

PLEASANT VALLEY TABLE
1594

Location

Ecoregion Section: OWYHEE UPLANDS SECTION (342C)

Watershed: 17050107045
17050107047

County: Owyhee

USGS Quad: PLEASANT VALLEY 4211657

LAT: 423520N S: 423428N E: 1164929W

LONG: 1165005W N: 423612N W: 1165040W

Legal Description (township/range, section, meridian, note)

009S004W 32 BO all

010S004W 05 BO all

Directions:

Pleasant Valley Table lies along the North Fork Owyhee River, between South Mountain and Juniper Mountain, approximately 30 miles SE of Jordan Valley. The site is accessed from the Mud Flat Road via a moderately good two-track road. Proceed north from the Mud Flat Road to a point west of Nickel Creek Reservoir. Walk up onto the table to the site.

Site Design

Designer: Moseley, Bob

Date: 97-09-04

Design Justification:

Site boundaries coincide with pRNA boundaries in the Owyhee RMP at this time (1997), but are subject to change when an ecological site design is completed.

Site Comments:

The site is within the North Fork Owyhee River WSA, which has been recommended suitable for wilderness designation. 1992-09: Site was visited by Boise District BLM botanist and biologist, who noted that despite the rocky nature of the habitat, livestock use was heavy this year. Bunchgrasses were grazed to a 0.5-1" stubble height, trampling was extensive, and no regrowth was apparent. This condition was consistent throughout the communities east of the N-S fenceline (U92BLM06IDUS). 1997: Site visited by Moseley; evidence of cattle grazing. Location of plots 97RM041-044.

Biological and Physical Characteristics

Size. Primary and Secondary Acres: 1,467.00

Primary Acres:

Elevation (ft). Minimum: 5300

Maximum: 5650

Site Description:

The Pleasant Valley Table site contains communities dominated by Owyhee sagebrush, silver sagebrush, and low sagebrush. The patterned ground or "biscuit and swale" topography creates poorly drained areas with thin soil over bedrock (swales) between deep soil mounds

(biscuits). The Owyhee sagebrush community occurs in swales where there is little soil, and water perches on the bedrock in the spring or during the summer rains and drains via ephemeral, low-gradient stream channels across the table. Sandberg's bluegrass is one of the few species associated with Owyhee sagebrush in this community. The silver sagebrush/dry graminoid community occurs in areas where a relatively deep, fine-textured soil has been deposited along the stream courses and the water table is high during certain times of the year. Low sagebrush occurs with Idaho fescue on mounds where the soil is deep and well-drained. The current site boundaries include a segment of the North Fork Owyhee River adjacent to Pleasant Valley Table and slopes north of the river that are dominated by western juniper. The juniper stands have not been inventoried in any detail. *Salix lasiandra* is the dominant species along the river segment, with *Salix geyeriana* becoming common on the downstream end.

Landuse History:

Cattle grazing is the primary landuse in the area.

Cultural Features:

Fences and a reservoir occur in the site.

Element Occurrences (element/size):

SALIX LASIANDRA/CORNUS STOLONIFERA	0 NO DET.
ARTEMISIA PAPPOSA EPHEMERAL WETLAND	0 NO DET.
DANTHONIA CALIFORNICA EPHEMERAL WETLAND	0 NO DET.
ARTEMISIA CANA/DRY GRAMINOID	0 NO DET.
HAPLOPAPPUS UNIFLORUS VAR HOWELLII	

Biodiversity Significance: B2

Extensive of rare community types, especially those occurring in ephemeral drainages, such as *Artemisia papposa*, *Danthonia californica*, and *Artemisia cana*/Dry graminoid.

Protection and Stewardship

Designation: PROPOSED RESEARCH NATURAL AREA
 PROPOSED AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL

Protection Comments:

The site is currently unprotected.

Information Needs:

1997: Site boundaries need to be defined.

Protection Urgency: P2

Integrity of this site is threatened by continued livestock grazing. Some degradation is already observable between 1987 and 1997.

Management Urgency: M2

Management action is needed within five years to prevent loss.

Current Landuse:

Onsite: The site is currently grazed.

Exotic Species Comments:

No major exotic species problems were observed in 1997.

MA Comments:

Lower Snake River District BLM, Owyhee RA.

COTTONWOOD CREEK
69

Location

Ecoregion Section: OWYHEE UPLANDS SECTION (342C)

Watershed: 17050102

County: Owyhee

USGS Quad: HILL PASTURE 4211651

LAT: 423205N S: 423115N E: 1160425W

LONG: 1160450W N: 423252N W: 1160515W

Legal Description (township/range, section, meridian, note)

010S003E 22 BO SE4, E2SE4NE4

010S003E 23 BO W2SW4, NW4

010S003E 26 BO W2W2W2NW4

010S003E 27 BO E2

Directions:

Cottonwood Creek is a tributary of Big Jacks Creek and lies about 30 miles SSW of Bruneau. The site is reached by a series of good roads that begin where the Wickahoney-Battle Creek Road leaves State Route 51.

Site Design

Designer: Moseley, Bob

Date: 97-07-14

Design Justification:

Site boundaries correlate with RNA/ACEC boundary.

Site Comments:

Location of plots 97RM009-010.

Biological and Physical Characteristics

Size. Primary and Secondary Acres: 346.00

Primary Acres: 346.00

Elevation (ft). Minimum: 4600

Maximum: 5380

Site Description:

Site consists of a narrow canyon which begins below the falls at the southern end of the site and extends downstream for about 2+ miles to the confluence of Cottonwood Creek with Big Jacks Creek. Canyon sides are mostly steep-walled with some colluvial slopes covered with *Artemisia tridentata wyomingensis*/*Festuca idahoensis* community type. Cottonwood Creek lies in a narrow canyon bottom and is largely spring-fed, although flash floods do occur. The stream channel is 1-2 meters wide. Redband trout (*Onchorhynchus mykiss gairdneri*) are known to occur here and were present in 1997. *Cornus sericea* (red-osier dogwood) thoroughly fills the canyon bottom floodplain in nearly impenetrable thickets. A few small terraces, generally above the floodplain, are occupied by tall, dense stands of *Prunus virginiana* (chokecherry). The waterfall is about 40' tall and free falls from a ledge into a plunge pool. Thick riparian vegetation and steep canyon walls prevent livestock from grazing the site. Interesting floating mats of *Montia chamissoi* occur in small eddies along the channel and

indicate stable flows.

Key Environmental Factors:

The creek is largely spring fed, although spring run-off and flash floods affect the riparian and aquatic zone. Substrate is volcanic.

Climate:

Landuse History:

Cattle grazing takes place on surrounding lands

Cultural Features:

None were observed in the site

Element Occurrences (element/size):

PRUNUS VIRGINIANA

15

CORNUS SERICEA

40+

ARTEMISIA TRIDENTATA WYOMINGENSIS/AGROPYRON SPICATUM

0 NO DET

ARTEMISIA TRIDENTATA WYOMINGENSIS/FESTUCA IDAHOENSIS

50+

Biodiversity Significance: B3

Redband trout (*Onchorhynchus mykiss gairdneri*) occur in Cottonwood Creek. California bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis californiana*) and potentially Mountain quail (*Oreortyx pictus*) are also in the area.

Other site features are a large waterfall and undisturbed upland and riparian vegetation.

Other Values: V3

The canyon and waterfall are very scenic.

Protection and Stewardship

Designation: RESEARCH NATURAL AREA

AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Protection Comments:

Established RNA/ACEC.

Information Needs:

Protection Urgency: P5

Protected.

Management Needs:

Management Urgency: M5

No special needs anticipated in the immediate future.

Current Landuse:

Onsite:

Offsite: The springs originate off-site and heavy cattle grazing has degraded many spring sources. This probably affects water quality on-site.

Exotic Species Comments:

No major exotic species problems were observed.

MA Comments:

Site is entirely within the Lower Snake River District BLM, Bruneau RA.

References

U83CAI01IDUS Caicco, S. L., and C. A. Wellner. 1983. Research Natural Area recommendation for Cottonwood Creek, BLM, Boise District, ID. Idaho Natural Areas Coordinating Committee mimeo report. 11 pp.

YP LAKE BED
371

Location

Ecoregion Section: OWYHEE UPLANDS SECTION (342C)

Watershed: 17050104

County: Owyhee

USGS Quad: GRASSY RIDGE 4211627

LAT: 421248N S: 421227N E: 1164644W

LONG: 1164705W N: 421310N W: 1164725W

Legal Description (township/range, section, meridian, note)

014S004W 10 BO SE4
014S004W 11 BO W2SW4SW4
014S004W 14 BO W2NW4
014S004W 15 BO W2NE4, E2W2NE4

Directions:

About 5.0 air miles NE of "45" Ranch, on the YP Desert (Owyhee Plateau). Access by truck via fenceline/section-line road.

Site Design

Designer: Moseley, Bob

Date: 97-07-24

Design Justification:

Site boundaries coincide with lake bed boundaries.

Site Comments:

Location of Plots 97RM025 and 97RM026.

Biological and Physical Characteristics

Size. Primary and Secondary Acres:

Primary Acres: 200.00

Elevation (ft). Minimum: 5181

Site Description:

Large vernal lake on a volcanic plateau. The lake bed is an obvious depression, and surrounded by *Artemisia tridentata wyomingensis*/*Festuca idahoensis* community raised ca 1-2 meters above the lake bed. The largest and wetter area is covered with the *Eleocharis palustris* vernal pool community. The eastern side of the depression is drier and contains the *Artemisia cana*/*Muhlenbergia richardsonis* community type. The lake bed was dry and hard (hard enough to drive on) during the July 1997 visit. The lake bed may flood to as much as 0.5 m deep during some springs, at which time a rich birdlife visits the lake during migration. A peregrine falcon was observed at this site during the spring of 1993, hunting the abundant shorebirds.

Key Environmental Factors:

The lake bed lies in a small, enclosed basin, that is a small precipitation catchment area, so is probably not filled with water every year, especially during low-precipitation winters and springs.

Landuse History:

The surrounding land is grazed by cattle and has for many years.

Cultural Features:

A fence follows the north-south section line through the lake bed.

Element Occurrences (element/size):

ARTEMISIA CANA BOLANDERI/MUHLENBERGIA RICHARDSONIS
ELEOCHARIS PALUSTRIS VERNAL POOL

37
160

Biodiversity Significance: B2

Although low in diversity, this site is the only occurrence known for the *Artemisia cana*/*Muhlenbergia richardsonis* habitat type. The area is probably an important waterbird migratory stop during springs when it is filled with water.

Other Values:

Protection and Stewardship

Designation: PROPOSED AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL
PROPOSED RESEARCH NATURAL AREA

Information Needs:

It is unknown to what extent the "upstream" reservoir is affecting/capturing inflow and making the lake "drier".

Protection Urgency: P4

Low protection priority.

Management Urgency: M3

No major threats are anticipated under current management.

Current Landuse:

Onsite: Section-line fence runs N/S through eastern portion of the site. Cattle trail through the lake bed, but little is palatable.

Offsite: A reservoir was constructed on "inlet" stream to the SW to capture inflow and may be altering distribution of the two communities on the lake bed.

Exotic Species Comments:

No exotic species were observed.

Record Maintenance

Lead Responsibility: USIDHP

Edition Date: 97-11-05 Edition Author: L. Williams

THE TULES
258

Location

Ecoregion Section: OWYHEE UPLANDS SECTION (342C)

Watershed: 17050104

County: Owyhee

USGS Quad: PIUTE BASIN EAST 4211625

JARVIS PASTURE 4211624

LAT: 421227N S: 421217N E: 1162957W

LONG: 1163010W N: 421245N W: 1163037W

Legal Description (township/range, section, meridian, note)

014S001W 18 BO NW4

014S001W 13 BO SE4NE4NE4, NE4SE4NE4

Directions:

The Tules site lies on the Owyhee Plateau in the SW corner of Idaho, approximately 6 miles NW of Duck Valley Indian Reservation. The area is accessed via a series of paved and dirt roads beginning on the reservation, passing the gas pipeline compressor station and wandering about on some two-tracks into Kimball Basin, north of the compressor station.

Site Design

Designer: Lower Snake River District BLM

Date:

Design Justification:

Site boundaries coincide with RNA boundaries.

Site Comments:

Location of plots 97RM028-029.

Biological and Physical Characteristics

Size. Primary and Secondary Acres: 113.00

Primary Acres: 113.00

Elevation (ft). Minimum: 4700

Maximum: 5100

Site Description:

The Tules is an abandoned meander of the Owyhee River in an area where the river is incised about 300 feet into the Owyhee Plateau. The area contains a diversity of wetland and upland communities, although the upland communities are limited in extent because of the steep canyon walls. Most of the colluvial cones are dominated by *Artemisia tridentata wyomingensis*/*Festuca idahoensis*, although a small, sandy terrace at the north end has a nice stand of *A. tridentata tridentata*/*Stipa comata*. Sedimentation into the abandoned meander has resulted in an extensive wetland system. Sand bar willow dominates the areas proximate to the river, while hard-stem bulrush dominates most of the rest of the meander. Small areas of beaked sedge and Sheldon's sedge occur along the western edge.

Key Environmental Factors:

The hydrology of the oxbow is controlled by water level of the river, so there is considerable annual vertical fluctuations. Substrate is volcanic.

Climate:

Landuse History:

The surrounding land has been used for livestock grazing for a long time. River floating takes place on the Owyhee River during the brief periods of high water.

Cultural Features:

A very old fence occurs in the only gap in the rim rock allowing access to the canyon. This was probably used to fence livestock into this small "pasture."

Element Occurrences (element/size):

ARTEMISIA TRIDENTATA TRIDENTATA/STIPA COMATA	5
SALIX EXIGUA/MESIC GRAMINOID	14
ARTEMISIA ARBUSCULA ARBUSCULA/POA SECUNDA	1*
ARTEMISIA ARBUSCULA ARBUSCULA/AGROPYRON SPICATUM	1*
CAREX UTRICULATA	1
SCIRPUS ACUTUS	17
CAREX SHELDONII HERBACEOUS VEGETATION	5
ARTEMISIA TRIDENTATA WYOMINGENSIS/FESTUCA IDAHOENSIS	20
HACKELIA OPHIOBIA	
TEUCRIUM CANADENSE VAR OCCIDENTALE	5 AC

Biodiversity Significance: B2

A diversity of high quality wetlands occur in this site. It is the only known site of the Sheldon's sedge community. Two rare plant species occur here as well, Hackelia ophiobia and Teucrium canadense. The Owyhee endemic, Artemisia packardiae, occurs on the canyon walls site.

Other Values: V2

The scenic value is very high. This site lies within the larger Owyhee Canyonlands megasite, important for many reasons, but mostly notably for the large and vigorous population of California bighorn sheep. Waterfowl (mostly mallards, apparently) nest in the Scirpus acutus community.

Protection and Stewardship

Designation: PROPOSED RESEARCH NATURAL AREA
AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Protection Comments:

Site occurs within the large Owyhee River Bighorn Sheep Habitat ACEC (Owyhee Canyonlands). The Tules has not been recognized individually as a special management designation.

Information Needs:

Protection Urgency: P4

Management Needs:

Monitor recreation use in the site and the Canada thistle patches.

Management Urgency: M4

No special management needed based on current conditions. May be needed in the future.

Current Landuse:

Onsite: Very little human use takes place in the site.
Cattle appear not to enter this part of the canyon

and one small camp occurs near the river and is probably used by float-boaters occasionally.

Offsite:

Exotic Species Comments:

Some small patches of Canada thistle were observed that are worth monitoring.

MA Comments:

Lower Snake River District BLM, Owyhee RA.

References

U87MOS13IDUS Moseley, B. 1987. Research Natural Area recommendation for The Tules. Unpublished report for Boise District BLM, Owyhee Resource Area. 7 pp.

Record Maintenance

Lead Responsibility: USIDHP

Edition Date: 96-04-18 **Edition Author:** P. J. Peterson

Landuse History:

The 45 Ranch was started as a horse ranch in 1880 and once had as many as 5,000 horses.

Cultural Features:

The ranch has two houses with a family living there year-around.

Element Occurrences (element/size):

ARTEMISIA TRIDENTATA TRIDENTATA/ELYMUS CINEREUS	5 AC
SCIRPUS PUNGENS	
10+	
ARTEMISIA LUDOVICIANA	5 AC
ARTEMISIA TRIDENTATA WYOMINGENSIS/FESTUCA IDAHOENSIS	40+ AC
HAPLOPAPPUS UNIFLORUS VAR HOWELLII	4 AC
TEUCRIUM CANADENSE VAR OCCIDENTALE	

Biodiversity Significance: B3

The ranch is home to bighorn sheep, mule deer, sage grouse, antelope, mountain lion, bobcats, river otter and several species of fish, including the rare redband trout. Two rare plants occur at the site. *Teucrium canadense*, a beautiful, red-flowered mint occurs in the riparian zone along the South Fork and one-flowered goldenweed, a showy member of the sunflower family, occurs in the ephemeral river bed of the Little Owyhee.

Other Values: V2

The 45 Ranch has an aura about it, largely because of its serious isolation in one of the largest tracts of uninhabited land in the lower 48 states. It is a cool place.

Protection and Stewardship

Designation: TNC PRESERVE

Protection Comments:

Information Needs:

Protection Urgency:

Management Needs:

The portion of the site that is currently in irrigated hay used to be the *Artemisia tridentata tridentata/Elymus cinereus* community. An excellent, but small, reference stand of this type occurs across the river if restoration is ever considered for the hay field.

Management Urgency: M3

Management of cattle on surrounding BLM allotments is currently being reevaluated.

Current Landuse:

Onsite: Much of the river terrace is currently cultivated; cattle graze much of the area as well.

Offsite: Water quality through the site is affected by upstream uses.

Exotic Species Comments:

Record Maintenance

Lead Responsibility:

Edition Date: 97-11-25 **Edition Author:** L. Williams