

Rangeland Health Standards Assessment

Allotment #430 South Poverty

Allotment Overview:

Allotment boundaries: refer to attached map.

7.5 Minute Topographic Maps: Poverty Basin South, Biscuit point, Sawed horn, Coleman hills, and Alkali lake.

AUMs of Authorized Use: 4201 AUMs

Permitted Season: 3/01-7/15 and 10/30-2/28

Allotment Category: M

Total acres: 17,050 acres of BLM

Grazing Management:

Although the South Poverty permit has both spring and winter use dates all of the grazing has been in the spring. South Poverty Allotment is divided into 7 pastures. South Poverty is managed under a rest rotation system where at least one different pasture is rested each year. Some years more pastures are rested depending on weather and market influences. Currently 3 pastures have some type of pipeline and watering system while the remaining pastures depend on dirt tanks in playas and water hauling efforts. Plans to expand the current pipeline system are underway and should be installed in 2006 or 2007 to bring water to two additional 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.

Meets Standard.

Indicators used to evaluate this standard are Soil Surface Factor (SSF), which documents erosion class and soil susceptibility to accelerated erosion; and plant community composition, which indicates the root capacity of the soil profile.

Soil Surface Factor is used to determine soil erosion condition. Soil Surface Factors used in the rating process are: soil movement, surface litter, surface rock, pedestalling, flow patterns, rills and gullies. Each factor is allotted points according to erosion conditions and the points totaled. Erosion condition classes are assigned based on a 0-100 scale. The following classes were used:

Erosion condition class	Points
Stable	0-20
Slight	21-40
Moderate	41-60
Critical	61-80
Severe	81-100

Refer to Appendix A (attached) for table summarizing the available Ecological Site Inventory (ESI) data rating the SSF by acre within the allotment.

The second factor used to evaluate Standard one is plant community composition, which indicates root occupancy of the soil profile (Please refer to Standard 5 for a list of native plant species observed on the allotment tour).

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

Meets Standard.

South Poverty contains 85 acres of palustrine and 138 acres of lacustrine habitats. All acres were classified as Proper Functioning Condition in 1998 surveys.

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.

Meets Standard.

The Ecological Site Inventory for South Lake County (ESI 1989; refer to Appendix A for complete summary of ESI data on allotment) indicates that 51% of the allotment is in mid to late seral stage with 17% classified as early seral stage. Thirty two percent of the allotment is seeded to crested wheatgrass and is not defined by seral stage. Observed Apparent Trend indicated that 79% of the allotment is in static or upward trend with 21% rated in downward trend. Of the 21% of the allotment in downward trend (7,466 acres), 49% of these plant communities (3,663 acres) are classified as crested wheatgrass communities which are in good condition. The remaining 51% of the plant communities (3,803 acres) classified in downward trend are primarily native sagebrush communities (Basin big sagebrush and Wyoming big sagebrush communities) that were historically overgrazed during the turn of the century and have been infested with cheatgrass in the understory. These plant communities have remnants of the original native plant communities but until extensive restoration efforts in the form of native reseeding projects occur, these fractured plant communities will continue to operate at a low ecological function and trend is likely to remain the same for some time. The current grazing practices of rest rotation should help maintain the healthy native and non-native plant communities that are present.

Weeds report:

No noxious weeds are known to occur in the allotment. Hoary cress (*Cardaria spp.*) is present in the adjacent 1001 allotment near Poor Jug Well. It is also common in small patches along the main roads in the Paisley Desert area. It is likely that in the future hoary cress may be detected in this allotment. Periodic inventories in this area for noxious

weeds will continue. If detected, weeds will be treated in accordance with the Resource Area Integrated Weed Management Program EA #OR-010-2004-03.

Botanist report:

Part of this allotment was planted in crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron spicatum*), and this year with the spring rains the community looks healthy and vigorous. As one proceeds south through the Allotment from the north, the biodiversity and numbers of forbs and plant species increase. The northeastern part of the Allotment has cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) and a scarcity of forbs under the shrubs. It should be noted that there appears to be quite a bit of death camas (*Zigadenus venenosus*) and larkspur (*Delphiium nuttallianum*), both plants are highly toxic to livestock and horses. However, much of the Allotment has healthy grasses and forbs and is in good condition.

Wildlife report:

Much of the area supports healthy diverse wildlife populations. Wildlife populations within non-native seedings and heavily infested cheatgrass areas 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.

Meets Standard.

South Poverty Allotment does not contain any perennial water, standard does not apply.

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.

Meets Standard.

Botanist report:

This area has been surveyed for Bureau special status plants and no plants were found. At this point in time, there are no known Bureau special status plants found within the allotment. Special Status Plants: **None found, none suspected.**

Plant species present:

Grasses:

Pseudoroegneria spicata (*Agropyron spicatum*)

Poa secunda

Achnatherum hymenoides (*Oryzopsis humenoides*)

Leymus cinereus (*Elymus cinereus*)

Elymus elymoides (*Sitanion jubatum*)

Forbs:

Few are in evidence at this time of year (late fall)

Zigadenus venenosus

Delphinium nuttallianum

Shrubs:

Ericameria nauseosa

Artemisia tridentata wyomingensis

Artemisia arbuscula

Wildlife report:

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*), 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 allotment for the bald eagle. 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 allotment.

Some marginal nesting habitat is available for ferruginous hawks and peregrine falcons on a few cliff faces within and adjacent to the allotment. No surveys have been conducted for ferruginous hawk or peregrine falcon and no incidental sightings exist within the allotment or surrounding area. There are no good foraging areas for peregrine falcons, but there are foraging areas for ferruginous hawk in scattered areas throughout the allotment. There are no resource conflicts for peregrine falcons, ferruginous hawks or bald eagles.

No burrowing owl sightings or nesting burrows have been observed within the allotment, however burrowing owls have been observed at locations adjacent to this allotment. Inventories for burrowing owls were conducted in 2000 and only occasional sighting were documented. There are no resource conflicts for this species.

Some marginal habitat is present for the pygmy rabbit, but no known locations exist within the allotment. No inventories have been conducted for this species within the allotment, however there are occasional sightings within the surrounding area and they are suspected to occur within portions of the allotment. There are no resource conflicts for this species.

Habitat for bighorn sheep occurs on several small rims scattered across the allotment. The exact numbers of bighorns that use the allotment are not known, however it is

suspected that bighorns only use the allotment for a portion of the year or may just pass through the allotment. There is little overlap in range between bighorns and cattle in general because of habitat partitioning. No major conflicts exist between bighorn sheep and cattle grazing within these allotments.

Pronghorn antelope are common in parts of the allotment. Pronghorn use is concentrated in portions of the allotment that have been burned, reseeded or lack heavy shrub cover. No major conflicts exist between pronghorn and cattle grazing within this area.

Mule deer inhabit much of the allotment, but are widely spread and in low numbers. No high concentrations of wintering mule deer inhabit this allotment. No conflicts exist between mule deer and cattle grazing within this allotment. Bitterbrush is not very abundant and sagebrush browse use appears to be somewhat stable at this time.

There are two inactive sage-grouse leks within the allotment. Neither of these lek sites has been active for some time. The status of these three leks was checked from 2002 - 2005 and no birds were observed. The nearest active lek sites are 5-6 miles to the east. Large proportions of the allotment are currently unusable to sage grouse due to grassland conversion from past wildfires, invasive cheatgrass and salt desert scrub. Current sage-grouse habitats within the allotment contain approximately 32% (14370 acres) nesting and early brood rearing habitats. Winter habitats make up an additional 34% (14750 acres). The other 34% (15035 acres) of the allotment contains areas that are considered non-suitable for sage-grouse. This is primarily due to a lack of shrub cover in much of these allotments due to past wildfires, seedings, cheatgrass or salt desert shrub communities. An estimated 56% of the area has the potential to be sage-grouse nesting or brood rearing habitat. Another 26% has the potential to become winter habitats. The other 18% of the area has no potential to become sage-grouse habitat.

In order for sage-grouse habitats within these allotments to improve, a great deal of restoration work and time would be needed to return shrub cover to areas where it was removed by wildfire. Some areas that are now heavy cheatgrass or were seeded to created wheatgrass are slowly returning to sage-grouse nesting habitat once again. It is unclear how these 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 sage-grouse within this allotment at this time.

Overall, this standard is being met for wildlife species within this allotment. The occurrence of old wildfires, cheatgrass and salt desert shrub communities appear to be the limiting factors for sage grouse and most sagebrush wildlife habitats. Efforts to improve this standard should focus on sagebrush restoration of past wildfire and seeded areas. This could be accomplished through intensive restoration efforts with fire, seeding, herbicides or through intensive grazing management. Use of intensive grazing to reduce root competition between crested wheatgrass and native shrubs and grasses can be accomplished successfully, but impacts from invasive species like cheatgrass must be

considered before using this approach. Impacts to soils and potential desirable seed sources available all need to be accounted for.

Team Members

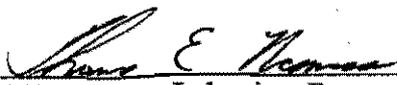
Title

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Determination

Existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use on the #430 South Poverty 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 #430 South Poverty Allotment require modification or change prior to the next grazing season to promote achievement of the Oregon standards and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.



Field Manager, Lakeview Resource Area

1/20/06

Date

Appendix A

Inventory of 1987 ESI Data Allotment # 430

Vegetation Community	Total Acres	% of acres	SSF Acres					OAT Acres			Acres of Vegetative Community in Seral Stage			
			Stable	Slight	Moderate	Critical	Severe	Down	Static	Up	PNC	Late	Mid	Early
AGCR/ Crested wheatgrass	5363	16%		1734	3629			2402	2653	308	n/a			
BRTE/DESCU Cheatgrass/ tansy mustard	501	1%		66	435			21	480					501
ELEL5/ Creeping wildrye	332	1%			332					332			332	
PSSPS/ Bluebunch wheatgrass	180	1%			180					180			180	
ARTR1/ Basin big sagebrush	57	<1%			57			32	25			25		32
ARTR1/BRTE Basin big sagebrush/ cheatgrass	1228	4%		92	1136			1114	93	21			1227	1
ARTR1/ELEL5/ Basin big sagebrush/ creeping wildrye	116	<1%			116				116				116	
ARTR1/FEID Basin big sagebrush/ Idaho fescue	158	<1%		158						158		158		
ARTR1/LETRS	613	2%	108	505					462	151		108	505	
T/STOC4 Basin big sagebrush/ needle and thread grass	229	1%		229						229		229		
ARTR1/PSSPS Basin big sagebrush/ bluebunch wheatgrass	258	1%		255	3					258		3	255	
Total Basin big sagebrush	2659	8%	108	1239	1312			1146	696	817		523	2103	33
ARTRW8/ Wyoming big sagebrush	434	1%		66	368			116	318				434	
ARTRW8/AGCR Wyoming big sagebrush/ crested wheatgrass	293	1%			293					293	n/a			
ARTRW8/BRTE Wyoming big sagebrush/ cheatgrass	2581	7%		51	2530			1128	1453				2356	225
ARTRW8/ELEL5 Wyoming big sagebrush/ squirreltail	6322	18%		979	5343			979	68	5275			6322	
ARTRW8/STCO4 Wyoming big sagebrush/ needle and thread grass	45	<1%	45							45		45		
ARTRW8/STTH2 Wyoming big sagebrush/ Thurber's needlegrass	3943	11%		3552	391					3943		3872	71	
Total Wyoming big sagebrush	13,618	39%	45	4648	8925			2223	1839	9556		3917	9183	225
Vegetation Community	Total Acres	% of acres	Stable	Slight	Moderate	Critical	Severe	Down	Static	Up	PNC	Late	Mid	Early
CHNA2/BRTE/DESCU Gray rabbit brush/ grass/ tansy mustard	218	1%			218			218						218

CHNA2/STCO4 rabbitbrush/ needle seed grass	1080	3%		1080					1080		1080			
Total Gray rabbitbrush	1298	4%		1080	218			218	1080		1080		218	
CHV18/AGCR Green rabbitbrush/ crested wheatgrass	4513	13%		754	3759			16	4497				4513	
CHV18/BRTE Green rabbitbrush/cheatgrass	508	2%		436	72			179	329				508	
CHV18/LETR5 Green rabbitbrush/ creeping wildrye	47	<1%			47			47			47			
CHV18/ORHY Green rabbitbrush/ Indian ricegrass	92	<1%		92					92			92		
Total Green rabbitbrush	5160	15%		1282	3878			195	376	4589		47	5021	
SAVE/AGCR Black greasewood/ crested wheatgrass	5236	14%		5236				1261	594	3381	n/a			
SAVE4/ELEL5 Black greasewood/ creeping wildrye	107	<1%			107				107				107	
SAVE4/LECI4 Black greasewood/ basin wildrye	70	<1%		70				20	50		70			
Total Black greasewood	5413	16%		5306	107			1261	721	3431		70	107	
ation Total	34,524													
Unknown	858													
Totals	35,382		153	15,355	19,016			7466	6765	20,293		5637	11,997	5998
Percentages			1%	44%	55%			21%	20%	59%		*16%	35%	17%
* 32% of this allotment is seeded to crested wheatgrass and is not defined by seral stage														

Legend

- Bureau of Land Management
- Private
- State

 poverty allotment boundary

poverty allotment

N

south poverty

north west

north jug

north east

water haul

south

south jug

0 600 1,200 2,400 3,600 4,800 Meters



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