

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

UPDATE for
Tim Long Creek Allotment #410

9 July 2015

The Tim Long Creek Allotment is 445 acres of public land. The allotment is separated into 3 pastures (see Map 1). Pasture 1 and 3 contain approximately 40 acres of BLM lands fenced in with private lands used by the J-spear Ranch. These pastures do not contain permitted use. Livestock typically do not utilize the BLM portions within the pastures. All permitted use is within Pasture 2. In Pasture 2, approximately 356 acres of BLM lands are fenced in with lands owned by Brenda Morgan and Jim Baldwin. Permitted use is 15 AUM's.

A field tour in the fall of 2014 provided new information on season of use. The allotment is utilized in the fall with livestock trailing primarily on the private portions of the allotment. Utilization was observed on Avery Creek in the fall.

Guidelines for Livestock Management

Existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use on the Tim Long Creek Allotment are consistent with the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (August 12, 1997).

Standard	Standards 2014	Current Assessment 2014	Standards 2006	Comments 2006 (Met Standards)
	Met	The allotment exhibits infiltration and permeability rates, moisture storage, and stability appropriate to soil, climate, and landform based on allotment utilization, observed apparent trend, and basal cover assessed in 2014.	Met	The watershed is functioning appropriate to landform based on adequate vegetative cover and species present.
	Met	Approximately 0.5 miles of Avery Creek exists on BLM-administered lands within the allotment, and was rated as FAR upward trend in 2014. A small portion of Ennis Creek runs through Pasture 3 which is not grazed by livestock and was not assessed. Previous lentic assessments were associated with the lotic riparian areas (Map2)	Met	Avery Creek an intermittent reach was evaluated to be at PFC. No PFC checklist could be found to support this information in 2014. An new assessment needs to be completed. One acre of lentic wetland was assessed in 1998 to be at PFC.
	Met	Some weeds species have been identified; however no dramatic change has occurred since the previous assessment.	Met	Some overcrowding of timber and juniper observed. Overall ecological processes are appropriate to soil, climate, and landform.
	Met	No surface water or groundwater within the	Met	Waters have not been monitored

Standard	Standards 2014	Current Assessment 2014	Standards 2006	Comments 2006 (Met Standards)
		allotment has been listed for exceeding State Water Quality standards.		
	Met	No changes have occurred since the previous assessment to the native or special status plant and animal species. All species continue to be spatially distributed across the landscape with density and frequency suitable to the appropriate quality of habitat.	Met	No known special status plant species are known to occur within the allotment. Wildlife and some special status species occur in the allotment and are healthy and diverse populations for the habitat provided.

STANDARD 1 - Upland Watershed -Upland soils exhibit infiltration and permeability rates, moisture storage, and stability that are appropriate to soil, climate, and landform.

This allotment supports sagebrush-steppe and forest fringe vegetation sites. The ecological sites within the BLM have a potential to be dominated by Idaho fescue, Bluebunch wheatgrass, Bottlebrush squirreltail, Antelope bitterbrush, and Mountain big Sagebrush. The long-term trend site evaluated in 2014 documented the site in an upward trend with all potential species present on site. All potential species on site indicate the vegetation community is at its potential with some Juniper encroachment. Plant cover, diversity, and abundance indicate appropriate soil infiltration, moisture storage, and stability that are appropriate for this site.

Based on these finding this standard is being met.

STANDARD 2 -Riparian/Wetland-Riparian-wetland areas are in properly functioning physical condition appropriate to soil, climate, and landform.

Previously the section of Avery creek was reviewed by a field visit with the team and at the time the team considered the stream “look to be at PFC.” No PFC standard checklist could be found for this rating. The 0.5 miles of Avery creek occurring on BLM-administered lands within the allotment was assessed in 2014, and determined to be Functional At Risk with an upward trend. The risk was due to two headcuts and livestock access to the headcut areas late in the year. Late season grazing in isolated areas, including the headcut sites, results in heavy cattle use and increases the risk of de-stabilizing the headcuts. The majority of Avery Creek is well vegetated with appropriate native riparian vegetation with limited access to the majority of the creek by livestock.

Approximately, 1/8 of a mile of Ennis (Innis) creek with approximately 0.3 acres of wetland associated with the creek occurs on BLM lands in Pasture 1. Due to difficult access to this section of BLM lands and lack of grazing on this piece, it has yet to be assessed for proper function and conditioning.

For these reasons this standard is being met on the allotment.

STANDARD 3 -Ecological Processes-Healthy, productive, and diverse plant and animal populations and communities appropriate to soil, climate, and landform are supported by ecological processes of nutrient cycling, energy flow, and hydrologic cycle.

Long Term Trend assessed within soil map unit name, Bullump-Lorella association of 30 to 50 percent slopes, indicates the site vegetative composition to be late seral. The ecological site potential is described to be dominated by Idaho fescue, Bluebunch wheatgrass, Big bluegrass, and Sandburgs bluegrass are common, Mountain sagebrush and Bitterbrush can dominate the aspect; variety of forbs (85% grasses, 5% forbs, 10% shrubs). This site is dominated by Idaho fescue, with all other common species present (93% grasses, 2% forbes, 2% shrubs, 1% Juniper, 2% annual grasses).

Ecological processes are functioning appropriately. Observed apparent trend collected in 2014 is upward. Plant communities look to be diverse with high vigor. Abundant and diverse community structure occurs on the BLM lands within the allotment. Some heavy timber and juniper does occur and could benefit from a vegetation treatment. Overall there is productive and diverse plant and animal populations occurring at appropriate levels within the allotment.

During 2014 noxious weed surveys several species of noxious weeds were found both on the BLM and adjacent private lands. The species found we as follows: Musk Thistle (*Carduus nutans*), bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), Medusahead (*Taeniatherum caput-medusae*), Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), and a new non-native winter annual grass species North Africa Grass (*Ventenata dubia*). The majority of the Medusahead is spreading from the BLM back on the private lands which had previously been sprayed with herbicide. The North Africa grass currently is located in small patched along the roads and in dry drainages. The thistles species were located in old burn piles in the uplands, along the roads and within the riparian areas. These species were documented and will be control using the most updated integrated weed management program for the Lakeview Resource Area.

The majority of habitats for wildlife within the allotment are in functional condition and support natural ecological processes. Habitat quality and population levels fluctuate over time, and generally represent natural trends in the ecosystem; however, some species may show erratic or negative trends. These trends are determined through monitoring of habitat and animal composition and community structure. This area supports diverse wildlife populations that are appropriate for the types of habitats available within the allotment. This standard is currently being met from the aspect of natural wildlife populations, diversity, and sustainability with current environmental conditions.

For these reasons this standard is being met on the allotment

STANDARD 4: Surface water and groundwater quality, influenced by agency actions, complies with State water quality standards.

Avery Creek is perennial in the upper BLM-administered reaches, and intermittent in the lower BLM-administered reaches. No water quality data exists for Avery Creek. The stream is extremely well vegetated and relatively undisturbed for most of its length through the BLM-administered reaches.

For these reasons this standard is being met on the allotment

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.

The allotment contains an appropriate assemblage of wildlife species and wildlife habitat expected for the shrub-steppe ecosystem. Species diversity may be somewhat higher in the riparian areas, providing additional habitat diversity.

Special status wildlife species or their habitats that may be present within the allotment include the Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*), Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), Burrowing Owl (*Speotyto cunicularia*), Kit Fox (*Vulpes macrotis*), Greater Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*), Townsend's big-eared bat (*Coryorhinus townsendii*), fringed myotis (*Myotis thysanodes*), pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), spotted bat (*Euderma maculatum*), and pygmy rabbit (*Brachylagus idahoensis*).

Some marginal nesting and roosting habitat exists within the allotment for the Bald Eagle. Roosting may occur in the riparian corridor and on U.S. Forest Service lands to the south. It is suspected that they are occasional visitors to the area. Bald Eagle foraging may occur within the allotment; however, it is probably restricted mostly to occasional carrion scattered through the allotment.

No nesting habitat is available for Peregrine Falcons. No incidental sightings of peregrines exist within the allotment. There is some potential nesting habitat for Ferruginous Hawks on scattered junipers within the allotment. No surveys have been conducted for Ferruginous Hawk. Ferruginous Hawk foraging habitat exists through portions of the allotment.

No observations of Burrowing Owls, kit fox, and pygmy rabbits exist within the vicinity of the allotment; however, they may occur within the allotment. This allotment is outside the northern range of the kit fox. It is likely that Burrowing Owls and pygmy rabbits occur in the allotment given the habitat type and range of the species.

No Greater Sage-Grouse leks occur within or near the allotment based on the 4-mile proximity criterion. The allotment does contain preliminary general habitat and ODFW low density habitat in the eastern portion of the allotment. Sage-grouse numbers are low within the allotment and use is restricted to areas that are not heavily encroached by western juniper. There are no known

sage-grouse lek sites within the allotment. The nearest known lek sites are several miles to the east and south. Sage-grouse habitats will improve over time as sagebrush and bitterbrush increase in these areas.

Species with high public interest include Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*). Mule deer inhabit the entire allotment. Invasive juniper has decreased mule deer habitat conditions in portions of the allotment; however, the allotment supports the current and proposed number of mule deer identified by ODFW big game management plans.

In 2005, no conflicts were identified between livestock grazing and wildlife species. Currently, there are no known resource conflicts between the current livestock grazing management and habitat for Peregrine Falcons, Bald Eagles, Ferruginous Hawks, Burrowing Owls, Golden Eagles, bat species, kit foxes, pygmy rabbits, bighorn sheep, or mule deer. Meeting the mule deer browse utilization objective established in the RMP/ROD is sufficient to maintain adequate bitterbrush densities within the allotment and avoid a conflict with livestock management.

The occurrence of invasive western juniper appears to be the limiting factor for sage-grouse, wintering mule deer, and most sagebrush obligates. Habitat management actions need to focus on control and reduction of western juniper to historic levels to improve this standard in the future.

For these reasons, this standard is being met for wildlife species (including special status species) and their habitat.

2015 ID Team Members

Name	
Lori Crumley	Rangeland Management Specialist
David Probasco	Wildlife Biologist
Theresa Romasko	Assistant Field Manager
Grace Haskins	Weed Management Specialist
Jimmy Leal	Fisheries Biologist
Jami Ludwig	Assistant Field Manager
Ian Grinter	Botanist
Paul Whitman	Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Recommendations:

The ID team recommends to either: 1) maintain early season of use and/or implement variable season of use, so riparian vegetation has a chance to re-grow annually; or, 2) if livestock grazing is to be season long or fall use, it is suggested to build small exclosures around areas most sensitive to grazing, including the headcuts through natural barriers or fencing.

2015 Determination

Existing grazing management practices on the Tim Long Creek Allotment promote achievement of, or significant progress towards, meeting the Oregon Standards for Rangeland Health and conform with the applicable Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.

Existing grazing management practices on the Tim Long Creek 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.



J. Todd Forbes, Field Manager



Date

Tim Long Creek Allotment (#00410) Monitoring Summary (2014)

The Tim Long Creek Allotment is scheduled to be grazed during the spring and summer (4/17-6/13). Actual use reports are consistent with this grazing season. Talking to the permittee livestock typically trail through the area in the fall as they come off the forest service allotments additionally. The total permitted AUMs are 15. The average actual use over the last 12 years is 18 AUMs and target utilization level of 50% has not been exceeded.

Specified Grazing Use

Allotment	LIVESTOCK		GRAZING PERIOD		TYPE USE	% Public Land	AUMS
	Number	Kind	Begin Date	End Date			
Tim Long Creek (00410)	8	CATTLE	4/16	6/15	Active	100	15

Actual Use and Utilization for Tim Long Creek

Year	Tim Long Creek	
	AUM	% use
2014	15	-
2013	15	-
2012	15	-
2011	15	-
2010	15	-
2009	15	-
2008	19	-
2007	29	-
2006	15	-
2005	15	-
2004	15	-
2003	15	-
2002	27	-
Average	18	

Key Species and Target Utilization Levels for the Tim Long Creek Allotment (00410)

Pasture	BLM Acres	Trend Plot	Key Species	Utilization Target %
Tim Long Creek	1,495	TLC-01	Idaho Fescue (<i>festuca idahoensis</i>), Bluebunch wheatgrass (<i>Pseudoroegneria spicata</i>), Bitterbrush	50

			(<i>purshia tridentata</i>),	
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Trend monitoring

Plot TLC-01

Years Data Recorded - 2012

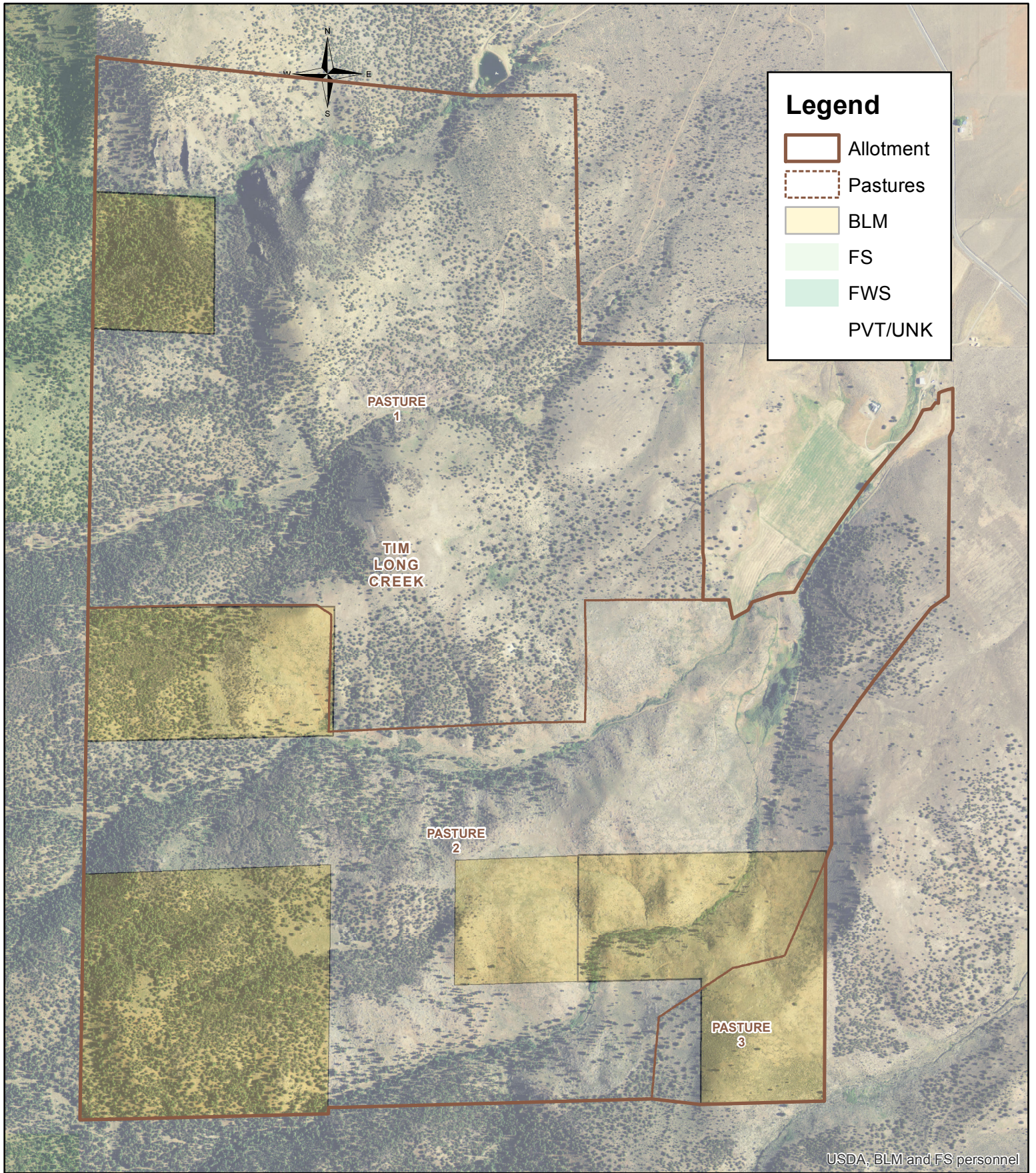
Dominant species are Idaho Fescue, Bluebunch wheatgrass, and snowberry with Sandburgs bluegrass, bitterbrush, Buckwheat are common. Photo trend and observed apparent trend are upward.

Observed Apparent Trend

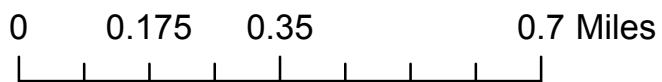
TLC-01	2014
Vigor	10
Seedlings	8
Surface Litter	5
Pedestals	4
Gullies	4
Total	31
<i>Rating</i>	<i>Upward</i>

Cover

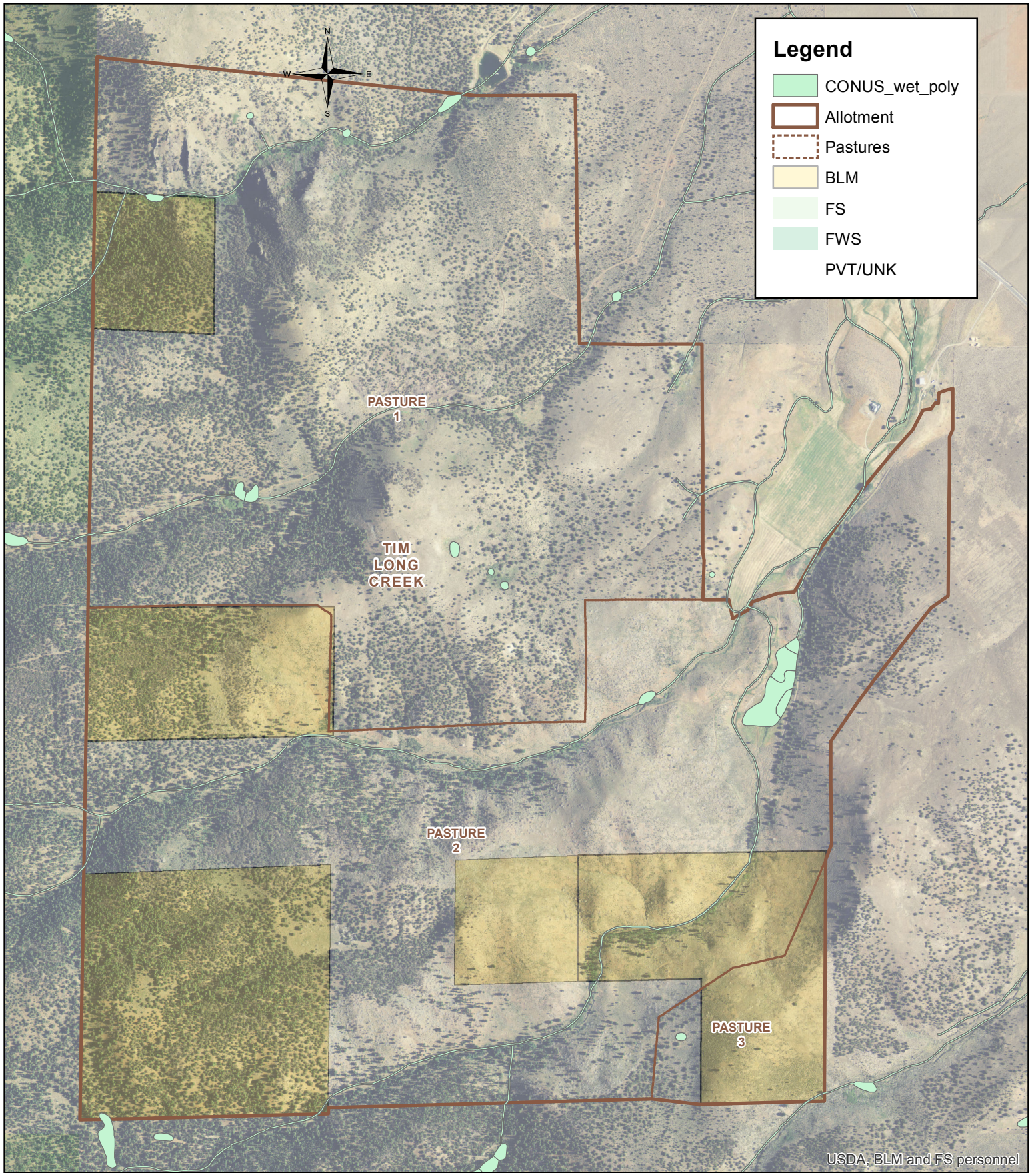
TLC-01	2014
Bare Ground	22
Litter	33
Rock	0
Vegetation	45
Crust	0



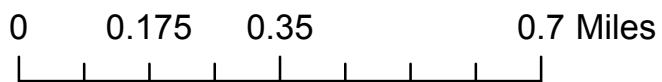
Map 1 - Tim Long Creek Allotment and Pastures



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Map 2 - National Wetlands Inventory



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