

Request for Motorized/Mechanized Use in the Big Springs Allotment

On April 5, the BLM Bruneau Field Office received a request for motorized use within the Owyhee River and Pole Creek Wilderness Areas as follows:

In order to adequately distribute livestock in the wilderness portions (Owyhee and Pole Creek) of the Big Springs allotment, I propose to use a motorcycle or ATV 3 - 4 times per week during the active grazing season. This is estimated to be April 1 - May 30th in the Owyhee wilderness and August 1 - September 30th in the Pole Creek wilderness. I also propose an estimated 1 excursion per week when cattle are not in the wilderness, but during the permitted season of use from April 1 to October 31. This will account for fence maintenance, reservoir checks, salt placement, and gathering individual animals.

My rationale includes the distance from Cow Camp to canyon rim (within wilderness) estimated at 12 miles. There are between 7 to 8 miles within wilderness. These distances are not conducive to moving livestock with enough frequency to protect natural resources without motorized methods.

We have used motorized herding and motorized scouting (salt distribution, fence checking, scouting) since the early 1960's. First for scouting and very soon after as an aid to manage livestock in an area with unique challenges for management.

The practice of motorized herding was accepted by me and BLM in areas that were Wilderness Study, as a management tool that was integral to stewardship. In fact the Stewardship award I received from BLM in 2008 was a reflection of my management using the tool of motorized herding. I cannot achieve that level of stewardship in what is a fence free area without motorized herding to control timing and duration of grazing in the respective areas. Without Motorized herding we will need to consider fencing areas to control timing and duration of grazing to achieve that level of stewardship.

The modern motorcycles and ATV's that I use have quiet mufflers that also have spark arresters. The tires I use on all machines are chosen to leave very little trace of passage.

April 1 through October 31, Motorized scouting 1 day a week.

April 1 through May 31 and August 1 through September 30, Motorized Herding 3-4 times a week.