Results of Assessment/Establishment of Cause

Achieving Standards For Rangeland Health
Conforming with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management

Resource Area: Deschutes

Geographic Area of Assessment: Deep Canyon, between Bend and Sisters, Oregon, in the Upper Deschutes River Watershed (See Map - Appendix)

Allotment Areas Assessed: Desert Springs Allotment (2505)

Period Assessment Conducted: October 1, 2002

Assessment determination: Meets Standards, but concerns about invasive juniper, OHV use and other recreation.

Assessment Benchmark: Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands in Oregon and Washington. Approved August 12, 1997 by the Secretary of the Interior.

Assessment Objectives:

Per USDI/USDA Tech Reference 1734-6 of 2000: Provide preliminary assessment of soil/site stability, hydrologic function, biological integrity. Help land managers identify areas that are potentially at risk for degradation. Provide early warnings of potential problems and opportunities. Provide capability to communicate fundamental ecological concepts to a variety of audiences. Improve communications among interest groups. Provide capability to select monitoring sites for future monitoring programs. Help understand and communicate rangeland health issues.

Per BLM, Oregon State Office IB No. OR-98-315 of 7/24/98: Assess rangeland condition relative to Rangeland Health Standards; determine cause in those cases where standards are not being met; and take action that will result in progress toward standards attainment where these are not being met.

Assessment Preparers

JoAnne Armson, NRT _____ 4/10/03

Rick Demmer, NRS _____ 4/10/03

Cody Vavra, Rangeland Specialist _____

Assessment Approval

for Robert Towne, Field Manager _____

Appendices:

A	Allotment Assessment Findings
B	Maps
C	Plant List
D	List of Lichens and Mosses
E	Wildlife

Appendix A
Allotment Assessment Findings

Notes:

1. This information applies only to BLM-administered lands within the allotment.
2. Where Allotment Monitoring Sites are referenced, information from these sites will include photographs, vegetation data, trend rating forms, cover worksheets, and/or Rangeland Health Evaluation Summary Worksheets (all located in the respective allotment's monitoring files).

Desert Springs Allotment

Public Land Upland Acres: 1947
Public Land Riparian/Wetland Acres: 0
Public Land Stream Miles: 0

I. Standard 1 (Watershed Function - Uplands)

A. Determination

☑ Meeting the Standard
☐ Not Meeting the Standard; Making Significant Progress Toward
☐ Not Meeting the Standard; Not Making Significant Progress Toward Standard
☐ Standard Does Not Apply

B. Establishment of Cause:

☐ Livestock are significantly contributing to the failure to meet the standard
☐ Livestock are not significant contributors to the failure to meet the standard
☐ Failure to meet the standard is related to other uses or conditions: ___on-site ___off-site

C. Rationale/Evidence

This allotment has been in non-use status since late 1980's early 90's. The allotment is on the edge of deer winter range, and increased winter elk use has been observed over the last 5 to 7 years. Ground cover by vascular vegetation and biological soil crust varies from about 40 P0002072.JPG to 80% P0002080.JPG. The most significant damage not yet healed are two burned areas, one on the north and the other on the south end, which occurred in the summer of 2001 P0002078.JPG, P0002079.JPG. Unauthorized livestock were observed in Desert Springs allotment during the fire and the permittee from an adjacent allotment was trespassed. Several roads traverse P0002077.JPG, the allotment, including Jordan Road, which is of historic interest. OHV use is fairly heavy especially during the winter months P0002076.JPG.

Evidence: Photos and lists of vascular vegetation, lichens and mosses.

II. Standard 2 (Watershed Function - Riparian/Wetland Areas)

A. Determination

☑ Meeting the Standard
☐ Not Meeting the Standard; Making Significant Progress Toward
☐ Not Meeting the Standard; Not Making Significant Progress Toward

B. Establishment of Cause:
☐ Livestock are significantly contributing to the failure to meet the standard

☐ Livestock are not significant contributors to the failure to meet the standard
☐ Failure to meet the standard is related to other uses or conditions: ___on-site; __off-site

C. Rationale/Evidence

Draws crossing this allotment show little sign of continuous surface or subsurface presence of water necessary to maintain riparian or wetland vegetation. Draws show much evidence of direct impact by anthropogenic disturbances.

III. Standard 3 (Ecological Processes)

A. Determination

☑ Meeting the Standard
☐ Not Meeting the Standard; Making Significant Progress Toward
☐ Not Meeting the Standard; Not Making Significant Progress Toward
☐ Standard Does Not Apply

B. Establishment of Cause:

☐ Livestock are significantly contributing to the failure to meet the standard
☐ Livestock are not significant contributors to the failure to meet the standard
☐ Failure to meet the standard is related to other uses or conditions: ___on-site; ___off-site

C. Rationale/Evidence

The 1,947 acres of public land on this allotment contain a mosaic of soil types and topographic features, P0002074.JPG, P0002081.JPG. It is apparent that past disturbances were heavy but that the area as a whole is on the mend. Soil loss (outside of the vehicle ruts) at present is minimal. There is some invasion by juniper, cheatgrass and rabbitbrush, but they for the most part are not wholly dominant species.

Evidence:

IV. **Standard 4 (Water Quality)**

A. Determination

☐ Meeting the Standard
☐ Not Meeting the Standard; Making Significant Progress Toward Standard
☐ Not Meeting the Standard; Not Making Significant Progress Toward Standard
☑ Standard Does Not Apply

B. Establishment of Cause (if applicable)

☐ Livestock are significantly contributing to the failure to meet the standard
☐ Livestock are not significant contributors to the failure to meet the standard
☐ Failure to meet the standard is related to other uses or conditions: ___on-site; ___off-site
☑ Not Applicable

C. Rationale/Evidence

Evidence:

V. Standard 5 (Habitat for Native, T&E and Locally Important Species)

A. Determination

- ☑ Meeting the Standard
- ☐ Not Meeting the Standard; Making Significant Progress Toward
- ☐ Not Meeting the Standard; Not Making Significant Progress Toward
- ☐ Standard Does Not Apply

B. Establishment of Cause:

- ☐ Livestock are significantly contributing to the failure to meet the standard
- ☐ Livestock are not significant contributors to the failure to meet the standard
- ☐ Failure to meet the standard is related to other uses or conditions: ___on-site; ___off-site

C. Rationale/Evidence

The health and diversity of bunch grasses and forbs suggest that this upland habitat can support the expected diversity of wildlife.

Peck's milkvetch (*Astragalus peckii*) is endemic to Central Oregon along the east flank of the Cascade Range. Centers of distribution include lands between Bend and Sisters, in Deschutes County. It is known to inhabit the Desert Springs allotment. Typical habitat includes western juniper (*Juniperus occidentalis*) woodlands with big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), antelope bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*), western needlegrass (*Achnatherum occidentalis*) and Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*). Soils in its habitat are loose sands or pumice. The status of Peck's milkvetch is: Federal Species of Concern; Oregon State Threatened; Oregon Natural Heritage Program List 1; BLM Bureau Sensitive.

There is also a known golden eagle in the allotment. A road closure was put in place in the late 1990's to help protect this nest site.

VI. Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management:

- ☑ Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management
- ☐ Does Not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management, Guideline No(s)_____

Appendix B
Maps

Appendix C
Plant List

Desert Springs Allotment
Field Date: October 1, 2002

Achillea millefolium
Agropyron dasystachyum
Alyssum alyssoides
Arabis sp.
Artemisia tridentata
Astragalus peckii
Astragalus purshii
Bromus tectorum
Calochortus macrocarpus
Carex rossii
Chaenactis douglasii
Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus
Cryptantha sp.
Descurainia pinnata
Elymus cinereus
Elymus elymoides
Eriogonum sphaerocephalum
Eriogonum strictum
Eriophyllum lanatum
Festuca idahoensis
Juncus balticus
Juniperus occidentalis
Leptodactylon pungens
Leucocrinum montanum
Lomatium macrocarpum
Lupinus sp.
Machaeranthera shastensis
Navarretia sp.
Nicotiana attenuata
Oryzopsis hymenoides
Penstemon richardsonii
Phlox hoodii
Pinus ponderosa
Poa secunda
Pseudoroegnaria spicata (AGSP)
Purshia tridentata
Ribes cereum
Scutellaria nana
Senecio sp.
Stipa occidentalis
Stipa thurberiana
Townsendia florifer
Tragopogon dubius
Verbascum thapsus
Vulpia octoflora
Zigadenus venenosus

Appendix D
List of Lichens and Mosses

A list of lichens and mosses will be added at a future date.

Appendix E
Wildlife

Mammals (*Signs not seen during the evaluation but probably present within the allotment)
Bushy-tailed woodrat
Northern pocket gopher
Mule deer
Elk
Coyote
Gray fox*
Raccoon*

Birds
Golden Eagle
Red-tailed hawk
Long-eared owl
American kestrel
Prairie falcon
Pinyon jay
Black-billed magpie
Raven
Mountain chickadee
Red-breasted nuthatch
Bushtit
Canyon wren
House wren
Townsend's Solitaire
Yellow-rumped warbler
Calliope hummingbird
Green-tailed towhee
Dark-eyed junco
White-crowned sparrow
House finch
Cassin's finch

Reptiles (*Signs not seen during the evaluation but probably present within the allotment)
Fence lizard
Desert short-horned lizard*
Side-blotched lizard
Northern alligator lizard*
Western skink*
Racer*
Gopher snake*
Striped whipsnake*

Amphibians (*Signs not seen during the evaluation but probably present within the allotment)
Pacific treefrog*