EVALUATION AND DETERMINATION
Achieving the OR/WA Standards for Rangeland Health
and
Conformance with the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management

Field Office: _Medford_____ Determination Date:__9/23/2008_____
Grazing Allotment Name & Number: _Buck Point #10114_____

Standard 1 Watershed Function – Uplands □ Standard doesn't apply

1 ■ Meeting the Standard	5 □ Not Meeting the Standard, cause not determined
2 □ Not Meeting the Standard, **but making significant progress towards**	
3 □ Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are **not** significant factors (list important causal agents)	6 ■ Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.
4 □ Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are significant factors (list important causal agents)	7 □ Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (list Guidelines No(s) in non-conformance)

Causal Factors for Achievement:
Several factors influence aspects of upland watershed function. Past management practices (livestock use and existing roads) influence nutrient cycling, water capture and retention, and plant productivity.

Rationale for Determination:
Upland sites with bare soil consequent to past disturbance (livestock use, and road construction) show less bare soil and succession towards perennial plant domination. Other sites appear to maintain a bare soil surface because of soil mineralogy. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) describes montmorillonitic soils through much of the region (USDA 1993).

Higher than expected counts of broadleaved weeds occurred within the oak savannah ecological site. This invasion of weeds is not due to the current permitted use, it is most likely caused by past management activities such as road construction and heavy livestock grazing.

A Rangeland Health Assessment was conducted on the allotment at a mixed fir forest and semi-wet meadow ecological site in September of 2007. Looking at indicators pertaining to Soil/Site Stability revealed that all of the indicators (100%) were rated none to slight,

and zero were rated slight to moderate, moderate, moderate to extreme, or an extreme to total departure.

Standard 2 Watershed Function – Riparian/Wetland Areas □ Standard doesn't apply

1 ■ Meeting the Standard	5 □ Not Meeting the Standard, cause not determined
2 □ Not Meeting the Standard, **but making significant progress towards**	
3 □ Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are **not** significant factors	6 ■ Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.
4 □ Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are significant factors	7 □ Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (list Guidelines No(s) in non-conformance)

Causal Factors for Achievement:
Several factors influence the functionality of riparian and wetland areas. Management practices including livestock grazing, timber harvest and road construction contribute to elevated fine sediment levels, lack of riparian shade, elevated water temperatures, loss of connectivity, and aquatic habitat degradation in some locations across the allotment. This allotment meets Standard 2 Watershed Function—Riparian/Wetland Areas because most of the streams are either properly functioning or showing an upward trend. This may be due in part to livestock use levels for the past 20 years well below permitted numbers.

Rationale for Determination:
This allotment is within the Emigrant Creek drainage and includes most of Sampson Creek, the headwaters of Soda Creek, Cattle Creek, Cove Creek, and other Emigrant Creek tributaries. On BLM lands within this allotment there are approximately 3.4 miles of perennial stream, 23 miles of intermittent channels, and 10 miles of dry draws. Most stream segments surveyed in this allotment are in Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) or functioning at risk with an upward trend and show few grazing impacts (BLM Stream Surveys 2007). Approximately 1.5 stream miles were functioning-at-risk downward trend or were non-functional. This same survey found approximately 1.5 miles of headwater streams in Sampson Creek and Soda Creek averaging 32 percent actively eroding banks; however, these conditions were not directly attributable to livestock. Over the last 20 years, actual use in this allotment appears to be well below permitted use levels with only four seasons in the last 20 years (1988, 1989, 2004, and 2006) showing actual use approaching the permitted use levels. This could explain improving conditions along many riparian areas.

Standard 3 Ecological Processes □ Standard doesn't apply

1 □ Meeting the Standard	5 □ Not Meeting the Standard, cause not determined
2 □ Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress towards	
3 ■ Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are not significant factors	6 ■ Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.
4 □ Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are significant factors	7 □ Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (list Guidelines No(s) in non-conformance)

Causal Factors for Non-Achievement:
Historic vegetation manipulation, road construction, and fire suppression negatively influence ecological processes. Soil mineralogy predisposes weed invasion to soils with an abundance of shrink-swell clays. Topographic factors (elevation, slope, aspect) influence ecological processes by how they moderate the environment and influence the dispersion of livestock.

Rationale for Determination:
There is a healthy mix of live and dead/decaying matter on the uplands of this allotment. The forested portion of this allotment supports a diverse mix of forest plant communities, where invasive plant species are generally confined to some road-sides or localized disturbed areas. The indicators assessed suggest energy, nutrient, and hydrologic cycles are balanced and utilization is low enough to not disrupt these cycles. The dry meadows and oak woodland plant communities support a diverse mix of plant species. However, invasive plant species are scattered in patches throughout the majority of the non-conifer areas, particularly annual grasses. Introduction and establishment of exotic annual grasses likely occurred prior to the last two decades and current livestock grazing is not intense enough to contribute to additional conversion of native plant communities to exotic annual grasslands.

Standard 4 Water Quality □ Standard doesn't apply

1 ■ Meeting the Standard	5 □ Not Meeting the Standard, cause not determined
2 □ Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress towards	
3 □ Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are not significant factors	6 ■ Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.
4 □ Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are significant factors	7 □ Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (list Guidelines No(s) in non-conformance)

Causal Factors for Achievement:
Several factors influence water quality in this allotment. Management practices including road construction, timber harvest, and grazing contribute to elevated fine sediment levels, elevated water temperatures, loss of connectivity, and aquatic habitat degradation. This allotment currently meets Standard 4 Water Quality because there are no 303(d) listed streams within the allotment and although there are areas of concern, riparian conditions in general across the allotment appear to be improving.

Rationale for Determination:
Within the Buck Point Allotment, there are no streams listed on DEQs 2004/2006 303 (d) list. However, most streams within the allotment are tributaries to Emigrant Creek, which is listed for summer stream temperature (stream miles 0 to 3.6 and 5.6 to 15.4) and for phosphorus (stream miles 0 to 3.6).

Although there was insufficient data to submit Sampson Creek for listing with DEQ, BLM temperature monitoring data from 1999 at the lower BLM line in Section 24 indicates that Sampson Creek exceeded the summer stream temperature criterion (64° Fahrenheit) by nearly seven degrees Fahrenheit.

Most stream segments on BLM lands in this allotment are in Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) or functioning at risk with an upward trend and show few grazing impacts (BLM Stream Surveys 2007). This same survey found approximately 1.5 miles of streams in Sampson Creek and Soda Creek with 30-80 percent actively eroding banks; however, these conditions were not directly attributable to livestock. In addition, the Upper Bear Creek Watershed Analysis (February 2000, p. 73 & p.80) refers to 1997 ODFW stream survey data indicating a high percentage of fine sediment and a high percentage of actively eroding stream banks. The ODFW 1997 stream survey covered approximately one mile of Sampson Creek below the confluence with East Fork Sampson Creek.

Over the last 20 years, actual use in this allotment appears to be well below permitted use levels with only four seasons in the last 20 years (1988, 1989, 2004, and 2006) showing actual use approaching the permitted use levels. This could explain improving conditions along many riparian areas.

Standard 5 Native, T&E, and Locally Important Species □ Standard doesn't apply

1 □ Meeting the Standard	5 □ Not Meeting the Standard, cause not determined
2 □ Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress towards	
3 ■ Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are not significant factors	6 ■ Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.
4 □ Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are significant factors	7 □ Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Manageme nt (list Guidelines No(s) in non-conformance)

Causal Factors for Non-Achievement:
Several factors influence abundance and distribution of native, T&E, and locally important species in this allotment. Where these influences have had effect, distributions of native, T&E and locally important species have been displaced by medusahead, annual oatgrass and other aggressive, other exotic annual grasses and forbs such as yellow starthistle and Canada thistle. Although these influences include grazing, the slight to light levels of livestock use are not a significant factor in the non-achievement of this standard.

Rationale for Determination:
Current use levels on this allotment are slight-light therefore; special status species are not likely to be adversely affected by the grazing use. Current conditions suggest this action is a No Effect for coho salmon, Coho Critical Habitat (CCH) because there are relatively few impacts from cows and where they occur is at least 4.0 miles upstream of CCH.

No occurrences of *Fritillaria gentneri* or any other federally listed plant species are known on federal lands within the allotment. The two special status plants that occur within this allotment are unpalatable to livestock and either occurs in areas receiving no use by livestock or slight to light use by livestock.

Two noxious weed species; *Centaurea solstitialis* (yellow star thistle), and *Cirsium arvense* (Canada thistle) are known to occur within the allotment. The populations of yellow star thistle occur in section 24,25,26,27, and 35, with large populations (over 2,000 plants) in sections 27 and 35. The small population of Canada thistle occurs along a

road in section 18. In the non-conifer habitats preferred by livestock, medusahead, annual oatgrass and other exotic annual grasses are present in most meadows and dominant in some areas on high shrink-swell clay soils.

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Ashland Resource Area

9/23/08
Date