

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

<b>Field Office:</b> Jarbidge Field Office			<b>Watershed Name:</b> Bruneau River
<b>Allotment Name/Number:</b> Winter Camp / 1064			
<b>Public Land (acres)</b>			<b>Streams on Public Land (miles):</b> Clover Creek (1.3 mi.)
<b>Upland:</b> 11,856	<b>Riparian:</b> 0	<b>Total:</b> 11,856	
<b>Date(s) of Field Assessment:</b> 2002-03			<b>Name of Permittee(s):</b> Joe Legunechi

**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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are <b>not</b> Significant Factors.
<input checked="" 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:

Nearly all of the Allotment is noted to be within none to slight deviation from the expected condition. This means that flow patterns were few with slight deposition and surface litter was in

place. There was little evidence of plant pedestals 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 were rare and widely spaced while gullies were not noted. The only exception noted was in the West Pasture in an area seeded to crested wheatgrass which was slight to moderately deviate from the expected. In this area, there was evidence of past erosion on some of the native grass pedestals. Flow patterns slightly more than expected for site #4 and bareground was moderately higher and there was 1 to 2 inches of surface soil loss. This soil erosion occurred as a result of wind scouring and water erosion the season after wildfire burned off the protecting soil.

**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 <b>not</b> 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:

Clover Creek segment 7.8 to 9.3 has a gap fence across it near 9.3. This gap fence is in good working order, but some panels need to be wired together in order to prevent livestock use downstream of the gap. Apparently, livestock have been able to meander downstream through an opening between two panels. Downstream use is evident but light. There is very little sinuosity and the creek is downcut in most sections. Banks are mostly covered with riparian herbaceous species and stable. The gravel/cobble substrate in Clover Creek is covered with fines. In some sections the stream banks are trampled and have sloughed into the channel. Reed canarygrass is also prevalent, thus decreasing diversity of desirable riparian species. However, the well-covered streambanks can dissipate the high energy of high flows.

Livestock can access Clover Creek segment 11.0 to 12.3 from the Winter Camp Allotment. Slightly more than half of the stream banks are covered and stable, with the remaining stream banks either covered but unstable, or bare and raw. Although hydric species such as sedge and bulrush comprise some of the vegetation along the stream bank, most of the vegetation component is shallow-rooted Kentucky blue grass. Cheatgrass is also widespread along the stream banks and all along the slopes leading into the creek. Rabbitbrush is present on the floodplains and stream banks.

Clover Creek segment 12.3 to 15.7 runs between the 71 Desert and Winter Camp Allotments (#01064) Allotments. Livestock use in this part of Clover Creek is primarily from the 71 Desert side, and provides the sole source of water in the northern-most pasture of this allotment. The stream segment is rated as functioning at risk in an upward trend because when rated it had not been grazed for a couple of years. This non-grazing was not a management change but rather initiated by the permittee.

During the last few years, Clover Creek in this area of the Winter Camp Allotment has dried up in July and usually begins to flow again in mid to late September. The cessation of flows is due to center pivot irrigation use in the Three Creek area. This may slow changes made by changes to livestock management.

**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 <b>not</b> 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>7</u>

Rationale/Information Sources:

(Refer to discussion in Standard 2)

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**Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities)**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.
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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). <u>3,9,12</u>

## Rationale/Information Sources:

Forbs and native perennial grasses are absent in many of the plant communities. Shrubs are receiving heavy hedging which may be from winter livestock grazing. It seems unlikely that winter use by wildlife alone is causing the level of hedging that is occurring. There is a compaction layer present at seven of the nine sites assessed. Three of them were restricting root penetration and four were not. These sites are near trough locations along the AEC Pipeline where grazing use is more congregated.

Cheatgrass is present at five sites, but it only is dominant at one site. At the other four sites it is only dominant in small areas disturbed by rodents.

General production is 25 to 75 percent of what is expected because of the low presence of perennial native bunchgrasses such as Thurber's needlegrass which should be present in these plant communities. Current grazing management is mostly in the dormant season for plants and the permittee generally does not graze the same pasture in two consecutive critical growing seasons. So the absence of Thurber's needlegrass is expected to be caused by repeated historic wildfire and past grazing management.

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**Standard 5 (Seedings)**Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*]

<input type="checkbox"/> Standard doesn't apply	
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## Rationale/Information Sources:

Wyoming big sagebrush canopy cover is about 0 to 2 percent with 6 percent cover of rabbitbrush. Sagebrush height averaged 25 inches. Crested wheatgrass cover ranges from about 18 to 33 percent and Sandberg bluegrass ranged from about 15 to 22 percent cover. Bottlebrush squirreltail was present at low levels at both sites. Native forbs present were primarily *Phlox* with a range of about 1 to 8 percent cover. Exotic annual species consisting of primarily cheatgrass with some bur buttercup and Russian thistle ranged from about 11 percent to 19 percent cover.

Some noxious weeds are present in the Winter Camp Butte Allotment. Field bindweed, Scotch thistle, and black henbane have been observed along the Bruneau-Three Creek Road in this allotment. Rush skeletonweed and Russian knapweed have been observed nearby in the Flat Top Allotment and may be present in this allotment.

**Standard 6 (Exotic Plant Communities, Other than Seedings)**

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

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Rationale/Information Sources:

**Standard 7 (Water Quality)**

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

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Rationale/Information Sources:

the BLM has been monitoring several water quality attributes for the East Fork of the Bruneau Rive (aka, Clover Creek), since 1992 at several locations in the upper reaches of this river, above Clover Crossing. In brief summary, the main attribute not meeting State Standards for a cold water biota is temperature. Daily average or maximum temperature standards (not to exceed 19° C or 22° C, respectively) have been routinely exceeded for the past several years mainly during the months of July and August. However, it is realized that these high temperatures are likely attributed to the narrow, black lava rock canyon setting and the very low flows of the river during the summer months, which can be traced to irrigation use in the head waters of the creek.

Also, on occasions, the dissolved oxygen and fecal coliform standards have been observed to exceed State Standards. The BLM has not monitored for sediments or any biological parameters.

Regulated by the State’s Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the East Fork of the Bruneau River, from it headwaters to the Bruneau River, has been identified and nominated for the State’s 1996 and ’98 303(d) list for not meeting water quality standards for **sediments** and **temperatures**, however the severity of these pollutants were rated low. Currently, DEQ is in the review and planning stages of the Bruneau River Basin Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) plan (draft 2002), which includes the review of the beneficial uses of the East Fork of the Bruneau River, along with several other creeks and water bodies in the basin. When the plan becomes final, recommendations for best management practices will be applied to this river (in cooperation with the BLM and private land owners) that will improve and enhance these current “water quality limited” issues and/or concerns.

Other probable surface waters within the allotment include several natural playas. Although these playas are ephemeral in nature, they do on occasions impound and retain water for livestock use during high rain fall events or after spring snow melt. The BLM does not monitor these waters nor does the DEQ have any concerns with them either mainly because of their nature. No water is ever release by these playas. It either sinks or evaporates, if not first used by livestock or wildlife.

**Standard 8 (Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals)**

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

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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. Sagebrush composition provides

adequate habitat for sensitive animal species. 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.

One plant presently classified as a sensitive species (Davis peppergrass) is known to be in the allotment. 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 is having a significant impact on sensitive plant species or not.

### **Determination**

I have determined that all of the applicable Standards for Rangeland Health ( Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8) are not being met and are not making significant progress in the Winter Camp Allotment. Livestock grazing practices are a significant factor in the achieving Standards for Rangeland Health 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 and do not conform with the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management. Current livestock management practices are not found to be a significant factor in not meeting Standard 1, 7 and 8.

/s/ E. Guerrero  
Field Manager

5/12/04  
Date