

Allotment Overview

Rye Ranch #706

Allotment Boundary: See attached map

7.5 Minute Topographic Quads: McCarty Butte, OR and Ft Rock, OR

AUM's of Authorized Use: 536

Permitted Season of Use: Spring, Summer, Fall 4/01 to 10/26

Grazing System: Three- Pasture Deferred Rotation

Land Status: BLM-4, 250 Acres Private-3, 312 Acres
(See attached map)

The Rye Ranch Allotment is approximately 20 miles north of Silver Lake, Oregon (see attached map). This allotment is categorized as a type M, Maintain. The criteria for M allotments are:

Present range condition is satisfactory.

Allotment resource production potential is moderate to high and present production is near potential.

No serious resource use conflicts or controversy exist.

Opportunity may exist for positive economic returns.

Present management appears satisfactory.

The majority of BLM acres in this allotment are seeded to crested wheatgrass.

Ecological Site Inventory Data

Complete classification data is not available for the entire allotment. The acres not classified represent private lands within the allotment, inclusions within a vegetation community too small to be mapped or transition zones and rocky outcrops

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

This standard is being met on the Rye Ranch Allotment.

The indicators used to evaluate this standard are Soil Surface Factor (SSF), a method of recording observations used as an indicator of accelerated erosion, plant community composition, which indicates the root capacity of the soil surface, Observed Apparent Trend (OAT) and grazing management. Existing vegetation monitoring is not available.

The land within the allotment was unsuccessfully farmed under the Homestead Act. Cultivation was unsuccessful and the land was returned to federal ownership in the 1930's.

Soil Surface Factor and Erosion

Soil Surface Factor (SSF) is a method of recording observations used as an indicator of accelerated erosion. The following is based on Ecological Site Inventory (ESI) transects. Of the 3 transects completed in the native pasture, 2 have an SSF rating of Slight and one had a Moderate rating. The Wastina pasture had one SSF rating of Moderate and one Slight and SSF in the Community pasture, the only transect completed had an SSF rating of Slight.

Nine percent of the allotment is rated as stable, 43% slight and 4% moderate. In the native pasture, one transect had a SSF rating of slight and one had a moderate rating (Table 1). The Wastina pasture had one SSF rating of moderate and one slight and SST in the community pasture was slight. Forty-four percent of the allotment is a crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*) seeding. No data was collected in the seeded areas.

ESI vegetation data shows high foliar cover of sagebrush and rabbit brush in all of the pastures. Rye Ranch 3x3 and landscape trend photos indicate an increase of these species since seeding in the Wastina and Community pastures. Photos from the 3x3 and landscape photo trends do not indicate an increase of these species in the Native pasture. The seedings were completed more than 30 years ago. This increase in shrub species and decrease in individual plant vigor is considered normal and expected in seedings over 30 years old. Observed Apparent Trend from the ESI transects identified a static trend in the Community pasture, a downward trend in all transect of the Native pasture and one static and one downward trend in the Wastina pasture (Table 1). Overall, less than 1% of the allotment was given a downward trend, 28% was identified as static and 28% as upward.

Table 1. SSF and Oat ratings compiled through use of ESI data.

Pasture	Range Site	SSF	OAT
Native	Droughty Bottom	Slight	Downward
	Silty Alkali Bottom	Moderate	Downward
	Pumice Plains	Slight	Downward
Wastina	Shallow Pumice Hills	Moderate	Downward
	Pumice Flat	Slight	Static
Community	Pumice Plains	Slight	Static

Standard II- Riparian/Wetland Areas- Riparian-wetland areas are in properly functioning physical condition appropriate to soil, climate and landform.

This standard does not apply to this allotment because there are no perennial water or wetlands present.

Standard III- 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.

This standard is being met on the Rye Ranch allotment.

Indicators used to evaluate this standard include the vegetation composition, ecological status, OAT, Condition Class and current plant composition as compared to a defined Potential Natural Community (PNC) for the defined soil type and precipitation zone. Thirteen percent of the allotment is at late seral stage, 43% at mid and less than 1% represents PNC (Table 2). The 44% not rated are the areas of crested wheatgrass seeding. Under the deferred rest rotation grazing system, use is during spring early summer in one pasture, late summer fall in another pasture and rest in the third pasture. The time of use and rest are alternated through the pastures. This type of grazing should result in the maintenance of existing key herbaceous species composition. The increase in shrub species is expected as the seedings age. Species identified as occurring at PNC are part of the current composition (Table 3). Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) is present and was identified in ESI data as common, making up more than 1% of species composition on 41% of the allotment.

Table 2. Ecological Status and final condition Class compiled through ESI data.

Pasture	Transect	Ecological Status	% Climax Veg	SSF	Stand Site	Final Condition Class
Native	1	Mid	43	Slight	¼	Fair
	2	Low	67	Moderate	½	Fair
	3	Mid	50	Slight	½	Fair
Wastina	4	Low	58	Moderate	½	Good
	5	Mid	64	Slight	1/10	Fair
Community Seeding	6	Mid	34	Slight	¼	Fair

Table 3. Current plant composition compared with PNC composition.

Pasture	Transect Number	Range Site	ESI Dominant Vegetation	PNC Dominant Vegetation	Plant species described through the ESI and identified at PNC in the range site description *
Native	1	Droughty Bottom 8-10"	<i>Elymus elymoides, Artemisia tridentata var tridentata,</i>	<i>Leymus triticoides, Artemisia tridentata var tridentata</i>	LECI4, ELEL5, LETR5, CHNAC, ARTRT, CHIVIS2, CHNA2
	2	Silty Alkaline Bottom 8-10"	<i>Leymus triticoides, Artemisia tridentata var tridentata</i>	<i>Leymus triticoides, Artemisia tridentata var tridentata</i>	LETR5, ARTRT, LECI4, SAVE4, DISPS2, CHNAC
	3	Pumice Plains 8-11"	<i>Stipa occidentalis, Chrysothamnus nauseosus</i>	<i>Stipa spp., Artemisia tridentata var vaseyana</i>	STIPA spp., ORHY, ASPU9, ARTRV, CHNA2, CHV18
Wastina	4	Shallow Pumice Hills 10-12"	<i>Festuca idahoensis Artemisia tridentata var vaseyana</i>	<i>Festuca idahoensis, Artemisia tridentata var vaseyana, Juniperus occidentalis</i>	FEID, STIPA spp, ELEL5, AMI2, PHD3, ARTRV, JUOC, CHNA2, CHV18
	5	Pumice Flat 10-12"	<i>Agropyron cristatum, Chrysothamnus nauseosus</i>	<i>Stipa occidentalis, Artemisia tridentata var vaseyana</i>	STIPA spp, ELEL5, CAREX spp, FEID, ERIOG, CASTI, ASPU9, ARTRV, CHV18
Community	6	Pumice Plains 8-11"	<i>Agropyron cristatum, Chrysothamnus nauseosus</i>	<i>Stipa spp., Artemisia tridentata var vaseyana</i>	STIPA spp., ELEL5, CARO5, ARTRV, CHNA2, CHV18

* These abbreviations represent the generic names of plant species found within the specific range sites.

Noxious weeds are known to occur in the allotment. Of particular concern is spotted knapweed, which has been found in the town of Fort Rock, and diffuse knapweed coming in from Deschutes County. The Fort Rock Road will continue to be an avenue for noxious weed spread and establishment over the years due to vehicular traffic and nearby

recreation destinations in North Lake County. An ongoing program is in place for monitoring of noxious weeds in the allotment and control measures are implemented if weeds are discovered.

Standard IV- Water Quality- Surface and groundwater quality, influenced by agency actions, complies with State water quality standards.

This standard is being met on the Rye Ranch Allotment.

No perennial water or wetlands occur on this allotment.

Standard V- 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 Rye Ranch Allotment.

There have been surveys for several specific Bureau sensitive plant in the allotment based on possible habitats, no plants were found. No sensitive or endangered plant species have been found during surveys completed prior to range improvement projects.

Special status wildlife species or their habitats that are present within the allotment include the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*), peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), burrowing owl (*Speotyto cunicularia*), and pygmy rabbit (*Brachylagus idahoensis*.) There are also four species with high public interest. These are sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*), mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), elk (*Cervus elaphas*) and pronghorn antelope (*Antilocapara americana*).

No nesting habitat exists within the allotment for bald eagle or peregrine falcon. It is suspected that they are occasional visitors to the area. No incidental sightings of peregrines exist within the close proximity of this allotment. Bald eagle foraging may occur within the allotment, however, it is probably restricted to occasional carrion scattered through the allotment. There are no resource conflicts for peregrine falcons or bald eagles.

Habitat is present for ferruginous hawk, burrowing owl and pygmy rabbits, but no known locations exist within the allotment for these species, although occasional sightings do occur within the area. No inventories have been conducted for any of these species within the allotment. There are no resource conflicts for these species.

The allotment is within mule deer winter range. Timing of grazing is such that fall season of use is minimized and impacts to bitterbrush are light. Bitterbrush uses appears to be minimal in most areas. No conflicts exist between mule deer and cattle grazing within this allotment.

Elk also use portions of this allotment during different times of the years. Elk herds within this area are very nomadic and use tends to be sporadic. No conflicts exist between elk and cattle with this allotment.

Pronghorn antelope habitat occurs throughout much of the allotment. Use for this species is probably scattered due to the amount of western juniper in the area. Most use is concentrated in the areas seeded to crested wheatgrass. No major conflicts exist between pronghorn and cattle grazing.

There are no known sage-grouse lek sites within or directly adjacent to the allotment. It is suspect that sage-grouse do us portions of the allotment. Sage-grouse habitats within the allotment contain less than 1% (20 acres) of suitable nesting habitats. Suitable brood rearing habitats make up about 1% (66 acres) and no suitable winter habitats occur. The other 99% (7,400 acres) of the allotment contains areas that are considered non-suitable for sage-grouse. This is primarily due to past cultivation during homestead era, invasive western juniper and old crested wheatgrass seedings. No major conflicts exists between cattle grazing and sage-grouse within this allotment at this time.

Overall, this standard is being met for wildlife species within this allotment. Past use from cultivation, control of wildlife, crested wheatgrass seedings and expansion of western juniper woodlands has made some portions of this allotment unusable for some species of wildlife. It is suspected that these crested wheatgrass seedings will eventually slowly reestablish with sagebrush, although sagebrush may not reestablish on much of the areas that were historically cultivated. Some areas could benefit from restoration efforts. However, it is doubtful that these efforts would be effective on historically cultivated areas.

Team Members

Title

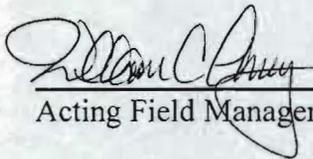
Martina Keil
Lucile Housley
Erin McConnell
Todd Forbes
Alan Munhall
Robert Hopper
Ken Kestner

Rangeland Management Specialist
Botanist
Weed Specialist
Wildlife Biologist
Fisheries Biologist
Supervisory Rangeland Mgt Spec.
Supervisory Natural Resource Spec.

Determination

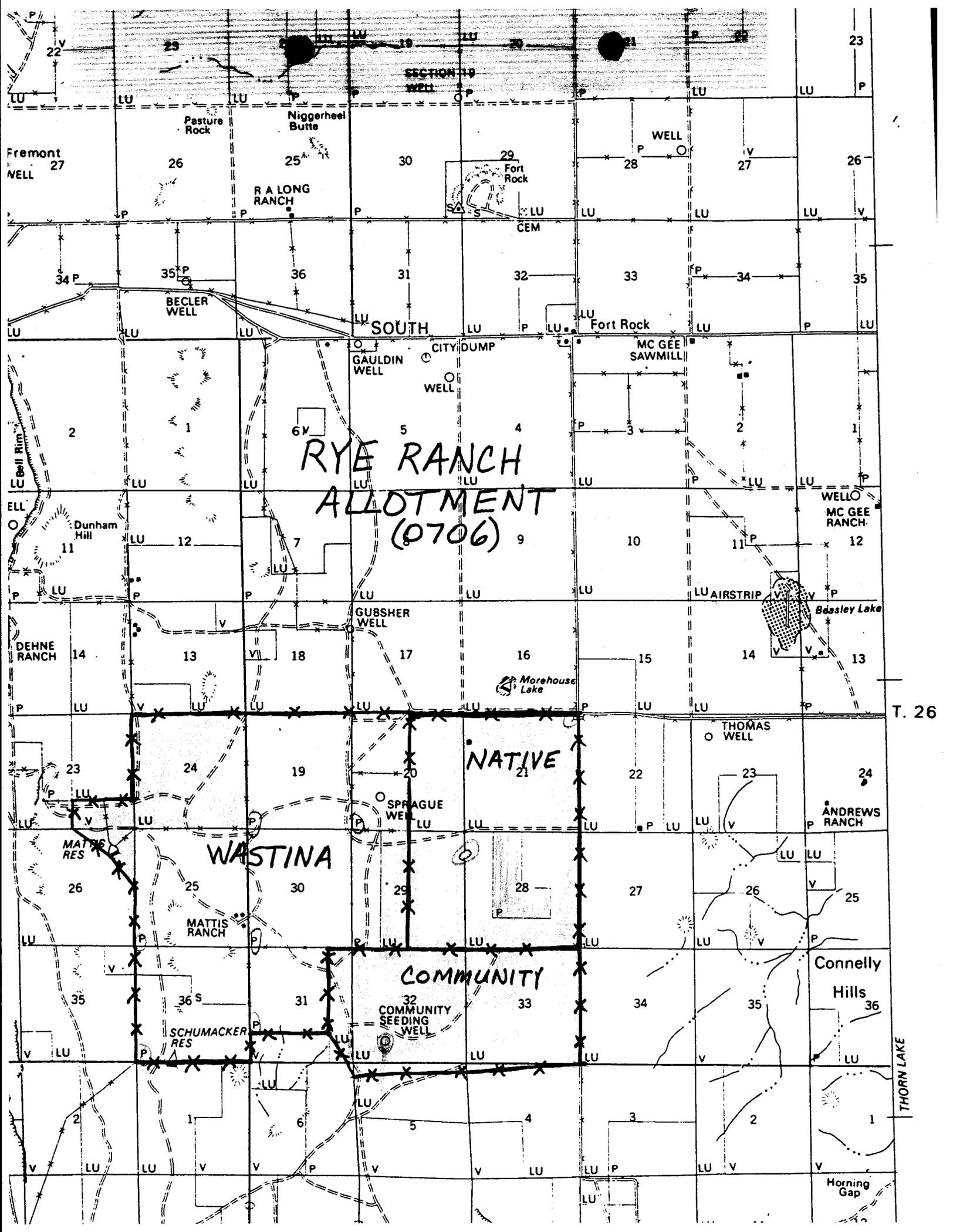
- (X) Existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use on the Rye Ranch Allotment promote achievement of significant progress toward the Oregon Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health and conform with the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management

- () Existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use on the Rye Ranch Allotment will require modification or change prior to the next grazing season to promote achievement of the Oregon Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health and conform with the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management



Acting Field Manager, Lakeview Resource Area

9/27/02
Date



SECTION 10
WELL

Pasture Rock
Niggerheel Butte

Fremont
WELL 27

R A LONG RANCH

Fort Rock

WELL

BECLER
WELL

SOUTH

Fort Rock

CITY DUMP
GAULDIN
WELL

MC GEE
SAWMILL

RYE RANCH
ALLOTMENT
(0706)

WELL
MC GEE
RANCH

GUBSHER
WELL

LU AIRSTRIP

Beasley Lake

DEHNE
RANCH

Morehouse
Lake

T. 26

THOMAS
WELL

NATIVE

ANDREWS
RANCH

WASTINA

MATTIS
RES

SPRAGUE
WELL

MATTIS
RANCH

COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY
SEEDING
WELL

Connelly
Hills

SCHUMACKER
RES

THORN LAKE

Horning
Gap