

SOUTH GOODING ALLOTMENT DETERMINATION

**Achieving Standards for Rangeland Health
and
Conforming with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management**

Field Office: Shoshone		Watershed Name/Number: Little Wood 1704022101	
Allotment Name/Number: South Gooding/90904			
Public Land (acres)			Streams on Public Land (miles): 0 Miles
Upland: 235	Riparian: 0	Total: 235	
Date(s) of Field Assessment: May 19, 2004		Name of Permittee(s): Jodi Sorensen	
Assessment Participants (Name & Discipline or Interest): Joanna Forliano, Rangeland Management Specialist Paul McClain, Wildlife Management Biologist Jodi Sorensen, Permittee			

Standard 1 (Watersheds)

Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*] Standard doesn't apply

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meeting the Standard.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are Significant Factors.
<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress to meeting the Standard.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are not Significant Factors.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management Guideline No(s).

Rationale/Information Sources: Eleven indicators were evaluated on the Sandy 8-12” ecological site. Field measurements found that vascular plants provide 58% of the cover for this site, rock 14%, biotic crust 4%, litter in contact with soil 12%, and standing litter 0% with bare ground found on 12% of the transect points.

The overall rating for Standard 1 is slight to moderate (refer to Table 3). Four indicators (36%) were marked none to slight, four indicators (36%) were marked slight to moderate, two indicators (18%) were marked moderate, and one indicator (10%) was marked moderate to extreme.

Final Determination

Standard 2 (Riparian Areas and Wetlands) & Standard 3 (Stream Channel/Floodplain)

Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*] X *Standard doesn't apply*

Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities)

Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*] Standard doesn't apply

<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting the Standard.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are Significant Factors.
<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress to meeting the Standard.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are not Significant Factors.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management Guideline No(s).

Rationale/Information Sources: Cover data indicates that cheatgrass, basin big sagebrush, Sandberg’s bluegrass, and tumble mustard are the dominant plant species. While perennial grasses and forbs native to the site are present, the abundance is substantially lower than expected. Decadent sagebrush is present throughout the South Gooding Allotment. Cheatgrass is the dominant species throughout the allotment and accounted for 20% of the ground cover in 2004. There is the possibility that this could pose a threat to further expansion into neighboring public lands.

According to the ecological site description, many other species of vascular plants should be present as well as a dominant visual aspect of this site. Some of these include Indian ricegrass, needle and threadgrass, sand dropseed, penstemon, arrowleaf balsamroot, and Hood’s phlox. None of these vegetative species were observed in June of 2004.

The average rating for assessed indicators for Standard 4 is moderate. When taking into account the actual plant community this allotment is displaying a moderate to extreme departure from the site potential. There is a substantial lack of native forbs and grasses that should be present on the site according to the ecological site description. This may be attributed in part to the repetitive early season use. Cheatgrass and Sandberg bluegrass are the most dominant vegetative species and because of that, this allotment is currently not providing a healthy, diverse, and productive wildlife habitat. Two indicators (22%) were marked none to slight, two indicators (22%) were marked slight to moderate, three indicators (34%) were marked moderate, and two indicators (22%) were marked moderate to extreme.

Standard 5 (Seedings)

Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*] X *Standard doesn't apply*

Note: At the time this Assessment, the Jerome Allotment did not have any seedings present. After the wildfire in 2006, a seeding was implemented. If this seeding becomes established, Standard 5 will apply to the Jerome Allotment in the future.

Final Determination

Standard 6 (Exotic Plant Communities, Other than Seedings)

Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*] X *Standard doesn't apply*

Standard 7 (Water Quality)

Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*] X *Standard doesn't apply*

Standard 8 (Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals)

Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*] Standard doesn't apply

<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting the Standard.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are Significant Factors.
<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress to meeting the Standard.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are not Significant Factors.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management Guideline No(s).

Rationale/Information Sources: The variation in habitat conditions and habitat structural components that currently exist on the allotment likely provides minimal suitable habitat conditions for each of the sensitive plant or animal species described above. The allotment provides relatively small and discrete areas of suitable or marginal winter habitat for the sage grouse. Picabo milkvetch (*Astragalus oniciformis*), a sensitive plant, may occur within the allotment due to the presence of potential habitat and the proximity of known populations five miles north. At this time, there are no documented populations in the South Gooding Allotment.

Determination:

I have determined that Standard 1(Watersheds) is being met and Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities) and Standard 8 (Threatened and Endangered Species) are not being met but current livestock grazing management is not a contributing factor in the failure of these two standards in the South Gooding Allotment. Standard 2 (Riparian Areas and Wetlands) and Standard 3 (Stream Channel and Floodplains), Standard 5 (Seedings), Standard 6 (Exotic Plant Communities), and Standard 7 (Water Quality) do not apply to the South Gooding Allotment.

Even though the South Gooding Allotment has not passed the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health, current livestock grazing is not considered to be a factor in the failure of Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities) and Standard 8 (Threatened and Endangered Species). The action listed below will be considered in the Environmental Assessment.

Final Determination

1. Renew a 10 year grazing permit in the South Gooding Allotment for the same active preference of 44 AUMs.
2. Incorporate the utilization standards for the new seeding if it is successful.
3. Incorporate a fall use period in the allotment to allow for seed set.

/s/ Lori A. Armstrong
Shoshone Field Office Manager

September 25, 2007
Date

No Comment Letters were received for the South Gooding Allotment Assessment mailed out on March 4, 2005.