

## EA & FONSI/DECISION RECORD

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NUMBER: # OR-035-05-05

**BLM Office:** Vale District, Baker Resource Area

**Proposed Action:** Issue new grazing permits in the Burnt River Geographic Unit, modifying these permits to help meet Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.

**Location of Proposed Action:** Burnt River Geographic Unit as described in the Baker Resource Management Plan/Record of Decision dated July 1989.

**Applicants (Grazing Permittees):** There are eight permittees that have authorized grazing permits in the Burnt River Geographic Unit.

**Conformance With Applicable Land Use Plan:**

This proposed action is subject to the following land use plan:

**Name of Plan:** Baker Resource Management Plan **Date Approved:** 7/12/89

This plan has been reviewed to determine that the proposed action conforms to the land use plan as required by 43 CFR 1610.5. This environmental assessment is tiered to the Baker RMP and incorporates by reference the information and analysis contained in the RMP. The Baker Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision was signed July 1989 and is the land use plan for public lands affected by the alternatives identified in this environmental analysis. The proposed action and all alternatives except No Action are in conformance with this plan.

The land use plan objectives for this geographic unit which are pertinent are listed below (See ROD pages 59-62).

- Vegetation (ROD, page 59): Manage upland grass-shrub vegetation to achieve a mid-seral stage plant community. Maintain or enhance the condition of riparian habitat on Burnt River and its perennial tributaries. Maintain or enhance trout habitat on Burnt River and selected tributaries.
- Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat (ROD, page 61): Meet forage requirements for big game as recommended by ODF&W. Maintain/improve habitat for bighorn sheep and turkey populations. Maintain/improve habitat for fisheries.
- Cultural Resources (ROD, page 62): Protect and preserve cultural resources for their information potential and public values.

**General Setting:** The North Bridgeport Allotment (#11302), pastures #1 and #2, the South Bridgeport Allotment (#11301), the Pine Creek Allotment (#01329), the Durkee Allotment (#01004), and the Cave Creek Allotment (#01003) are located between Durkee, Oregon and Bridgeport, Oregon (see Map, Appendix A).

**Remarks:** The Rangeland Health Standards and Guides assessment field work in the above allotments (the Burnt River Geographic Unit) was completed on these BLM lands in 2003 and 2004.

**Purpose and Need for Proposed Action:** The Determinations and Recommendations for these allotments identified certain rangeland health standards that are still not being met (see below) and livestock grazing is a significant factor contributing to that situation. Thus there is a need for existing grazing management to be modified in order to make progress toward meeting all standards.

**Analysis and Findings-Rangeland Health Assessments-Summary Table:**

**Standards that are not being met due to current livestock grazing are labeled with an asterisk (\*)**

<b>Allotment Number - Pasture Name</b>	<b>Standard 1- watershed function, uplands</b>	<b>Standard 2- watershed function, riparian</b>	<b>Standard 3- ecological processes</b>	<b>Standard 4- water quality</b>	<b>Standard 5- native, T&amp;E, or locally important species</b>
<b>11302-Deer Creek S.</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met *</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met*</b>	<b>Met</b>
<b>11302-French Gulch</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met *</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met*</b>	<b>Met</b>
<b>11302-Dark Canyon</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met *</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met *</b>	<b>Met</b>
<b>11302-Ebell Creek</b>	<b>Not Assessed</b>				
<b>11302-Deer Creek N.</b>	<b>Not Assessed</b>				
<b>11302-Blue Springs</b>	<b>Not Assessed</b>				
<b>11301-Burnt River</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met *</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met</b>
<b>11301-Gravelly Cove</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met</b>
<b>11301-Rooster Comb</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met *</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met</b>
<b>11301-Brush Spray</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met</b>
<b>11301-Marble Creek</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met</b>
<b>01004-Seeding</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met*</b>	<b>Not Met</b>	<b>Not Met*</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
<b>01004-East</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>	<b>Met</b>
<b>01004-West</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Present</b>	<b>Met</b>
<b>01003-East</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met*</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met*</b>	<b>Met</b>
<b>01003-West</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met*</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met*</b>	<b>Met</b>

All the data and other indicators used to evaluate status of the standards and analyze information to make the above decisions can be found in the completed field forms and are summarized in this EA; more detail can also be found in the Allotment Evaluations and the Determination and Recommendations documents which are incorporated by reference as a part of this EA. See Appendix for complete Determinations and Recommendations documents.

Standards shown above as not being met due to current livestock grazing are:

Standard 2: Riparian/wetland areas are in properly functioning condition appropriate to soil, climate, and landform.

Standard 4: Surface water and ground water quality, influenced by agency actions, complies with state water quality standards.

The proposed action is to address these resource issues with modifications to the grazing permits either in livestock numbers or grazing time, with some proposals becoming the new terms and conditions of the grazing permits.

## Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

### Proposed Management Actions Common to All Alternatives:

- To achieve better livestock distribution, require maintenance of fences, springs and reservoir developments on a yearly basis; permits stipulate that turnout can be denied if required maintenance has not been completed. Maintenance must stay within the existing disturbed area. Any deviation from this must be reviewed by the cultural resource specialist. Require that salting areas always be at least 300 feet away from water, and preferably over ¼ mile from water. Require more frequent riding to keep livestock scattered better and removing all livestock when moving into another pasture.
- Historically, frequent low-intensity fire helped maintain an open landscape across the Burnt River GU, killing juniper seedlings and saplings and thereby minimizing the spread of juniper and limiting the density of existing juniper stands (Gedney, 1999). Although there is no current formal assessment of juniper stand densities, it is clear that there has been an increase of young to mature western juniper, possibly due to a lack of wildfire, historic grazing, and/or climatic changes. After assessments are made of historical and current stand conditions in the Burnt River GU, future management of juniper stands and rangelands would emphasize reduction of juniper stocking to historic levels, particularly where juniper is encroaching into Douglas-fir stands and rangelands. Juniper treatments would likely consist of hand-cutting juniper trees and/or using prescribed fire, while retaining all old junipers on rocky ridges and outcrops. Cut trees may be used in riparian restoration, or may be sold as special forest products. Other disposal options would include piling and burning, burning individual standing trees, or resting treatment areas until native bunchgrass recovery bolsters ground vegetation enough to allow broadcast burning through the downed trees. All prescribed burns in juniper stands and rangelands would be planned in coordination with forest health slash burning and applicable grazing rotations, and would comply with smoke management guidelines. Treatment areas not specifically mentioned in this EA will be analyzed in a site-specific EA.
- Under all alternatives, cultural resource surveys will be completed prior to implementation of surface disturbing range projects and vegetation treatments. **All fences, projects or treatments not specifically named in this EA will be analyzed in a site-specific EA.**
- Avoidance measures (for example fencing or grazing system adjustments) and project location adjustments would be implemented to avoid impacts to cultural resources. Riparian exclosures that contribute to the protection of cultural resources would be maintained.

## Proposed Monitoring Common to All Alternatives

Monitor the grazing changes to see if utilization standards are being met or if not will the carrying capacity need to be adjusted again to make sure the utilization level is met. Monitoring livestock grazing will be done to ensure management objectives for upland and riparian systems are met or moving towards these conditions that will allow for restoration of these desired conditions, prevent any degradation of these systems and improve the overall conditions of riparian and aquatic habitat. This requires grazing systems that will meet proper carrying capacities for these designated areas. Utilization monitoring for herbaceous and shrub species is accomplished at key use sites at pre-season, mid-season and the end of the grazing season using the key forage plant method when livestock grazing is occurring. Utilization Monitoring Thresholds based on results from the Section 7 consultation process will be used to monitor grazing allotments. Thresholds for upland herbaceous vegetation use will be 50%; riparian herbaceous vegetation use will be 45%; and browse/shrubs use will be 30%. During the mid-season grazing period, if utilization indicates that the standard is close to being achieved, the permittee will take appropriate and necessary action to prevent the standard from being exceeded. This type of action may include moving livestock from the pasture or allotment, shortening the season of use, more riding to move livestock for better distribution, or constructing fencing to exclude livestock from the areas of concern.

Cultural resource sites in the allotments would be monitored. If monitoring identifies disturbance due to livestock congregation, the cultural resources would be avoided and mitigated by exclusion of livestock (for example, through riparian fencing) and/or by adjustments to the grazing system.

### A. No Grazing Alternative:

Under this alternative, the pastures identified above as not meeting standards due to livestock management would be rested for three full growing seasons before grazing use is resumed as described below under “Proposed Action”. These pastures would be:

Deer Creek South, French Gulch, and Dark Canyon in North Bridgeport Allotment #11302  
Burnt River and Rooster Comb in South Bridgeport Allotment #11301  
Seeding and East in Durkee #1004, East and West in Cave Creek #1003

### B. No Action Alternative (Continue Existing Management):

Under this alternative, the grazing permits would be reissued without modification. They would be for a period of 10 years, except when base property leases are less than 10 years the BLM permits would coincide with the terms of the base property leases.

#### 1. Durkee Allotment #1004

The current authorized livestock use in the Durkee Allotment is:

63 cattle	4/16 to 10/31	413 AUMs
32 cattle	4/16 to 10/31	210 AUMs
34 cattle	4/16 to 10/31	225 AUMs
29 cattle	4/16 to 10/31	184 AUMs

(In addition to the above public land use, there are exchange-of-use agreements for intermingled private lands, in the amounts of 133 AUMs, 13 AUMs, and 52 AUMs for a total of 198 AUMs, to be used within the dates above).

Current Grazing Plan in Durkee Allotment (1971 Allotment Management Plan):

TURNOUT DATE & PASTURE MOVE DATES

2006, 2007, 2009

PASTURE	4/16-5/15	5/16-7/15	7/16-10/31	Livestock #	AUMs
SEEDING	////////////////////			188	185
EAST		////////////////////		188	377
WEST			////////////////////	188	668

2005, 2008

PASTURE	4/16-5/31	6/1-9/30	10/1-10/31	Livestock #	AUMs
SEEDING	////////////////////			188	284
EAST			////////////////////	188	192
WEST		////////////////////		188	754

**2. Cave Creek Allotment #1003**

The current authorized livestock use in the Cave Creek Allotment is:

119 cattle	4/20 to 7/15, 9/16 to 11/30	638 AUMs
28 cattle	4/20 to 7/15, 9/16 to 11/30	152 AUMs

In addition to the above public land use, there is an exchange-of-use agreement for 161 AUMs, to be used within the dates above.

Current Grazing Plan in Cave Creek Allotment:

TURNOUT DATE & PASTURE MOVE DATES

2004,2005

PASTURE	4/20-7/15	7/16-9/15	9/16-11/30	Livestock #	AUMs
WEST		OFF	////////////////////	177	442
EAST	////////////////////	OFF		177	506

2006,2007

PASTURE	4/20-7/15	7/16-9/15	9/16-11/30	Livestock#	AUMs
EAST		OFF	////////////////////	177	442
WEST	////////////////////	OFF		177	506

**3. North Bridgeport Allotment #11302**

The current authorized livestock use in the North Bridgeport Allotment is:

33 cattle	5/16 to 9/30	1600 AUMs
340 cattle	5/16 to 9/30	156 AUMs

YEARS

2004, 2007, 2010

TURNOUT DATE & PASTURE MOVE DATES

PASTURES	5/16-6/03	6/03-7/03	7/03-7/30	7/30-8/24	8/24-9/14	9/14-9/30	Livestock #	AUMs
FRENCH GULCH	////////////////////						340+33	213+21
DEER CREEK SOUTH		////////////////////					340+33	347+34
DARK CANYON			////////////////////				340+33	313+30
EBELL CREEK				////////////////////			340+33	291+28
DEER CREEK NORTH					////////////////////		340+33	246+24
BLUE SPRINGS						////////////////////	340+33	190+19
	18 Days	30 Days	27 Days	25 Days	21 Days	16 Days		1756 AUMs

YEARS

2005, 2008, 2011

TURNOUT DATE & PASTURE MOVE DATES

PASTURES	5/16-6/15	6/15-7/03	7/03-7/30	7/30-8/20	8/20-9/05	9/05-9/30	Livestock#	AUMs
DEER CREEK SOUTH	//////////						340+33	347+34
FRENCH GULCH		//////////					340+33	213+21
DARK CANYON			//////////				340+33	313+30
DEER CREEK NORTH				//////////			340+33	246+24
BLUE SPRINGS					//////////		340+33	190+19
EBELL CREEK						//////////	340+33	291+28
	30 Days	18 Days	27 Days	21 Days	16 Days	25 Days		1756 AUMs

YEARS

2006, 2009, 2012

TURNOUT DATE & PASTURE MOVE DATES

PASTURES	5/16-6/03	6/03-7/03	7/03-7/30	7/30-8/16	8/16-9/10	9/10-9/30	Livestock#	AUMs
FRENCH GULCH	//////////						340+33	313+30
DEER CREEK SOUTH		//////////					340+33	347+34
DARK CANYON			//////////				340+33	213+21
BLUE SPRINGS				//////////			340+33	291+28
EBELLCREEK					//////////		340+33	246+24
DEER CREEK NORTH						//////////	340+33	190+19
	18 Days	30 Days	27 Days	16 Days	25 Days	21 Days		1756 AUMs

////////// = GRAZING PERIOD

(In addition to the above public land use, there is an exchange-of-use agreement for 40 AUMs, to be used within the dates above).

**4. South Bridgeport Allotment # 11301**

The current authorized livestock use in the South Bridgeport Allotment is:

100 cattle	5/17 to 6/01	56 AUMs
450 cattle	6/01 to 7/31	903 AUMs
350 cattle	7/31 to 9/15	553 AUMs
100 cattle	7/31 to 9/15	158 AUMs

YEARS

2003, 2005, 2007, 2009

TURNOUT DATE & PASTURE MOVE DATES

PASTURES	5/17-6/01	6/01-7/31	7/31-9/15	7/31-9/15	LIVESTOCK #	AUMs
GRAVELLY COVE	//////////				50	28
MARBLE CREEK	//////////				50	28
BURNT RIVER		//////////			450	903
ROOSTER COMB			//////////		350	553
BRUSH SPRAY				//////////	100	158
	15 Days	60 Days	45 Days	45 Days		1670 AUMs

YEARS

2004, 2006, 2008, 2010

TURNOUT DATE & PASTURE MOVE DATES

PASTURES	5/17-6/01	6/01-7/31	7/31-9/15	7/31-9/15	LIVESTOCK #	AUMs
GRAVELLY COVE	//////////				50	28
MARBLE CREEK	//////////				50	28
ROOSTER COMB		//////////			450	903
BURNT RIVER			//////////		350	553
BRUSH SPRAY				//////////	100	158
	15 Days	60 Days	45 Days	45 Days		1670 AUMs

////////// = GRAZING PERIOD

## 5. Pine Creek Allotment #01329

The Pine Creek allotment consists of approximately 2000 acres of which 360 fragmented acres are publicly owned (based on GIS data information). The Baker RMP identifies it as a C-category or Custodial allotment. It is difficult for BLM to manage isolated parcels intermingled with private land, especially when the BLM does not have any control over the private ground, but it is necessary to address this allotment relative to Rangeland Health Standards. Resource issues would only be accomplished if done on both private and public land. An overview of the public land indicates some minor concerns with plant vigor, but not with plant composition. This allotment has no defined grazing schedule (the permittee gets billed for 52 AUM's for use of the public acres) and is used at any time as long as abuse to the public land does not occur; rangeland health is not an issue at this time.

### C. Description of Proposed Action

The proposed action is to issue grazing permits to the current permittees, but with modifications. The grazing permits would be for a period of 10 years, except when base property leases are less than 10 years the BLM permits would coincide with the terms of the base property leases.

#### 1. Durkee Allotment #1004

In Durkee Allotment, the proposed action is to issue grazing permits with terms and conditions as follows:

63 cattle	4/16 to 10/31	413 AUMs
32 cattle	4/16 to 10/31	210 AUMs
34 cattle	4/16 to 10/31	225 AUMs
29 cattle	4/16 to 10/31	184 AUMs

(In addition to the above public land use, there will continue to be exchange-of-use agreements for intermingled private lands, in the amounts of 133 AUMs, 13 AUMs, and 52 AUMs for total of 198 AUMs, to be used within the dates above).

Changes to grazing management in Durkee Allotment would include:

- 1) Use will be made in accordance with the grazing plan (see diagram below).
- 2) Use of the Seeding Pasture will be no more than one month in springtime, to allow regrowth after grazing and recovery of riparian vegetation.
- 3) Utilization (average of all key areas, in East and West pastures) threshold is 50% (when deferred until seed-ripe, 55% utilization is allowable).
- 4) Two growing seasons rest will be required after burning in juniper treatment areas (Woods Gulch Fuels Reduction Project, which was addressed in Categorical Exclusion OR-035-05-07).
- 5) The Durkee Drift Fence between East and West pastures is proposed to be realigned to achieve better cattle distribution around Rocky Flat Well and Upper McElroy Waterhole, resulting in lower overall utilization rates, and eventually resulting in being able to defer the West Pasture until after seed-ripe (July 15). This fence, if built, would be analyzed in a site-specific EA.
- 6) Juniper trees in the riparian zone, within 40 feet of the creek (Woods Gulch) within the Seeding Pasture and Kirby Spring area would be felled and dropped in or adjacent to the stream channel to allow protection of stream banks and seedlings, to capture sediment, and to improve water flow.. Selected trees with roots that contribute to stabilizing vulnerable spots in the stream banks would be left uncut. The length of creek that would be so treated is about 0.8 mile. Where fuel loadings are excessive and wildfire would cause excessive resource damage, felled juniper trees may be jackpot burned. Such burning would reduce fuel loads to an acceptable level while maintaining adequate numbers of felled trees to provide stream bank protection.

7) If the average utilization at key management areas (uplands) in the West Pasture exceeds 55% by the end of the grazing season, the next year's period of use in the allotment will be changed to be two weeks shorter (with an equivalent reduction in AUMs of livestock use for that year), and this will continue each year until the utilization stabilizes at 55% or less. For the East Pasture in years when it is grazed in spring, the objective will be for average utilization at the key upland management areas to be 50% at the time cattle are removed. If this objective is not achieved, the next spring period of use will be changed to end one week earlier (with an equivalent reduction in AUMs of livestock use for that year), and this will continue each year until the utilization stabilizes at or below the target levels. Over a period of 3-5 years, the utilization data will also be used to adjust the grazing preference, if necessary, to better match the carrying capacity. Frequent riding to distribute cattle is expected to be necessary to keep from exceeding the target utilization at the key areas.

Proposed New Grazing Plan for Durkee Allotment:

TURNOUT DATE & PASTURE MOVE DATES

2007, 2009, 2010

PASTURE	4/16-5/15	5/16-6/30	7/1-10/31	Livestock #	AUMs
SEEDING	////////////////////			188	185
EAST		////////////////////		188	284
WEST			////////////////////////////////////	188	760

2008, 2011

PASTURE	4/16-5/15	5/16-5/31	6/1-9/7	9/8-10/31	Livestock #	AUMs
SEEDING	////////////////////				188	185
EAST		////////////////////		////////////////////////////////////	188	433
WEST			////////////////////////////////////		188	612

**2. Cave Creek Allotment #1003**

In Cave Creek Allotment, the proposed action is to issue grazing permits with terms and conditions as follows:

123 cattle	4/20 to 7/10, 9/16 to 11/30	637 AUMs
29 cattle	4/20 to 7/10, 9/16 to 11/30	152 AUMs

In addition to the above public land use, the exchange-of-use agreement will be set at 104 AUMs, down from 161 AUMs at present, a reduction of 35%, to be used within the dates above. The reason for this reduction is that at least 35% of the private land offered for exchange of use is unusable by cattle due to steepness of slope and distance from water. Also, Baxter Spring, BLM Project #0414, which is located on this exchange-of-use land, is currently classified as a project failure and has not been maintained for many years. The old exchange-of-use agreement was based on a range carrying capacity of 4.8 acres per AUM applied to all the private land in the allotment, no matter how steep.

Changes to grazing management in Cave Creek Allotment would include:

1) Until juniper control measures are completed (see #3 below), the West Pasture will be used in spring instead of fall, so as to allow more rapid riparian improvement of Cave Creek and its tributaries. The rationale is that the fall use in riparian zones in this pasture has been more detrimental than spring use because it depletes the streamside vegetation at the end of the growing season, leaving little protection prior to spring runoff, and also results in more browse use. After juniper control, there will be dead juniper trees protecting most of the creek from grazing, and the fall use will be more acceptable. For two years following juniper control, the West Pasture will be used in fall. The final grazing plan will provide for periodic deferment of grazing in each pasture, in accordance with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management. The grazing plan is diagrammed below.

2) If the average utilization at key management areas (uplands) exceeds 55% by the end of the fall grazing season, the next fall period of use will be changed to be two weeks shorter (with an equivalent reduction in AUMs of livestock use for that year), and this will continue each year until the utilization stabilizes at 55% or less. For the spring use pasture, the objectives will be for average utilization at the key upland management areas to be 50% at the time cattle are removed, and in riparian zones to be 45% on herbaceous species and 30% on browse species by the end of the growing season (measurement of riparian utilization will be at the end of the growing season, after regrowth has occurred). If these objectives are not achieved, the next spring period of use will be changed to end one week earlier (with an equivalent reduction in AUMs of livestock use for that year), and this will continue each year until the utilization stabilizes at or below the target levels. Over a period of 3-5 years, the utilization data will also be used to adjust the grazing preference, if necessary, to better match the carrying capacity. Frequent riding to distribute cattle is expected to be necessary to keep from exceeding the target utilization at the key areas.

3) Juniper trees within areas identified for juniper cutting (about 0.8 mile along Cave Creek and Reagan Creek drainages) would be felled. Many would be dropped in or adjacent to the stream channels to allow protection of stream banks and seedlings, to capture sediment, to reduce competition with aspen or cottonwoods, and to improve water flow. Selected trees with roots that contribute to stabilizing vulnerable spots in the stream banks would be left uncut. Following felling of juniper, each area will be evaluated concerning fuel loadings and adequate stream bank protection. Where fuel loadings are excessive and wildfire would cause excessive resource damage, felled juniper trees may be jackpot burned. Such burning would reduce fuel loads to an acceptable level while maintaining adequate numbers of felled trees to provide stream bank protection. If burning for fuel reduction is determined to be necessary, it would be limited so as to not require complete rest from grazing. Grazing on the West Pasture would be deferred until fall for at least two years after the cut to enhance seed production and establishment of desirable species. The East Pasture would be grazed in spring during the years the West Pasture is deferred for fall use.

**Proposed Grazing Plan for Cave Creek Allotment**

**Before juniper control:**

2007, 2008 ?                      TURNOUT DATE & PASTURE MOVE DATES

PASTURE	4/20-4/30	5/1-7/10	7/10-9/15	9/16-11/30	Livestock #	AUMs
WEST		////////////////////	OFF		172	402
EAST	////////////////////		OFF	////////////////////	172	490

Above dates subject to change based on utilization percentages at key areas.

**After juniper control:**

2009, 2010                      TURNOUT DATE & PASTURE MOVE DATES

PASTURE	4/20-7/10	7/10-9/15	9/16-11/30.	Livestock #	AUMs
WEST		OFF	////////////////////	172	429
EAST	////////////////////	OFF		172	464

Above dates subject to change based on utilization percentages at key areas.

### 3. North Bridgeport Allotment #11302

In North Bridgeport Allotment, the proposed action is to change the permittees' grazing permits to authorize the following grazing:

30 cattle	5/16 to 9/22	1348 AUMs
300 cattle	5/16 to 9/22	136 AUMs

#### Proposed New Grazing Plan for North Bridgeport Allotment

YEARS

2008, 2011

##### TURNOUT DATE & PASTURE MOVE DATES

PASTURES	5/15-6/09	6/09-7/04	7/04-7/19	7/19-8/13	8/13-8/28	8/28-9/22	Livestock #	Aums
DEER CREEK SOUTH	//////////						300+30	257+26
FRENCH GULCH		//////////					300+30	257+26
DARK CANYON			//////////				300+30	160+16
EBELL CREEK				//////////			300+30	257+26
DEER CREEK NORTH					//////////		300+30	160+16
BLUE SPRINGS						//////////	300+30	257+26
	25 Days	25 Days	15 Days	25 Days	15 Days	25 Days		1484 Aums

Above dates subject to change based on utilization percentages at key areas.

YEARS

2009, 2012

##### TURNOUT DATE & PASTURE MOVE DATES

PASTURES	5/15-6/09	6/09-7/04	7/04-7/29	7/29-8/13	8/13-9/07	9/07-9/22	Livestock #	Aums
FRENCH GULCH	//////////						300+30	257+26
DEER CREEK SOUTH		//////////					300+30	257+26
BLUE SPRINGS			//////////				300+30	257+26
DEER CREEK NORTH				//////////			300+30	160+16
EBELL CREEK					//////////		300+30	257+26
DARK CANYON						//////////	300+30	160+16
	25 Days	25 Days	25 Days	15 Days	25 Days	15 Days		1484 Aums

Above dates subject to change based on utilization percentages at key areas.

////////// = GRAZING PERIOD

Standard and Guide findings indicated that the majority of resource issues and concerns were within the riparian areas and not the uplands. Adjusting livestock numbers and grazing time should allow movement towards a more accurate carrying capacity for the acres that are actually grazed by livestock.

Changes to grazing management in North Bridgeport Allotment would include:

- 1) Use will be made in accordance with the grazing plan (see diagram above), which reduces use from 1756 AUMs to 1484 AUMs (15% reduction). This was started in 2004 with a reduction from 340 head to 320 head. Continued reductions, if over 10%, would be phased in over a 5 year period in accordance with 43 CFR 4110.3-3(a).
- 2) Thresholds for upland herbaceous vegetation use will be 50%; riparian herbaceous vegetation use will be 45%; and browse/shrubs use will be 30%. During the mid-season grazing period, if utilization indicates that the standard is close to being achieved, the permittee will take appropriate and necessary action to prevent the standard from being exceeded. This type of action may include moving livestock from the pasture or allotment, shortening the season of use, more riding to move livestock for better distribution, or perhaps constructing fencing to exclude livestock from the areas of concern.

#### 4. South Bridgeport Allotment #11301

In South Bridgeport Allotment, the proposed action is to change the permittees' grazing permit to authorize the following grazing:

100 cattle	5/17 to 6/01	56 AUMs
350 cattle	6/01 to 7/16	529 AUMs
350 cattle	7/16 to 8/15	255 AUMs
100 cattle	7/16 to 8/15	102 AUMs

#### Proposed New Grazing Plan for South Bridgeport Allotment

YEARS

2007

#### TURNOUT DATE & PASTURE MOVE DATES

PASTURES	5/17-6/01	6/01-7/16	7/16-8/15	7/16-8/15	LIVESTOCK #	Aums
GRAVELLY COVE	//////////				50	28
MARBLE CREEK	//////////				50	28
BURNT RIVER		//////////			350	529
ROOSTER COMB			//////////		250	255
BRUSH SPRAY				//////////	100	102
	15 Days	45 Days	30 Days	30 Days		942 Aums

Above dates subject to change based on utilization percentages at key areas.

YEARS

2008

#### TURNOUT DATE & PASTURE MOVE DATES

PASTURES	5/17-6/01	6/01-7/16	7/16-8/15	7/16-8/15	LIVESTOCK #	Aums
GRAVELLY COVE	//////////				50	28
MARBLE CREEK	//////////				50	28
ROOSTER COMB		//////////			450	529
BURNT RIVER			//////////		350	255
BRUSH SPRAY				//////////	100	102
	15 Days	45 Days	30 Days	30 Days		942 Aums

Above dates subject to change based on utilization percentages at key areas.

////////// = GRAZING PERIOD

Standard and Guides findings indicated that the majority of resource issues and concerns were within the riparian areas and not the uplands. Adjusting livestock numbers and grazing time should allow movement towards a more accurate carrying capacity for the acres that are actually grazed by livestock. The above reductions in grazing time and livestock numbers could be on a temporary basis depending on installation of temporary or permanent fences to reduce livestock use on the riparian areas, as to enhance their recovery process and to help to meet the proper utilization thresholds.

Changes to grazing management in South Bridgeport Allotment would include:

- 1) Use will be made in accordance with the grazing plan (see diagram above), which reduces use from 1670 AUMs to 1195 AUMs (30% reduction) from 1195 AUMs to 942 AUMs. This was started in 2004 with a reduction of one month and the next year from 450 head to 350 head. Continued reductions, if over 10%, would be phased in over a 5 year period in accordance with 43 CFR 4110.3-3(a).
- 2) Thresholds for upland herbaceous vegetation use will be 50%; riparian herbaceous vegetation use will be 45%; and browse/shrubs use will be 30%. During the mid-season grazing period, if utilization indicates that the standard is close to being achieved, the permittee will take appropriate actions to prevent the standard from being exceeded. This may include moving livestock from the pasture or allotment, shortening the season of use, more riding to move livestock for better distribution, or perhaps constructing fencing to exclude livestock from the areas of concern.

**Proposed Management Actions for North and South Bridgeport Allotments:**

- Inventory pastures for possible new water developments and fencing to help achieve resource goals.
- Adjust grazing system, livestock numbers and time to meet utilization standards on riparian areas (45% on riparian herbaceous plants and 30% on riparian shrub component). Continue to monitor.
- Restore ecosystems that exhibit poor plant diversity and plant vigor to move towards DRFC (desired range future condition). This can be accomplished by removal, burning or control of these species, such as annuals, shrubs, junipers and other forest species and reseed with native grass species where needed.
- Enlarge and maintain Cottonwood Spring riparian enclosure to enhance resident aspen stand. This improvement will require an inventory by the cultural resource specialist before expansion of the enclosure can occur.
- Install new fence to make upper Cave Creek a separate use area. Build small enclosure around Rooster Comb Spring area for protection. This improvement will require an inventory by the cultural resource specialist before projects can be completed.
- Monitor the riparian areas to determine how much use is occurring by wildlife each year.
- Monitor the Campbell mining occupancy rehabilitation project to ensure success of seeding and stabilization measures.
- Ensure that the mining operations are not contributing to resource degradation.
- Maintain the Deer Creek riparian enclosure fence.

<b>Environmental Effects:</b>					
<b>Critical Element</b>	<b>Affected</b>		<b>Critical Element</b>	<b>Affected</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Air Quality		X	T & E Animals		X
ACECs		X	T & E Fish		X
Cultural Resources	X		T & E Plants		X
Energy Resources		X	Tribal Concerns & Treaty Rights		X
Environmental Justice		X	Wastes, Hazardous/Solid		X
Farmlands, Prime/Unique		X	Water Quality, Drinking/Ground	X	
Floodplains		X	Wetlands/Riparian Zones	X	
Migratory Birds		X	Wild & Scenic Rivers		X
Social/Economic	X		Wilderness		X

**Description of Effects, No Grazing Alternative:** Social/Economic: This alternative would result in the greatest economic impact to the permittees' ranching operations. Some of them would have to reduce their cattle operations, and some would have to find and pay for alternative grazing areas during the three years the BLM pastures are being rested. In either case, incomes would be reduced. Wetlands/Riparian Zones: Three years of no grazing in the pastures identified would allow increased regeneration of riparian vegetation, resulting in more plants which provide bank cover, stream bank stability and shading. Water Quality: Increased vegetative cover, lack of bank trampling, and more shading by woody vegetation would result in lower water temperatures and better water quality. Cultural Resources: Project surveys and measures designed to avoid impacts to sites would protect cultural resources. Dispersed livestock grazing has negligible effect on cultural resources. Increased regeneration of riparian vegetation, improved stream bank stability, maintenance of riparian fencing, increased plant cover, and meeting rangeland health standards would reduce the potential for disturbance or erosion, which would contribute to site stability and protection of cultural resources.

**Description of Effects, No Action Alternative:** Social/Economic: This alternative would result in the least economic disruption to the permittees' ranching operations. Wetlands/Riparian Zones and Water quality probably will continue to fail to meet standards for rangeland health. Cultural Resources: Project surveys and measures designed to avoid impacts to sites would protect cultural resources. Dispersed livestock grazing has negligible effect on cultural resources.

**Description of Effects, Proposed Action:** Social/Economic: The proposed action would result in economic effects to the permittees' ranching operations in the form of reduced numbers of cattle or increased costs for alternative grazing areas. Wetlands/Riparian Zones: Lessened amounts of livestock use in riparian zones, or springtime use in riparian zones allowing summer and fall regrowth, would result in increased bank cover and increased stream bank stability. Juniper trees growing along the Woods Gulch riparian zone and the Cave Creek riparian zone will be cut down with chainsaws and dropped on the ground or in the creeks where they will be left to decompose naturally. In removing junipers along Woods Gulch and Cave Creek, the unnatural amounts of juniper in these drainages will be diminished to more natural levels and aspen, willow, and sedges will be allowed to come back. The dead juniper logs and branches will stabilize the creeks, lessening erosion, and will also protect young seedlings of desirable plants from grazing and trampling. One anticipated effect of removing this swath of junipers is an improved flow of water in the drainages. Water Quality: Increased vegetative cover, less bank trampling, and more shading by woody vegetation would result in lower water temperatures and better water quality.

Cultural Resources: Project surveys and measures designed to avoid impacts to sites would protect cultural resources. Dispersed livestock grazing has negligible to no effect on cultural resources. Reducing livestock use in riparian zones, maintenance of riparian fencing, improved stream bank stability, increased vegetative cover, and meeting rangeland health standards would stabilize soils and reduce the potential for disturbance or erosion, which would contribute to the protection of cultural resources.

#### **Cumulative Effects Analysis of the Alternatives:**

Cumulative effects are the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions.

Historical grazing and mining have had a negative impact in most of the area. Several changes in livestock grazing have already been implemented to address resource issues previously identified through monitoring, and with these grazing changes rangeland health has improved over historical conditions. Riparian fence work has already been completed on the Burnt River, Clarks Creek and Deer Creek to reduce some if not most of the livestock grazing on these three streams.

**Cumulative Effects, No Grazing Alternative:** The cumulative effects of the no grazing alternative would include riparian zone recovery, increased bank cover, better streambank stability, and more shading of streams by woody vegetation. The cumulative effects on ranching operations would consist of further cutbacks on livestock use, which combined with others over the years, increasingly make the ranching business untenable.

**Cumulative Effects, No Action Alternative:** To reissue the grazing permits without modification would cause cumulative effects in the continuance of grazing practices that have slowed riparian zone recovery and been detrimental to water quality.

**Cumulative Effects, Proposed Action:** Lessened amounts of livestock use in riparian zones, or springtime use in riparian zones allowing summer and fall regrowth, would result in increased bank cover and increased streambank stability. Increased vegetative cover, less bank trampling, and more shading by woody vegetation would result in lower water temperatures and better water quality. Removal of juniper along 0.8 mile of riparian zones would result in less than 20 acres of juniper removal added to less than 1000 acres of treatment under the Woods Gulch Fuel Reduction Project between 2005 and 2008. The Durkee Allotment alone has over 10,000 acres, and Cave Creek Allotment has over 5,000 acres, so the cumulative acres of juniper treatments would involve less than 7% of the acreage in these allotments. Cumulative effects on the ranching operations would again involve some cutbacks in livestock use on top of other restrictions over the years.

**Appendices**

- Appendix A: Burnt River Geographic Unit Map
- Appendix B: Durkee Allotment Map with Determination/Recommendations Document
- Appendix C: Cave Creek Allotment Map with Determination/Recommendations Document
- Appendix D: North Bridgeport Allotment Map with Determination/Recommendations
- Appendix E: South Bridgeport Allotment Map with Determination/Recommendations

**Persons/Agencies Consulted:** Grazing Permittees

**Literature Cited**

Gedney, et al 1999. Western Juniper in Eastern Oregon. USDA Forest Service General Technical Report , Portland, Oregon. 53 p.

USDI-BLM. 1989. Baker Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision. U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Vale District, Oregon. 1 v.

**Preparers:** Craig Martell and Gary Guymon

**Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist concurrence:** \_\_\_\_\_

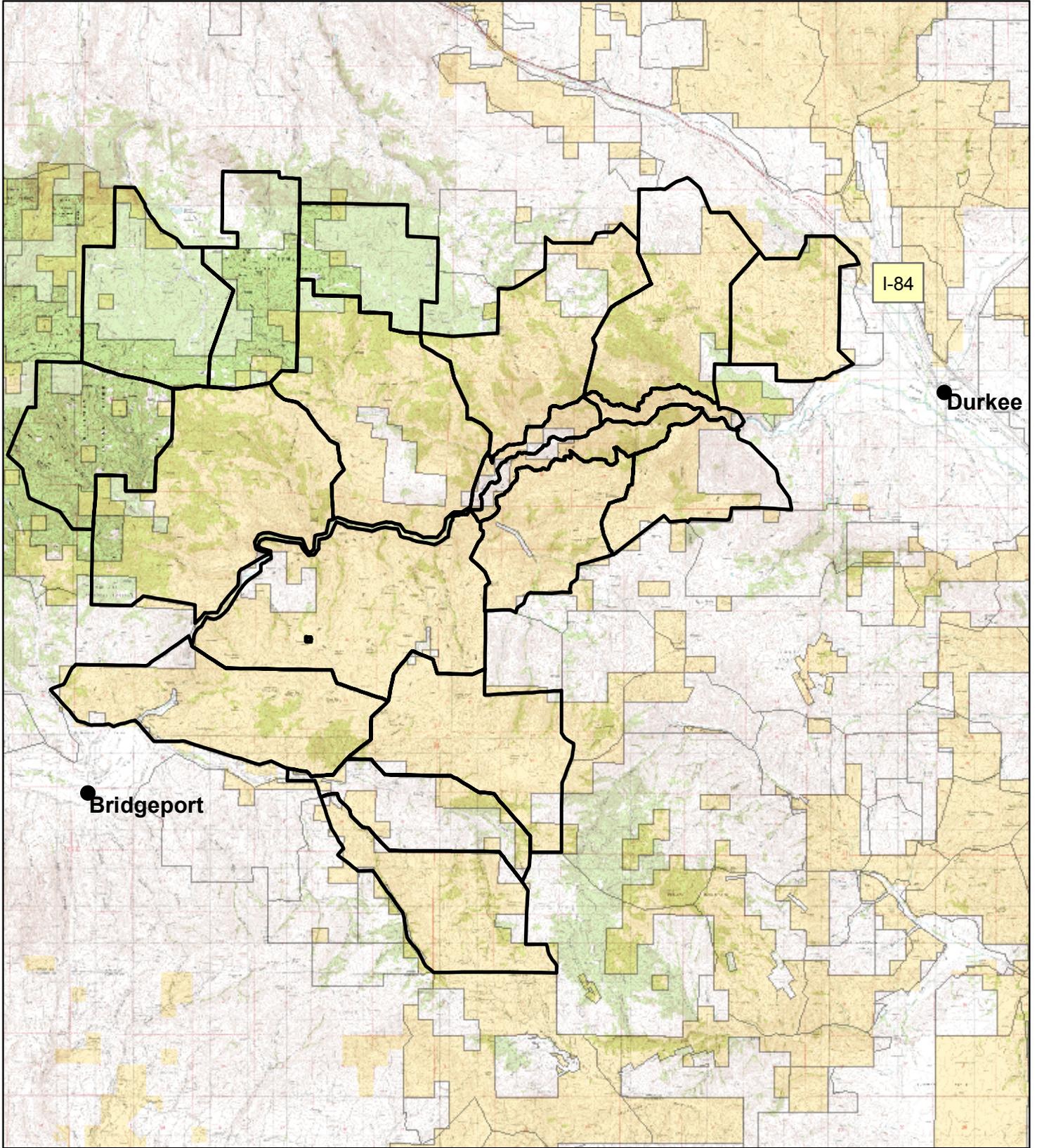
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**Baker Field Manager concurrence:** \_\_\_\_\_

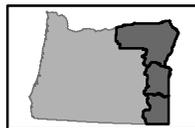
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# Appendix A: BURNT RIVER GU MAP



1:138,354

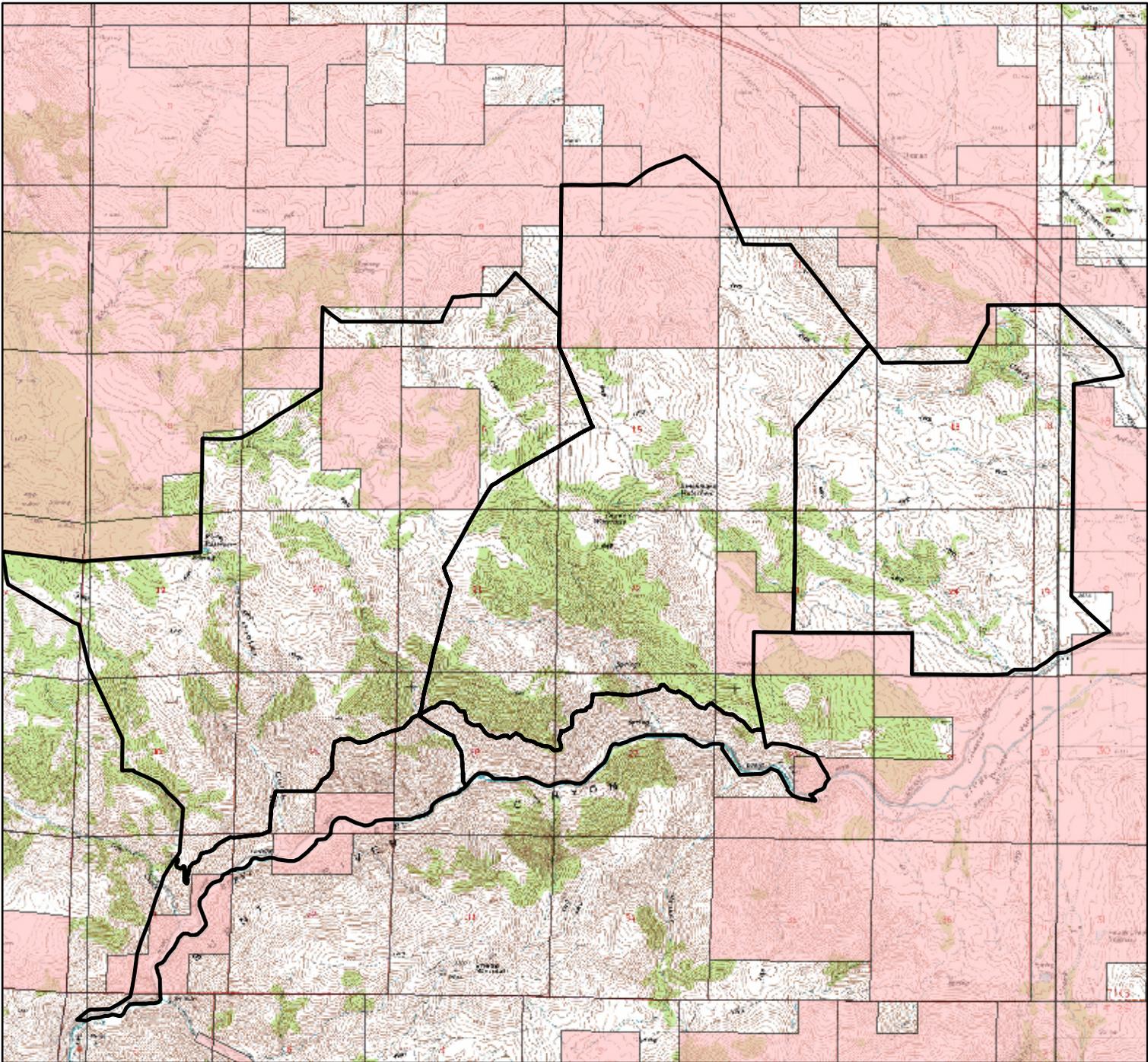


No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources. This information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This product was developed through digital means and may be updated without notification.

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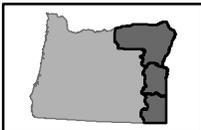
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County Road	Forest Service
BLM	Private
FS	State
Primitive or Unknown Road Condition	
Pasture/Allotment Boundaries	
<b>Baker RA Streams</b>	
<all other values>	
<b>HYDFLOW</b>	
Perennial	
Intermittent or Seasonal	
Ditches & Pipelines	
Unknown	

# Appendix B: Durkee Allotment



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 0.050 0.100 Miles

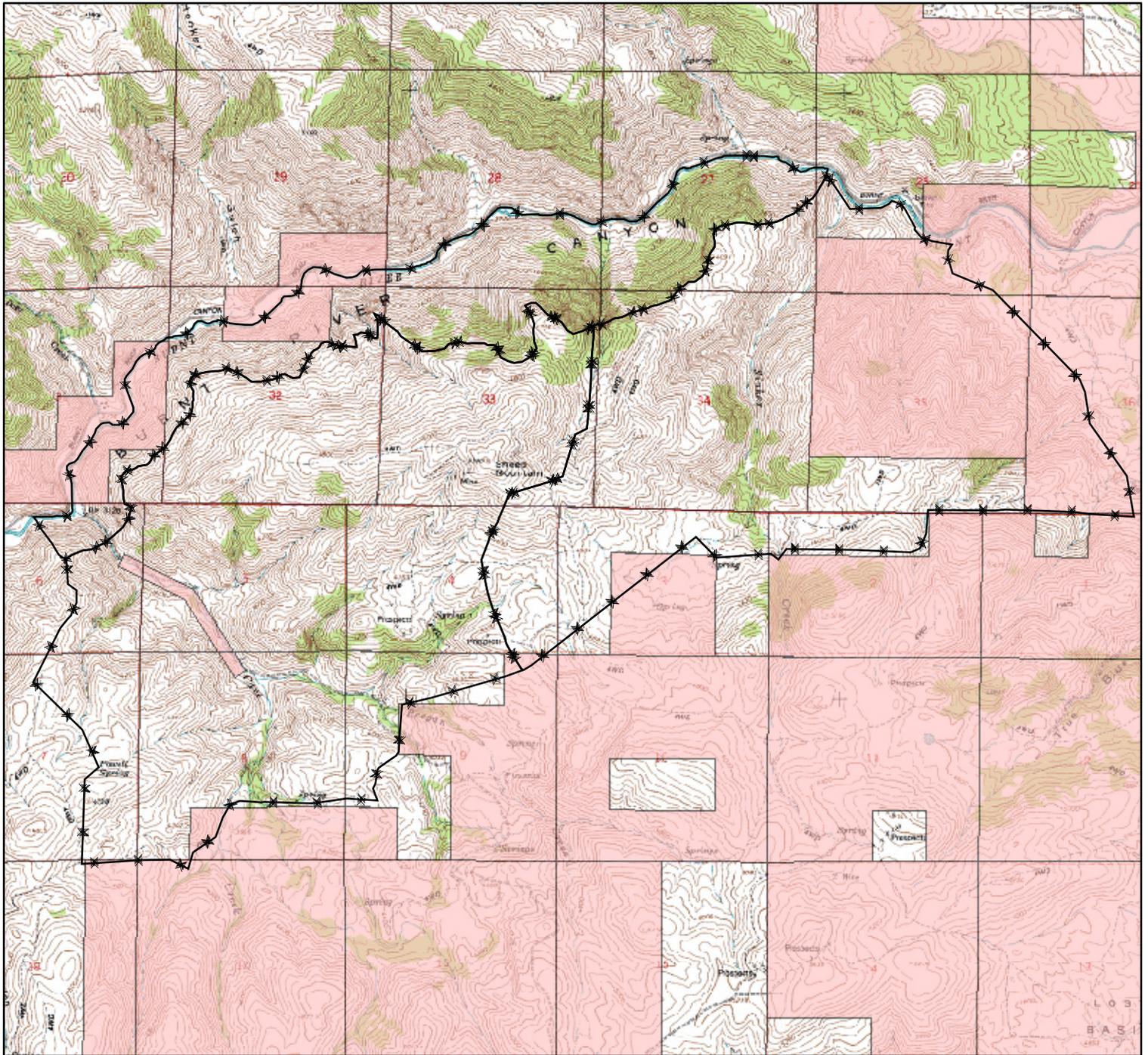
No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources. This information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This product was developed through digital means and may be updated without notification.



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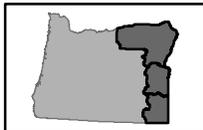
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Cities	County Road	Bureau of Reclamation
Places	BLM	Forest Service
Pasture/Allotment Boundaries	FS	Private
-all other values-	Primitive or Unknown Road Condition	State
Perennial		Fish and Wildlife
Intermittent or Seasonal		Federal Indian Affairs
Ditches & Pipelines		Federal Aviation Administration
Unknown		US Department of Defense
		Undetermined

# Appendix C: Cave Creek Allotment



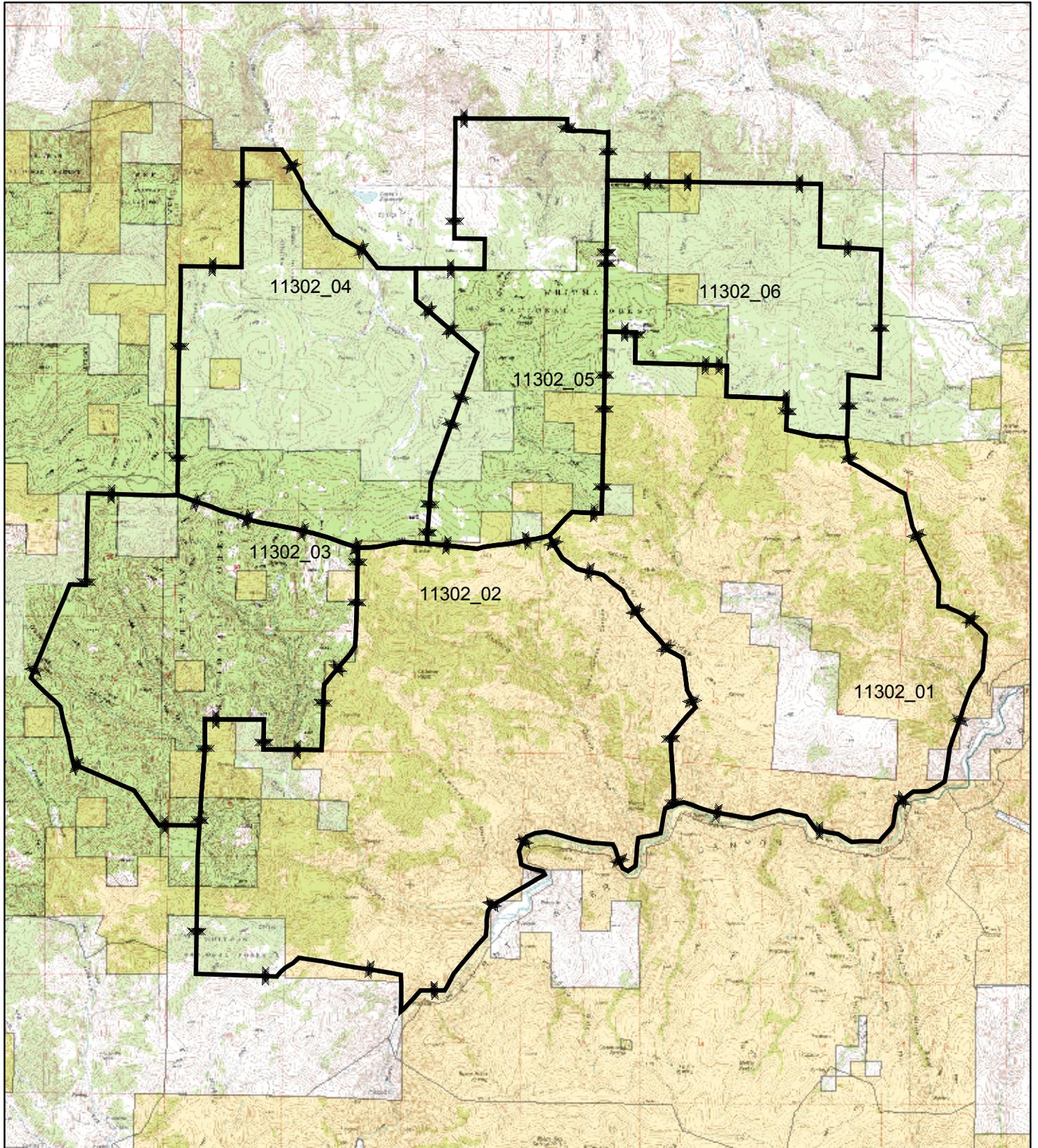
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No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources. This information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This product was developed through digital means and may be updated without notification.

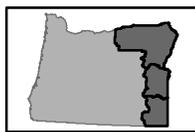


Legend		
Resource Area Boundary	Paved Road	<b>Land Status</b>
Cities	County Road	Bureau of Land Management
Places	BLM	Forest Reclamation
Pasture/Allotment Boundaries	FS	Forest Service
-all other values-	Primitive or Unknown Road Condition	Private
Perennial		State
Intermittent or Seasonal		Fish and Wildlife
Ditches & Pipelines		Bureau of Indian Affairs
Unknown		Federal Aviation Administration
		US Department of Defense
		Undetermined

# Appendix D: NORTH BRIDGEPORT ALLOTMENT



1:70,000

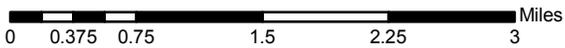
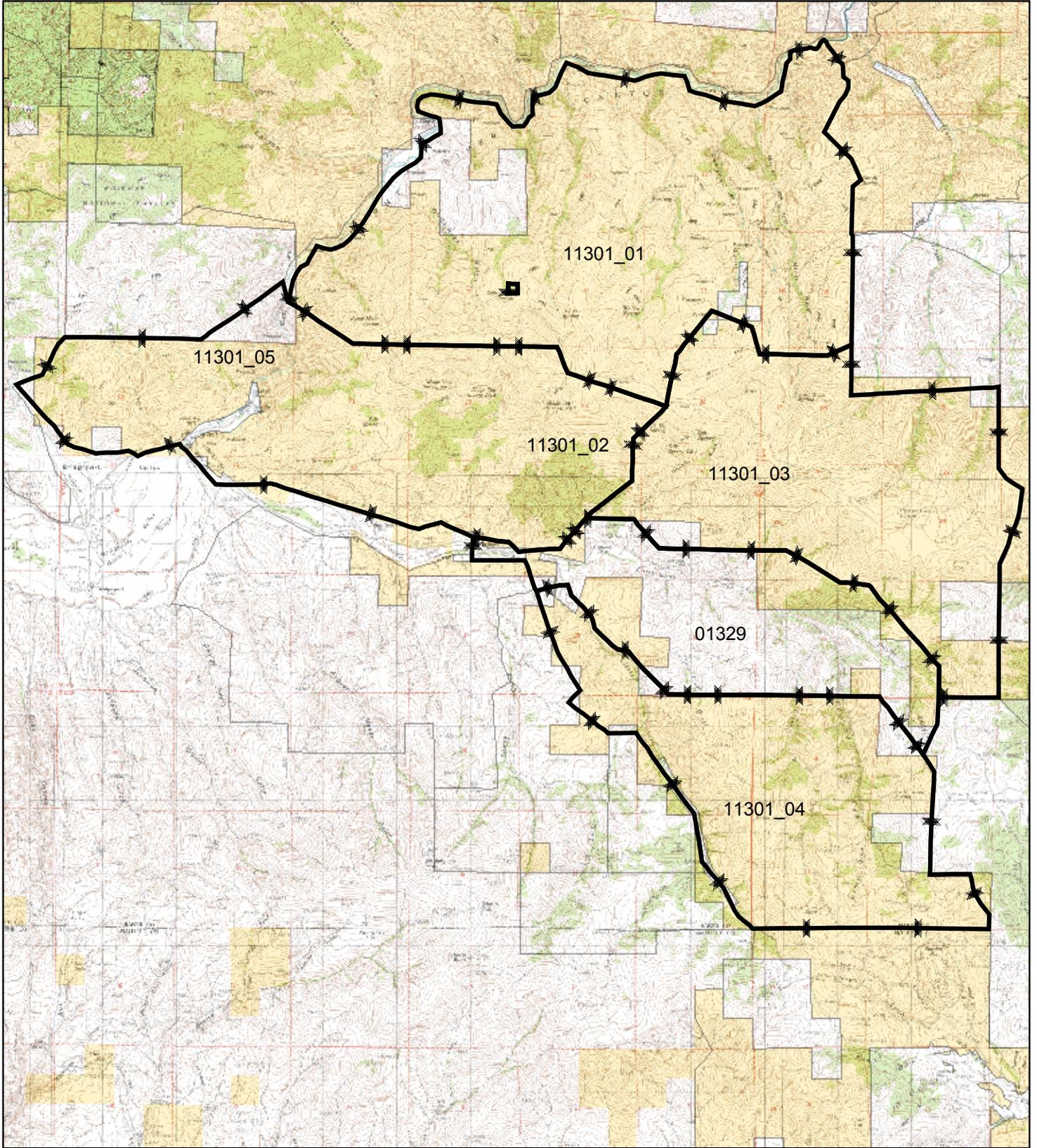


Legend			
	Paved Road		Bureau of Land Management
	County Road		Forest Service
	BLM		Private
	FS		State
	Primitive or Unknown Road Condition		
	Pasture/Allotment Boundaries		
	<b>Baker RA Streams</b>		
	<all other values>		
	<b>HYDFLOW</b>		
	Perennial		
	Intermittent or Seasonal		
	Ditches & Pipelines		
	Unknown		

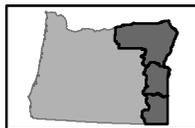
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# Appendix E: SOUTH BRIDGEPORT ALLOTMENT



1:72,000



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Legend			
	Paved Road		Bureau of Land Management
	County Road		Forest Service
	BLM		Private
	FS		State
	Primitive or Unknown Road Condition		
	Pasture/Allotment Boundaries		
	<b>Baker RA Streams</b>		
	<all other values>		
	<b>HYDFLOW</b>		
	Perennial		
	Intermittent or Seasonal		
	Ditches & Pipelines		
	Unknown		