

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

Rangeland Health Assessment Update for the  
Jones Canyon Allotment #00411

April 2015

## Summary of Rangeland Health Standards Assessment for the Jones Canyon Allotment

Standard	2014	Summary 2014	2006	Summary 2006
1. Watershed Function – Uplands	Met	Trend studies conducted in 2014 support the 2006 findings that erosion and plant composition deviate little from what is expected for the site.	Met	Soil Surface Factor and Plant Community Composition did not substantially deviate from what was expected for the site.
2. Watershed Function Riparian/Wetland Areas	Met	The National Wetland Inventory has delineated six acres of lacustrine wetlands or ponds within this allotment. These lentic ponds are ephemeral and primarily located within the Jones Canyon drainage. These ponds are meeting lentic Proper Functioning Condition.	Met	In 1998, there were 3 acres of lentic wetland assessed as PFC in this allotment.
3. Ecological Processes	Met	Trend studies and OAT conducted in 2014 support that the allotment continues to show an upward trend for the entire allotment. There are known sites of noxious and invasive weeds within the allotment (see narrative below). These sites will continue to be monitored and controlled through integrated weed management methods.	Met	Ecological Site Inventory for South Lake County (ESI 1989; refer to Appendix A) indicated that 100% of the allotment is in mid to late seral stage. OAT indicated that 100% of the allotment was in a static or upward trend.
4. Water Quality	Not Applicable	There is one intermittent-ephemeral spring/seep located in the northeastern portion of the allotment. Water quality has not been monitored in the Jones Canyon Allotment. Perennial waters are subject to water quality standards. The one identified ephemeral spring/seep is not subject to this standard.	Not Applicable	There were no perennial streams known to this allotment that would be subject to water quality standards. The wetlands identified are ephemeral lacustrine wetlands (see 2 above).
5. Native, T/E, and Locally Important Species	Met	There is no known conflict between livestock grazing and other wildlife species within the allotment (see narrative below). Surveys for special status species have been conducted during other project work within the allotment. To date, no Special Status Plant Species have been discovered. Preliminary General sage grouse habitat (PGH) occurs within the allotment.	Met	The allotment was surveyed for BLM Special Status plants. None were discovered. Overall, this standard was met for wildlife species within the allotment. (See narrative below).

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

Meets Standard.

Trend studies and observed apparent trend (OAT) conducted in 2014 throughout the allotment indicate an upward trend (see Appendix A).

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

Meets Standard.

In addition to the known lentic ponds that are meeting Proper Functioning Condition (PFC), there are two known springs within the allotment. One intermittent to ephemeral spring or seep is located within the Jones Canyon draw; the other spring, which is typically dry or only has subsurface flow, is located in the south central part of the allotment. The ephemeral spring is

currently meeting PFC, the other spring has no surface flow, and therefore PFC methodology is not applicable.

**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.**

Meets Standard.

**Vegetation:** Photo trend and Observed Apparent Trend studies (OAT) were established in 2005. These long term trend plots within the allotment were all reread in 2014. An upward trend was denoted for each of the three sites, this signifies an upward trend throughout the allotment. Personal and other specialist observations throughout the allotment concur with these findings.

As stated in the 2006 rangeland health assessment, noxious weeds are known to occur in the allotment. Small scattered infestation of musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*) and bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) were also documented during the 2014 invasive plant survey. These species are located in the ephemeral spring and along Jones Canyon in the old juniper piles. Mediterranean sage (*Salvia aethiopsis*) occurs in small isolated patches across the allotment, usually only a few plants per infestation. All of the infestations could be controlled through hand grubbing and will be managed in accordance with the most current Integrated Weed Management Plan for the Lakeview Resource Area. During the 2014 surveys a moderate amount of cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) was noted across the allotment. At this point control methods will not likely be needed, however the site will be monitored for future control effort needs. There were several small infestations of Russian knapweed (*Acroptilon repens*) noted along the road adjacent to the allotment on private land. The public lands adjacent to these infested private lands will be monitored for spread of noxious weeds.

**Wildlife:** This standard is currently being met from the aspect of natural wildlife populations, diversity, and sustainability with current environmental conditions. The majorities of habitats within the allotment are in a 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. In 2006 and in 2013 the allotment was supporting the current and proposed number of mule deer and pronghorn antelope identified in ODFW big game management plans. This area supports diverse wildlife populations that are appropriate for the types of habitats available within the allotment.

**STANDARD 4: NA**

**STANDARD 5: Native, T&E, and Locally Important Species**

Meets Standard.

**Fish:** Due to the lack of perennial water, there is no fish habitat on BLM-administered lands in the Jones Canyon Allotment.

**Wildlife:** Special status wildlife species or their habitats that may be present within these allotments include the Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo*

*regalis*), Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), Burrowing Owl (*Speotyto cunicularia*), Greater Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*), and pygmy rabbit (*Brachylagus idahoensis*). There are also three species with high public interest: mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), California bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*), and pronghorn antelope (*Antilocapra americana*).

Some marginal nesting and roosting habitat exists within these allotments for the Bald Eagle. Bald Eagle foraging does occur within the allotment; however it is probably restricted mostly to road killed deer adjacent to the major roadways and 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 juniper trees within the allotment, but no surveys have been conducted. Ferruginous Hawk foraging habitat exists through portions of the allotment. No observations of Burrowing Owls exist within the vicinity of the allotment. They may occasionally occur within the allotment. There are no known resource conflicts for Peregrine Falcons, Ferruginous Hawks, Bald Eagles, or Burrowing Owls within the allotment.

Bighorn sheep inhabit the most of the northern portion of the allotment. There is some overlap in range between bighorns and cattle. However bighorn sheep use is light at this time and is mostly restricted to the steeper hill slopes and ridges. No major conflicts exist between bighorn sheep and cattle grazing within the allotment.

Pronghorn antelope occur in portions of the allotment. Pronghorn antelope use is concentrated along the slopes and higher flat ridges in the northern portions of the allotment that are covered with grass or shorter shrubs. No major conflicts exist between pronghorn and cattle grazing within this allotment.

Mule deer inhabit the entire allotment. High to moderate concentrations of wintering mule deer occur along the northern and eastern edges of the allotment. No conflicts exist between mule deer and cattle grazing within this allotment. Bitterbrush is common in a few portions of the allotment, but gets little use by cattle due to timing of grazing.

Preliminary General Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat (PGH) occurs throughout most 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. Within the allotment, approximately 40% of the area is suitable for sage-grouse. Much of this habitat is low sagebrush, but there are scattered stands of mountain big sagebrush and bitterbrush available for nesting. Another 30% of the allotment has the potential to become sage-grouse habitat if western junipers were reduced. The remainder (30%) does not have the potential to be sage-grouse habitat due to the presence of mixed conifer or ponderosa pine forest or very steep rocky slopes. In order for sage-grouse habitats within the allotment to improve, restoration work would be to combat the expansion of western juniper. Sagebrush and bitterbrush is still established in many areas where western juniper is being removed. Sage-grouse habitats will improve over time as sagebrush and bitterbrush increase in these areas. There are no known sage-grouse lek sites within the allotment. The nearest known lek sites are several miles to the east in the vicinity of Coglan Buttes. No major conflict exists between cattle grazing and sage-grouse within this allotment at this time.

Overall, this standard is being met for wildlife species within the allotment. The expansion of western juniper appears to be the limiting factor for sage grouse and most sagebrush-dependent wildlife habitats. Efforts to improve this standard should focus on removal of expanding western juniper and sagebrush restoration.

**Plants:** The allotment has been surveyed for BLM Special Status plants, none were found. Coyote tobacco (*Nicotiana attenuata*) has appeared in recent years in areas that were jack-pot burned. The plant has a high value for the Tribal people as it is used for cultural reasons. This plant will probably be found for a few years and then disappear as the seeds are dependent on smoke for germination. Livestock have little effect on this species.

#### **2014 ID Team Members**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
David Probasco	Wildlife Biologist
Grace Haskins	Weed Management Specialist
Ian Grinter	Botanist
Michael Cutler	Rangeland Management Specialist
Paul Whitman	Planning and Environmental Coordination
Theresa Romasko	Assistant Field Manager

#### **Guidelines for Livestock Management**

Existing grazing management practices and levels of grazing use on the Jones Canyon Allotment are consistent with the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (August 12, 1997). Due to steep topography and very little water development within the allotment, the allotment is primarily used for trailing livestock between private land and an adjacent Forest Service spring-summer grazing allotment. This short-term use provides almost complete rest during the growing season. This rest enables the grass species to provide adequate cover for infiltration, moisture storage and maintains diverse plants communities.

**2014 Determination**

Existing grazing management practices on the Jones Canyon 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 Jones Canyon 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 applicable Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.



4-20-15

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J. Todd Forbes

Date

Field Manager

Lakeview Resource Area

**Appendix A: Jones Canyon Allotment Monitoring Summary 2014** (see Monitoring Files for Raw Data)

**Table 1. Jones Canyon Actual Use and Utilization**

Year	AUMs	% Utilization	Permitted Active AUMs
2005	13		13
2006	12		13
2007	13		13
2008	13		13
2009	13		13
2010	13		13
2011	13		13
2012	13		13
2013	13		13
2014	13	13%	13
<b>Avg. all</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Average 10 years</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13%</b>	

This allotment is only used for a few days each year to trail livestock from private land to U.S. Forest Service Permit. Access to this allotment is very limited and not accessible by truck. Except for a small seep in the Jones Canyon proper, there is no known perennial water or developed water available for livestock. Utilization has only been recorded once in the past ten years, however, there have been other projects involving other specialists and use has not been noted as an issue (juniper treatment 2004, Trend establishment 2005, Rangeland Health Assessment 2006). Utilization was recently read in 2014 and trend plots established in 2005 were reread as well. Utilization was slight throughout the allotment. Trend plots were read and the trend was evaluated as upward trend (Observed Apparent Trend, OAT evaluation form) throughout the allotment.

**Table 2. Jones Canyon Allotment #0411 Trend Summary 2014**

Trend Number and type	Trend	Recent Trend Reading
FT-01 OAT/Photo	Upward Trend	11/5/2014
FT-02 OAT/Photo	Upward Trend	11/5/2014
FT-03 OAT/Photo	Upward Trend	11/5/2014