

**Executive Summary and Authorized Officer's Determination
For the
Centennial Watershed Assessment**



Price Creek Allotment, July 2014

**Bureau of Land Management
Dillon Field Office
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This document summarizes the findings of the Centennial Watershed (CW) Assessment conducted during the 2014 field season. The watershed has 36 grazing allotments which include 83,102 BLM administered acres. This area includes public lands administered by the BLM within two hydrologic unit code (HUC) 5 boundaries; upper and lower Centennial Valley.

The Centennial Watershed Assessment Report describes the existing condition of BLM administered lands within the watershed. The assessment also presents management and project recommendations for improving resource conditions where needed. Please refer to the Assessment Report for a complete discussion of resource conditions, concerns and management opportunities.

In January 2015, the BLM began National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation. The NEPA document includes all BLM-administered public lands covered in the Centennial Assessment. Alternative management was analyzed wherever it was determined that allotments were not meeting the Standards, allotments were meeting the Standards but had site specific resource concerns, there were habitat concerns, unhealthy forest conditions, and/or fuels conditions outside the natural range of variability. Alternatives were also developed for travel management to both, correct mapping errors and enhance access to public lands within the watershed.

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 not be meeting the standards; however, considering broader scope and scale, the area may be in proper functioning condition. No single indicator provides sufficient information to determine rangeland health; they are used in combination to provide information necessary to determine rangeland health. Alternatively, just because a standard is being met does not mean that the conditions on the ground represent desired resource condition or objectives. For example, an upland site with reduced composition of bunchgrasses may meet the upland health standard if it sustains a native plant community, even if it is dominated by low producing, low palatability grasses, shrubs and or forbs. While such a site may have stable soils and allow for proper hydrologic function, it won't provide the forage, cover or structure that it would if it was dominated by taller, more palatable plants.

In addition, every riparian reach or acre of upland habitat does not need to be rated as PFC for the allotment to meet standards. The scope of the resource being assessed and relative importance of riparian/wetland habitat or upland sites within the context of the allotment as a whole is considered to determine if the allotment is meeting standards or not. For example, if an allotment has 15 miles of riparian habitat and 13 miles habitat is functioning properly while 2 miles is functioning at risk, the relative importance of the two miles that is functioning at risk is considered in making an overall determination of meeting the riparian health standard or not. If the two miles of stream functioning at risk has fisheries habitat or is contributing to water quality impairment, the allotment would not meet the riparian health standard. However, if the two miles of stream functioning at risk are low energy, isolated intermittent reaches or spring brooks, not hydrologically connected to larger bodies of water, the allotment as a whole may meet the riparian health standard and these isolated reaches will be addressed as site specific resource concerns.

The table below summarizes the determination of rangeland health standards by allotment. It also briefly describes the significant causal factors identified by the interdisciplinary team (IDT) on allotments where one or more of the Standards are not in compliance.

Allotment Name, Number, & BLM Acres	Are Healthy Rangelands Standards Being Met?					Contributing factors in failing to meet Standards.
	Upland	Riparian Wetland	Water Quality	Air Quality	Bio-diversity	
7L SGC 20153 Acres: 343	YES	YES	NO ²	YES	YES	Red Rock River is on the Montana DEQ 303(d) list of impaired streams.
Antelope Peak 20179 Acres:2338	YES	NO	N/A	YES	YES	Livestock impacts to reach 1750.
Bean Place 10125 Acres: 129	YES	YES	N/A	YES	YES	Standards Achieved
Brundage Bridge 20707 Acres: 382	YES	YES	NO ²	YES	YES	Red Rock River is on the Montana DEQ 303(d) list of impaired streams.
Brundage Creek 20707 Acres: 4118	YES	YES	1	YES	YES	Standards Achieved
Cayuse 03234 Acres: 475	YES	N/A	N/A	YES	YES	Standards Achieved
Centennial 20710 Acres: 527	YES	N/A	N/A	YES	YES	Standards Achieved
Centennial Isolated 20641 Acres: 40	YES	N/A	N/A	YES	YES	Standards Achieved
Cocanougher Ind. 10738 Acres: 45	YES	YES	NO ²	YES	YES	Red Rock River is on the Montana DEQ 303(d) list of impaired streams.
Curlew 20199 Acres: 181	YES	YES	N/A	YES	YES	Standards Achieved

Allotment Name, Number, & BLM Acres	Are Healthy Rangelands Standards Being Met?					Contributing factors in failing to meet Standards.
	Upland	Riparian Wetland	Water Quality	Air Quality	Bio-diversity	
Davis SGC Common 10737 Acres: 446	YES	YES	NO ²	YES	YES	Hell Roaring Creek is on the Montana DEQ 303(d) list of impaired streams.
Duff Creek AMP 20688 Acres: 3344	YES	YES	NO ²	YES	YES	O'Dell Creek is on the Montana DEQ 303(d) list of impaired streams.
Fish Creek 20172 Acres: 3706	YES	NO	NO ²	YES	YES	Ungulate impacts to Metzel Creek (trampling, pugging). Fish Creek is on the Montana DEQ 303(d) list of impaired streams.
Jones SGC 20731 Acres: 122	YES	YES	N/A	YES	YES	Standards Achieved
Lima Reservoir AMP 10151 Acres: 5122	YES	YES	N/A	YES	YES	Standards Achieved
Long Creek AMP 20154 Acres: 4476	YES	NO	NO ²	YES	YES	Ungulate impacts to riparian area (trampling, pugging) in West Creek pasture. Long Creek is on the Montana DEQ 303(d) list of impaired streams.
Long Creek SGC 20157 Acres: 117	YES	N/A	1	YES	YES	Standards Achieved
Lousy Springs 00763 Acres: 621	YES	N/A	N/A	YES	YES	Standards Achieved
Mata-stib SGC 10696 Acres: 472	YES	YES	N/A	YES	YES	Standards Achieved

Allotment Name, Number, & BLM Acres	Are Healthy Rangelands Standards Being Met?					Contributing factors in failing to meet Standards.
	Upland	Riparian Wetland	Water Quality	Air Quality	Bio-diversity	
McCandless Brothers SGC 20185 Acres: 300	YES	YES	N/A	YES	YES	Standards Achieved
Monida-Corral Creek 00766 Acres: 72	YES	N/A	N/A	YES	YES	Standards Achieved
Monida Hill 20023 Acres: 6462	YES	YES	1	YES	YES	Standards Achieved
Morton Ind/SGC 20163 Acres: 470	NO	NO	NO ²	YES	NO	Composition and vigor of cool season grasses. Ungulate impacts to riparian areas (trampling, pugging). Corral Creek is on the Montana DEQ 303(d) list of impaired streams.
Mud Lake 30260 Acres: 1083	YES	YES	1	YES	YES	Standards Achieved
Oxbow 20735 Acres: 3254	YES	YES	NO ²	YES	YES	Red Rock River is on the Montana DEQ 303(d) list of impaired streams.
Passmore/SGC 20183 Acres: 83	YES	YES	NO ²	YES	YES	Jones Creek is on the Montana DEQ 303(d) list of impaired streams.
Peet Creek 10730 Acres: 4750	YES	YES	NO ²	YES	YES	Peet Creek is on the Montana DEQ 303(d) list of impaired streams.
Price Creek 30040 Acres: 14562	YES	YES	NO ²	YES	YES	Price Creek is on the Montana DEQ 303(d) list of impaired streams.

Allotment Name, Number, & BLM Acres	Are Healthy Rangelands Standards Being Met?					Contributing factors in failing to meet Standards.
	Upland	Riparian Wetland	Water Quality	Air Quality	Bio-diversity	
Red Rock 30636 Acres: 267	NO	NO	NO ²	YES	NO	Composition and vigor of cool season grasses. Undesirable and/or noxious weeds. Red Rock River is on the Montana DEQ 303(d) list of impaired streams.
Richie SGC 30610 Acres: 160	YES	YES	N/A	YES	YES	Standards Achieved
Rody Ind. 20685 Acres: 414	NO	N/A	N/A	YES	NO	Composition and vigor of cool season grasses. Undesirable and/or noxious weeds.
Saier Ind. 20169 Acres: 321	YES	N/A	N/A	YES	YES	Standards Achieved
Sand Dunes 20732 Acres: 665	YES	N/A	N/A	YES	YES	Standards Achieved
Shambo Units 20152 Acres: 11660	YES	YES	NO ²	YES	YES	Jones Creek is on the Montana DEQ 303(d) list of impaired streams.
Shineberger 20159 Acres: 277	YES	YES	N/A	YES	YES	Standards Achieved
Tom Creek 20701 Acres: 2806	YES	YES	NO ²	YES	YES	Tom Creek is on the Montana DEQ 303(d) list of impaired streams.
<p>1 Tributary streams in the CW are not on the 303(d) list, are not priority streams, and are not scheduled to be evaluated by the DEQ.</p> <p>2 The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has the responsibility for making water quality determinations and has completed its evaluation of 303(d)-listed streams.</p>						

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has the responsibility for making water quality and beneficial use support determinations. Every 2 years DEQ prepares a Water Quality Integrated Report (WQIR) for the USEPA. The 2014 Report is being prepared at this time and DEQ has issued data calls. The report will be issued in 2015. These reports are posted on Montana's Clean Water Act Information Center (CWAIC) website. The CWAIC website

contains Summary and Assessment Reports for impaired lakes and streams and was utilized to make Water Quality Determinations. The CWAIC Assessment Report provides more detailed information and is available at the CWAIC website (<http://deq.mt.gov/wqinfo/CWAIC/default.mcp>). Tributary streams in the CW are not priority streams, are not evaluated by DEQ, and are not on the 303(d) list. While the BLM does not make water quality determinations, issues and concerns are documented and recommendations are developed to address these concerns. Fourteen allotments are **not** meeting this standard based on DEQ water quality determinations. These allotments are:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. 7L SGC | 8. Morton Individual/SGC |
| 2. Brundage Bridge | 9. Oxbow |
| 3. Cocanougher | 10. Passmore/sgc |
| 4. Davis SGC Common | 11. Peet Creek |
| 5. Duff Creek | 12. Red Rock |
| 6. Fish Creek | 13. Shambo Units |
| 7. Long Creek AMP | 14. Tom Creek |

Of these fourteen allotments, four of them did not meet the upland and/or riparian health standard and authorizations or activities on BLM administered lands may be contributing to impaired water quality on streams within these allotments. These four allotments include Fish Creek, Long Creek AMP, Morton Individual/SGC and Red Rock. On the remaining ten allotments, uses currently authorized by BLM are not contributing to impaired water quality.

NEPA Documentation

The Dillon Field Office has completed the Centennial Watershed Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-MT-B050-2015-011-EA) during the winter/spring of 2015. Within this EA, the BLM Dillon Field Office has presented and analyzed a reasonable range of management alternatives based on the recommendations from the Centennial Watershed Assessment report and public scoping. Before implementation of any of the alternatives analyzed in the Centennial Watershed EA, the BLM will offer a public comment period, prepare a Proposed Decision and follow the guidance for administrative remedies. Implementation of new plans will begin upon the Authorized Officer's decision becoming final and may take several years to fully implement.

For more information, please review the Centennial Watershed Assessment Report or contact the Dillon Field Office at (406) 683-8000.

Authorized Officer's Determination:

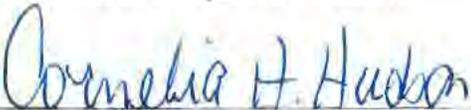
Based on my review of the Assessment Team's recommendations and other relevant data and information, I have determined that the following allotments within the Centennial Watershed **meet** the Standards for Rangeland (Land) Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management for BLM lands in Montana:

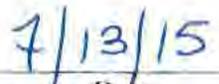
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|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. 7L SGC | 16. Mata-stib SGC |
| 2. Bean Place | 17. McCandless Brothers SGC |
| 3. Brundage Bridge | 18. Monida-Corral Creek |
| 4. Brundage Creek | 19. Monida Hill |
| 5. Cayuse | 20. Mud Lake |
| 6. Centennial | 21. Oxbow |
| 7. Centennial Isolated | 22. Passmore/SGC |
| 8. Cocanougher Individual | 23. Peet Creek |
| 9. Curlew | 24. Price Creek |
| 10. Davis SGC Common | 25. Ritchie SGC |
| 11. Duff Creek AMP | 26. Saier Individual |
| 12. Jones SGC | 27. Sand Dunes |
| 13. Lima Reservoir AMP | 28. Shambo Unit |
| 14. Long Creek SGC | 29. Shineberger |
| 15. Lousy Springs | 30. Tom Creek |

I have determined that the following six allotments **do not** meet the Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management for BLM lands in Montana and that current livestock management is a significant causal factor in the land health standards not being met.

1. Antelope Peak
2. Fish Creek
3. Long Creek AMP
4. Morton Individual/SGC
5. Red Rock
6. Rody Individual

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. Appropriate action means implementing actions that will result in significant progress toward fulfillment of the standards. Practices and activities subject to standards and guidelines include the development or revision of Allotment Management Plans (AMP), establishment of terms and conditions of permits, leases and other grazing authorizations, and range improvement activities such as vegetation manipulation, fence construction and development of water.


Dillon Field Manager


Date