

ALTERNATIVE 4

Under this alternative, the Green Mountain Common Allotment (GMCA) would be divided into two separate grazing allotments (see Alternative 4 map). The existing Green Mountain Use Area and the Hadsell Pasture would be separated from the current GMCA and made into a new allotment. The remaining area, which represents the majority of acreage, would remain one large grazing allotment. New allotment names would be given to each of the two allotments based on dominant geographic features within their respective boundaries as displayed in the following table:

Current Name	New Allotment Name	Number of Pastures	Total Acres
Green Mountain Common Allotment	Alkali Creek Common	5 Pastures	467,932
Green Mountain Use Area	Green Mountain Allotment	6 Pastures	51,233

The Alkali Creek Common Allotment would be managed under a one-herd, rest-rotation grazing system. The Green Mountain Allotment (old Green Mountain Use Area) would be managed under a deferred-rotation grazing system. Active livestock herding would be required and a key part of this alternative. The grazing season would be shortened, and the active AUM's would be reduced to the historic averages (actual use over a 25 year period).

The existing use areas within the new Alkali Creek Common Allotment would be combined to create five large grazing pastures. Sheep grazing would occur within the Alkali Creek Common and within the Alkali Creek Sheep Use Area. Lambing, docking and shipping would be done primarily in the Alkali Creek Sheep Use Area. Allotment management plans would be developed for both grazing allotments. The following proposal, in greater detail, constitutes Alternative 4:

1. Use Levels – Under Alternative 4, livestock use levels would be reduced to the historic active use level on both allotments. The long-term average (1980-2004) is 49% of permitted use. This means that over the course of the past 25 years, the average level of active grazing use that has been authorized on the GMCA is about 49%.

As background information, some of the present day GMCA permitted AUMs were once in fall-winter-spring sheep use. The permitted use in the Seven Lakes Common Allotment (SLCA) was transferred to the Lander Field Office (LFO) in 1980 from the Rawlins Field Office (RFO). The SLCA was permitted for both sheep and cattle grazing use. The conversion ratios for sheep to cattle were analyzed in the Seven Lakes Grazing EIS. However, many years prior to this EIS, several sheep permits were converted to cattle permits. These conversions were made at the standard five sheep to one cow ratio. A suitability analysis was not used to ensure that there was sufficient water and forage available to accommodate livestock, big game, and wild horse needs. Presently, cattle

still concentrate around water sources, resulting in poor distribution of livestock, with some areas receiving heavy grazing and other areas, light grazing (Seven Lakes Final Grazing EIS, 1978, Green Mountain Final Grazing EIS 1982, BLM EA No. WY050-EA9-039, 1999 and BLM GMCA Evaluation, 2002). Consequently, the historic authorized use levels (49 percent) on GMCA reflect the available summer cattle AUMs within service areas of the limited water sources present during this time period.

The following table represents the use levels (AUMs) proposed under Alternative 4 for both allotments combined, by livestock kind or ungulate species:

Livestock or Wildlife Species	Animal Unit Months Allocated
Cattle	17,596 (3,519 head x 5 months)
Sheep	5,611 (2,338 head x 12 months)
Wild horses (upper AML)	3,550
Antelope	2,050
Mule Deer	2,960
Elk	2,270
Moose	130

Note: Animal Unit Month (AUM) is defined as the amount of forage required to support a cow-calf or five sheep for one (1) month.

Because of the suitability issue discussed above, twelve new water wells would be drilled and equipped in the South Arapahoe and Picket Lake Pastures of the Alkali Creek Common Allotment to support the water needs for the entire herd (at one time). The installation of these wells is dependent on funding availability; therefore, until all water wells are developed, authorized livestock numbers for both cattle and sheep will need to be temporarily reduced from the historical average. The authorized numbers would gradually increase to the historic average as the water wells are developed. The goal is to have all necessary water wells developed during a six year period. Water hauling would be authorized on a case-by-case basis to minimize the overall reduction in livestock numbers until these six wells are developed.

2. Livestock Season of Use – Under Alternative 4, the cattle turn-out date for the Green Mountain Allotment would be May 1 (depending on range readiness conditions) and the off-date would be October 1, for a total of 154 days. This would be a reduction of approximately 30 days from the current season of use. The cattle turn-out date for the Alkali Creek Common Allotment would be May 1 (depending on range readiness conditions) and the off-date would be September 17, for a total of 140 days. This would be a net reduction of approximately 44 days from the current season of use. This reduction is needed to lessen the number of grazing days per pasture in order to provide rest and deferment that will provide for long term riparian area recovery. Sheep use would be year-long or 365 days, from March 1 to February 28. The total number of sheep would be 2,338 divided into two bands.

Both use levels and season of use would apply only under normal conditions and would not preclude adjustment for unexpected occurrences that would affect forage availability such as drought, wildfire, etc.

3. Range Improvements – Under this alternative, the schedule of proposed fence construction and water development included in the 1999 Decision would continue to be implemented. The development of these range improvements would help balance the needs of grazing permittees and provide for sustainable, long-term rangeland health. These improvements included 48 miles of fencing to protect riparian and other sensitive areas and development of 68 springs, wells, and reservoirs to provide water for both livestock and wildlife. It is recognized that there would not be sufficient range improvement funds to provide for the construction of these improvements and that cost-sharing between BLM and the permittees would be necessary. The BLM would also work with the Wyoming Department of Agriculture and Wyoming Water Development Commission as a source of additional funding for the development of these water projects.

The timeframe for developing the 12 wells would be approximately 6 years. This means that during the time that livestock are in the South Arapahoe and Picket Lake Pastures, authorized numbers would need to be temporarily reduced so there is enough water for them to use. The authorized livestock numbers would be increased annually (up to the historical average), as these new wells are developed and able to sustain increased livestock numbers. Water hauling would be authorized in these two pastures to allow for improved livestock distribution and to provide additional water for livestock so the overall reduction in livestock numbers is lessened.

In order to divide the Green Mountain Allotment from the Alkali Creek Common Allotment and to provide additional management options, approximately 19 miles of new fences would be constructed. This would include 7 miles of fence along the southern portion of the Sheep Creek Pasture, 6 miles along the south and west boundaries of the Willow Creek Pasture, 2 miles along the south and west portion of the Hadsell Pasture and 4 miles along the south and west portions of the Crooks Creek Riparian Pasture (see attached Alternative 4 map).

Under this alternative, temporary electric fences would be authorized on a case-by-case basis for the purposes of controlling livestock use in sensitive riparian areas. If approved, these fences would be limited to three strands of smooth wire and would require the grazing permittee to remove the fence after livestock use has taken place. The construction of permanent corner brace posts may be authorized on a limited basis on pre-selected sites to provide the grazing permittees with increased flexibility and management options.

4. Use Areas / Pastures – The 6 major use areas within the current GMCA would be converted to five large grazing pastures to form the Alkali Creek Common Allotment. The remaining use area (Alkali Creek Sheep Use Area) would not be used as a

component of the grazing system for cattle. The table below describes the pastures in the new Alkali Creek Common Allotment and the number of acres in each pasture:

Pasture Name	Total Acres	BLM-Administered Public Land
Happy Springs	72,882	94%
North Arapahoe	86,063	91%
South Arapahoe	99,536	94%
Picket Lake	86,261	95%
Antelope Hills	110,001	87%

5. Grazing Systems and Treatments – Under this alternative, the Alkali Creek Common Allotment would operate under a 5-pasture, rest-rotation grazing system as described below:

	YEAR ONE		YEAR TWO		YEAR THREE		YEAR FOUR		YEAR FIVE	
Pasture Name	Rotation Order	Days of Grazing	Rotation Order	Days of Grazing	Rotation Order	Days of Grazing	Rotation Order	Days of Grazing	Rotation Order	Days of Grazing
Happy Springs	1 st	45	Rest	0	4th	30	3rd	30	2nd	35
North Arapahoe	2 nd	35	1st	45	Rest	0	4th	30	3rd	30
South Arapahoe	3 rd	30	2nd	35	1st	45	Rest	0	4th	30
Picket Lake	4 th	30	3rd	30	2nd	35	1st	45	Rest	0
Antelope Hills	Rest	0	4th	30	3rd	30	2nd	35	1st	45
Total Days		140		140		140		140		140

The Alkali Creek Sheep Use Area would not be grazed by cattle. Sheep would continue grazing the Alkali Creek Sheep Use Area under a spring and fall/winter continuous seasonal grazing system. Under this alternative, cattle trailing would only be authorized in the turnout pasture in the spring and the fourth pasture in the fall. Trailing would not be authorized across the deferred and rest pastures.

The Green Mountain Use Area would be separated from the GMCA and become its own grazing allotment as described above. The allotment name would be the Green Mountain Allotment and would use a modified 6-pasture deferred rotation grazing system. The following grazing systems would be implemented on these two allotments:

Allotment or Use Area Name	Grazing System
Alkali Creek Sheep Use Area	One-pasture, spring and fall / winter continuous-seasonal grazing.
Green Mountain Allotment	Six-pasture deferred rotation grazing.

Adjustments to the timing, duration, and levels to be grazed would be based on periodic evaluations of allotment conditions. Under this alternative, livestock grazing would be closed to further use in the pasture(s) that has already been used. Livestock that are found and identified in a pasture that has already been used would be considered in trespass and appropriate administrative action would be taken on the offending permittee.

The following vegetation treatments (see vegetation treatment map for Alternative 4) would be applied within the Alkali Creek Common and Green Mountain Allotments over a 10 to 15 year period:

Treatment Type	Location	Acres	Comment
Prescribed Burn	Cottonwood Creek	5,700	Habitat Enhancement
Prescribed Burn	Crooks/Fremont/Happy Springs Area	6,600	Habitat Enhancement
Prescribed Burn	Jost/1 st /4 th Creek Area	3,300	Habitat Enhancement
Prescribed Burn	Pickett Creek	4,200	Habitat Enhancement
Prescribed Burn	Magpie/Mason Creeks	3,000	Habitat Enhancement
Mechanical Treatment	East Fork Cottonwood Area	35	Fuels Reduction in Aspen Stand
Total Acres		22,835	

Noxious weeds would continue to be inventoried and treated in accordance with existing policy and BLM regulations.

6. Salt and Mineral Placement – Under Alternative 4, salt and mineral supplements would be located at least 0.5 mile from water sources to promote better livestock distribution and discourage livestock from concentrating near these water sources.

7. Herding of Livestock – Under Alternative 4, herding would be mandatory on both allotments. The BLM, in cooperation with the GMCA permittees, and the Wyoming Department of Agriculture would secure funding to conduct one additional “low stress livestock herding” training session within the first 3 years of when the AMP is developed. Monitoring of active herding, by the BLM, would be done routinely and would be considered successful if stubble height requirements and riparian objectives are being met. The BLM would encourage the establishment of a recognized grazing association with by-laws and protocol for each permittee to follow. Included in this would be rules regarding fence maintenance responsibilities, herding requirements and other proactive management actions.

8. Flexibility – Under Alternative 4, flexibility in yearly grazing operations would be addressed through the development of an annual operating plan for each allotment. These operating plans would adjust authorized use, pasture rotations, turnout dates / pastures, and gathering dates / pastures based on range readiness, range conditions, and permittee needs. These constraints would be discussed with the permittees at an annual pre-turnout meeting in mid-April of each year.

9. Riparian Management Pastures – Under Alternative 4, the 1999 Decision would continue to be implemented regarding riparian management pastures. The 1999 Decision provided for the establishment of seven riparian management pastures to allow for rest and recovery of key riparian areas. These pastures would vary in amount of rest, season of use, and duration of use as follows:

Riparian Pasture	Prescribed Use	Status
West Fork of Crooks Creek	3 years initial rest followed by spring or fall grazing (but not both) not to exceed 15-30 days.	Completed
Ice Slough	3 years initial rest followed by spring or fall grazing (but not both) not to exceed 15-30 days.	Completed
Warm Springs	3 years initial rest followed by spring or fall grazing (but not both) not to exceed 15-30 days.	Completed
Long Slough	1 year initial rest followed by spring grazing of up to 30 days.	Completed
Sweetwater River	3-5 years initial rest followed by spring grazing of up to 30 days.	Not Completed
Crooks Creek-Bare Ring Slough	10 years initial rest followed by spring or fall grazing (but not both) not to exceed 15-30 days.	Completed
Lost Creek	3 years initial rest followed by spring or fall grazing (but not both) not to exceed 15-30 days.	Not Completed

Construction of the two remaining riparian management pastures would be constructed as funding is available.

10. Predator Control – Alternative 4 is the same as Alternative 1, which incorporates existing BLM policy. The permittee/lessee and/or his/her employees would not use or place poison or M-44 devices for prairie dog or predator control on BLM-administered public lands. Predator, prairie dog or trophy animal predation control actions will be carried out by the Animal and Plant Health and Inspection Service (APHIS), Wildlife Services (WS), or the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, or whoever has the responsibility for the offending species. If predation problems and conflicts with prairie

dogs arise, the permittee/lessee would immediately notify the BLM Lander Field Office and the appropriate agency.

11. Vegetation and Land Treatments – The 1999 Decision allows for the planning and implementation of land treatments to modify the existing plant community and control undesirable plant species. These treatments could include the use of prescribed burning, mechanical treatments, herbicide treatments, or other acceptable methods and would be planned and coordinated with other federal and state agencies and private landowners to the greatest practical extent.

In the case of each treatment, the method to be used would be dependent upon such factors as environmental impacts, effectiveness, safety, cost-effectiveness, practicality, etc. and would be evaluated for compliance with the Final EIS – Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States, 1991, and the Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program Final EIS, 1985.

12. Allotment Monitoring and Evaluation – Under this alternative, the BLM, in cooperation and consultation with the grazing permittees of both allotments, the University of Wyoming Extension Service (UWCES), Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) and Interested Publics would develop and implement a monitoring plan to determine whether the new Allotment Management Plan is meeting the intended goals and objectives.

The BLM in cooperation with the UWCES, WDA, WDEQ and Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) would train and encourage the Alkali Creek Common and Green Mountain grazing permittees to assume a larger role in conducting and implementing the monitoring requirements described above. In the long term, grazing permittees would be expected to initiate pasture moves based on the vegetative monitoring data they collect. Once the grazing permittees are able to effectively conduct this monitoring, BLM managers would periodically confirm their monitoring results to ensure proper protocols are being followed.

This alternative provides for a comprehensive allotment monitoring and evaluation program to measure such factors as range condition and trend, vegetation attributes, forage utilization, grazing impacts, precipitation, water quality, soil quality, and actual use. The information gathered from monitoring these parameters would be used to determine forage production and utilization levels and evaluate the effects of grazing on vegetation, water quality, and soils. This would aid BLM managers in deciding whether adjustments in stocking levels, season and duration of use, and other management considerations should be made. All monitoring would be conducted in accordance with BLM approved methods.

Allowable livestock forage utilization levels under this alternative would be similar to Alternative 1, except that specific standards would be identified by plant community as described in the table below. Monitoring would take place in key areas identified in the 1999 decision. In general, each pasture would have at least two key areas.

Plant Community Type and Monitoring Method	** Forage Utilization Standard	When Would Standard be Implemented?
Riparian Vegetation (Stubble Height Method)	6 Inch Stubble Height within key areas	During the last two pastures of the grazing rotation
Willows (Browse Method)	35-45% use on leader growth (not all key areas would be monitored for willow use. Site-specific locations would be identified).	During the last two pastures of grazing rotation
Upland Vegetation (Height-Weight Method)	35-45% use on herbaceous key species within key areas	35% use during the last two pastures of the grazing rotation

** Stubble height monitoring would be conducted during the grazing season and again after livestock are removed from their respective allotments. During the time livestock are in the first two pastures of the rotation schedule, stubble height monitoring would not be used as a move indicator. If livestock are in either of the last two pastures of the rotation sequence, and stubble height monitoring indicates the utilization standard has been reached, livestock would be moved to the last pasture of the rotation schedule or off the allotment if in the last pasture.

Water quality monitoring would be conducted in cooperation with the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ), the local conservation district, and other interested publics. The BLM would continue using existing PFC information and gather new information where necessary. WDEQ would follow their established protocols of monitoring to determine if beneficial uses for these water bodies are, or are not, being met. WDEQ would then make a determination to list or not to list a particular water body as impaired.

13. Drought Planning – Drought planning would be done in accordance with official BLM policy (IM No. 2003-073). This policy is based on early, pre-season, continuing and post drought assessments. Generally, the policy advocates frequent external communications with BLM grazing permittees and other interested publics. Assessments would be made by using all available data and information from a variety of professional sources before drought actions are implemented. On-the-ground conditions (e.g., residual vegetation (height, vigor, amount), snow pack and soil moisture would be assessed to determine the effects and appropriateness of continued grazing use. Rain gauges located within or adjacent to the GMCA would be used to measure and interpret vegetative production variations resulting from climatic changes. One-on-one meetings with livestock permittees and interested publics would be encouraged.

14. Sage-grouse Guidelines – The 1999 Decision included specific guidelines for the management of vegetation within sage-grouse habitat during the various stages of sage-grouse reproduction and winter survival. More recent research, however, has indicated

that the habitat characteristics listed below are more consistent with successful breeding, nesting and brood rearing.

Under this alternative, the guidelines identified below would not be used as a prescription; however, they would be used to help the BLM reach objectives for optimum sage-grouse habitat within these two allotments. The BLM would work in cooperation and consultation with the grazing permittees, interested publics and the Wind River/Sweetwater Local Sage-grouse Working Group (established by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department) to manage sage-grouse habitat based on best management practices.

Leks – Big sagebrush canopy cover adjacent to lek should be at least 20 percent and average height at least 12 inches. Grass canopy cover should be at least 25 percent with an average height of 4 to 6 inches. Lek use periods are generally between March 1 and May 15.

Nesting / Early Brood Rearing Habitat – Wyoming big sagebrush cover should be at least 15-30 percent with an average height of 11 to 32 inches. Grass/forb canopy cover should be greater than 13 percent with an average leaf height of 7 inches. Nesting and early brood rearing habitats are generally used between March 15 and July 15.

Mountain big sagebrush cover should be at least 20 percent with an average height of 16 inches. Grass/forb canopy cover should be 30 percent with an average leaf height of 6 inches.

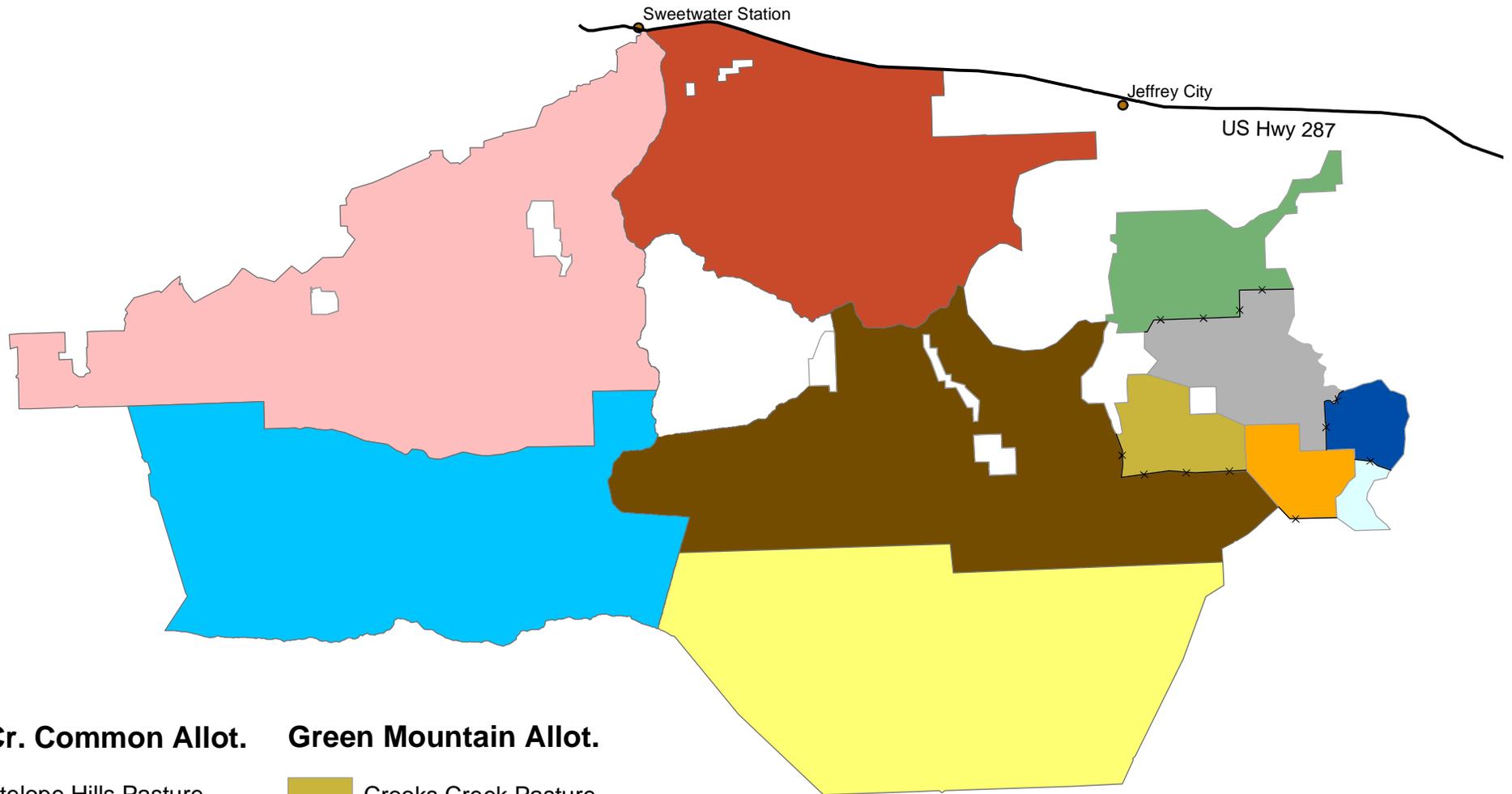
Residual Cover – Recently published research suggests that the single most important habitat characteristic in nesting success is residual perennial grass cover. Perennial grass of at least 4 inches should be left in nesting areas to provide adequate concealment for nests and chicks the following year.

Late Brood Rearing or Summer Habitat – This habitat is normally associated with meadows, springs, seeps, and other riparian areas with adjacent escape cover (sagebrush). During wetter summers or prior to herbaceous plant desiccation hens with broods may remain in sagebrush habitat and use of riparian habitats is limited. Herbaceous vegetation (grass and forbs) should be 4 to 6 inches in height to provide escape cover. Summer habitats are generally used from July 15 to September 30.

Winter Habitat – Areas identified as winter habitat should be maintained at 10-30 percent cover (Wyoming big sagebrush) with an average height of 10-14 inches above snow.

Green Mountain Area Allotments and Pastures

Alternative 4



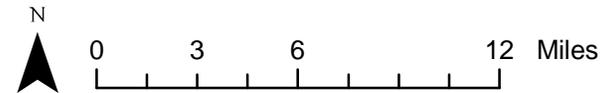
Alkali Cr. Common Allot.

- Antelope Hills Pasture
- Happy Springs Pasture
- North Arapahoe Pasture
- Picket Lake Pasture
- South Arapahoe Pasture
- Alkali Creek Sheep Pasture

Green Mountain Allot.

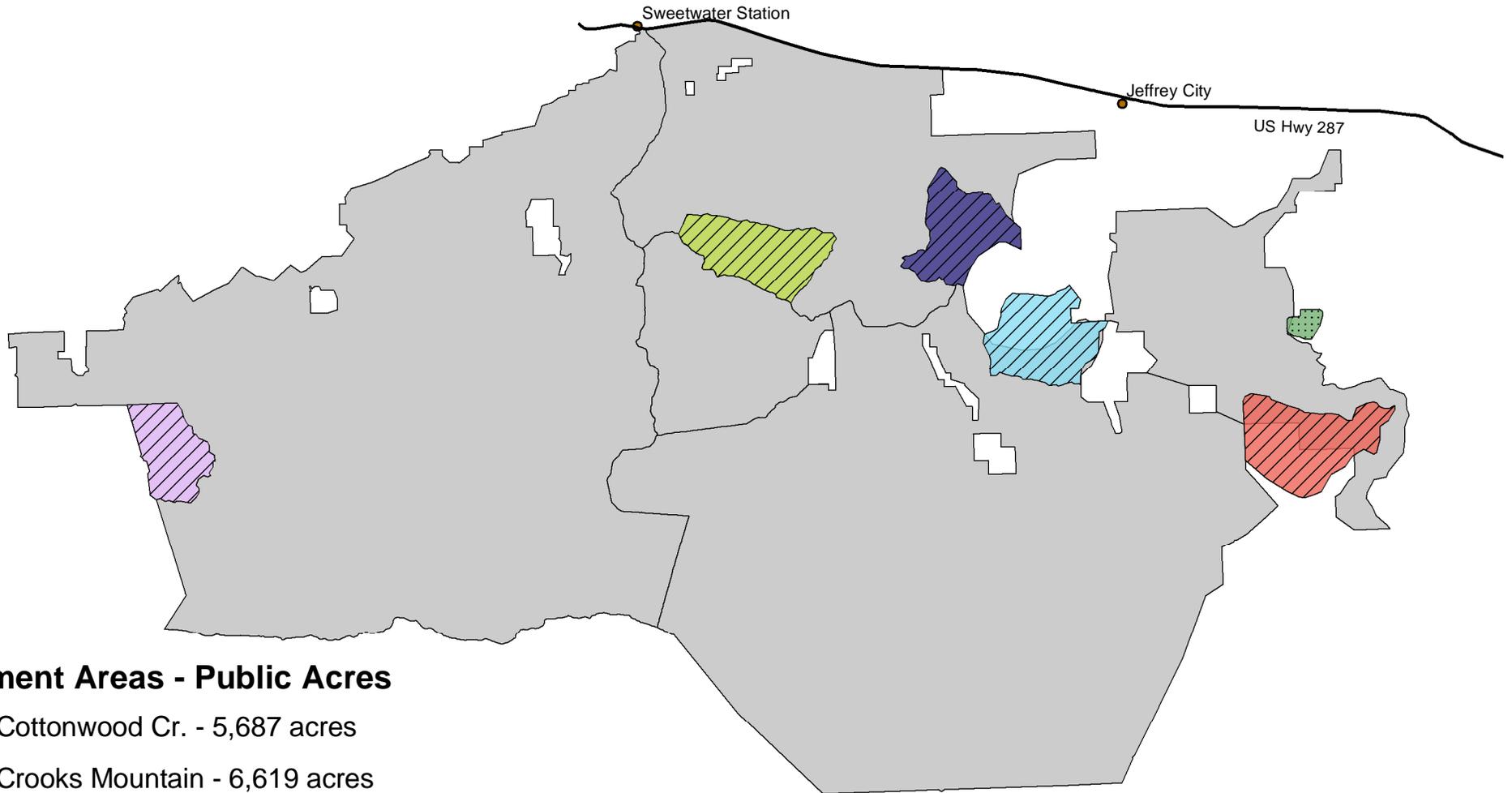
- Crooks Creek Pasture
- Hadsell Pasture
- Sheep Creek Pasture
- Stratton Rim Pasture
- Willow Creek Pasture
- Reserve Pasture

××× Proposed New Fences



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, completeness, or reliability of the information presented.

Green Mountain Common Allotment Alternative 4



Treatment Areas - Public Acres

- Cottonwood Cr. - 5,687 acres
- Crooks Mountain - 6,619 acres
- 1st/ 4th Creeks - 3,304 acres
- Magpie/ Mason Creeks - 2,971 acres
- Picket Creek - 4,208 acres
- East Fork Cottonwood Cr. - 34 acres

Treatment

- Mechanical treatment
- Prescribed burn



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