

## **RANGELAND HEALTH STANDARDS - ASSESSMENT –CAHIL FRF ALLOTMENT #0219**

### **Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (BLM, 1997)**

#### **Introduction**

The Range Reform '94 Record of Decision (BLM, 1995a) recently amended current grazing administration and management practices. The ROD required that region-specific standards and guidelines be developed and approved by the Secretary of the Interior. In the State of Oregon, several Resource Advisory Councils (RACs) were established to develop these regional standards and guidelines. The RAC established for the part of the state covering the Rabbit Basin allotment is the Southeastern Oregon RAC. These standards and guidelines for Oregon and Washington were finalized on August 12, 1997 and include:

#### Standard 1 - Upland Watershed Function

Upland soils exhibit infiltration and permeability rates, moisture storage, and stability that are appropriate to soil, climate, and landform.

#### Standard 2 - Riparian/Wetland Watershed Function

Riparian-wetland areas are in properly functioning physical condition appropriate to soil, climate, and landform.

#### Standard 3 - Ecological Processes

Healthy, productive, and diverse plant and animal populations and communities appropriate to soil, climate, and landform are supported by ecological processes of nutrient cycling, energy flow, and the hydrologic cycle.

#### Standard 4 - Water Quality

Surface water and groundwater quality, influenced by agency actions, complies with State water quality standards.

#### Standard 5 - Native, T&E, and Locally Important Species

Habitats support healthy, productive, and diverse populations and communities of native plants and animals (including special status species and species of local importance) appropriate to soil, climate, and landform.

**Standard 1 - Upland Watershed****This standard is being met on the allotment.**

One indicator normally used to evaluate this standard is the Soil Surface Factor (SSF), but no transects were done on this allotment so there is no information on the Soil Surface Factor. Observation of the 460 acres of BLM land in the allotment indicated there was ample vegetation to prevent accelerated erosion. There is no evidence of significant wind or water erosion as the site is relatively flat with no gullies or rills apparent.

Another indicator of Upland Watershed condition is plant composition and community structure. The dominant vegetation was not mapped but the range sites were identified from the soil mapping and these can be seen in attached Table 1. About 31% of the 460 acres of BLM land is Sodic Meadow, with 21% being Semi Wet Meadow, 14% is Lakebed, 10% is Sodic Flats, 7% is Playa and the remaining 17% is rockland or inclusions. The meadows and the Sodic Flat all contain significant vegetative cover including spiny hopsage and greasewood with saltgrass and basin wildrye in the understory.

**Standard 2 - Riparian/Wetland****This standard is being met.**

There are no major intermittent or perennial streams on BLM in this allotment.

There are 257 acres of palustrine wetlands in the allotment. Lentic Properly Functioning Condition assessment (PFC) was performed in March, 1998 and all the acres were in PFC. Although there has been no recent lentic PFC assessments or surveys performed, the sites observed appear to be functioning properly. If surveys are completed in the future, and it is determined that the standard is not being met due to livestock grazing, appropriate management actions would be taken to bring the sites into properly functioning condition.

**Standard 3: Ecological Processes****This standard is being met.**

Following are observations from the interdisciplinary team.

The vegetation in Allotment #0219 appears healthy and productive. Livestock does not appear to be having a negative effect on the vegetation in the areas surveyed. During this evaluation, the ecological processes for plant growth and decomposition appeared normal. This allotment has an exceptionally healthy population of great basin wild rye. No introduced species were noted in the area evaluated.

**Standard 4-Surface water and groundwater quality, influenced by agency actions, complies with State water quality standards.****The standard is being met.**

At this time, neither the surface water nor groundwater within the allotment has been listed for exceeding State water quality standards.

**Standard 5: Native, T&E, and Locally Important Species****Standard 5 is being met for native, T&E and locally important wildlife species.**

The deer and pronghorn populations are healthy and stable in number within the allotment. Habitat quantity and quality do not appear to be limiting population size or health. Wildlife populations fluctuate at or slightly below ODFW's Management Objective for the unit.

The allotment also provide habitat for numerous small and nongame birds and mammals common to the Great Basin, as well as, historic habitat for sage grouse and California bighorn sheep (both Bureau Sensitive Species). There are no known sage grouse leks found within the allotment and sage grouse have been seen using the allotment at all times of the year. The allotment also provides habitat for raptors and other sensitive species, as well as, some federally listed species. No critical habitat or limitations have been identified for any of these species which include wintering bald eagles, and possibly pygmy rabbits, various sensitive bat species or Peregrine falcons. Livestock grazing does not appear to be limiting wildlife habitat within the allotment.

No noxious weeds are known to occur in the allotment.

Native Plant Species: *Atriplex spinosa*, *Distichlis spicata* var. *stricta*, *Elymus cinereus*, *Ericameria nauseosa*, moss (soil), *Poa secunda*, *Rumex* sp., and *Sarcobatus vermiculatus*.

Special Status Plants: No known sensitive plant species in this allotment.

Locally Important Plant Species: No known cultural plant species in this allotment.

### **Current Management and Recent Management Changes**

The allotment is grazed with 280 AUMS in the fall and winter in conjunction with the permittee's private land and state lease The fall and winter grazing works well in this area. Since the grasses are dormant, the grazing has little or no impact on their vigor.

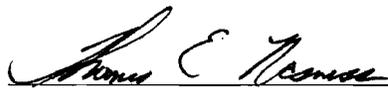
### **Team Members**

### **Title**

Les Boothe	Range Management Specialist
Alan Munhall	Fishery Biologist
Vern Stofleth	Wildlife Biologist
Heather Partipilo	Botanist
Bill Cannon	Archaeologist
Ken Kestner	Supervisory NRS
Robert Hopper	Supervisory RMS
Erin McConnell	Weed Management Specialist
Elizabeth Berger	Hydrologist

### **Determination**

- Existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use on the Cahill FRF Allotment promote achievement of significant progress towards the Oregon Standards for Rangeland Health and conform with the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.
- Existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use on the Cahil FRF Allotment will require modification or change prior to the next grazing season to promote achievement of the Oregon Standards for Rangeland Health and conform with the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.



Field Manager, Lakeview Resource Area

9/30/04

Date

# Cahill Allotment #219

RUMP LAKE  
ELEVATION 478  
25

Piper Lake  
29

US  
LAKES

V A L L E Y

0.75 0.375 0 0.75 Miles



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