B.** The following Annual Indicator Criteria (AIC) would apply to all permits:

- *The grazing use must not exceed 50% utilization or be detrimental to the range's soil or vegetation.*
- *The permittee/lessee will notify BLM of any occurrences of noxious or invasive weed infestations on their allotment(s).*

**C.** The following Administrative terms and conditions would be **deleted** from all permits.

- Bulls must meet State of Idaho trichomoniasis testing requirements prior to turnout on public lands. Operators found to be in violation of state law may be subject to civil and criminal penalties.
- Operators found to be in violation of state law may be subject to civil or criminal penalties.
- Livestock and base property leases must be in compliance with the Idaho Falls District lease policy of 1991.
- Payment by MasterCard and VISA is now an option
- The grazing use must not exceed 50% utilization or be detrimental to the range's soil or vegetation. (*This now appears under Annual Indicator Criteria*).

**Alternative Action: No Action - Reissue Grazing Permits with no Minor Administrative changes to Terms and Conditions and no changes in Numbers of Livestock, Season of Use or Grazing Preference.**

**Description of Alternative Action**

**The Pocatello Field Manager would reissue grazing permits to 20 permittees to authorize grazing on public land within the 20 allotments identified in Table 1.**

**Alternative(s) Considered but not Further Analyzed**

**Alternative Action: No Livestock Grazing**

**Description of Alternative Action**

Under the No Livestock Grazing alternative, livestock grazing would not be authorized on public land within the 20 allotments identified in Table 1. The BLM would not renew the grazing permits.

The No Livestock Grazing alternative was not further analyzed in this EA for the following reasons as per the PRMP, 1988, (CHAPTER 2, pg 2 – 1 & 2, ALTERNATIVES, ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT ANAYZED IN DETAIL, NO LIVESTOCK GRAZING):

1. Resource conditions, including range, riparian, vegetation, watershed, and wildlife habitat, do not warrant prohibition of livestock grazing on these allotments.
2. Total elimination of livestock grazing would be in direct conflict with existing laws and regulations.
3. The cost of removing range improvement projects not benefiting other programs would be prohibitive.
4. The enforcement of no livestock grazing on the fragmented pattern of public land in the PFO would be difficult at best and very expensive.
5. Public comments received during the issue identification and criteria development steps indicate a general acceptance of livestock grazing on public land, provided that such grazing is properly managed.
6. It is estimated that permittees using BLM lands generate \$1.1 million in annual income in the Pocatello Field Office and 143 jobs. Given this economic significance and the general social acceptance of livestock grazing, people in the PFO and the state of Idaho would not support a no grazing alternative.

The No Livestock Grazing Alternative was considered to be unreasonable and unrealistic, and its implementation would not meet the purpose and need of this EA.

## AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

### General Setting

The public lands within the allotments comprise 0.31 % (15,705 acres) of the regions approximately 5,142,000 total acres of lands and 2.6 % of the 613,800 acres of BLM lands in the PFO. The majority of these lands consist of small isolated parcels, located on steep slopes, with rugged, mountainous topography. They are usually grazed concurrently with private, Forest Service, and/or state owned land. These lands provide wildlife habitat, livestock grazing, and occasional recreational uses such as hunting and hiking.

The allotments are dominated by, and usually surrounded by much larger parcels of private grazing lands and have limited or no legal public access due to the intermingled nature of private and public land and the absence of roads. Four allotments have no public access. Sixteen allotments have public access; 11 of those 16 have limited and/or difficult access because access is gained by entering the public land through an adjacent BLM allotment, or Forest Service or state land which is contiguous. There are approximately 67,134 acres of land in the allotments of which 15,705 acres (23%) are public land and 77% are private and/or state land. **Table 1** shows the acres of public land in each allotment.

Of the 20 allotments being analyzed, 12 allotments comprising 2,813 acres of public land are small (less than 640 acres) scattered, isolated tracts. The average size of these smaller allotments is 234 acres and range from 40 acres to 520 acres in size. Eight (8) allotments totaling 12,892 acres consist of areas greater than 640 acres of public land.

North Sulfur & Trail allotment (#14031) could be partially encumbered by a geothermal lease sometime in the near future. The EA for leasing (ID-320-2007-EA-322 SULPHUR CANYON GEOTHERMAL LEASE (I-34353)) has been completed and a decision is pending. While the lease itself would have no affect on grazing, future exploration and development could. The leasing EA states that up to 80 acres in the allotment or 7% (23 AUM's) of the forage could be disturbed. However, because most of the disturbance would be reclaimed long-term impacts to the allotment would be limited. Four allotments analyzed in the EA are located on or adjacent to phosphate mining activity; Woodall Springs (#04388) adjacent to Conda/Woodall Mine, North Sulfur & Trail (#14031) located south of Conda/Woodall Mine, Schmid Ridge (#14046) near Dry Valley Mine, and Wooley Ridge-1 partially on Wooley Valley Mine.

**Table 1 - Allotments/Permittees/Allotment Information**

Allotment Name/Number	Permittee/Lessee	Livestock Number/Season of Use	Public Acres	Permitted Active AUM's	Suspended AUM's	Total AUM's	Seral Condition/Trend
Bagley Hollow/04048	Ronald G. Jensen	150 C 5/15 – 6/15	80	8	0	8	Late-Mid/Static
Basin Divide/04265	Fish Creek Ranch LC	240 C 5/16 – 10/31	1602	267	0	267	Late-Mid/Static
Bishcoff Canyon/14034	Bryan Brown	5 C 6/1 – 9/30	120	13	0	13	Late/Static
“ “ “	C. & M. Cook	5 C 6/1 – 9/30	120	13	0	13	Late/Static
Burton Creek-1/04058	W. & M. Stuart	48 C 5/15- 11/30	280	47	0	47	Late-Early/Up
Cedar Mountain/06010	Egan Family Trust	50 C 4/26 – 5/25	2001	49	0	49	Late/Static
“ “ “	Norman J. Lish	51 C 4/26 – 5/25	2001	50	0	50	Late/Static
Cheatbeck Canyon/14084	E. & D. Collins	17 C 5/1 – 9/30	120	17	0	17	Late-Mid/Static
Chinese Peak/03803	Todd Mickelsen	515 S 5/8 – 7/5	1400	200	0	200	Late/Static
Deep Creek/06013	Durbano Land & Cattle Co	9 C 6/1 – 9/15	161	32	5	37	Mid/Static
Fish Creek Basin/04267	Fish Creek Ranch LC	125 C 5/16 – 9/30	364	71	0	71	Late-Mid/Static
Fox Hollow/06091	Nick O. Phillips	12 C 5/16 – 9/15	520	52	0	52	Mid/Static
Garden Creek/27000	B. & D. Bradley	174 C 5/1 – 6/15	1185	189	0	189	Late/Static
Jack Knife/14119	Anis B. Shippen	20 C 6/1 – 7/31	40	7	0	7	Late/Up
North Peterson Ranch/04371	Blotter Family Limited Part.	84 C 6/1 – 9/30	1183	148	0	148	Late-Mid/Static
North Sulphur & Trail/14031	Lynn Beus Estate	1593 S 5/15 – 7/15	1846	324	0	324	Late-Mid/Static
Schmid Ridge/14046	Blotter Family Limited Part.	167 C 6/15 -10/15	1926	386	0	386	Late-Mid/Static
“ “ “	Doris-Bollar Hayden	128 C 6/15 -10/15	1926	44	0	44	Late-Mid/Static
Soda Hills-3/04359	Terry Johnson	61 C 5/5 – 8/31	1749	123	0	123	Late-Mid/Static
South Garden Creek/03817	Meadowbrook Ranch	20 C 5/15 -10/30	40	6	1	7	Mid/Up
Wide Hollow-1/04231	Fish Creek Ranch LC	50 C 6/1 – 9/14	250	15	0	15	Late-Mid/Static
Woodall Spring/04338 (R)	Caribou Cattle Co.	400C 5/15 – 9/30	420	57	0	57	Late-Mid/Up
Wooley Ridge-1/04395	Connor Cattle Co	145 C 6/1 – 10/15	418	53	0	53	Late-Mid/Up

(R)-Denotes riparian area present on BLM land.

## **Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management**

An interdisciplinary team consisting of specialists in Range, Forestry, Recreation, Realty, Fire/Fuels, Botany, Archeology, and Wildlife was formed to conduct ISRH/GLGM evaluation, assessment and determination for each allotment. The applicable Standards for Rangeland Health were identified and assessed for each allotment. The completed allotment assessments were then further examined by the interdisciplinary team to determine if each allotment was meeting applicable ISRH and conforming to GLGM. The evaluation and determination process involved a review and examination of existing information (trend, utilization and condition data) in grazing case files, allotment files, fuels surveys, botanical data, cultural data survey, riparian inventories, personnel knowledge of the allotments, and professional judgment.

As a result of the review and examination of the allotment assessments and available data, the Field Manager determined which allotments are meeting or not meeting ISRH/GLGM and if livestock are the cause.

**All allotments addressed by this EA are meeting Standard 1 (Watersheds), Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities) and Standard 8 (Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals) and conform to GLGM. Woodall Spring allotment has a riparian area and in addition to Standards 1, 4 and 8, is meeting Standard 2 (Riparian Areas/Wetlands), Standard 3 (Stream Channel/Flood Plain), and Standard 7 (Water Quality). Standards 5 (Seedings) and 6 (Exotic Plant Communities, other than Seedings) do not apply to any of the allotments. See Table 2.** The standards have been achieved under the current grazing management and permitted use. If ISRH's are being met, it is an indication that the public land within an allotment has proper hydrologic function, energy flow, nutrient cycling, health, diverse native animal habitat, and its populations of native plants are being maintained.

**Table 2. IDAHO STANDARDS FOR RANGELAND HEALTH BY ALLOTMENT.** Meeting Standard (MS), NMS (Not Meeting Standard). NMS-2: Making significant progress towards meeting the standard; NMS-3: Current livestock grazing management practices are not significant factors; NMS-4: Current livestock grazing management practices are significant factors; NMS-5: Cause not determined; NA: Not Applicable

Allotment Name/Number	IDAHO STANDARDS FOR RANGELAND HEALTH							
	1 Watershed	2 Riparian	3 Stream Channel & Flood Plain	4 Native Plants	5 Seeding	6 Exotic Plants	7 Water Quality	8 Threatened & Endangered Species
Bagley Hollow/04048	MS	NA	NA	MS	NA	NA	NA	MS
Basin Divide/04265	MS	NA	NA	MS	NA	NA	NA	MS
Bishcoff Canyon/14034	MS	NA	NA	MS	NA	NA	NA	MS
“ “ “	MS	NA	NA	MS	NA	NA	NA	MS
Burton Creek-1/04058	MS	NA	NA	MS	NA	NA	NA	MS
Cedar Mountain/06010	MS	NA	NA	MS	NA	NA	NA	NA
“ “ “	MS	NA	NA	MS	NA	NA	NA	MS
Cheatbeck Canyon/14084	MS	NA	NA	MS	NA	NA	NA	NA
Chinese Peak/03803	MS	NA	NA	MS	NA	NA	NA	NA
Deep Creek/06013	MS	NA	NA	MS	NA	NA	NA	MS
Fish Creek Basin/04267	MS	NA	NA	MS	NA	NA	NA	MS
Fox Hollow/06091	MS	NA	NA	MS	NA	NA	NA	MS
Garden Creek/27000	MS	NA	NA	MS	NA	NA	NA	MS
Jack Knife/14119	MS	NA	NA	MS	NA	NA	NA	MS
North Peterson Ranch/04371	MS	NA	NA	MS	NA	NA	NA	MS
North Sulphur & Trail/14031	MS	NA	NA	MS	NA	NA	NA	MS
Schmid Ridge/14046	MS	NA	NA	MS	NA	NA	NA	MS
“ “ “	MS	NA	NA	MS	NA	NA	NA	MS
Soda Hills-3/04359	MS	NA	NA	MS	NA	NA	NA	MS
South Garden Creek/03817	MS	NA	NA	MS	NA	NA	NA	MS
Wide Hollow-1/04231	MS	NA	NA	MS	NA	NA	NA	MS
Woodall Spring/04338 (R)	MS	MS	NA	MS	NA	NA	MS	MS
Wooley Ridge-1/04395	MS	NA	MS	MS	NA	NA	NA	MS

**Vegetation - Watersheds (Standard 1) and Native Vegetation (Standard 4)**

Watershed conditions are closely linked to the condition of vegetation. A healthy vegetation cover, appropriate for the soil-plant association / ecological site, ensures that watersheds are healthy and resilient to the natural range of climatic variability, years of heavy thunderstorms or heavy snow pack and drought, as well as to multiple uses. Native upland plant communities in the subject allotments consist primarily of

sagebrush/grass associations in the valleys and juniper/sagebrush/grass associations in the foothills and mountains. Characteristic species include: bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata* = *Agropyron spicatum*), Indian ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides* = *Oryzopsis hymenoides*), needlegrass (*Stipa* spp.), bluegrass (*Poa* spp.), Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*), sand dropseed (*Sporobolus* spp.), prairie junegrass (*Koeleria cristata*), big sagebrush subspecies (*Artemisia tridentata* subspecies *tridentata*, *vayseyana*, *wyomingensis*), antelope bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*) and Utah juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*). At higher elevations, Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) stands are found on north and east facing slopes, with aspen communities (*Populus tremuloides*) often occurring in seeps, canyon bottoms and in other moist areas. Various shrub species like mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus montanus*), serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), and chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*) may occur locally at higher elevations. Common upland plants are listed in **Table 3**.

The majority of the public lands within the allotments are in late seral ecological condition and static to upward in ecological trend. See **Table 1**.

No known weed infestations are present in the allotments. However, should the presence of an infestation be discovered it will be treated chemically, biologically and/or mechanically to control its spread under the guidance of the Pocatello Field Office Noxious Weed Control EA, N0. ID-075-2002-015,

**Standard 1 (Watersheds)** is being met when watersheds provides for the proper infiltration, retention, and release of water appropriate to soil type, vegetation, climate and landform to provide for proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow. Meeting the standard indicates that: (1) The amount and distribution of ground cover including litter, for identified ecological site(s) or soil plant associations are appropriate for site stability, and (2) Evidence of accelerated soil erosion in the form of rills, and/or gullies, erosional pedestals, flow patterns, physical soil crusts/surface sealing, and compaction layers below the soil surface is minimal for soil type or landform. The standard was determined as being met when ecological condition of the allotment is predominately mid to late seral condition. **Standard 1 (Watersheds)** is being met.

#### **Standard 2 (Riparian Areas/Wetlands)**

Riparian areas and wetlands are adjacent to permanent water sources (e.g., rivers, streams, springs, lakes and reservoirs) and are typically dominated by cottonwoods, alder, aspen, willows, sedges, rushes and grasses; key riparian plants exclude forbs and shrubs. Healthy riparian areas provide important ecosystem services that include water storage, aquifer recharge, sediment trapping, filtering of chemical and organic wastes, streambank building and maintenance, energy dissipation of floodwaters and primary production. Healthy riparian areas exhibit elevated soil saturation zones, increased subsurface storage, plants that provide shade, stabilize streambanks and filter sediments, higher summer stream flows and cooler water that provide quality habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms. In addition, riparian areas are highly productive wildlife foraging areas that provide thermal- and escape cover.

One allotment, Woodall Springs #04338 has a riparian area, a marsh-wetland, 40 acres in size on BLM land. The parcel is part of a larger; approximately 860 acre spring/marsh complex located on private land that is fed by Woodall spring and several other springs, all located on private property. Standing water up to 6 inches deep is present with numerous rivulets of water, 6 to 18 inches deep running throughout the marsh. Dense, vigorous stands of vegetation consisting of Bull rush, Carex and Juncus dominate the site. A riparian condition study was taken on the parcel and it was found to be in Proper Functioning Condition.

**Standard 2 Riparian Areas/Wetlands** is being met when riparian-wetland areas are in properly functioning condition appropriate to soil type, climate geology, and landform to provide for proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow. Meeting the standard indicates: (1) The riparian/wetland vegetation is controlling erosion, stabilizing streambanks, shading water areas to reduce water temperature, stabilizing shorelines, filtering sediment, aiding in floodplain development, dissipating energy, delaying flood water, and increasing recharge of ground water appropriate to site potential. (2) Riparian/wetland vegetation has deep strong binding roots sufficient to stabilize streambanks and shorelines. Invader and shallow rooted species are a minor component of the floodplain. (3) The age class and structural diversity of riparian/wetland vegetation is appropriate for the site. (4) Noxious weeds are not increasing. The BLM portion of marsh is in Proper Functioning Condition. **Standard 2** is being met.

### **Standard 3 (Stream Channel/Flood Plain)**

The condition of stream channels, floodplains are closely linked to the condition of riparian and wetland areas. Healthy riparian areas have stable streambanks that protect stream channels, intercept precipitation and broad floodplains that impede overland flow, trap sediments and help to dissipate the energy of storm water events.

Standard 3 (Stream Channel/Flood Plain) is being met when stream channels and floodplains are properly functioning relative to the geomorphology (e.g., gradient, size, shape, roughness, confinement, and sinuosity) and climate to provide proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow. Meeting the standard indicates: (1) Stream channels and floodplains dissipate energy of high water flows and transport sediment. Soils support appropriate riparian-wetland species allowing water movement, sediment filtration, and water storage. Stream channels are not entrenching. (2) Stream width/depth ratio, gradient, sinuosity, and pool, riffle and run frequency are appropriate for the valley bottom type, geology, hydrology, and soils. (3) Streams have access to their floodplains and sediment deposition is evident. (4) There is little evidence of excessive soil compaction on the floodplain due to human activities. (5) Stream banks are within an appropriate range of stability according to site potential. (6) Noxious weeds are not increasing. The BLM portion of marsh is in Proper Functioning Condition. **Standard 3** is being met.

**Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities)** is being met when healthy, productive, and diverse native animal habitat and populations of native plants are maintained or promoted

as appropriate to soil type, climate, and landform to provide for proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow. Meeting the standard indicates that: (1) Native plant communities (flora and microbiotic crusts) are maintained or improved to ensure the proper functioning of ecological processes and continued productivity and diversity of native plant species. (2) The diversity of native species is maintained. (3) Plant vigor (total plant production, seed and seed stalk production, cover, etc.) is adequate to enable reproduction and recruitment of plants when favorable climatic events occur. (4) Noxious weeds are not increasing. (5) Adequate litter and standing dead material are present for site production and decomposition to replenish soils nutrients relative to site potential. **Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities)** is being met.

**Table 3. Common Vegetation**

Grasses	Forbs	Shrubs
bluebunch wheatgrass Idaho fescue Nevada bluegrass slender wheatgrass western wheatgrass letterman needlegrass mountain brome big bluegrass bulbous oniongrass prairie junegrass basin wildrye spike fescue streambank wheatgrass sedge (dryland species) columbia needlegrass sandberg bluegrass bottlebrush squirreltail Kentucky bluegrass cheatgrass brome canby bluegrass threadleaf sedge mat muhly timber oatgrass	sticky geranium tapertip hawksbeard aster species western yarrow groundsel species bluebell American vetch western valerian mulsear lupine arrowleaf balsamroot cutleaf balsamroot helianthella longleaf phlox buckwheat fleabane mountain agoseris biscuitroot aspens peavine white stoneseed mullen sneezeweed pusstoes cinquefoil species	mountain big sagebrush Threetip sagebrush silver sagebrush Basin Big sagebrush horsebrush mountain snowberry oreongrape green rabbitbrush chokecherry woods rose antelope bitterbrush shrubby cinquefoil serviceberry maple species. Douglas-fir mountain mahogany Rocky Mountain Juniper

**Water Quality (Standard 7)**

Water quality is closely linked to the condition of riparian and wetland areas. Healthy riparian areas have stable streambanks and healthy and diverse vegetation that protect stream channels, intercept precipitation and broad floodplains that impede overland flow, trap sediments and help to dissipate the energy of storm water events. **Standard 7 (Water Quality)** was determined as being met where riparian conditions indicate PFC. **Standard 7 (Water Quality)** is being met when surface and ground water on public lands comply with the Idaho Water Quality Standards. Meeting the Standard indicates that the physical, chemical, and biological parameters described in the Idaho Water Quality Standards are being met. The BLM portion of marsh is in Proper Functioning Condition. **Standard 7 (Water Quality)** is being met.

### **Standard 8 (Threatened & Endangered Plants and Animals Special Status Species)**

Special Status Animals include wildlife species that are listed as Threatened and Endangered, Candidates for listing, Experimental (Non-essential) populations and BLM sensitive species. No special status species of plants or animals are known to exist on the public lands in the subject allotments. However, if discovered they would be sufficiently protected because all relevant standards and guidelines are being met.

**Standard 8 (Threatened & Endangered Plants and Animals)** is being met when habitats are suitable to maintain viable populations of threatened and endangered, sensitive, and other special status species. Meeting the standard indicates: (1) that the physical, chemical, and biological parameters described in the Idaho Water Quality Standards are being met. (2) Riparian/wetland vegetation with deep binding roots is sufficient to stabilize streambanks and shorelines. Invader and shallow rooted species are a minor component of the floodplain. (3) Age class and structural diversity of riparian/wetland vegetation is appropriate for the site. (4) Native plant communities (flora and microbiotic crusts) are maintained or improved to ensure the proper functioning of ecological processes and continued productivity and diversity of native plant species. (5) The diversity of native species is maintained. (6) The amount and distribution of ground cover including litter, for identified ecological site(s) or soil plant associations are appropriate for site stability. (7) Noxious weeds are not increasing.

**Standard 8 (Threatened & Endangered Plants and Animals)** was determined as being met when **Standards 1 (Watersheds), Standard 2, (Riparian Areas and Wetlands), Standard 3 (Stream Channel/Flood Plain), Standard 4 (Native Vegetation) and Standard 7 (Water Quality)** were being met which would indicate that habitats are suitable to maintain viable populations of threatened and endangered, sensitive, and other special status species. **(Standard 8) Threatened & Endangered Plants and Animals** is being met.

### **Wildlife**

Wildlife habitat management in the PFO focuses on maintaining and improving food, water, and cover for over 100 species of mammals, 214 species of birds, 32 species of fish, 13 species of reptiles, and 5 species of amphibians; some of the bird species are subject to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 and amendments. Deer, elk, moose, and a large variety of small mammals are present in the PFO. Some of the allotments provide important habitat for deer, elk and sage grouse (Table 3). Different species have different habitat requirements, whereby good habitat conditions for one species may not meet adequate habitat conditions for another species. To maintain diverse, viable, and abundant populations of wildlife, a mosaic of biologically and structurally diverse habitat types is necessary. Riparian zones are important habitats for wildlife that provide water and high structural diversity. Common wildlife habitats are sagebrush/grass, mountain brush, aspen, Douglas-fir, juniper/mountain mahogany, maple, with a few marshlands and riparian areas. Wildlife species diversity is high as a result of the variety and good

condition of habitat types. Data regarding the abundance and distribution of nongame species, fur-bearers, and predators are limited.

**Table 4. Allotments that contain habitat for Big Game (Deer, Elk) and Sage Grouse Key habitat (K), with either Isolated (I) or Stronghold (S) populations. Data from Idaho Department of Fish and Game.**

Allotment	Big Game	Sage Grouse	Allotment	Big Game	Sage Grouse
Bagley Hollow/04048	D		Garden Creek/27000	D & E	
Basin Divide/04265	D		Jack Knife/14119		
Bishcoff Canyon/14034	D & E	I	North Peterson Ranch/04371	D & E	I
Burton Creek-1/04058	D		North Sulphur & Trail/14031	D & E	
Cedar Mountain/06010	D		Schmid Ridge/14046	E	I
Cheatbeck Canyon/14084	D		Soda Hills-3/04359	D	
Chinese Peak/03803	D		South Garden Creek/03817		
Deep Creek/06013	D		Wide Hollow-1/04231	D	
Fish Creek Basin/04267	D & E		Woodall Spring/04338	D	
Fox Hollow/06091	D		Wooley Ridge-1/04395		

### **Soils**

Soils present in the allotments may be separated into three main groups based on source of parent material and geology. The most extensive group is the soils formed in slope rock debris (colluvium) and water carried material (alluvium). Many of these soils are influenced by wind blown soils (loess) in the upper section of the profile. These soils occur throughout the area from the highest mountain to the valley floors. The next soil group is shallow residual soils and side slope colluvium associated with steeper upland slopes. The third group is the deep loess soils located on the gentle valley slopes and leeward side of hills and mountains. These soils are subject to extreme erosion and generally have been eroded off the steeper slopes. Wind erosion on the allotments is minor. Because the allotments are located on steep slopes, they are in a moderate or a high erodibility group, and are susceptible to water erosion.

### **Socio-Economics**

The subject allotments occupy portions of five southeastern Idaho counties: Bannock, Oneida, Bear Lake, Caribou, and Franklin. Local economies benefit from activities on BLM public lands, including visitor expenditures, and the processing and harvesting of natural resources (e.g., timber, minerals, and forage). In addition, the BLM collects revenues from issuing various permits for grazing use, timber harvesting, mining as well as recreation and other commercial activities; a portion of these revenues is redirected back to the state. Investments are made in the management of land and resources, land acquisition, range improvements, construction and access, central hazardous materials fund, and wildfire preparedness and operations. Recreation value is derived from these lands by hiking, hunting, observing the scenery, and experiencing nature in quiet and solitude.

Historically, ranching has played a role in the way-of-life and economy in southeastern Idaho. Because of the mixed patterns of land ownership in southeastern Idaho, public and private land uses are often intertwined and decisions made in the management of public lands can impact livestock operators.

**Critical Elements of the Human Environment**

CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT			OTHER IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT		
The following elements of the human environment are subject to requirements specified in treaty, statute, regulation, or executive order and must be considered in all environmental assessments			The elements of the environment listed below are not included on the "critical elements" list, but are important to consider in assessing all impacts of the proposal(s).		
All the following elements have been analyzed. Elements denoted by an "X" in the <i>not affected</i> column are not affected by the proposed action or alternatives and will receive no further consideration.					
Elements	Not Affected	Affected	Elements	Not Affected	Affected
Air Quality	X		Paleontological Resources	X	
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	X		Indian Trust Resources	X	
Cultural Resources	X		Wildlife	X	
Environmental Justice (EO 12989) (minority and low-income populations)	X		Availability of Access/Need to Reserve Access	X	
Farm Lands (prime or unique)	X		Recreation Use, Existing and Potential	X	
Floodplains	X		Existing and Potential Land Uses	X	
Invasive, Non-native Species	X		Vegetation types, communities; vegetative permits and sales; Rangeland resources	X	
Migratory Birds	X		Fisheries	X	
Native American Religious Concerns	X		Forest Resources	X	
Threatened/Endangered Plants; Sensitive Plants	X		Soils	X	
Threatened/Endangered Fish; Sensitive Fish	X		Wild Horse and Burro Designated Herd Management Areas	X	
Threatened/Endangered Animals; Sensitive Animals	X		Visual Resources	X	
Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	X		Economic & Social Values	X	
Water Quality – Surface	X		Mineral Resources	X	
Wetlands/Riparian Zones (including uplands)	X				
Wilderness	X				
Wild & Scenic Rivers	X				
Tribal Treaty Rights	X				

### **Affected Resources/Value**

No resources of the existing situation in the subject allotments are being affected by the proposed actions administrative changes.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

#### **Impacts of the Proposed and Alternative Actions**

Impacts to all resources by the proposed or alternative action are expected to remain the same as the existing situation. There are no other changes taking place on the permits/leases other than minor administrative changes. Adding the Annual Indicator Criteria, *“The permittee/lessee will notify BLM of any occurrences of noxious or invasive weed infestations on their allotment(s)”*, would help identify newly established noxious weeds before an infestation occurs. There are no impacts on the allotments occurring due to the administrative changes. Therefore, there are no additional or different impacts to be analyzed.

### **CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION**

#### **Persons and Agencies Consulted**

Permittees/Lessees

Idaho Department of Lands

Idaho Department of Fish & Game

#### **List of Preparers**

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