

**Standards for Rangeland Health
and
Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management
for
Public Lands in Oregon and Washington**

**UPDATE for the
East Rabbit Hills Allotment #530**

6/19/13

The original East Rabbit Hills Allotment Rangeland Health Assessment was conducted in 2003. The East Rabbit Hills Allotment has a total of 8,404 acres and 1,200 AUMs. The allotment is split into two pastures the main pasture is 7,718 acres and the Steer Field Pasture (Heifer field) is 852 acres. The East Rabbit Hills Allotment is currently grazed in the spring and irregularly in the winter with a total of 1198 AUMs from 11/15-4/20. This allotment is grazed under two, 10-year permits by two livestock operators. One permittee prefers to utilize the allotment primarily in the spring and the other operator would like to utilize portions of the allotment more in the winter and some in the spring. This allotment is characterized by stands of crested wheatgrass seedings.

Summary of Rangeland Health Assessment for East Rabbit Hills Allotment (00530)

Standard	Assessment Findings 2003	Current Assessment 2012	Comments
1. Watershed Function – Uplands	Met	Met	<p>The 2003 RHA states that the Soil Surface Factor is unknown in a majority (59%) of the allotment and the remaining part of the allotment is in the slight erosion class.</p> <p>Upland soils exhibit infiltration and permeability rates, moisture storage, and stability that are appropriate to soil, climate, and landform. Available trend data show that plant cover and the amount and distribution of bare ground is within the range of variability expected for the ecological sites found in the allotment.</p> <p>The plant composition is most commonly <i>Agropyron cristatum</i>. <i>A. cristatum</i> makes up 31% of the main pasture and 78% of the small pasture. Wyoming big sagebrush makes up 21% of the main pasture and 15% of the main pasture is Wyoming big sagebrush/grass. There are some forbs scattered in the allotment and annual weeds taking up much of the space between bunch grasses and shrubs.</p> <p>Most of the allotment falls into the early stage ecological condition class due to the crested wheatgrass, 17% is in the mid, and 8% in the late seral stage. Livestock grazing does not appear to be negatively impacting the upland watershed function.</p>
2. Watershed Function Riparian/ Wetland Areas	Met	Met	<p>Rabbit Creek is an intermittent creek and is often dry during the spring livestock grazing period for the allotment. The 2003 RHA states that there are 5 acres of palustrine wetlands found in the allotment and they are rated in Proper Functioning Condition. Livestock grazing does not appear to be a factor limiting riparian/wetland function.</p>
3. Ecological Processes	Met	Met	<p>There are healthy and productive plant populations and communities within the allotment. Plant reproduction is appropriate and organic matter is accumulating in the form of litter and is being incorporated into the soil. Trend photos indicate good vigor of perennial vegetation and trend is stable to upward within the allotment.</p>
4. Water Quality	NA	NA	<p>This standard is not applicable to the assessment area. There are no perennial streams in this allotment.</p>
5. Native, T/E, and Locally Important Species	Met	Met	<p>The allotment is supporting the current and proposed number of mule deer and pronghorn identified by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife management plans. Deer and pronghorn populations are healthy. The allotment is home to numerous small and non-game birds and mammals common to the Great Basin. There are no known sage grouse leks or habitat within the allotment. The allotment also provides habitat for some BLM and state sensitive wildlife species. No critical habitat or limitations have been identified for any of these species which include wintering bald eagles, and possibly pigmy rabbits, California bighorn sheep, various sensitive bat species or Peregrine falcons. Livestock grazing does not appear to be limiting wildlife habitat within the allotment.</p>

Guidelines for Livestock Management

Existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use on the Lynch Allotment are consistent with the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (August 12, 1997). The pasture is grazed at an appropriate season coordinated with precipitation, plant growth, and plant form to promote appropriate vegetative cover and optimal rangeland health. BLM lands are grazed in coordination with private lands to minimize conflicts and promote adequate livestock distribution. It is recommend to use the Steer pasture more in the winter or provide a pasture rotation to allow relief from heavy use early in the spring. This will allow plants increased recovery and regrowth from recent heavier use.

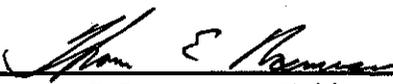
2013 Team Members

Name	Title
Lori Crumley	Rangeland Management Specialist
Vern Stofleth	Wildlife Biologist
Theresa Romasko	Assistant Field Manager
Grace Haskins	Weed Management Specialist
Bill Cannon	Archeologist
Jimmy Leal	Fisheries Biologist
Chris Bishop	Recreation
Todd Forbes	Assistant Field Manager

2013 Determination

Existing grazing management practices of levels of grazing use on the East Rabbit Hills Allotment promote achievement of significant progress towards the Oregon Standards for Rangeland Health and conform with the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.

() Existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use on the East Rabbit Hills Allotment will require modification or change prior to the next grazing season to promote achievement of the Oregon Standards for Rangeland Health and conform with the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.


Thomas E. Rasmussen, Field Manager

6/19/13
Date

East Rabbit Hills Allotment Monitoring Summary (2012):

The two operators of the East Rabbit Hills Pasture are NJN Flynn Investments LLC and Jack Flynn. NJN is permitted 598 AUMs from 11/15-4/20 and Jack Flynn is permitted 600 AUMs in the spring from 11/15-4/20.

The Steer Field Pasture has been grazed moderate to heavy. The heavy use is typically in the winter and very early spring and plants have recovered with regrowth yearly. This is within the management guidelines for the pasture.

Actual Use and Utilization

Year	Steer Field Pasture		Main Pasture			Total
	AUMs	% Use	AUMs		% Use	
	Jack		Jack	NJN		
2013		0			30	
2012	85	54		469	45	527
2011	178	70		559	44	737
2010	141	60		482	41	623
2009	137	70		475	65	612
2008	138	70		315	70	453
2007	168	70		181		349
2006			256	715	36	971
2005		32		397		397
2004	253			409		662
2003			184	583	47	767
2002			224	592		816
2001			212	579		791
2000			264	553	52	817
1999			237	690		927
1998			177	633	35	810
1997			173	504		677
1996		45			45	
1995		69			73	
1994		40			42	
1993						
1992					65	
1991						
1990		60				60
Average	169		216	496	637	

East Rabbit Hills (Main) Pasture:

Observed Apparent Trend

RB-4	2008	2011	RB-7	2005	2008	2011
Vigor	4	4	Vigor	10	6	6
Seedlings	4	5	Seedlings	6	5	5
Surface Litter	5	4	Surface Litter	5	5	5
Pedestals	5	5	Pedestals	5	5	4
Gullies	5	5	Gullies	5	5	5
Total	23	22	Total	31	26	25
Rating	<i>Stable</i>	<i>Stable</i>	Rating	<i>Upward</i>	<i>Upward</i>	<i>Stable</i>

Cover

RB-4	1987	2008	2011	RB-7	2008	2011
Bare Ground	32.5	30	18	Bare Ground	41	9
Litter	0	50	56	Litter	31	52
Rock	38.7	1		Rock	0	
Gravel	17.5			Gravel		
Vegetation	11.3	19	26	Vegetation	28	38
Crust/Moss				Crust/Moss		1

% Composition

RB-4	1987	2008	2011	RB-7	2008	2011
Rye	44.5	92	97	AGCR	100	100
AGCR	22.2	8	3			
BRTE	22.2					
mustard	11.1					

Trend plot RB-4 was established in 1987 in the East Rabbit Hills Pasture. In 2011, notes observed the year to have a long cold wet spring and minimal growth. *Bromus tectorum* and *Thelypodopsis vermicularis* is heavily present at this site. From 2008-2011 a very slight increase in percent cover of *Agropyron crisitatum* and a slight decrease in percent cover of *Elymus cinereus* is observed. Trend photos show *E. cinereus* and *A. crisitatum* has increased in growth over the years and the space between the *E. cinereus* and *A. crisitatum* has decreased. The space between is filled *B. tectorum* and *T. vermicularis*. Observed apparent trend and photo trend is stable.

Trend plot RB-7 was established in 1985 in the East Rabbit Hills Pasture. In 2011, *A. crisitatum* plants looked short and spindly with many seed heads with presence of *Delphinium* sp. and *Lupinus* sp. In 2008, most seed heads were present. *B. tectorum* and *T. vermicularis* do occupy the site. Observed Apparent Trend and photo trend is stable and upward.