

Land Health Evaluation Report

Jerry Creek Allotment

Bureau of Land Management

Butte Field Office

Introduction and Assessment Process

This report documents whether land health standards were achieved for the Jerry Creek Grazing Allotment administered by the Bureau of Land Management's Butte Field Office. Standards for Rangeland Health were evaluated utilizing an interdisciplinary team (ID team) of resource specialists.

Rangeland Health Standards for Western Montana are described in detail in the Record of Decision (ROD) issued for Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota (August 1997). The preamble of the Western Montana Standards states: "The purpose of the S&Gs (Standards and Guidelines) are to facilitate the achievement and maintenance of healthy, properly functioning ecosystems within the historic and natural range of variability for long-term sustainable use." Standards are statements of physical and biological condition or degree of function required for healthy sustainable lands. Achieving or making significant progress towards these functions and conditions is required of all uses of public land as stated in 43 CFR 4180.1.

This report contains an evaluation of each of the five standards:

- Standard #1 Upland Health
- Standard #2 Riparian/Wetland Health
- Standard #3 Water Quality
- Standard #4 Air Quality
- Standard #5 Biodiversity

Available monitoring data from both upland and riparian sites, existing inventories, historical photographs and standardized methodology are used by an ID team to assess condition and function. Condition/function declarations regarding this allotment are expressed as:

- Proper Functioning Condition (PFC)
- Functioning at Risk (FAR), which is assigned a trend of up, down, static or not apparent
- Nonfunctioning (NF)

Standards are met when conditions are at PFC or FAR with an upward trend. This is dependent on scope and scale. The BLM will consider the information contained in this report, along with public scoping and other sources of information, to make a determination regarding causal factors and courses of action to be analyzed in a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document.

General Allotment Summary

Allotment Name/Number: Jerry Creek 20318

Current Management Category: I (Improve)

Location: T1N, R10W, Section 30; T1N, R11W, Sections 13-15, 17-29; T1N, R12W, Sections 2, 3, 10-13; Silver Bow County

Public Acres: 10,130 acres (BLM managed lands).

Season of Use: 06/01 to 07/31

Public Animal Unit Months: 816

Assessment Date: July 19, 20, & 21, 2010

The Jerry Creek Allotment lies about 1 mile north of Wise River, MT, about 11 miles northwest of Divide, MT and about 25 miles southwest of Butte, MT. The entire Jerry Creek Allotment consists of approximately 51,000 acres of lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the State of Montana, the United States Forest Service (USFS), and includes some private property. The public land administered by the BLM is managed in a 2 pasture rest rotation system. One pasture is grazed every other year for no longer than 45 days or in the case of the Patton (BLM) Pasture no longer than 50 days during the 61 day window of time that the livestock are authorized in the allotment (6/1 to 7/31). The Patton (BLM), Dickie Hills and Johnson Creek Pasture areas are grazed together every other year. The Johnson Creek Pasture is managed by the USFS. The Jimmie New, Patton (USFS) and Granulated Pasture areas are grazed together every other year on alternate years. The Granulated and Patton (USFS) Pastures are managed by the USFS. Two grazing operators graze in common on the BLM managed lands in the early summer season. Following grazing on the BLM managed lands the livestock are moved to the USFS portion of the Jerry Creek Allotment. The livestock graze on USFS managed lands until 9/30. The USFS portion of the Jerry Creek Allotment also contains a rest rotation grazing system. Another operator, joins the 2 other grazing operators on the USFS portion of the allotment or graze their livestock separately on other pastures managed by the USFS within the allotment.

The USFS and BLM co-manage grazing on this allotment.

The Wise River weather station reports 11.22 inches of precipitation on average. The average daily temperature at Divide is 41 degrees Fahrenheit. There are no recorded average temperatures at the Wise River Station. The Jerry Creek Allotment is located at higher elevations than either the Wise River or Divide weather stations, and receives more precipitation and cooler weather than is recorded at either weather station.

Summary of Standards Achieved --Yes, No, N/A (Not Applicable)--						
Allotment Name	Allot #	1. Upland	2. Riparian	3. Water Quality	4. Air Quality	5. Biodiversity
Jerry Creek	20318	No	No	No	Yes	No

Rangeland Health Standards Evaluation and Rationale

The issue of scope and scale must be kept in mind when evaluating each standard. It is recognized that isolated sites within a landscape may be Functioning at Risk (FAR) and not meeting the standards; however, considering broader scope and scale, the area may be deemed in Proper Functioning Condition (PFC). Likewise, isolated sites may be in PFC, but, overall, the resource within the allotment or area could be FAR and not meeting standards. Therefore, no single indicator provides sufficient information to determine rangeland health. Indicators are used in combination to provide information necessary to make rangeland health determinations.

Western Montana Standard #1

“Uplands are in Proper Functioning Condition”

Finding Standard is not met.

Rationale

The rangeland health evaluation conducted on this allotment was compared to the Natural Resource Conservation Service’s (NRCS) ecological site guides. The sites evaluated on this allotment showed little departure from the soil stability, hydrologic and biotic function indicators. Utilization is within acceptable levels on this allotment and on adjacent property managed with the public land. Use was measured at 13% on Bluebunch wheatgrass and 3% on Idaho fescue following livestock grazing in the Dickie Hills Pasture in 2010 at a permanent utilization transect. Scattered Spotted knapweed plants are present along some roadways. Conifers have expanded and colonized throughout the allotment into upland sites and in the areas surrounding the locations where upland evaluations were conducted. Mortality within the conifers is also very high.

Rangeland health evaluation was completed at T1N, R11W, Sec. 13. The soil type for this site is Lieberg-Bridger complex, 6 to 20 percent slopes (737D). The ID team verified by digging a soil pit, that the ecological site was a loamy, 17-19” precipitation zone. A NRCS technical range site description has currently not been drafted for this ecological site. The loamy, 17-19” ecological site corresponded to a Silty 15 to 19” site. The ID was able to compare the existing site conditions with potential range conditions. The assessment showed 17 of 17 indicators rated none to slight from departure. The site had a

good representation of native vegetation.

A second rangeland health evaluation was completed at T1N, R11W, Sec. 21. The soil type for this site is Sebud-Poin-Tiban complex, 15 to 45 percent slopes, extremely stony (901E). This site was determined to be a droughty steep ecological site. A NRCS technical range site description currently has not been drafted for this ecological site. A droughty, steep ecological site corresponds to a Silty 15 to 19" site, which has an existing description. The assessment showed 16 of 17 indicators rated none to slight from departure. The Functional/structural groups indicator was rated as slight to moderate, because the composition of the forbs and shrubs was higher than expected for the site. The Daubenmire trend study near the evaluation site had a 17% composition of shrubs and 28% total composition of forbs, which is higher than the expected of 15% total shrubs and 15% total cover of forbs by weight.

Daubenmire Trend Study Data Summary – Jimmie New Pasture near the first evaluation site. The first column has the percent cover and the second column has the percent composition (Comp).

<u>Species</u>	<u>Aug. 8, 1988</u>		<u>Aug. 18, 1998</u>		<u>July 8, 2004</u>	
	Cover	Comp	Cover	Comp	Cover	Comp
Idaho fescue	15%	25%	10%	15%	8%	6%
Prarie junegrass	1%	3%	.5%	.75%	2%	2%
Carex species	6%	10%	11%	17%	27%	20%
Richardson needlegrass	4%	7%	3%	3%	2%	2%
Bluebunch wheatgrass	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%
Lupine	4%	7%	5%	8%	7%	5%
Buckwheat	2%	3%	2%	2%	4%	3%
Sagebrush	3%	5%	5%	8%	No Recording	
Bare Ground	4%	--	5%	--	No Recording	
Litter	50%	--	75%	--	No Recording	

Daubenmire Trend Study Data Summary – Patton BLM Pasture near the second evaluation site.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Aug. 21, 1990</u>		<u>Aug. 17, 2009</u>	
	Cover	Comp	Cover	Comp
Idaho fescue	12%	16%	9%	8%
Prarie junegrass	1%	1%	2%	2%
Bluebunch wheatgrass	1%	2%	1%	1%
Kentucky bluegrass	16%	22%	22%	19%
Lupine	2%	3%	7%	6%
Buckwheat	4%	5%	7%	6%
Sagebrush	18%	24%	20%	17%
Bare Ground	2%	--	3%	--

The forest types in this allotment are not functioning ecologically within their historic range of variability. Across the landscape, patch sizes and size/age class dynamics are not represented well. In addition, overstocking and expansion is prevalent throughout the landscape. In the near future, while the needles of the lodgepole pine and Douglas fir are still red, there is an increased risk for a catastrophic wildfire, which could promote erosion and an increase in overland flows and sediment input to the Big Hole River.

Western Montana Standard #2

“Riparian and Wetland Areas are in Proper Functioning Condition”

Finding Standard is not met.

Rationale

A total of 12.5 miles of stream reaches are present on the Jerry Creek Allotment. The main drainage in the Jerry Creek Allotment is Jimmie New Creek and its tributaries. Most of the reaches in the allotment are tributaries of the Big Hole River. Approximately 4.5 miles of stream reaches were rated as properly functioning condition (PFC) while the remaining 7 miles were rated as functioning at risk (FAR), and 0.5 miles nonfunctioning (NFU). The ID team did not assess the short reaches along the Big Hole River, one of which was less than ¼ of a mile.

Jimmie New Creek and Tributaries

The West Fork of Jimmie New Creek was previously rated as functioning at risk condition, however during the assessment this year, the ID team concluded that conditions have improved and the reach is PFC. The main stem of Jimmie New Creek was rated as FAR due to excessive erosion, loss of willows and other riparian species, and evidence that riparian woody shrubs are continuing to decline. There are five tributaries to the West Fork and main stem of Jimmie New Creek, and only one was rated as PFC. The remaining reaches were rated at FAR and non-functioning condition.

One new tributary to Jimmie New Creek was identified during the allotment assessment, which is NFU. The tributary that is NFU was a newly documented reach that had poor quantities and vigor of riparian vegetation, excessive erosion, as well as one 6ft deep headcut. The remaining tributaries are rated as FAR due to lower plant vigor and species diversity of riparian vegetation, as well as concerns regarding vertical stability of the streams and excessive bank erosion.

Other Reaches

Cat Creek was rated in prior assessments as PFC, however during the 2010 evaluation the ID team rated the reach as FAR. Both the sinuosity and width depth ratio were not as expected, for the B stream channel type that it was classified as. Willow and aspen recruitment is limited and the adjacent riparian areas made up of seeps and springs were heavily trampled. Many abandoned channels and terraces that had adequate surface water

appeared to be losing riparian vegetation. Many stream crossings were present near the BLM/USFS boundary.

Both Spring Gulch and Patton Gulch were previously rated FAR, and the ID team determined that both reaches were FAR during the assessment completed this year. The upper portion of Patton Gulch was rated as FAR with the trend not apparent and lower reach was rate FAR with a downward trend. The lower portion of Patton Gulch has substantial downcutting and was heavily entrenched, and both the downcutting and entrenchment has caused the water table to drop. Where the water table had been lowered, the floodplain and streambanks were no longer supporting riparian vegetation. Throughout the entire reach aspen recruitment was low, and the young aspen that were present have been heavily browsed.

Similar to Patton Gulch, Spring Gulch also had several active head cuts and areas where streambank instability has lead to excessive bank erosion. Plainleaf willow and aspen that are present along the reach have been repeatedly and heavily browsed, which limits successful recruitment. Several seeps and springs within the floodplain contain only decadent willows and limited desirable herbaceous species.

Table 1. Stream reaches and functional class ratings located on the Jerry Creek Allotment.

Reach Name	Type of Stream	Reach Length	Previous Rating	Current Rating
West Fork Jimmie New Creek	Perennial	0.47	FAR	PFC
West Fork Jimmie New Creek	Perennial	1.65	FAR	PFC
La Ducet Creek	Perennial	0.76	FAR	PFC
Spring Gulch	Intermittent	1.97	FAR	FAR
Jimmie New Creek	Perennial	0.39	PFC	FAR
Jimmie New Creek	Perennial	0.99	PFC	FAR
Jimmie New Creek	Perennial	0.52	FAR	FAR
W. Fork Jimmie New Ck. Trib.	Perennial	0.32	PFC	PFC
Jimmie New Creek Tributary	Perennial	0.17	PFC	FAR
Jimmie New Creek Tributary	Perennial	0.53	PFC	FAR
Jimmie New Creek Tributary	Perennial	0.85	PFC	FAR
Patton Gulch	Intermittent	1.53	FAR	FAR
Big Hole Tributary	Intermittent	0.92	FAR	PFC
Cat Creek	Perennial	0.50	PFC	FAR
Jimmie New Tributary (New Reach)	Perennial	~0.50	NR	NF
Big Hole River	Perennial	0.15	PFC	NR
Big Hole River	Perennial	0.27	PFC	NR

Overall, the majority of the reaches were not PFC, therefore the ID team concluded that the Jerry Creek Allotment was not meeting the riparian standard.

Western Montana Standard #3:
“Water Quality Meets State Standards.”

Finding Standard is not met.

Rationale

The State of Montana, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has responsibility for implementing the Clean Water Act. This responsibility includes establishing Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) of sediment and contaminants affecting water quality for beneficial uses. The Middle Big Hole River and Jerry Creek, which are located below the Jerry Creek Allotment are listed on the State of Montana and EPA 303(d) list of impaired water bodies, and none of the reaches within the allotment are listed. TMDLs have been developed for the Big Hole River and Jerry Creek and are published in the Middle and Lower Big Hole Planning Area Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) and Water Quality Improvement Plan of 2009.

The Middle Big Hole River was determined by the DEQ to be fully supporting agriculture, and industry, partially contact recreation. It does not support aquatic life, cold water fisheries and drinking water.

Sediment was noted as a primary factor negatively affecting water quality of the middle-Big Hole River, originating from historic mining, unstable banks, grazing and roads. The TMDL plan targets an overall 28% reduction in sediment loading for the watershed, which corresponds to target reductions in uplands of 23% reduction from grazing and 56% reduction from croplands. Streamside source target reductions are 36% from streamside erosion and a 30% from roads. Mining is noted as contributing excessive levels of lead and copper. No known abandoned or active mines on BLM land are contributing.

Jerry Creek was determined by the DEQ to fully support agriculture and industry, to partially support contact recreation and does not fully support aquatic life, cold water fisheries and drinking water.

An overall target TMDL reduction in sediment of 18% for the watershed was set. This corresponds to a 23% reduction from upland grazing, 26% reduction from streamside erosion and 34% reduction from roads. Metal contamination was noted as a problem in Jerry Creek, but not from sources on BLM land.

Western Montana Standard #4
“Air Quality Meets State Air Quality Standards.”

Finding Standard is met.

Rationale

Although the actual air quality in the allotment is unknown, there is no evidence to suggest that the current allotment conditions are contributing to any air quality problems in terms of a source of smoke or dust particulates. No visual impairment was observed.

Western Montana Standard #5

“Provide habitat as necessary, to maintain a viable and diverse population of native plant and animal species, including special status species.”

Finding Standard is not met.

Rationale

The following indicators were used to assess whether existing habitat conditions are at a condition to support viable and diverse populations of native plant and animal species, including special status species.

- Plants and animals are diverse, vigorous, and reproducing satisfactorily
- Noxious weeds are absent or insignificant in the overall plant community.
- Spatial distribution of species is suitable to ensure reproductive capability and recovery.
- A variety of age classes is present.
- Connectivity of habitat or presence of corridors prevents habitat fragmentation.
- Diversity of species (including plants, animals, insects, and microbes) are represented.
- Plant communities in a variety of successional stages are represented across the landscape.

Fisheries

The Jerry Creek Allotment is adjacent to the Big Hole River and streams found in the allotment flow directly into the Big Hole. The Big Hole River is a world renowned trout fishery and is one of only a few free flowing rivers left in the west. The lower Big Hole is classified as a Blue Ribbon Fishery and hosts rainbow, brown, westslope cutthroat and brook trout. Rocky Mountain whitefish, burbot, longnose dace, longnose suckers, mottled sculpin and white sucker are also present. The river is refuge for the last wild population of fluvial arctic grayling, a trout species now limited to the Big Hole River in the lower 48 states.

Two drainages in the allotment provide habitat for fish. Fish observed in Jimmie New Creek (including the West Fork of Jimmie New) are likely to be brook trout according to Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Cat Creek provides habitat for non-native brook trout and genetically pure westslope cutthroat trout. Aquatic conditions throughout these streams as well as in other perennial, non-fish bearing streams varies from good quality habitat along undisturbed reaches to reaches with a lack of pools, streamside vegetation, and heavy sedimentation. The loss of beavers from several streams has also resulted in a loss of deep pools, back water areas and willow thickets. Where beaver dam complexes historically occurred, streams are now cutting through sediment deposits and these stream reaches are now lacking pools and instream structure.

Wildlife

The Jerry Creek Allotment is within the Dewey linkage area identified by American Wildlands. The Dewey linkage area allows north-south wildlife movement between the Mount Haggin-Fleecer Mountain areas into the Pioneer Mountains and east-west movement between the Divide area and Highland Mountains and the Upper Big Hole River Valley. The Jerry Creek Allotment is also within the Fleecer linkage area. This linkage area provides north-south connectivity between the Anaconda-Pintlers and the Pioneers and the Mount Haggin Wildlife Management Area. It also provides east-west connectivity between Fleecer Wildlife Management Area, the Mount Haggin Wildlife Management Area, and the Anaconda-Pintlers.

Existing stands of dense Douglas-fir mixed with lodgepole pine and stands dominated by lodgepole pine currently provide habitat for those wildlife and avian species that prefer closed canopy, dense forest or forest generalists. The allotment also provides habitat for those species that use sagebrush and grassland habitats or edges along forest and sagebrush/grassland openings. Numerous wildlife species and/or their habitats can be found in the allotment including but not limited to elk, mule deer, moose, bighorn sheep, red fox, black bear, coyote, bobcat, mountain lion, tailed frog, Columbia spotted frog, pine marten, long-tailed and short-tailed weasels, porcupine, badger, red squirrel, flying squirrel, mountain cottontail, snowshoe hare, white-tailed jackrabbit, ground squirrels and other small mammals.

Avian species known to use the allotment include hairy, downy, pileated and three-toed woodpeckers, brown creeper, grouse, northern flicker, mountain chickadee, red-breasted nuthatch, chipping sparrow, gray jay, Clark's nutcracker, common raven, dark-eyed junco, pine siskin, mountain bluebird, Townsend's solitaire, western tanager, great-horned, northern saw-whet, and northern pygmy owls, yellow-rumped warbler, Cooper's and sharp-shinned hawks, Cassin's finch, red crossbill, red-naped sapsucker, ruby-crowned and golden-crowned kinglets, hermit thrush, and vesper and savannah sparrows.

Habitat dominated by sagebrush/grasslands provide important habitat for grassland species and sagebrush obligates including BLM sensitive species such as sage grouse and sage thrasher. Other BLM sensitive species suspected or known to be found in the allotment include Brewer's sparrow, golden eagle, northern goshawk, great gray owl, boreal toad, wolverine, fisher, and grey wolf.

Elk can be found in the allotment year-round but winter range is located at lower elevations and along windswept slopes. The allotment also provides and an important corridor for elk moving between the Pinter Mountains and the Mount Haggin Wildlife Management Area.

The allotment also provides mule deer winter range as well as calving habitat for both elk and deer. Moose can be found anywhere in the allotment but use is concentrated along riparian habitats. The Jerry Creek Allotment is within the transition zone between

shrubland/grassland and forested habitats and provides essential habitat requirements for big game species.

Habitat for two species listed under the Endangered Species Act, Canada lynx and grizzly bear, is found throughout the allotment. The allotment is within suitable denning and travel habitat for lynx but provides very limited foraging habitat. Although the allotment is not within a designated recovery or distribution zone for grizzly bear, the allotment does provide habitat and movement corridors for the grizzly bear and grizzly bear sightings do occur in the area.

Wildlife habitat in the allotment has been impacted by both anthropogenic and natural events. High road densities reduced the quality of wildlife habitat in the allotment but the Upper Big Hole Travel Plan closed half of the open roads, 21 miles, in the allotment. An additional 19.5 miles will be closed during the critical winter season to protect wintering big game and other species. Road closures and seasonal restrictions will significantly reduce disturbance to wildlife and improve habitat in the allotment.

Fire suppression and change in fire frequency has changed open Douglas-fir “savannah” habitat to dense thickets of Douglas-fir. Spruce budworm is reducing the health of Douglas-fir while lodgepole pine stands are experiencing high mortality due to epidemic levels of mountain pine beetle. Both upland and riparian aspen has significantly declined throughout the allotment.

Conifer colonization is reducing the amount and quality of sagebrush, grass and forbs in the allotment. Although weed infestations are low compared to other areas in the field office, weeds are still having a negative impact on wildlife habitat in the allotment.

Riparian habitats throughout the allotment have been impacted by heavy cattle grazing and timber management. Several streams (Spring Gulch, Jimmie New Creek, and Patton Gulch) are lacking aspen and willow regeneration. Streams that were clear-cut in the 1980’s along Jimmie New Creek are downcutting, have heavy sediment loading, and loss of down woody material. The loss of beaver due to trapping or lack of food source for this species has resulted in fewer pools and willow thickets that would have been provided by beaver dam complexes in several stream reaches of the allotment. Pools and willow thickets that would have been provided by beaver dam complexes are gone and streams are now lacking in habitat diversity.

Although the allotment still provides wildlife habitat for a variety of species, the uplands are experiencing a decline in both quality and quantity of habitat due to conifer colonization of sagebrush meadows and forest insects. Riparian habitat has declined substantially throughout the allotment due to a loss of aspen and willow communities and beaver dam complexes. Overall, the allotment is not providing habitat necessary to maintain a viable and diverse populations of native wildlife species, including special status species.

Sensitive Plants

Lemhi penstemmon is located adjacent to the Jerry Creek Allotment, and no populations were identified during the allotment evaluation. A small population of linear-leaf fleabane has been identified in the Dickie Hills area of the allotment. The population is located in area that receives very limited wildlife use and virtually no livestock grazing due to the topography and terrain. The allotment will continue to support the fleabane under current management.

Preliminary Identification of Causal Factors and Recommendations

Based on the field review and observations, it appears the following factors may be contributing to land health standards not being achieved:

Forest health conditions. Almost all of the large stands of lodgepole pine are being decimated by the mountain and western pine beetle. Also, many acres of Douglas-fir forested areas are being altered by the spruce budworm and Douglas-fir beetle.

- Stream bank trampling.
- Stream conditions from historic logging along these riparian reaches.
- Erosion, sedimentation and altered stream morphology from historic mining and the Anaconda smelter.
- Changes in the natural fire regime.
- Historic logging.
- Heavy browsing of woody riparian vegetation.

Final determinations will be made upon assessment of further information. It should be noted that if changing a current management or use will not result in progress toward meeting the standards, then the current management or use should not be considered a significant causal factor.

The following actions may be necessary in order to make significant progress in achieving the Western Montana Standards for Rangeland Health:

- Excluding grazing along Cat Creek.
- Additions of downed woody material to a number of riparian reaches.
- Reclamation of a roadway and a slope to prevent additional sediment supply and decrease stream energy into the new reach, inventoried, near the West Fork of Jimmie New Creek.
- Thinning and burning of timber stands in the allotment to create healthier forest conditions that mimic natural fire regimes.

How This Information Will Be Used

If the information in this Evaluation Report indicates that the allotment meets the Western Montana Standards for Rangeland Health, BLM will issue grazing decision(s) (subject to protest and appeal) to renew or issue associated grazing authorizations as necessary, with the appropriate level of NEPA documentation and public involvement in

accordance with CEQ guidance and BLM direction. No additional final determinations are necessary.

For allotments not meeting the Western Montana Standards for Rangeland Health, BLM will use the information in this Evaluation Report along with any other relevant data or information, including input from interested parties, to make a final determination whether or not current grazing management or levels of use are a significant causal factor in not meeting rangeland health standards on the allotment. If current grazing management and/or levels of use appear to be a significant causal factor, BLM will use the NEPA process to document the affected environment and develop alternatives to propose changes to grazing management to facilitate achieving rangeland health standards. These changes or actions will be addressed with an appropriate level of NEPA documentation and public involvement in accordance with CEQ guidance and BLM direction. A Final Determination Document will be prepared in concert with the NEPA analysis and associated decision(s). Pursuant to 43 CFR 4180.2(c), the Authorized Officer shall take appropriate action as soon as practicable, but not later than the start of the next grazing year upon determining that existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use on public lands are significant factors in failing to achieve the standards. Any grazing decisions, however, are subject to protest and appeal.

If current grazing management or levels of use do not appear to be a significant causal factor, changes or activities in other program areas or activities that appear to be significant causal factors may or may not be undertaken through a NEPA process, dependent on program and office priorities. However, a Final Determination Document will be prepared to document and outline the significant causal factors.

Involvement of Permittees, State Agencies and Interested Publics

The following groups/individuals were notified of the Jerry Creek Allotment Assessment:

All grazing permittees authorized to graze on the allotment

Western Watersheds Project

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest
Wise River Ranger District

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
Butte Area Resource Office

BLM Staff Participants

The following BLM staff participated in the preparation of this report:

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