

## **Allotment Assessment Coonskin AMP**

### **I. Name and Number of Allotment**

Coonskin AMP Allotment #01123  
Permittees: Cedar Creek Cattle Company  
Guerry, Inc.

### **II. Livestock Use**

1. Preference: 3,109 cattle AUMs; 1,674 sheep AUMs : Total 4,783 AUMs
2. Historic Use Range: 2,793 to 6,581 AUMs
3. Suspended Preference: 0 AUMs
4. Season of Use: 3/01 to 5/31; 12/01 to 12/30; 3/01 to 7/31 (sheep)  
(TNR authorizations included grazing use through February 28)
5. Kind and Class of Livestock: 1000 cattle; 109 cattle; 1664 sheep
6. Percent Public Land: 100%

### **III. Allotment Profile**

1. The Coonskin AMP Allotment is located in the southeast part of the Jarbidge Field Office Area and is located in MUA-12. There are eight pastures in this allotment. The current permit was issued in 1999 authorizing 3133 AUMs. This permit is valid until 2005. During these livestock grazing permits, TNR was authorized from 1990 to 1996 (included in Table 1 figures).
2. Federal Acreage: 41,034
3. MUA Objectives (Jarbidge RMP, 1987):
  - increase AUMs of forage issued for livestock in MUA-12 from 33,650 to 44,854 by the year 2005 (II-48); Coonskin AMP is 15% of MUA 12. This increase use would result from the availability of additional forage from water developments, brush control and seeding projects and improvement in native range condition (II-3).
  - maintain 23,518 acres of existing vegetative improvements (II-47);
  - improve 123,980 acres of lands in poor ecological condition (II-47);
  - manage big game habitat in MUA 12 to support increased populations of mule deer (50%) and antelope (8%) (II-48);
  - improve sage grouse habitat (II-48);
4. Key Forage Species:
  - Bluebunch Wheatgrass
  - Thurber's needlegrass
5. Grazing System: The grazing use in this Allotment is outlined in the Livestock Management Plan, Tews Land and Livestock. The Allotment is used by cattle and sheep in the late spring, fall and winter (March through May and October through February 28) in conjunction with other allotments in which the permittees have permitted use. The pastures are rotated so as not to graze cattle or sheep

during the critical growth period between the boot stage and flowering of key species two consecutive years. Sheep use in the Allotment is primarily trailing use to and from other Allotments.

#### IV. Management Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to determine the allotment’s status in meeting the Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Management and to renew the grazing permit with management guidelines to meet these Standards.

##### A. Summary of Studies Data

##### 1. Actual Use

Table 1 shows the actual use since from 1990 to 2002.

**Table 1 - Actual Use**

Grazing Season	Sheep Use	Cattle Use	Total AUMs
1990	1866	1197	3063
1991	1811	3336	5147
1992	1596	1197	2793
1993	887	2389	3276
1994	1460	5121	6581
1995	741	4866	5607
1996	1382	5169	6551
1997	1030	2209	3239
1998	1335	2241	3576
1999	1639	2940	4579
2000	1632	3092	4724
2001	1285	2524	3809
2002	1316	3091	4407

##### 2. Climate

The long term water year (September through June) precipitation average for Castleford NOAA Weather Station is 9.41 inches and for the Hollister NOAA Weather Station is 9.62 inches. The 10-year average annual water year precipitation for the BLM rain gauge stations at **Big Hill** is 8.7 inches and **Cedar Mesa** is 11.5 inches. The Big Hill station, at an elevation of 3,400 feet, best represents the lower elevations and northern areas of the allotment while the Cedar Mesa station, at 4,700 feet, represents the higher elevations and the southern areas. The middle elevations of the allotment are presumed to have annual moisture averages somewhere in between the averages of these two stations or about 9 to 10 inches. Table 2 shows the yearly precipitation accumulations for the water year for the past 9-10 years at each of the stations. Also shown is the average yield index for the Castleford and Hollister Weather Stations.

**Table 2 - Water Year Precipitation  
and Crop Year Index**

Year	Big Hill (in inches)	Cedar Mesa (in inches)	Yield Index At Castleford	Yield Index At Hollister	Average Yield Index
1993	--	4.5 <sup>^</sup>	1.10	1.55	1.33
1994	--	9.4	0.54	0.72	0.63
1995	7.3	16.4*	1.25	1.94	1.60
1996	11.4*	11.5	1.16	1.28	1.23
1997	12.6*	16.2*	1.44	1.41	1.46
1998	11.3*	16.3*	0.71	1.72	1.24
1999	5.6	10.3	0.72	1.05	0.91
2000	7.7	7.0	0.51	0.49	0.51
2001	6.5	8.2	0.38	0.52	0.46
2002	8.5	9.9	0.57	0.88	0.73
2003	7.4	9.6	0.59	0.75	0.67

<sup>^</sup> Incomplete. Only 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters totals.

\*Above Average Precipitation.

### 3. Utilization

Table 3 shows the actual data from sampling at transects in the Allotment.

**Table 3 - Utilization Data**

Year	Vegetation Community	Utilization Range	Utilization Average
2001	Crested seeding	27-59%	43%
2001	Native	34-46%	41%
2002	Crested seeding	9-29%	18%
2002	Native	12-32%	20%

### 4. Production

Appendix 1 displays the production data that has been collected in the Coonskin AMP Allotment. It shows that 15,322,571 pounds of forage vegetation is produced during a near normal production year. Forage vegetation refers to grasses, and in seeded areas may include alfalfa and sainfoin. The production of forbs and shrubs is not included in this poundage. Considering precipitation data and its relationship to drought, as well as the needs of the watershed and wildlife, it is estimated that 5,468 AUMs of forage vegetation is available for livestock.

## 5. Condition and Trend

In June 1993 and May 1994, 10 long-term vegetation/soil cover monitoring study sites were established in the Coonskin AMP allotment in cooperation with the permittee. One additional site was established in July of 1995 as well. In accordance with the Minimum Monitoring Standards for BLM Rangelands in Idaho, the study methods initiated included nested plot frequency, percent ground cover, shrub density, and 3X3 plot data and site photographs. All of the sites were located throughout the seven or eight pastures of the entire 18 mile long allotment in native shrub communities, burned areas or established seedings. The 11 sites are situated in the following legal locations (site number), range sites, and elevations:

10S11E12; Artrw/Stth2, Loamy 8-10", now a seeding @ 4,045 feet,  
10S11E24; Artrw/Stth2, Loamy 8-10", native site @ 4,155 feet,  
10S11E33; Artrw/Stth2, Loamy 8-10", native site @ 4,390 feet,  
11S11E03; Artrw/Stth2, Loamy 8-10", burned native site @ 4,380 feet,  
11S11E05; Artrw/Stth2, Loamy 8-10", burned native site @ 4,500 feet,  
11S11E22; Artrw/Stth2, Loamy 8-10", native site @ 4,550 feet,  
11S11E33; Artrw/Stth2, Loamy 8-10", burned native site @ 4,670 feet,  
12S11E08; Artrw/Stth2, Loamy 8-10", burned native site @ 4,880 feet,  
12S11E09; Artrw/Stth2, Loamy 8-10", native site @ 4,950 feet,  
12S11E28; Artrw/Stth2-Agsp, Loamy 10-12", burned native site @ 5,060 feet, and  
13S11E02; Artrw/Stth2-Agsp, Loamy 10-12", burned native site @ 5,115 feet.

Since most of the baseline data was collected in 1993-1994 and one in 1995, none of the 11 study sites have been revisited, therefore trend analysis of these studies can not be evaluated and is currently unknown.

Table 4a shows the past (1981-82 inventory) and current ecological condition (2002 production studies) for native sites and Table 4b shows the general condition of the sites seeded to crested wheatgrass. The table also lists the corresponding trend sites.

**Table 4a - Condition and Trend Evaluation of Native Vegetation Study Sites**

1981-83 Inventory Site	Inventory Site Location	Trend Site	Vegetation Types	1981-83 Ecological Rating*	2002-03 Production Studies Name/Rating
IN-25	10S09E24		Brte/Sial2(Burn)	Early	
		10S11E12	Artrw/Stth2	Late	
RA-38	10S11E13	10S11E24	Artrw/Stth2	Early	
IN-40	10S11E31	10S11E33	Artrw/Stth2	Late	CSP-2/Late
IN-39	11S11E33			Early	
RA-39	11S11E20	11S11E03	Agsm	Early	CSP-5/Late
RA-39	11S11E20	11S11E05	Agsm	Early	
IN-32	12S12E05	11S11E22	Artrw/Stth2	Early	
RA-20	12S11E08	11S11E33	Agsm	Mid	
RA-20	12S11E08	12S11E08	Agsm	Mid	
RA-18	12S11E10	12S11E09	Artrw/Stth2	Mid	CSP-7/PNC
RA-19	12S11E16		Artrw/Stth2	Early	
RA-12	12S11E26		Artrw/Agsp	Mid	
RA-6	13S10E03	12S11E28	Agsm**	Mid	CSP-8/Late
RA-6	13S10E03	13S11E02	Agsp/Agsm**	Mid	CSP-8/Late

\*\*Original 1982 Range Inventory Site was an Artrw/Stth2 vegetation type before burn.

**Table 4b – Condition and Trend Evaluation of Seeding Study Sites**

1981-83 Inventory Site	Inventory Site Location	Vegetation Types	1981-83 Condition Rating*
IN-42	10S11E10	Artrw/Agcr	Excellent
RA-40	10S11E22	Artrw/Agcr	Good

\* Jarbidge RMP referred to Range Condition as: Excellent, Good, Fair, and Poor. Since that time these terms have been related to; Potential Natural Community, Late Seral, Mid Seral and Early Seral, respectively. Value terms of excellent, good, fair, poor are only used as a value rating for areas of vegetation treatments where crested wheatgrass was seeded.

Trend site files are retained by the field office in the Allotment Study cabinet and the vegetative condition site writeup files are in the Range Survey cabinet in the Jarbidge Field Office. Both files can be reviewed upon request.

In conclusion, although vegetative trend have not been established yet from a second reading (data collection period), professional judgment estimates that vegetation trends and conditions have not changed all that much (declined or improved), at either the study sites or throughout most of the allotment, over the past 9-10 years because of the allotment’s physical location and ecological setting. The allotment is situated in a very low rain fall zone, receiving about 8 to 10 inches of moisture annually. This limiting factor plays an important role in determining the overall production and condition/trend status of vegetation on a yearly basis. For much of the latter part of the 1990’s and early

2000's, rainfall accumulations have been far below the normal. Although moisture averages were above normal in the mid 1990's, which may have improved vegetative production and trends then (right after all the study sites were established), the more recent dry years probably have reversed any upward vegetative trends that may have occurred during the wetter years. This is predominantly the reasoning for estimating that the trend for the overall allotment is static.

The RMP objectives state that rangelands in poor (early seral) condition are to be managed for improvement (improve one condition class) for all multiple use areas and that fair (mid-seral) condition lands need to improve to good (late seral) condition for sage grouse and other wildlife. The native sites were initially rated as in either poor or fair condition based on the 1981-82 vegetation inventories. In 2002, four sites were sampled in the allotment on native vegetation communities on the Loamy 7 to 10 inch ppt ecological sites. One site (CS-2) is at potential natural community (PNC) (excellent condition), one site (CS-8) is in late seral and two sites are in mid-seral ecological condition. A new permittee acquired the allotment in 1999. Since that time the allotment has been grazed only to end of May or early June whereas before it was grazed into July and early August. This change of season of use may have allowed for a better ecological condition.

The one seeding study site, as indicated by the table above, was in satisfactory and good condition based on the initial trend monitoring data. Condition ratings of seedings are based on shrub re-invasion densities (low to high) and seeded grass species frequencies (low to high). As indicated by the monitoring data, this seeding in the Coonskin AMP allotment is meeting the RMP objective for sustaining existing vegetative improvements.

## **B. Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Management**

In 2002, rangeland health data was gathered on the Allotment at 6 ecological sites within native range, and two ranges site within seedings. Rangeland health data was collected per Technical Reference 1734-6, *Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health*. The rangeland health data was collected by an interdisciplinary team for the purposes of making a quantitative assessment of the soil/site stability, hydrologic function, and the integrity of the biotic community for the various ecological sites.

Eight transects were read at various ecological sites and are identified as CS-1 to CS-8. The "Preponderance of Evidence" based on the eight transects, is shown in Table 5. The degree of departure or deviation from the potential ecological site description (None to Slight, Slight to Moderate, Moderate, Moderate to Extreme, or Extreme) is made based on an evaluation of the data. Transect CS-2R, was taken in a reference site.

**Table 5 - Preponderance of Evidence**

Attribute (The sites are considered meeting attributes if not mentioned)		Deviation From Potential				
		Extreme	Moderate to Extreme	Moderate	Slight to Moderate	None to Slight
Soil Site Stability Rationale: At some sites, bare ground in areas greater than 10% (CS-3, 6, 7). Soil surface resistance to erosion is low (CS-3, 6). Hoof prints causing some pedestaling (Cs-1, 6). Small areas of deposition and long flow patterns (CS-1, 3, 6). Some soil loss (CS-2, 4).	<i>Native</i>				CS-6	CS-2R., CS-4, CS-5, CS-7, CS-8
	<i>Seedlings</i>				CS-1, CS-3	
Biotic Integrity Rationale: Low composition of perennial grasses (CS-6). Low composition of forbs (CS-1, 3, 6, 7). Low composition of shrubs (CS-3, 4, 7). Few legume nitrogen fixers (CS-Production at about 50% of potential (CS-6). Cheatgrass sparse (CS-5) to common (CS-3, 6). Compaction layer causing lateral roots (CS-1)	<i>Native</i>				CS-4, CS-6	CS-2R, CS-5, CS-7, CS-8
	<i>Seedlings</i>				CS-1, CS-3	
Hydrologic Function Rationale: High percent of bare ground allows for increased evaporation and runoff and decreased infiltration (CS-1). Low shrub component to catch snow (CS-3, 4). Too much litter because of high cheatgrass composition. (CS-4). Litter movement off interspaces (CS-1).	<i>Native</i>				CS-6	CS-2R, CS-4, CS-5, CS-7, CS-8
	<i>Seedlings</i>				CS-1, CS-3	

**1. Standard 1 – Watershed**

Six of the sites assessed were noted to have none to slight deviation from expected. This means that flow patterns were few with slight deposition and surface litter was in place. There was little evidence of plant pedestaling due to water or wind erosion. There was minimal soil crusting and no evidence of a compaction layer. There was some evidence of hoof prints, but deep hoof prints were uncommon. Rills and gullies were rare or absent. The only exception noted was higher than expected bare ground (>10%) at five sites, low soil surface resistance to erosion, and a high amount of trampling in small areas of depressions.

**2. Standard 2 - Riparian Zones and Wetlands and Standard 3 - Stream Channel/Floodplain**

No streams with perennial or intermittent water flows are located within the Coonskin AMP Allotment. Although Saylor Creek runs through a portion of the allotment, it is ephemeral in nature and, in most years, does not have flowing water even during spring run off. Therefore, neither Standard 2 or Standard 3 are applicable to this allotment.

### **3. Standard 4 - Native Plant Communities**

The sampling locations fell in two range sites, Loamy 7-10" (CS-4, 5, 7, and 8) and Loamy 8-10" (CS-2). The site at CS-2 is a reference area for the Loamy 7-10 inch ppt Wyoming big sagebrush/Thurbers needlegrass.

Two of the loamy 7-10 sites (CS-4, 8) had burned in wild fires. Rabbitbrush was the most common shrub at both sites (8 and 20 percent cover for sites CS-4 and CS-8 respectively). The average sagebrush heights were 12 inches at CS-4 and 25.9 inches at CS-8. Sandberg bluegrass was the most abundant native grass (22 percent and 24 percent cover, respectively). Late seral grasses (Thurber needlegrass, bluebunch wheatgrass) were reduced to 3 percent cover or less at both sites. Average grass height was 5 inches at CS-4 and 4.5 inches at CS-8. Grass heights were influenced by the abundance of Sandberg bluegrass and recent grazing. Perennial forb cover was 5 percent and 4 percent respectively, with phlox being the dominant native forb. Bare ground was 10 percent and 6 percent, with biological soil crusts limited to 11 percent and 9 percent. The majority of the biological crusts were early seral species. Exotic annual cover was dominated by cheatgrass (24 percent at CS-4 and 10 percent at CS-8). Other exotic annuals present included bur buttercup, Russian thistle, and tumble mustard. In the burned areas, fire intolerant species (low pussy-toes) were generally lacking. Indian paintbrush was also reduced in the burned areas.

The unburned sites (CS-5 and 7) had 16 percent and 14 percent sagebrush cover. Total shrub cover at CS-5 was increased by 6 percent on green rabbitbrush, which was high for this site. Sandberg bluegrass was the most abundant grass, however, Thurber needlegrass provided 10 percent and 8 percent cover, respectively, for sites CS-5 and CS-7. Bottlebrush squirreltail and thickspike wheatgrass were also present but contributed 4 percent or less for each species. Average grass height was 10.3 inches (CS-5) and 6.2 inches (CS-7). The second site had been grazed. The native forb component at both sites was fairly abundant and diverse. Phlox was the most common forb intercepted. Bare ground was 6 percent (CS-5) and 13 percent (CS-7), whereas, biological soil crusts averaged 27 percent and 30 percent cover, respectively. Exotic annual cover averaged 5 percent at CS-5, and future expansion is a concern in this area.

Site CS-2 (Loamy 8-10" range site) had 21 percent sagebrush cover and 1 percent of green rabbitbrush cover. The average sagebrush height was 22.4 inches. Sandberg bluegrass was the most common grass species (27 percent cover) followed by Thurber needlegrass (8 percent), bottlebrush squirreltail (7 percent), and thickspike wheatgrass (1 percent). The average grass height was 6.8 inches. The native forb community was very diverse with phlox and milkvetch the more abundant forbs. Bare ground was only 6 percent, whereas biological soil crusts were 20 percent. The biological soil crusts were very diverse with early and later seral species of lichens and mosses present. Exotic annuals were uncommon with cheatgrass providing 1 percent of the total cover.

The dominant shrub in the allotment was Wyoming big sagebrush. A small juniper stringer was present in Juniper Draw.

The allotment contains year-round pronghorn habitat, including winter range.

#### **4. Standard 5 - Seedings**

Three sites in seedings were evaluated [CS-1, 3, and 6]. Sagebrush cover varied from 1.3 percent at CS-3 to 22 percent and 23 percent, at sites CS-1 and CS-6, respectively. The amount of sagebrush cover and native grasses indicate that these sites (CS-1, 6) have more native characteristics than seeding. Perennial grass (native and seeded species) cover varied from 23 percent to 41 percent, with grass heights averaging between 5.8 to 8 inches. The amount of bare ground varied from 13 percent to 29.3 percent. Exotic annuals (cheatgrass, bur buttercup, Russian thistle) varied from 8 percent to 14.7 percent cover. Native perennial forb abundance was low at all sites (0 – 1 percent). Some of the seedings had originally included four-wing saltbush in the seed mix. In addition to being a valuable browse species for antelope, four-wing saltbush is also used by nesting songbirds including species on Idaho BLM's sensitive species list such as loggerhead shrikes. None of the areas with four-wing saltbush were evaluated.

#### **5. Standard 6 – Exotic Plant Communities, Other Than Seedings**

Not Applicable.

#### **6. Standard 7 – Water Quality**

Not Applicable. See Standard 2. There are no live streams, perennial springs and ponds, or ground water wells in the Coonskin AMP allotment. Water for livestock and wildlife use is provided throughout the allotment by means of pipelines and troughs. The source of this watering system comes from a relatively high volume spring (Steel Spring) on private property south of the House Creek Ranch. Since the source originates on private land, the BLM does not monitor its quality, but it is assumed that it is of high quality because it comes directly from a protected and enclosed source.

#### **7. Standard 8 - Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals**

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 notes from incidental observations. BLM has no information regarding whether or not pygmy rabbits are present or were historically present in the Coonskin AMP Allotment. No bat inventory has been conducted in this allotment. Also, a number of wildlife species presently designated as “watch” are present. Watch species are **not** presently designated as Sensitive species, but may be added to the sensitive list in future years. All these species are shown in Table 6. BLM has no data on any bat species in this allotment. No sensitive plants are known to occur in this allotment. Only limited surveys for sensitive plants have been conducted in this allotment and sensitive species may occur. It is unknown whether the standard is being met for special status plant species. There is no information available to determine whether livestock grazing management was having a significant impact on sensitive plant species.

**Table 6 - Idaho BLM Sensitive and Watch in the Coonskin  
AMP Allotment**

<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Presence</b>
Greater sage grouse	<i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i>	S	C
Prairie falcon	<i>Falco mexicanus</i>	S	C
Ferruginous hawk	<i>Buteo regalis</i>	S	C
Loggerhead shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	S	C
Brewer's sparrow	<i>Spizella breweri</i>	S	C
Sage sparrow	<i>Amphispiza belli</i>	S	C
Swainson's hawk	<i>Buteo swainsoni</i>	W	C
Western burrowing owl	<i>Speotyto cunicularia</i>	W	C
Sage thrasher	<i>Oreoscoptes montanus</i>	W	C
Brewer's blackbird	<i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>	W	C
Grasshopper sparrow	<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	W	C
Long-billed curlew	<i>Numenius americanus</i>	W	C
Short-eared owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	W	L
Slickspot peppergrass	<i>Lepidium papilliferum</i>	C	L
Status codes: S = designated Sensitive species; C = FWS candidate species; W = Watch category Presence codes: C = presence confirmed in allotment; L = presence likely in the allotment; H = historic, likely extirpated			

Greater sage grouse. Four active sage grouse leks and two historic leks (20-060 20-061) are present within the Coonskin Butte Allotment. An additional two historic (20-058, 20-065) and four active leks are within 2 miles of the Coonskin Allotment. The most recent aerial inventory for sage grouse leks in this allotment was 1982. Male sage grouse numbers attending leks in the area are down (Table 7). Sage grouse nesting occurs in areas with adequate shrub cover (10-30%). Plant communities where Sandberg bluegrass, bottlebrush squirreltail, and Thurber needlegrass grazed to 40% use level will not provide adequate residual vegetation for nesting sage grouse more than 0.5 miles from water.

**Table 7 - Numbers of male sage grouse at leks in or near the Coonskin AMP Allotment for which there is data.**

Lek #	# Males	Year of Recent Count	Highest # Males	Year of Count
<b>20-003</b>	0	2003	7	2000
20-005	0	2002	16	1980
<b>20-062</b>	0	2002	13	1991
20-124	0	2001	20	1971
<b>20-140</b>	1	2001	14	1995
<b>20-141</b>	13	2002	23	2000
20-149	0	2002	10	1999
20-165	7	2002	9	2000
Lek # bolded are located within the Coonskin AMP Allotment				

Prairie falcon. Prairie falcons have been observed flying over the allotment. Suitable nesting habitat is present on the cliffs along Sailor Creek.

Ferruginous hawk. A single active ferruginous hawk nest (F10) is known to be present in the allotment. The nest is located in a stringer of junipers associated with Juniper Draw. It is not active every year, but when not used by ferruginous hawks, it has been used by red-tailed hawks and Swainson hawks.

Loggerhead shrike. Loggerhead shrikes have been observed in several areas during the nesting season where tall sagebrush, junipers or four-wing saltbush is present.

Brewer's sparrow and sage sparrow. These species are found in areas with an adequate sagebrush canopy.

Slickspot peppergrass. Slickspot peppergrass is not known to occur in this allotment, however, 31,835 acres of suitable habitat does occur. Threats to this species include degradation of slickspots and surrounding area habitat, trampling from livestock, and weed invasion.

### **C. Guidelines for Grazing Management**

The current grazing management plan provides for periodic rest during the critical growth period between the boot stage and flowering. Not all water troughs have functional escape ramps for wildlife. The fence wire spacing is not to BLM specifications for mule deer, and antelope. Top wire is generally too high and there is also much net wire fence present.

Per the *Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management*, the following Guidelines need to be implemented to promote significant progress toward the Standards:

Guideline 6 – The development of springs, seeps, or other projects affecting water and associated resources shall be designed to protect the ecological functions, wildlife habitat, and significant cultural and historical/archaeological/paleontological values associated with the water source.

Guideline 20 – Design management fences to minimize adverse impacts, such as habitat fragmentation, to maintain habitat integrity and connectivity for native plants and animals.

## **V. Conclusions**

Most sites are meeting the indicators of Standard 1 (Watershed), Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities), Standard 5 (Seedings), and Standard 8 (Special Status Species).

## **VI. Consultation**

Jim Klott, Wildlife Biologist

Arnold Pike, Range Conservationist  
Sheri Hagwood, Botanist  
Max Yingst, Recreation  
Jeff Ross, Archeologist  
John Ash, NRS – Climate/Monitoring/WQ  
Clare Josaitis, Natural Resource Specialist  
Cedar Creek Cattle Co.-Chuck Jones

## **VII. Recommendations**

Increase permitted use at for livestock grazing from 4,783 AUMs (3,109 cattle AUMs and 1,674 sheep AUMs) to 5,468 (3,554 cattle AUMs and 1914 sheep AUMs).

Conduct Ecological Site Inventory of those acres previously determined to be in poor condition to quantify current status. Seed or plant native shrubs, grasses and forbs into poor condition range sites and rest as necessary to ensure establishment. Included in this are 11,880 acres dominated by rabbitbrush, 1,435 acres dominated by annual grasses, and 8,605 acres of Wyoming sagebrush/Sandburg bluegrass.

Restore annual vegetation communities to native perennial vegetation.

Maintain 3,528 acres of existing vegetation improvements. Restore or improve the remaining non-native seedings to a more native plant community.

Manage big game habitat to support increased mule deer and antelope populations. Restore sagebrush into the allotment to improve water cycling as well as habitat for sage grouse and other wildlife species.

Manage for light utilization levels (up to 40%) at key areas in order to improve and maintain the existing native communities. Under the forage allocation proposed, a percent of the forage production would be allocated to watershed and wildlife and would allow the native plant communities to recover, and provide habitat for wildlife. Monitor native grass areas reverting to sagebrush to ensure re-establishment of big game habitat and upland game bird nesting and cover habitat.

Allow no more than 50% frequency of browsing on current year leaders on key woody species\*. Under the forage allocation proposed, a percent of the forage production would be allocated to watershed and wildlife, would allow the native plant communities to recover, and over the long term provide habitat for wildlife.

Remove all woven or net wire fence. Replace the fence with 3 strand wire (pronghorn wire spacing specifications) for pasture fence and 4 strand wire (pronghorn wire spacing) for allotment boundary fence, if warranted. (see RMP page II-83 regarding existing fences).

Verify that all water troughs have correctly installed and properly functioning wildlife escape ramps. All troughs should have water for wildlife from May through October, even when livestock are not present in the pasture.

Establish use levels on four-wing saltbush that will provide for the long-term survival and reproduction of this important browse species in year round pronghorn habitat.

Treat burned native areas to control exotic annuals and increase sagebrush, native grasses, and forbs to improve rangelands in poor condition.

No salting should occur within 0.25 miles of Saylor Creek to protect cultural resources.

\*Note: 50% use on key woody species is not allocated to livestock. Use is expected to be low except for during the winter if snow covers herbaceous vegetation. No winter range was identified in this allotment, however mule deer and antelope winter in the area.

**Appendix 1 Stocking Rate Based Climate and Production**

**Allotment:**

**Coonskin #1123**

**Date: 1/16/2004**

Station	Avg. PPT (Inches)	75% of Avg. (Inches)	# of Years ≥75% of Avg.	# of Years of Data	% of Years ≥75% of Avg.	
Castleford	9.41	7.06	27	38	71%	
Hollister	9.62	7.22	38	53	72%	
	Avg. YI adjustment for Castleford, Hollister	Decision Weighted % of Years ≥75% of Avg. PPT			AUMs Available for Livestock	
Production Cedar Mesa	0.78	Use Factor	% of Veg. Prod'n Available			
Total Pounds	11,951,605	15,322,571	40%	71%		29%

Pasture	Vegetation	Acres	lbs/Acre	lb. of Forage	Utilization Factor	Weighted Forage
#1	Wy sage/bluegrass	500	128	64,000	40%	25,600
	Wy sage/crested	131	147	19,257	40%	7,703
	Wy sage/Thurbers	594	124	73,656	40%	29,462
	Annual	740	0	0	40%	0
Subtotal		1,965				
#2	Wy sage/bluegrass	2,448	128	313,344	40%	125,338
Subtotal		2,448				
#3	Wy sage/crested	3,795	472	1,791,240	40%	716,496
	Wy sage/Thurbers	299	124	37,076	40%	14,830
	Crested	640	718	459,520	40%	183,808
Subtotal		4,734				
#4	Wy sage/bluegrass	1,777	128	227,456	40%	90,982
	Wy sage/Thurbers	4	455	1,820	40%	728
	Wy sage/crested	212	147	31,164	40%	12,466
	Annual	390	0	0	40%	0
Subtotal		2,383				
#5	Bluebunch	374	128	47,872	40%	19,149
	Rabbitbrush	9	147	1,323	40%	529
	Wy sage/Thurbers	4,281	455	1,947,855	40%	779,142
	Annual	291	0	0	40%	0
Subtotal		4,955				
#6	Wy sage/Thurbers	6,482	374	2,424,268	40%	969,707
	Crested	751	718	539,218	40%	215,687
	Bluebunch	1,093	128	139,904	40%	55,962
Subtotal		8,326				
#7	Bluebunch	303	128	38,784	40%	15,514
	Crested	218	718	156,524	40%	62,610
	Annual	4	0	0	40%	0
	Wy sage/Thurbers	7,756	86	667,016	40%	266,806
Total		8,281				
#8	Wy sage/Thurbers	7,942	374	2,970,308	40%	1,188,123
Subtotal		7,942				
Total Acres		41,034		11,951,605		4,780,642
Weighted Use Factor						0.40