

Evaluation and Standard and Guidelines Health Assessment

SUMMARY SHEET

Allotment Name: Sheeprock

Date Signed: 7/26/01

RESULTS

1. Carrying Capacity: Estimate is 3624-5447 AUMs expressed as a range of numbers which varies depending on the pastures available for livestock grazing.
2. Livestock Average Actual Use: 16 year average is 2764 AUMs.
3. Exchange of Use: 0 AUMs.
4. Wild Horse Average Actual Use: 864 AUMs.
5. Active Livestock Use: 4000 AUMs.
6. Resource Concerns:
 - Large areas of low producing Wyoming big sagebrush along with much of the burned area from the 1983 Sharptop fire are unstable
 - Serious controversy and conflicts exist with wild horses in the Paisley Desert HMA since the majority of horses are in the Sheeprock allotment
 - Bighorn sheep were introduced in 1990. Forage needs for big horn sheep are 220 AUMs.
 - cheatgrass has invaded much of the area burned in the Sharp Top fire, Mediterranean sage has invaded the same area and is expanding, musk thistle was found in 2000.
 - soils concerns include, hydrologic function, infiltration, and erosion hazard.
7. Standards: Achieved/Not Achieved
 - A. Watershed Function - Uplands **Not Achieved** on 20% of the allotment
 - B. Watershed Function - Riparian/Wetland Areas- **Not Present**
 - C. Ecological Processes- **Not Achieved** on 20% of the allotment, **At Risk** on 33% of the allotment, **Progress Towards Achieving** 47%
 - D. Water Quality- **Not Present, no perennial or intermittent streams.**
 - E. Native, Special Status, and Locally Important Species- **Partially Achieved**
8. Trend: Uplands

Upward	33,964 Acres
Stable/ Static	107,461
Down	2600

9. Grazing Treatments:
Grazing treatments are not meeting resource objectives.
10. Guidelines: Livestock management must be improved to meet the guidelines. Although, historical grazing use is the dominant factor in not meeting guidelines, present grazing is designed to maintain the existing conditions and does not allow for improvement.
11. Monitoring: Monitoring has been adequate but could be improved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Level of Livestock Use: 4000 AUMS at the highest level depending on the grazing rotation with a low level of 2351 AUMs. No change to the active preference of 4000 AUMS.
2. Exchange of Use: 0 AUMS.
3. Wild Horse Use: 936 AUMS. Wildlife Use: 337 AUMS.
4. Changes in grazing treatments:
Improve grazing treatments to provide two years rest and/or grazing use outside the critical season of May1-July 15 after a native pasture is grazed during the critical season. Provide rest one year out of three on crested wheatgrass seedings. Rest Poverty Seeding in 2001. Consider combining several allotments in a rotational grazing system.
5. New monitoring needed: Establish key areas for utilization and trend monitoring studies.
6. Range improvements needed: No range improvements are recommended for livestock management at this time. Restoration of approximately 25,000 acres of poor and fair condition land in this allotment is highly recommended for treatment. The majority of this land is in the east pasture, with smaller areas in the West, South and Red House pastures.
7. Changes in management category: The Sheeprock allotment should remain an I category allotment until the large areas of poor condition rangeland are improved and stabilized.

Team Members

Title

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Allan Munhall	Fishery Biologist
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DETERMINATION FOR RANGELAND HEALTH

Determination

- Existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use on the Sheeprock 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 Sheeprock 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.

Scott R. Florence
Scott R. Florence, Manager
Lakeview Resource Area

7/26/01
Date

ALLOTMENT ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, AND EVALUATION

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

ALLOTMENT NUMBER: 428

ALLOTMENT NAME: Sheeprock

A. Background

The Sheeprock Allotment is located approximately 48 miles northwest of Lakeview, Oregon. It is used by one grazing permittee, JR Simplot Trust.

This allotment contains 144,025 acres of BLM lands and 4460 acres of private land. These are divided into five pastures by a combination of rims and fencing. The private land is in the Red House pasture.

The vegetation types on this allotment are primarily Wyoming big sagebrush/ bunch grass (75%), with some smaller pockets of Black sagebrush, Low sagebrush, Rabbit brush, Greasewood and Spiny Hopsage.

The Sheeprock Allotment supports a moderately complex association of resident migratory, and nomadic populations of large ungulate mammals (California bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope, and mule deer), as well as a fairly typical assemblage of Great Basin small mammal, bird, amphibian and predator species.

There are 5 animal species documented within the allotment for which special status has been assigned by either the State of Oregon or the Federal government. The Northern bald eagle, is jointly listed as Threatened. The kit fox, is listed as Threatened by the state, but has no Federal status. The burrowing owl and the ferruginous hawk are listed both listed as BLM sensitive and the pygmy rabbit is listed as a BLM assessment species. In addition to these species, the grater sage grouse is a species of high public interest and has had management guidelines developed for it's management.

B. Present Situation

1. Permittees and The Total Number of AUMs of Specified Livestock Grazing

Permittee	Active Livestock AUMs	Suspended Nonuse	Total AUMs Specified for Livestock Grazing	Exchange of Use	Total Use
JR Simplot					

Trust	4000	0	4000	0	0
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2. Allotment Category: I

Primary factors determining the category, summarized from the 1982 MIC Rating Form:

- a. Range condition is unsatisfactory, specifically there are large areas of low producing Wyoming big sagebrush, and much of the burned area from the 1983 Sharptop fire is unstable
- b. Forage production potential is moderate to high and present production is low to moderate.
- c. Present management is satisfactory.
- d. Resource use conflicts and controversy may exist. Serious controversy and conflicts exist with wild horses in the Paisley Desert HMA since the majority of horses in the HMA are in the Sheeprock allotment.

3. Area Rank

The Sheeprock Allotment was ranked as #7, of the 25 allotments given a rank, in the former High Desert Resource Area with #1 the highest priority. A resource area wide priority has not been assigned after the High Desert, Warner Lakes and Lost River Resource Areas were combined to form the present Lakeview Resource Area.

4. Major Resource Concerns

Serious controversy and conflicts exist between livestock and wild horses in the Paisley HMA.

Cheatgrass has invaded much of the burned area in the allotment.

Mediterranean sage had invaded 140 acres in various densities, and is spreading. Musk thistle is present in the same area.

Large acreages of poor condition, and unstable land occur in the allotment.

Soil concerns include infiltration rate, severe erosion hazard, and hydrologic function.

Approximately 40 Bighorn sheep were introduced in 1990. 220 AUMs will be allocated in the next planning process.

5. Season of Use:

Season of use is described in planning documents as Spring 4/1-5/15. Permitted and actual use has been Spring/Summer 3/01- 6/15.

6. Land Use Plans Examined

- a. Lakeview Grazing Management Environmental Impact Statement/Resource Management Plan (EIS),1982 as amended 1996.
- b. High Desert Management Framework Plan (MFP),1982
- c. Lakeview Rangeland Program Summary (RPS) Updates 1987-present.

7. Forage Allocations from the Land Use Plan
Note: Final forage allocation for this allotment were published in the 1987 RPS update. Prior to that time, the area was part of the larger Paisley Common Allotment #400.

Livestock	4000
Wildlife	117
Wild Horses	367

8. Decisions/ Agreements.

Adjustments to grazing use in the Sheeprock allotment have been implemented through agreements rather than decisions. When the Lakeview EIS was finalized, the Sheeprock Allotment was part of a large allotment (Paisley Common #400 of 551,620 public acres). Grazing permittees in the Paisley Common Allotment were facing a 16% reduction in active preference. The Lakeview EIS recommended intensive range improvements and grazing systems for the area. Permittees in the Paisley Common Allotment voluntarily reduced grazing use until

range improvements were completed (1983-1986). After the Sharptop Fire of 1983, 42000 acres of rehabilitation seedings and several miles of fence were installed within two years. Between 1986-1992 allotment carrying capacities were tested issuing temporary non-renewable use. Grazing use was allocated in the Paisley Adjudication Agreement 1986, and then revised in the 1992 Adjudication agreement. As a result of the agreement all permittees of the Paisley Common Allotment were given full active preference, and the area was divided into individual allotments.

II. OBJECTIVES

A. Land Use Plan Objectives

1. Provide forage for wildlife by initially allocating AUMs of livestock forage to wildlife and then providing additional AUMs in the long term to meet Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife management objectives.
2. Maintain wild horses in the Paisley Desert HMA by allocating 317 AUMs of livestock forage to wild horses.
3. Reduce erosion by improving range condition. Maintain or improve ecosite condition.
4. Increase long-term vegetation allocation to livestock from the proposed initial allocation by increasing forage production. Improve and sustain the productivity of the rangeland vegetative resource through implementation of a rest rotation grazing system.

B. Allotment Specific Objectives derived from the 1983 & 1986 Paisley Agreement

1. Maintain and/or improve range conditions, while providing 4000 AUMs of livestock forage, 367 AUMs for wild horses, and 117 AUMs for wildlife.

III. GRAZING SYSTEM AND PASTURE USE SUMMARIES

A. Grazing System

There are five pastures in the allotment. A rest rotation grazing system is in place on the pastures with native vegetation in the allotment. Use in the Red House and Poverty Seeding pastures has been early on an annual basis.

B. Pasture Use Summaries

Pasture Use Summaries showing actual use, utilization and climate data are attached. (See Appendix D) Data is summarized as Period of Livestock Use @ AUMs of use x(multiplied by) Utilization level x (multiplied by) yield index = adjusted utilization.

IV. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

A. Inventory and Range Condition

1. Key Species and Target Utilizations by Pasture

Pasture	Acres	Key Species	Utilization Target
East Sheeprock	59,572	Squirreltail, Thurbers needle grass, Needle and thread grass	50%
West Sheeprock	46,360	Squirreltail, Thurbers needle grass, Needle and thread grass	50%
South Sheeprock	15,360	Crested Wheatgrass	60%
Poverty Seeding	10,138	Crested Wheatgrass	60%
Red House	12,595	Crested Wheatgrass	60%
	144,025		

2. Vegetation

An ecological site inventory is nearly complete for this area. The vegetation types on this allotment as summarized from the 1962 range survey are listed in the following table (Table 1). The range survey is accurate as a baseline survey, which was mainly used for initial forage allocations. Vegetation studies at that time did not use the ecological site concept.

The most significant changes to the vegetation types occurred after the Sharptop fire which burned 4,020 acres of rangeland in 1983, mostly in the

Big sagebrush/ squirreltail vegetation type. The burned area is in the South & West pastures of the Sheeprock allotment. 1300 acres of the burn were seeded to crested wheatgrass and annual rye. The other 2720 acres located in the Diablo WSA were untreated.

5371 acres of the Poverty Seeding pasture were sprayed for brush control in 1965 and 5272 acres were seeded to crested wheatgrass.

There have been surveys for several specific Bureau sensitive plants in the allotment, using possible habitats, no plants were found. There have also been surveys for range projects and other surveys, no plants were found. At this point in time, there are no known Bureau sensitive plants found within the allotment.

Table 1. Summary of Vegetation in the Sheeprock Allotment				
Dominate Shrub	Dominate Grass Species	Acreage	% of Shrub Type	% of Acreage in Allotment
Big Sagebrush	All(Total for big sagebrush)	107,338	100%	75%
“ ”	Squirreltail	94,740	88%	66%
“ ”	Bluebunch wheatgrass	6924	6%	5%
“ ”	Creeping wildrye	2224	2%	1%
“ ”	Thurbers needle grass	1698	2%	2%
“ ”	¹ Other	1752	2%	1%
Rabbit brush	Indian ricegrass	9406	100%	7%
Greasewood	Total	727	100%	1%
“ ”	Squirreltail	687	94%	<1%
“ ”	Inland Saltgrass	40	6%	<1%
Shadscale	Squirreltail	7234	100%	5%
² Wildlife		7235	100%	5%
³ Various	Annual dominated	12,076	100%	8%

¹ Other grass species which individually are less than 1% of the acreage with a big sagebrush over story. These grasses include; Sandbergs bluegrass, needle and thread grass, basin wildrye, Indian ricegrass, and Carex species
² Acreage in this column was not defined by vegetation type, instead it was classified as suitable for forage for wildlife only. Some of the areas included are Sheeprock (the land feature), Coghlan hills, Diablo Rim, and areas unsuitable for livestock use which have value for wildlife forage.
³ Shrubs of all types that had annuals, including cheatgrass as the dominant grass species on the site. Shrubs include, big sagebrush, rabbit brush, greasewood, four wing saltbush, and spiny hopsage

3. Range Condition: Range condition and trend in each pasture is summarized in the following table (Table 2).

Table 2. Summary of Range Condition and Trend by Pasture (Number of Acres)							
Pasture	Condition				Trend		
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Up	Down	Stable
East Sheeprock		400	43,993	15,179	19,886		39,686
West Sheeprock		1920	44,440	0	12,278		34,082
South Sheeprock			14,160	1200	1300		14060
Poverty Seeding			9338	800		1100	9038
Red House.			3680	8915	500	1500	10,595
Total	0	2320	11,5611	26,094	33,964	2600	107,461

4. Wild Horse Inventory

There are currently 30 horses in the Sheeprock Allotment after gathering in October of 2000. Inventory for the past 10 years is listed in the following table (Table 3).

Table 3. Wild Horse Numbers in the Sheeprock Allotment of the Paisley HMA									
Year	Horses inside HMA	Horses outside HMA	AUM	Total	Year	Horses inside HMA	Horses outside HMA	Total	AUM
1991	27	0	324	27	1998	53	7	60	720
1992	38	0	456	0	1999	64	12	76	912
1993	32	0	384	32	2000	102	18	120	1440
1994	82	0	984	0					
1995	98	0	1176	0					
1996	89	0	1068	0					
1997	80	12	1104	92	Ave	72			864

B. Studies and Results

8. Actual Use, Utilization and Climate

Actual use, utilization and climate data used to estimate carrying capacity indicate that the active preference for livestock and forage allocations for wildlife and wild horses are within the carrying capacity for the allotment. The carrying capacity is based on a rotational grazing system being in place and followed. Therefore the full 4000 AUMs are available on some, but not all years. Without a grazing rotation, carrying capacity is considerably lower.

See Appendix G for Table of Actual Use, Utilization, Climate and Calculation of Potential Stocking Levels (Carrying Capacity). See Appendix F for the allotment summary.

6. Trend

There are 20 photo trend plots in this allotment. Photos were taken periodically from 1970 to 2000. Additional trend studies include 7 frequency studies and 3 pace transects. Observed apparent trend was recorded on 12 plots.

Range Condition and trend are analyzed using available trend studies including photos, analysis of cover, species composition and frequency, along with professional judgement. See Table of Trends for a Summary of Trend Studies (Table 4). Factors considered in determining condition and trend are listed as follows.

Two plant species most critical in determining range condition are big sagebrush and

squirreltail. Big sagebrush comprises 5-10% of any community in good condition. Condition class is reduced accordingly if sagebrush cover exceeds this percentage. Squirreltail is present throughout the resource area. On good condition rangeland it generally represents 5% of the vegetative community. It is the dominant grass in areas where other grasses on the site have been reduced through grazing pressure (blue bunch wheatgrass, basin wildrye, prairie june grass, and Indian ricegrass for example).

Upward trend can be attributed to several years of grazing use below active preference, grazing of crested wheatgrass seedings, which reduce pressure on native grasses, and the rest rotation grazing system in place.

Downward trend is the result of using an area at the same each year during the critical growing season, or area in deteriorated condition with enough slope for runoff to occur.

Stable or static trend, represents no noticeable change. All poor condition and the majority of the fair condition rangeland is in static condition and indicates areas that will require many years of proper management (30 years), or more realistically, vegetative improvement projects such as brush control, seeding or prescribed fire. Most of these rangelands have deteriorated to a condition with a dominant big sagebrush canopy and little or no grasses, or forbs.

Table 4. Table of Trends, Summary of Trend Monitoring Sites Sheeprock Allotment #428

Trend Site #	Pasture	Resource	Photo Trend	Observed Apparent Trend	Frequency	Pace Transect	Professional Judgement	Comments
ESR1	East	Upland	Stable			Down	Down	increase in bare ground and decrease in vegetative cover
ESR2	East	Upland	Stable					no noticeable change
PS1	Poverty Seeding	Upland	Down				Down	Low vigor of crested wheatgrass, increase in sagebrush
WSR1	West	Upland	Stable	Up	Up		Up	Area of heavy cheatgrass, judged trend upward because a few native perennial grasses are establishing
WSR2	West	Upland	Up		Up		Up	Increase in bluebunch wheatgrass, squirreltail, high vigor of desirable grasses
WSR3	West	Upland	Stable	Stable			Stable	Very little change, a few seedings of Squirreltail and Shadscale establishing. Biotic crusts present.
WSR4	West	Upland	Stable	Up			Stable	Little change, biotic crusts present.
WSR5	West	Upland	Stable	Stable		1 st read 2000	Stable	No change in cover, composition, no deterioration, area used by wild horses
WSR6	West	Upland	Stable	Stable			Down	This area burned in the Sharptop fire & was not treated. Sagebrush and cheatgrass establishing
WSR7	West	Upland	Down	Stable		Static	Static	Static in low seral stage. Area is near water and gets heavy grazing pressure from wild horses and livestock
SSR1	South	Upland	Down	Stable			Static	Static in low seral stage. Area heavily invaded by cheatgrass after the Sharptop fire.
Trend				Observed		Pace	Professional	

Table 4. Table of Trends, Summary of Trend Monitoring Sites Sheeprock Allotment #428

Site #	Pasture	Resource	Photo Trend	Apparent Trend	Frequency	Transect	Judgement	Comments
SSR2	South	Upland	Static		Up		Up	Native perennial grasses establishing in an are dominated by cheatgrass. Cheatgrass invaded after the Sharptop fire
SSR3	South	Upland	Static	Stable			Static	Static in poor condition, few perennial grasses, heavily invaded by cheatgrass after Sharptop fire
SSR4	South	Upland	Up				Up	Area seeded to crested wheatgrass after Sharptop fire, seeding well established.
HB1	East	Stable					Stable	Area seeded to crested wheatgrass after the Sharptop fire. Seeding established and stable
HB2a	East	Static	Static				Static	Area dominated by big sagebrush, lots of bare ground, few perennial grass species, area deteriorated to low seral condition, Static at low seral stage.
HB2b	East	Static	Static				Static	“ ”
HB4	East	Down					Down	Plot in old road bed. Enough slope for runoff and trend is down.
HB5	East	Static	Static				Static	Static in deteriorated condition
RH1	Red House	Stable					Stable	Crested wheatgrass seeding.

7. Soil Surface Factor

The majority of the Sheeprock Allotment (90%) was determined to be in the moderate soil erosion condition class(41-60). Two areas were rated in the Critical erosion condition class(61-80); T.30S., R.21E., Sec. 32(Halfway Buttes area) and T.30S., R.19 E., Sec. 2(Sheeprock reservoir area on border of East Sheeprock and West Sheeprock pastures). One area was rated in stable erosion condition class (the southeast corner of Poverty Seeding). All ratings were prior to the Sharptop fire. Soil surface factor (SSF) rating sheets are attached in Appendix E.

C. Annual Allotment Summaries

See pasture use summaries provided in Appendix D for record of grazing use. A brief summary of notes/observations is recorded in the following table.

Summary of Notes/Observations for the Sheeprock Allotment #428	
Year	Notes/Observations. Also refer to allotment files for field notes and data. The Paisley and Alkali Lake weather stations are used for this allotment.
2000	Extremely dry year. All but four water holes dry. Had several good rains in September and October that filled the water holes. Livestock use below active preference (54%). Wild horses were gathered in October.
1999	11 wild horses outside the herd area in Poverty Seeding. Utilization is moderate. There was no regrowth on grazed plants after cattle were removed because of the dry year

Summary of Notes/Observations for the Sheeprock Allotment #428	
1998	Utilization, and trend data gathered. Aerial census of the Paisley Desert HMA
1997	39% utilization. As usual, slight/light use on west side. Need better water and salt placement to improve distribution, and relieve pressure on the eastside.
1996	Several trend studies completed. Wild horses noted when and were seen. Slight grazing use reported in East Sheeprock, South Sheeprock, and West Sheeprock.
1995	Wild horses gathered in October
1994	Noted location of wild horses. Found broken fence and bent posts near Yankee reservoir. Added frequency study to trend plot SSR2. Aerial census of Paisley Desert HMA.
1992	Cattle drifted back to ZX ranch due to lack of water. Horse location and utilization noted. Red House seeding utilization was 60% 3/31. Checked water holes for clean out.
1991	noted location of wild horses and utilization.

V. EVALUATION OF STANDARDS, OBJECTIVES, AND MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

A. Achieving Rangeland Health Standards

1. Watershed Function - Upland

Standard: Upland soils exhibit infiltration and permeability rates, moisture storage, and stability that are appropriate to soil, climate, and land form

This standard is not being met on 20% of the allotment.

a. Indicators Used

Indicators used to evaluate this standard are Soil Surface Factor (SSF), which documents accelerated erosion, plant community composition, which indicates root capacity of the soil profile. The baseline SSF and existing vegetation monitoring studies, including trend, actual use, utilization and climate data were the basis for this assessment.

Another indicator to consider is the livestock management system. The system was designed to provide two years grazing outside the critical growing season for grasses, in order to establish an upward trend. Early use is intended to provide full plant growth after cattle are removed from the allotment. However, grazing until June 15 has not provided an early use treatment. Therefore the current system is maintaining existing conditions, but not allowing for improved plant health. In most years cattle must be removed by April 30, for spring moisture conditions to provide full plant regrowth. Yearly grazing during May on the seeding pastures has resulted in an increase in big sagebrush, reduced forage production, and a downward trend.

The plant community composition on the majority of the area not meeting the standard, is dominated by a closed canopy of sagebrush with few grass or forb species, it will need restoration through seeding, prescribed fire or brush control to meet the standard.

The following table (Table 5) provides estimates of acreages in each pasture that do not meet the standard and acreages considered at risk.

Table 5. Acres in the Sheeprock Allotment Not Meeting Standard 1			
Pasture	Acres Not Met	Acres at Risk	Total
South Sheeprock	4020	10,040	14,060
Poverty Seeding	800		800
Red House	1500	10,595	12,095
West	5129	5870	10,999
East	18,442	21,244	39,686
Total/ % of Allotment	29,891/ 20%	47,749 / 33%	77,640/ 53%

2. Watershed Function - Riparian/Wetland Areas
Standard: Riparian/Wetland areas are in properly functioning condition

appropriate to soil, climate, and land form.

This standard is not applicable to the Sheepprock Allotment because riparian and wetland areas are not present.

3. Ecological Processes

Standard: Healthy productive, and diverse plant and animal populations and communities appropriate to soil, climate, and land form are supported by ecological processes of nutrient cycling, energy flow, and the hydro logic cycle.

This standard is partially met and partially not met.

- a. Indicators Used include soil stability, vegetative condition and trend, plant and animal communities, as well as monitoring studies in the Sheeprock file.

Plants Approximately 20% of the allotment does not meet the standard through lack of a diverse, healthy, plant community. Another 33% is at risk, or may potentially not meet the standard. The remaining 47% of the allotment is showing significant progress towards meeting this standard. Please refer to Soil Surface factor summary and tables for vegetative community, condition and trend provided in this evaluation, and the table in Standard 1. The basis for the standard not being met, is that large acres of rangeland are in a deteriorated condition with a closed canopy of sagebrush, and few understory species.

Animals The Sheeprock Allotment supports most of the terrestrial animals common to the sagebrush steppe in the Great Basin. The allotment provides habitat for deer, antelope, big horn sheep and sage grouse. The 117 AUMs of livestock forage for deer, and antelope plus the 220 AUMs for big horn sheep, seems adequate to support the current wildlife populations, but may need adjustment in the future.

4. Water Quality

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

This Standard is not applicable to the Sheeprock Allotment, because there are no perennial or intermittent streams that flow on the allotment.

5. Native, Special Status, and Locally Important Species

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

This Standard is partially met

- a. The indicators used are vegetative trend, species composition, and diversity of wildlife species. Photo trend studies show the diversity of vegetation in the allotment. With the exception of cheatgrass invaded sites and closed canopy sagebrush sites, the allotment has a diversity of plant communities which hold adequate litter on the site to provide proper nutrient cycling , hydrologic cycling and energy flow. Reclamation projects would be necessary for this allotment to reach its greatest potential.

B. Objectives from the Lakeview Grazing Management EIS

1. Objective: Provide forage for wildlife by initially allocating AUMs of livestock forage to wildlife and then providing additional AUMs in the long term to meet Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife management objectives.

Analysis: This objective has been met. Future wildlife forage needs will be updated in the new planning process, including forage needs for bighorn sheep

2. Objective: Maintain wild horses in the Paisley Desert HMA by allocating 317 AUMs of livestock forage to wild horses

Analysis: This objective does not allocate forage for wild horses in proportion to the number of animals on the allotment. Most of the horses in the Paisley Desert HMA are in the Sheeprock Allotment. Present forage allocations spread forage needs over five allotments. It is recommended to increase the gathering cycle on this allotment from a four year cycle to a five year cycle, which would increase the forage needs for wild horses. Considering these factors it is recommended to increase the forage allocation on this allotment to 936 AUMs.

3. Objective: Reduce erosion by improving range condition. 1982 RPS objective. Maintain or improve ecosite condition.

Analysis: Range condition is improving on approximately 33,964 acres. The remaining area is in stable or downward trend. When ecological site inventory is complete for this area, ecosite condition can be analyzed.

4. Objective: Increase long term vegetation allocation to livestock from the proposed initial allocation by increasing forage production. Improve and sustain the productivity of the rangeland vegetative resource through implementation of a rest rotation grazing system.

Analysis: Vegetative production has increased after the 1983 Lakeview EIS and productivity maintained. Crested wheatgrass seedings provide most of the increase in forage. Grazing management is maintaining the productivity of the resource. The objective should now be to maintain vegetative production, and improve plant health.

C. Grazing Treatments/System

The grazing treatments are not meeting resource objectives. Yearly use in Poverty seeding is resulting in a downward trend in this pasture. A minimum of one year out of three grazing treatment in the seeding pasture must be outside the critical season of May1-July15, and complete rest is preferred. The rest rotation system on native pastures is maintaining both satisfactory and unsatisfactory conditions. Grazing treatment need adjustment to allow two years outside the critical season of May1-July 15, for each year a native pasture is grazed during the critical season. Two years of rest would also provide beneficial effects to sage grouse habitat.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Objectives that Conform with the Land Use Plan

1. Objective A: Show an upward trend in the native rangelands in the South, East, and West Sheeprock pastures using Squirreltail and Thurbers needle grass as key species. At the same time maintain a stable trend in crested wheatgrass seedings in the South Sheeprock, Red House and Poverty Seeding pastures.

Objective A addresses the resource concern that large acres of rangeland are in poor condition. Grazing treatments designed to provide a stable or upward trend, will also provide for early spring forb, cover and habitat requirement needs of sage grouse.

Carrying capacity for the allotment may be maintained or increased to support livestock, wild horses and wildlife, while meeting other resource objectives, if stable and upward trends are established.

Monitoring studies used to measure this objective will include trend studies designed to measure, cover, species composition, and frequency. Actual use, climate and utilization data will be gathered in all pastures to determine if the level of livestock grazing is consistent with resource objectives.

This objective addresses Standard 1 and Standard 3. Grazing treatments designed to provide an upward trend will provide progress towards meeting these standards.

Management actions needed to address the objective and conform with the guidelines include implementing a rotation grazing system that allows two years of rest or use outside the critical growing season of May1-July 15, for each year native pastures are grazed, and rest at least every third year in crested wheatgrass seedings. Further improvement to degraded rangelands would require vegetation projects such as prescribed burning, reseeding, and or brush control.

2. Objective B: Maintain a viable healthy herd of wild horses from 38-78 horses.

This objective addresses the resource concern to manage horses within the Paisley Desert HMA, and the Rangeland Health Standard 3. Monitoring to measure this objective will include wild horse census, utilization and trend studies. Management actions to achieve objective B will include periodic gathering of the herd to keep a viable healthy herd in balance with other resources.

3. Objective C: Restore 60% of the 29,891 acres of poor condition rangeland to fair condition or better, within 15 years.

This objective addresses the resource concern that large acreages in the allotment

are in poor condition, with high erosion hazard and poor watershed health, and are not meeting Rangeland Health Standards 1 and 3. Monitoring to address this objective will be vegetative trend and photo studies such as frequency, composition, density and cover studies. Management actions needed to achieve this objective are vegetation manipulation projects such as brush beating, seeding, prescribed fire. Seeded species should emphasis native grasses, forbs and shrubs. Livestock grazing strategies and rest from livestock grazing would need to be adjusted if projects are implemented.

Management actions for livestock grazing would be the same as objective A initially, if projects are completed, more rest may be necessary for plant establishment and health.

4. Objective D: Provide a diversity of vegetation and plant communities across the landscape. Including but not limited to plant communities necessary to support threatened and endangered plant and animal species.

This objective addresses the health needs of plants, animals, and watershed including Rangeland Health Standards 1,3,4 & 5. A high degree of diversity benefits in plant communities that sustain wildlife populations, livestock and wild horses. Diversity increases a plant communities resilience to fire and weed invasion and assist in soil stabilization. Monitoring will include vegetative utilization, trend studies.

Management actions to accomplish this objective are to improve livestock grazing strategies which consider the plant needs of grasses, forbs and shrubs. Vegetative restoration projects may be necessary to release forb species. Additional restoration projects described in objective c would improve diversity.

5. Objective E: Improve soil conditions to support improved hydrologic function and improved water holding capacity in the watershed.

This objective addresses resource concerns of low infiltration rate and high erosion potential as well as the desire to improve the water holding capacity of the area as measured by the plant communities ability to hold water. The Rangeland Health Standards addressed are 1, and 3. Monitoring of this objective will include vegetation and soil trend.

6. Objective F: Maintain or improve public rangeland

conditions to provide forage on a sustained yield basis for wildlife including big horn sheep, antelope and mule deer with an initial forage demand of 337 AUMs.

This objective addresses the forage and habitat requirement of big game species. Rangeland Health Standards addressed are 1 and 3. Management actions which address this objective are described in objectives A-E.

7. Objective G: Improve and maintain suitable sage grouse strutting, nesting, brood rearing, and/ or wintering habitat in good condition to the extent possible. Using the following parameters as optimum guidelines.
 - a. Strutting habitats
20-50% canopy cover of nearby loafing areas
 - b. Nesting habitats
Sagebrush height between 16-32 inches
Sagebrush canopy cover between 15-25%
Herbaceous understory 15% grass + 10% forbs
Herbaceous understory height at least 7 inches tall
 - c. Brood rearing habitats
Sagebrush height between 16-32 inches tall.
Sagebrush canopy cover between 10-25%
≥ 40% of the area with: Herbaceous understory 15% grass + 10% forbs

This objective addresses Rangeland Health Standard 5 and the need to protect locally important species. Management actions to reach this objective may include modifications to livestock grazing strategies and stocking levels, as well as vegetation improvement projects such as seeding, brush beating, plowing or prescribed fire.

B. Recommended Level of Use

Permittee	Active Livestock AUMs	Suspended Nonuse	Total AUMs Specified for Livestock Grazing	Exchange of Use	Total Use
JR Simplot	4000	0	4000	0	4000
Total	4000	0	4000	0	4000

C. Interim Management

An improved livestock grazing system can be implemented within the next year without interim management.

D. Categorization

The Sheeprock allotment is recommended to stay an I category allotment until resource concerns are minimized.

- Appendix A: General Location Map and Ownership
- Appendix B: Allotment Map
- Appendix C: Allotment Map (Pastures, acres, key species, target utilization)
- Appendix D: Pasture Use Summaries, Summary Table of Livestock Use
- Appendix E: Soil Surface Factor Rating Sheets
- Appendix F: Allotment Summary Table, Acres, Average Use, Potential Stocking Level
- Appendix G: Carrying Capacity Calculations
- Appendix H: Recommended Grazing System Schematics: Map, Diagram

APPENDIX F: ALLOTMENT SUMMARY

Pasture	Acres	Livestock Average Actual Use	Average Exchange Use	Wild Horse Average Actual Use	Wildlife Average Actual Use	Total Average Use	Estimate PSL	Ac/AUM
South Sheeprock	15,360	298	n/a	none	13	311	794	19
West Sheeprock	46,360	1575	n/a	476	37	2088	2500	18
East Sheeprock	59,572	1559	n/a	176	48	1783	1900	31
Poverty Seeding	10,138	1253		144	8	1405	1493	7
Red house	12,595	232	n/a	0	11	243	330	4
Totals	144,025			796	117		3624- 4517	
<p>Notes and clarifications: Wild horse use in Poverty Seeding is outside the Paisley Desert HMA. All carrying capacity(PSL) are estimates and assume a rotation grazing system meeting plant health needs is followed, grazing two to four pastures each year and resting the others. PSL is expressed as a range and varies each year according to the pastures grazed PSL for the Red house pasture is estimated for the crested wheatgrass seeding only (1320 acres).</p>								