

Rangeland Health Standards Assessment

Allotment #407 Clover Flat

Allotment Overview:

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Allotment: located approximately six miles west of Valley Falls (refer to attached map).

7.5 Minute Topographic Maps: Clover Flat

AUMs of Authorized Use: Active Preference is 200 AUMs.

Permitted Season: 04/15 – 06/15

Management category: M

Allotment size and status: 2,521 public acres and 4,851 private acres

Grazing System: Spring three pasture system. Pastures consist of Crested Wheatgrass seeding (*Agropyron cristatum*), native plant communities, and riparian pastures.

STANDARD 1- Upland Watershed- Upland soils exhibit infiltration and permeability rates, moisture storage, and stability that are appropriate to soil, climate, and land form.

This standard is being met on the Clover Flat Allotment.

Indicators used to evaluate upland watershed condition in this allotment are plant composition and grazing management. Current plant composition is compared to a defined Potential Natural Plant Community (PNC) for the identified soil types and precipitation zone (table 1). No official surveys have been completed in recent years; BLM lands in this area were not included in the Ecological Site Inventory (ESI) South Lake 1. PNC data is compiled using the Soil Survey of Lake County, Oregon, Southern Part, published 2001. Table 1 compares the current plant composition with the PNC. Plant species expected at PNC for each range site as described in the Lake County Soil Survey are part of plant community composition currently found on the allotment.

Grazing Management

Livestock grazing in the Clover Flat Allotment (#407) occurs in the spring. The Seeding pasture is grazed for approximately two months (April-June). The Riparian pasture is grazed for approximately two weeks in early April. The Moss Creek pasture is currently closed to grazing. The grazing system in the Seeding and Riparian pastures is designed to maintain healthy perennial vegetative communities. Perennial vegetation provides protective cover to reduce soil movement, decrease compaction and thus increase infiltration. Current grazing strategies are adequate to maintain the existing conditions in these allotments.

STANDARD 2- Riparian-wetland areas are in properly functioning physical conditions appropriate to soil, climate, and landform.

This standard is being met on the Clover Flat Allotment.

This standard is being met. Lotic PFC site inventories were completed in 1997 on Moss Creek. The lower reach of the creek was found to be in PFC within the pasture. There was some excessive deposition in the system and it was noted that this reach is still sensitive to disturbance.

The upper, steeper gradient reach, was rated as Functional at Risk with an upward trend. Notes taken from the review indicated good plant cover, but still needing to develop a full flood plain.

Any change in grazing in this presently excluded area should be monitored closely to assure that the stream continues to improve.

STANDARD 3- 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.

This standard is being met on the Clover Flat Allotment.

The current plant community composition as compared to the PNC was the indicator used to evaluate this standard. As stated above, plant species expected at PNC for each range site as described in Lake County Soil Survey are part of the plant community compositions currently found on the allotment.

Noxious weeds are known to occur in the allotment. Canada thistle and Mediterranean sage are present in the Riparian Pasture. Mediterranean sage is sparsely scattered in the upland areas and small patches of Canada thistle occur in the bottom of the main drainage. Both species are under an annual weed treatment program. Medusahead rye (*Taeniatherum caput-medusae*) is present in the Seeding Pasture around O'Leary spring. It is likely that medusahead rye occurs in other areas of the allotment as it is a common weed in the area both on public and private lands. Extensive surveys have not been made to determine the exact extent of the medusahead rye infestation.

Table 1; Current plant composition compared with PNC composition.

Range Site	Dominant Vegetation on allotment	PNC Dominant vegetation	Plant species that occur on the allotment and are identified in the PNC description
12E 12C 25F 189B	Juniperus occidenatlis, Artemisisa arbuscula, Festuca idahoensis,	Artemisia arbuscula, Festuca idahoensis, Pseudoroegneria spicata spicata	Artemisia arbuscula, Festuca idahoensis, Pseudoroegneria spicata spicata
117F	Pseudoroegneria spicata spicata, Poa secunda , Purshia tridentate, Stipa thurberiana, Leymus cinereus, Sitanion hystrix	Artemisia arbuscula, Festuca idahoensis, Pseudoroegneria spicata spicata, Poa secunda, Purshia tridentata	Artemisia arbuscula, Festuca idahoensis, Pseudoroegneria spicata spicata, Poa secunda, Purshia tridentata
22F		Artemisia arbuscula, Festuca idahoensis, Pseudoroegneria spicata spicata, Poa secunda, Stipa thurberiana	Artemisia arbuscula, Festuca idahoensis, Pseudoroegneria spicata spicata, Poa secunda, Stipa thurberiana
127A		Leymus cinereus, Leymus triticoides	Leymus cinereus, Leymus triticoides
234F		Poa secunda, Artemisia arbuscula	Poa secunda, Artemisia arbuscula

Forbs include: *Achillea millefolium*, *Agoseris* sp., *Allium* sp., *Artemesia* sp. (mugwort), *Astragalus filipes*, *Astragalus* sp., *Camassonia tanacetifolia*, *Castilleja* sp., *Cirsium* sp. (native), *Collinsia parviflora*, *Crepis* sp., *Delphinium* sp., *Descurainia* sp., *Draba verna*, *Epilobium* sp., *Equisetum* sp., *Erigeron* spp., *Eriogonum* sp., *Fragaria* sp., *Juncus* sp., *Lithophragma parviflora*, *Lomatium* sp., *Lupinus* sp., *Lygodesmia spinosa*, *Monolepsis* or *Iva* sp., *Montia perfoliata*, *Phlox longifolia*, *Potentilla* sp., *Ranunculus glaberrimus* var. *glaberrimus*, *Rumex* sp., *Rumex crispus*, *Stellaria* sp., *Taraxacum officinale*, *Tragopogon dubius*, *Trifolium gymnocarpon* var. *plummerae*, *Typha* sp., and *Vicia* sp. Other plants present include mosses, puffball mushrooms, *Russula* sp. (mushroom), *Letharia* sp. (lichen), and crustose lichens.

Much of this area supports healthy diverse wildlife populations. Wildlife populations within non-native seedings are not as diverse as they could be if they were in a late seral stage or closer to their potential vegetative communities. They do, however, still have adequate levels of species diversity to remain functional. This standard is currently being met from the aspect of wildlife populations and diversity.

STANDARD 4- Surface water and groundwater quality, influenced by agency actions, complies with State water quality standards.

This standard is being met on the Clover Flat Allotment.

Moss Creek has not been listed as Water quality impaired by the Oregon DEQ.

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.

This standard is being met on the Clover Flat Allotment.

Native Plant Species: *Achillea millefolium*, *Agoseris* sp., *Allium* sp., *Artemesia* sp. (mugwort), *Artemesia tridentata*, *Astragalus filipes*, *Astragalus* sp., *Camassonia tanacetifolia*, *Carex* sp., *Castilleja* sp., *Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus*, *Cirsium* sp. (native), *Collinsia parviflora*, *Crepis* sp., *Delphinium* sp., *Descurainia* sp., *Draba verna*, *Elymus cinereus*, *Elymus elymoides*, *Epilobium* sp., *Equisetum* sp., *Ericameria nauseosus*, *Erigeron* spp., *Eriogonum* sp., *Fragaria* sp., *Juncus* sp., *Juniperus occidentalis*, *Lithophragma parviflora*, *Lomatium* sp., *Lupinus* sp., *Lygodesmia spinosa*, *Monolepsis* or *Iva* sp., *Montia perfoliata*, *Phlox longifolia*, *Pinus ponderosa*, *Poa secunda*, *Populus tremuloides*, *Potentilla* sp., *Pseudoroegneria spicata*, *Purshia tridentata*, *Ranunculus glaberrimus* var. *glaberrimus*, *Ribes cereum* var. *cereum*, *Rosa woodsii*, *Rumex* sp., *Rumex crispus*, *Salix* sp., *Stellaria* sp., *Stipa thurberiana*, *Taraxacum officinale*.

Tragopogon dubius, *Trifolium gymnocarpon* var. *plummerae*, *Typha* sp., *Vicia* sp., crustose lichens on rocks, *Letharia* sp., *Russula* sp., mosses, puffball mushroom.

Special Status Plants: None found, none suspected.

Locally Important Plant Species: *Lomatium* species are cultural plants.

Standard 5 - Wildlife section for allotment 407.

Special status wildlife species or their habitats that are present within this allotment include the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*), peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), burrowing owl (*Speotyto cunicularia*), kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis*), sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*), and pygmy rabbit (*Brachylagus idahoensis*). There are also three species with high public interest. These are mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), California bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*) and pronghorn antelope (*Antilocapra americana*).

No nesting or roosting habitat exists within this allotments for the bald eagle. Nesting and roosting does occur on U.S. Forest Service lands to the west. It is suspected that they are occasional visitors to the area. Bald eagle foraging does occur within the allotment; however it is probably restricted mostly to road killed deer adjacent to the major roadways and occasional carrion scattered through the allotments. No nesting habitat is available for peregrine falcons. These sites were surveyed for peregrine falcon nests in 1999, but none were located. No incidental sightings of peregrines exist within the allotment, but occasional sighting occur within the vicinity of Chewaucan marsh. Chewaucan marsh also provides some foraging areas for peregrine falcons. There is some potential nesting habitat for ferruginous hawks on a few cliff faces and scattered junipers this allotment. No surveys have been conducted for ferruginous hawk. Ferruginous hawk foraging habitat exists through some of the allotment. There are no resource conflicts for peregrine falcons, ferruginous hawks or bald eagles.

Burrowing owls have been observed within the vicinity of the allotment. Inventories for burrowing owls were conducted in 2000 and only occasional sighting were documented. There are no resource conflicts for this species.

Habitat is present for kit fox and pygmy rabbit, but no known locations exist within the allotment for these species. No inventories have been conducted for either of these species within the allotment, however it is suspected that they could occur within portions of the allotment. There are no resource conflicts for these species.

Bighorn sheep also inhabit the northeastern portion of the allotment. There is little overlap in range between bighorns and cattle within this allotment. No major conflicts exist between bighorn sheep and cattle grazing within these allotments.

Pronghorn antelope are common in portions of this allotment and in adjacent allotments. Pronghorn use is concentrated in portions of this allotment that are covered with grass or

shorter shrubs. No major conflicts exist between pronghorn and cattle grazing within this area.

Mule deer inhabit much of the area. High to moderate concentrations of wintering mule deer inhabit these allotments. No conflicts exist between mule deer and cattle grazing within this allotment. Bitterbrush is common in some portions of the allotment, but gets little use by cattle due to timing of grazing.

There are no known sage-grouse lek sites within the allotment. Sage-grouse are known to occur in the southeastern portion of the allotment. Large proportions of this allotment are currently unusable to sage grouse due to grassland conversion, juniper invasion or lowland pastures. Current sage-grouse habitats within this allotment contain approximately 5% (350 acres) nesting habitats. Brood rearing habitats make up approximately 10% (700 acres) and winter habitats also make up approximately 10% (700 acres). The other 75% (5,500 acres) of the allotment contains areas that are considered non-suitable for sage-grouse. This is primarily due to invasive western juniper or a lack of shrub cover. It is estimated that 40% of the area has the potential to be sage-grouse nesting habitat. Another 20% has the potential to become brood rearing habitats. The other 40% of the area has no potential to become sage-grouse habitat.

In order for sage-grouse habitats within these allotments to improve, restoration work would be needed to return shrub cover to areas where it was removed. It is unclear if areas that were seeded to crested wheatgrass will be used in the future by sage-grouse. There are similar habitats on the Vale BLM district that were cleared, seeded to crested wheatgrass, and then heavily grazed. Sagebrush has returned to some of these areas and they are currently being used by sage-grouse despite the non-native understory of crested wheatgrass. No major conflicts exist between cattle grazing and sage-grouse within this allotment at this time.

Overall, this standard is being met for wildlife species within this allotment. The occurrence of non-native seedings, heavily modified private pastures and invasive juniper appear to be the limiting factors for sage grouse and most sagebrush dependant wildlife habitats. Efforts to improve this standard should focus on sagebrush restoration and juniper reduction. This could be accomplished through intensive restoration efforts with fire, seeding or herbicides.

Team Members

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Title

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Determination

Existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use on the Clover Flat Allotment promote achievement of significant progress toward the Oregon Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health and conform with the Guidelines for Livestock grazing Management.

Existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use on the Clover Flat Allotment will require modification or change prior to the next grazing season to promote achievement of the Oregon standards and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.

James E. Rosman

Acting Field Manager, Lakeview Resource Area

8/27/03

Date

Grazing Allotment 407

Legend

 Allotment 407

