

**Determination
Standards for Rangeland Health and
Conformance with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management**

Field Office: Jarbidge Field Office	Watershed Name: Salmon Falls Creek
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Allotment Name/Number: Bracket Bench / 1096

Public Land (acres)			Streams on Public Land (miles): 5.7 Corral Creek (0.7 mi.) Brown's Creek (2.8 mi.) China Creek (0.9 mi.) Antelope Springs Creek (1.3 mi.)
Upland: 20,574	Riparian: 20	Total: 20,594	
Date(s) of Field Assessment: 2002			Name of Permittee(s): Cedar Creek Cattle Co.

Assessment Participants (Name & Discipline or Interest):

Arnie Pike, Rangeland Management Specialist
 James Klott, Wildlife Biologist
 Clare Josaitis, Natural Resource Specialist
 John Ash, Natural Resource Specialist
 Sheri Hagwood, Botanist
 Patricia Courtney, Range Technician

Standard 1 (Watersheds)

Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*]

<input type="checkbox"/> Standard doesn't apply	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meeting the Standard.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are Significant Factors.
<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress to meeting the Standard.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are not Significant Factors.
<input type="checkbox"/> Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management Guideline No(s). <u>12</u>

Rationale/Information Sources:

There was a high amount of bare ground and soil surface was susceptible to erosion at the lower elevations of the Allotment (Pastures 1 and 2). All of the other Pastures (3, 4, 5, 6) meet the indicators of the Standard

Standard 2 (Riparian Areas and Wetlands)

Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*]

<input type="checkbox"/> Standard doesn't apply	
<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting the Standard.	X Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are Significant Factors.
<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress to meeting the Standard.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are not Significant Factors.
<input type="checkbox"/> Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management Guideline No(s). <u>5</u>

Rationale/Information Sources:

Predominant vegetation along the upper portion of Browns Creek is Kentucky bluegrass, Baltic rush, rose, aspen, and willow. The upper portion of this creek has been heavily used during the hot season by livestock. In spite of the mature woody vegetation along much of this creek, livestock trailing and associated use (loafing, shading, grazing) is evident along the entire reach. Where herbaceous vegetation is present, stubble heights are shorter than what is needed to dissipate forthcoming spring flows or to capture fines during the next year's run-off. Many young willows and aspen have been hedged/rubbed to the point that they are no longer vital. Some heavily grazed Nebraska sedge is present in isolated spots along the upper portion of Browns Creek. Otherwise, no other herbaceous obligate wetland species are present.

The lower portion of Browns Creek is predominantly Baltic rush, cheatgrass, Kentucky bluegrass, and Wyoming sagebrush. Small amounts of Nebraska sedge are present in very isolated pockets, with a grazed stubble height of approximately four inches observed at the end of this year's grazing use. Stubble height on Baltic rush is higher, approximately seven to eight inches. Most use appears to be made when this part of the creek is dry.

Predominant vegetation along China Creek is willow, rose, aspen, with Wyoming big sage brush within the riparian zone. Fish are present in the creek below the waterfall. This portion of China Creek (4.5 to 5.2) has been heavily used by livestock. Young willows have been hedged. Where present, *Carex* species have been suppressed by grazing and have not produced seedheads. Grazing use is apparently limiting the opportunity for the water table to increase and the riparian zone to widen. A higher than expected amount of herbaceous facultative upland species were observed within the riparian zone.

Standard 3 (Stream Channel/Floodplain)

Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*]

<input type="checkbox"/> Standard doesn't apply	
<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting the Standard.	X Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are Significant Factors.
<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress to meeting the Standard.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are not Significant Factors.
<input type="checkbox"/> Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.	X Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management Guideline No(s). <u>5</u>

Rationale/Information Sources:

The upper portions of Brown’s Creek are entrenched and others are shallow and wide. The majority of the stream banks and many areas of the floodplain are trampled to bare soil. There is a high amount of fines in the stream. The upper portion of Browns Creek canyon is very narrow and adjacent uplands are steep (greater than 30% slope). The topography of this stretch of Browns Creek does not make it suitable for livestock use. Stream banks on the lower portion of the creek are relatively intact.

Cattle have been able to access most of the China Creek. Many stream banks are trampled and much of the stream bed is shallow and wide. In some spots, the stream channel is incised. In spite of the high level of livestock use, gravel substrates within the creek were relatively clean of fines.

Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities)

Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*]

<input type="checkbox"/> Standard doesn't apply	
X Meeting the Standard.	X Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are Significant Factors.
<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress to meeting the Standard.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are not Significant Factors.
<input type="checkbox"/> Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.	X Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management Guideline No(s). <u>12</u>

Rationale/Information Sources:

Native vegetation communities are not meeting this Standard in Pastures 1 and 2, but they are meeting this Standard in Pastures 3, 4, 5 and 6. The reasons for not meeting the indicators in Pasture 1 and 2 are low composition of bluebunch wheatgrass; low plant vigor; the presence of cheatgrass and other invasive plants (field bindweed, bur buttercup, knapweed); the low composition of nitrogen fixing legumes.

Standard 5 (Seedings)

Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*]

<input type="checkbox"/> Standard doesn't apply	
X Meeting the Standard.	X Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are Significant Factors.
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<input type="checkbox"/> Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.	X Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management Guideline No(s).

Rationale/Information Sources:

This Standard is being met in all seeded plant communities except the in Pasture 1. Invasive plants were common in this seeded plant community. Production was slightly less than expected.

Standard 6 (Exotic Plant Communities, Other than Seedings)

Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*]

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Standard doesn't apply	
<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting the Standard.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are Significant Factors.
<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress to meeting the Standard.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are not Significant Factors.
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Rationale/Information Sources:

Standard 7 (Water Quality)

Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*]

<input type="checkbox"/> Standard doesn't apply	
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<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress to meeting the Standard.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are not Significant Factors.
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Rationale/Information Sources:

There is no monitoring data on Brown's Creek and Corral Creek because of their ephemeral nature. A brief water quality summary discussion of China Creek concludes that the upper segment appears to be meeting the temperature standard and other criteria for a cold water biota stream. The main reasons for meeting cold water biota standards are attributed to the stream being directly fed by several nearby springs and the water course being very well covered with willow canopy along its entire upper stretch. No other water quality problems have been detected in this stream.

Standard 8 (Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals)

Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*]

<input type="checkbox"/> Standard doesn't apply	
X Meeting the Standard.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are Significant Factors.
<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress to meeting the Standard.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are not Significant Factors.
<input type="checkbox"/> Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management Guideline No(s).

Rationale/Information Sources:

A number of species presently designated as Sensitive species are present in the allotment. For the most part, the allotment has not been inventoried for sensitive species. Sensitive species occurrences are frequently from incidental observations.

Also a number of wildlife species presently designated as “watch” are also present. Watch species are **not** presently designated as Sensitive species, but may be added to the sensitive list in future years. The most concern with the sensitive animal species is the lack of plant diversity as shown by the limited forb and dominant perennial native grasses. Most of the plant communities are capable of providing adequate habitat for the special status wildlife species that occur in the allotment.

One plant, presently classified as sensitive species, is known to be in the allotment. It appears that the standard is being met for this special status plant species known to occur in the allotment. Impacts from livestock have either been described as “slight”, or they have not been reported or observed at some of the plant locations.

Determination

I have determined that Standards for Rangeland Health (1, 4, 5 and 8) are being met or are making significant progress toward meeting them in Pastures 3, 4, 5, and 6 of the Brackett Bench Allotment. These Standards are not being met in Pastures 1 and 2 and current livestock grazing

practices are a significant factor. Standards 2, 3 and 7 are not being met in Pastures 5 and 6 and current livestock practices are a significant factor. Some of the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management are not met.

/s/ E. Guerrero
Field Manager

5/12/04
Date