

2006 Evaluation of Summit Spring Allotment (#1072) Relative to Rangeland Health Standards

Assessment Participants (Name & Discipline or Interest):

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I. Area Evaluated

The Summit Spring Allotment (#1072) is located west of Rye Valley, Oregon (see Appendix 1: Map), and it is within the Pedro Mountain Geographic Unit as described in the Baker Resource Management Plan/Record of Decision dated July 1989. It is an allotment consisting of one pasture of 975 acres of public land. The 10-year permit shows 358 active AUMs between the dates of 10/5 and 11/30, but it states that actual use will be made according to the allotment management plan. The allotment management plan for many years has been two years of fall use followed by two years of spring use (April 20 to June 15), and the lack of a spring use period on the ten-year permit was an oversight which needs to be corrected now that ten-year permits have acquired more significance.

II. Data and Information Used in the Evaluation

A. Trend Plots

The only trend information in this allotment is from a photopoint established in 1965, with photos on file in the allotment file in the Baker City office. Photos were taken most recently in 1982 and 2005, and no apparent trend is discernible.

B. Rangeland Health Assessments

Appendix 3 summarizes the results of the rangeland health assessments completed in 2006. Multidisciplinary teams viewed 4 sites on the allotment, assessing 17 rangeland health indicators at each site in accordance with Technical Reference 1734-6, Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health, 2000 (Version 4).

C. Proper Functioning Condition Assessments

Appendix 3 summarizes the results of the PFC assessments completed in 2006, in which 17 indicators were assessed in accordance with Technical Reference 1737-15, A User Guide to Assessing Proper Functioning Condition, 1998.

D. Native, T & E, and Locally Important Species Habitat Ratings

These are habitat ratings for Standard 5 that were done with each rangeland health assessment. Indicators used were:

1. Presence or absence of T & E species or species of concern

What Was Used to Evaluate the Status of this Standard: Rangeland health assessments, using the attribute of Biotic Integrity, plus plant species changes determined from trend plots.

Determination for Standard 3:

Standard Met X Standard Not Met Standard Not Present
Livestock not a significant factor
Livestock a significant factor

Biotic Integrity was rated none-to-slight departure from expected levels at one site, and slight-to-moderate at the other.

D. Standard 4 - Water Quality

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

What Was Used to Evaluate the Status of this Standard: Professional judgment based mainly on the observations from the proper functioning condition assessments.

Determination for Standard 4:

Standard Met X Standard Not Met Standard Not Present
Livestock not a significant factor
Livestock a significant factor

Remarks on PFC forms did not show obvious problems affecting water quality, and there is a lack of water quality data in this area.

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.

What Was Used to Evaluate the Status of this Standard: Native, T & E and locally important species habitat ratings done with each rangeland health assessment, plus sagebrush canopy cover estimates.

Determination for Standard 5:

Standard Met X Standard Not Met Standard Not Present
Livestock not a significant factor
Livestock a significant factor

Weed species on loafing sites and some invasion by young juniper were noted, but habitats were generally adequate for native species. There were no species of T & E importance identified as a concern.

Conformance with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management

Management is not in conformance with guidelines to promote livestock distribution, encourage a uniform level of proper grazing use, and avoid unwanted or damaging concentrations of livestock in riparian areas.

Recommendations

1. Require maintenance of all water developments to assist in better distribution of cattle grazing. Fully functioning spring developments would help draw cattle away from Shirttail Creek riparian zones. Turnout should not be allowed until all projects are maintained.
2. Change the dates on the 10-year permit to cover alternating spring and fall use dates.

IV. Appendices

Appendix 1: Map

Appendix 2: Summary of Rangeland Health Evaluations

Appendix 3: Summary of Proper Functioning Condition Assessments

Appendix 4: Actual Use and Utilization Table