

**Standards for Rangeland Health
and
Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management
for
Public Lands in Oregon and Washington**

UPDATE for

North Rabbit Hills #531

20 June 2013

The North Rabbit Hills Allotment is comprised of approximately 12,352 acres of which 11,712 acres are BLM-administered lands. This allotment is grazed by three permittees from 1/1-4/15 with a total of 1,317 AUMs. All livestock are run in common and move livestock north to the Northeast Warner Allotment for the summer. This allotment is characterized by stands of crested wheatgrass seedings and has no separated pastures.

The original North Rabbit Hills Allotment Rangeland Health Assessment was conducted in 2003. There are two long-term trend monitoring plots in this allotment.

Summary of Rangeland Health Assessment for North Rabbit Hills Allotment (00531)

Standard	Assessment Findings 2003	Current Assessment 2012	Comments
1. Watershed Function – Uplands	Met	Met	<p>Upland soils exhibit infiltration and permeability rates, moisture storage, and stability that are appropriate to soil, climate, and landform. Available trend data show that plant cover and the amount and distribution of bare ground is within the range of variability expected for the ecological sites found in the allotment.</p> <p>Crested wheatgrass is the most common vegetation type within the allotment with some Wyoming sagebrush. The crested wheatgrass seedings do provide a stable perennial plant community and a significant forage resource for the cattle. Livestock grazing does not appear to be negatively impacting the upland watershed function.</p>
2. Watershed Function Riparian/Wetland Areas	Met	Met	<p>Riparian-wetland areas are in properly functioning physical conditions appropriate to soil, climate, and landform. Livestock grazing does not appear to be a factor limiting Riparian/Wetland function.</p>
3. Ecological Processes	Met	Met	<p>Plant composition and community structure are appropriate for this allotment. The dominant vegetation is crested wheatgrass seeding with some Wyoming sagebrush communities. Annual cheatgrass is abundant within the allotment also. The current practice of grazing in late winter and early spring should reduce some cheatgrass production.</p> <p>Two noxious weed species occur on the allotment Russian knapweed (<i>salsola kali</i>) and spiny cocklebur (<i>xanthium spinosum</i>). Current total weed infestations occupy less than one acre.</p>
4. Water Quality	NA	NA	<p>This standard is not applicable to the assessment area. There are no perennial streams in this allotment.</p>
5. Native, T/E, and Locally Important Species	Met	Met	<p>This standard is being met for native, T&E and locally important wildlife species. The deer and pronghorn populations are healthy and increasing in number within the allotment. Habitat quantity and quality do not appear to be limiting population size or health. The allotment is supporting the current and proposed number of mule deer and pronghorn identified by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife management plans. The allotment also provides habitat for numerous small and nongame birds and mammals common to the Great Basin. There are no known sage grouse leks or identified habitat found within the allotment. The allotment also provides habitat for raptors and some BLM and state sensitive wildlife species and 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, California bighorn sheep, various sensitive bat species or Peregrine falcons. Livestock grazing does not appear to be limiting wildlife habitat within the allotment.</p> <p>No special status plants or locally important plant species found.</p> <p>Existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use promote achievement of these guidelines. This allotment has been and continues to be grazed during the fall and winter. This grazing season enables the grass species to complete their reproductive life cycle each year.</p>

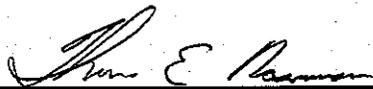
2013 Team Members

Name	Title
Lori Crumley	Rangeland Management Specialist
Vern Stofleth	Wildlife Biologist
Theresa Romasko	Assistant Field Manager
Grace Haskins	Weed Management Specialist
Bill Cannon	Archeologist
Jimmy Leal	Fisheries Biologist
Chris Bishop	Recreation
Todd Forbes	Assistant Field Manager

2013 Determination

Existing grazing management practices of levels of grazing use on North Rabbit Hills 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 North Rabbit Hills 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.



Thomas E. Rasmussen, Field Manager

6/21/13

Date

**North Rabbit Hills Allotment #531
Monitoring Summary (2012):**

The North Rabbit Hills allotment is grazed during the winter and spring (1/1-4/15). The total permitted AUMs is 1,317; each of the three permittees is allowed 439 AUMs. The average actual use over the last 22 years is 1,312 AUMs. Utilization has been mostly moderate and occasionally heavy. The heavy use is typically in the winter and very early spring and plants have recovered with regrowth yearly. This is within the management guidelines for the pasture.

Actual Use and Utilization 1993-2012

Year	NJN Flynn AUMs	Jack Flynn AUMs	Joe Flynn AUMs	Total AUMs	% Utilization
1993		131		131	
1994	404	468		872	52
1995	411	237	443	1091	
1996	379	361	362	1102	54
1997	295	378	384	1057	
1998	453	492		945	
1999	503	424	436	1363	
2000	422	380	381	1183	56
2001	401	453	453	1307	
2002	420	410	462	1292	
2003	470	514	514	1498	41
2004	360	409	401	1170	
2005	373	436	409	1218	29
2006	600	558	436	1594	50
2007	282	296	286	864	58
2008	384	467	388	1239	70
2009	447	409	399	1255	68
2010	420	444	439	1303	60
2011	438	436	448	1322	33
2012	421			421	43
Average	420	521	415	1312	51

Permitted Use

	Joe Flynn	Jack Flynn	NJN Flynn
Total AUMs	439	439	439
Suspended AUMs	0	0	0
Active AUMs	439	439	439
Period of Use	1/1-4/15	2/1-4/15	2/1-4/15
Number of Cattle	249	360	180

Trend monitoring summaries.

RB-01

Percent cover at RB-01

Toe Hit	1985	2008	2011
Bare ground	97	33	15
Litter	0	49	57
Rock	2	0	5
Gravel	0	0	0
Vegetation	1	18	23

Note: In 2008 and 2011, BRTE, tumble mustard, and annual forbs were recorded as litter.

Percent composition of species at RB-01

Species	1985	2008	2011
Crested wheatgrass	18	100	98
larkspur	0	0	2
Cereal Rye	30	0	0
cheatgrass	20	0	0
forbs	32	0	0

Observed apparent trend for RB-01

	2008	2011
Vigor (10)	7	5
Seedlings (10)	4	5
Surface Litter (5)	5	4
Pedestals (5)	5	4
Gullies (5)	5 (N/A)	5 (N/A)
Total (35)	26	23
Category	Upward	Stable

Observed apparent trend and photo trend is upward and stable with healthy crested wheatgrass stands providing abundant vegetative cover and soil stability. Some rabbitbrush and larkspur are present. Cheatgrass and tumble mustard occupy the interspaces.

RB-05

Percent cover at RB-05

Toe Hit	2009	2011
Bare ground	0	13
Litter	28	27
Rock	0	2
Gravel	44	18
Crust	0	7
Vegetation	28	33

Note: some biological crusts were seen

Percent composition of perennial species at RB-05

Species	2009	2011
Crested wheatgrass	100	94
larkspur	0	3
lupine	0	3

Observed apparent trend for RB-05

	2009	2011
Vigor (10)	6	5
Seedlings (10)	5	5
Surface Litter (5)	4	4
Pedestals (5)	5	4
Gullies (5)	5 (N/A)	5 (N/A)
Total (35)	25	23
Category	Stable	Stable

Observed apparent trend and photo trend is stable with healthy crested wheatgrass stands providing abundant vegetative cover and soil stability. Some larkspur are present. Cheatgrass and tumble mustard heavily invest the interspaces.