



United States Department of the Interior  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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In Reply Refer To:  
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November 12, 2013

**REGISTERED MAIL - FEDEX**

Chipmunk Grazing Association  
c/o Elias Jaca  
P.O. Box 175  
Marsing, Idaho 83639

Ted Blackstock  
6754 Opaline Rd.  
Given Springs, ID 83641

**Notice of Field Manager's Proposed Decision**

Dear Mr. Jaca and Mr. Blackstock:

Thank you for your application for permit renewal on the Alkali-Wildcat and Rats Nest, Chipmunk Field FFR, Elephant Butte, Sands Basin and Texas Basin FFR allotments. Thank you also for working with the BLM during this permit renewal process; I appreciate your interest in grazing the allotments in a sustainable fashion and am confident that this proposed decision achieves that objective.

As you know, the BLM recently evaluated current grazing practices and current conditions in the Alkali-Wildcat and Rats Nest, Chipmunk Field FFR, Elephant Butte, Sands Basin and Texas Basin FFR allotments (hereinafter, "Jump allotments"). We undertook this effort to ensure that any renewed grazing permit(s) on these allotments will be consistent with the BLM's legal and land management obligations. As part of our evaluation process, rangeland health assessment/evaluation/determinations and specialist reports were completed; this proposed decision incorporates by reference the information contained in those documents.

The BLM also engaged in public scoping and met with members of the public interested in grazing issues in the Jump allotments. The process for completing the Jump Creek, Succor Creek, & Cow Creek Watersheds Grazing Permit Renewal Environmental Impact Statement (Chipmunk Group EIS) began with the publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register on January 9, 2012. The NOI included a call for resource information and the identification of issues for this project planning effort. The scoping period closed on March 9, 2012, but some relevant comments were submitted after the end of the scoping period. All comments, including those submitted after March 9, 2012, are addressed in the scoping report (which can be found at

[http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/fo/owyhee/owyhee\\_grazing\\_group/grazing\\_permit\\_renewal0.html](http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/fo/owyhee/owyhee_grazing_group/grazing_permit_renewal0.html)

and were considered during the development of the FEIS. The package solicited comments to better identify issues associated with renewing livestock grazing permits on this allotment. One public scoping meeting was also held from 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM on February 23, 2012; in addition, an open house was held on June 13, 2013, in Marsing, Idaho, with the public arriving and departing at their leisure. The purposes of these meetings were to provide more information about the issues the BLM identified and give the public an opportunity to ask questions and submit input in person.

After evaluating conditions on the land and meeting with you and the public, it became clear that resource concerns currently exist on the Jump allotments. To assist us in addressing livestock impacts to public land resources, my office prepared and issued an environmental impact statement<sup>1</sup> (EIS) in which we considered a number of options and approaches to maintain and improve resource conditions. Specifically, the BLM considered and analyzed in detail three alternatives for the Chipmunk Field FFR allotment, four alternatives for the Texas Basin FFR allotment, and five alternatives for the Alkali-Wildcat and Rats Nest (Wild Rat<sup>2</sup>), Elephant Butte and Sands Basin allotments. We also considered other alternatives that we did not analyze in detail. Our goal in developing alternatives was to consider options that were important to you as the permittee, and to consider options that, if selected, would ensure that natural resource conditions on the Jump allotments are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Owyhee Resource Management Plan (ORMP) and the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (Idaho S&Gs). This proposed decision incorporates by reference the analysis contained in the EIS. The Draft EIS detailing the alternatives below was made available for public review and comment for a 45-day period ending June 17, 2013. In addition to timely comments received from you, a number of government entities and agencies, interest groups, and members of the public also provided comments. Comments that were received are summarized and responses are provided as an appendix to the completed EIS available on the web at:

[http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/prog/nepa\\_register/owyhee\\_grazing\\_group/grazing\\_permit\\_renewal0.html](http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/prog/nepa_register/owyhee_grazing_group/grazing_permit_renewal0.html).

We have now completed the most difficult part of the permit renewal process and I am now prepared to issue a proposed decision to renew your permit to graze livestock within the Alkali-Wildcat and Rats Nest, Chipmunk Field FFR, Elephant Butte, Sands Basin and Texas Basin FFR allotments. Upon implementation of the decision, your permit(s) to graze livestock in the Jump allotments will be fully processed using the revisions to the grazing regulations<sup>3</sup> in 1995, adoption of the Idaho S&Gs in 1997, and implementation of the ORMP in 1999.

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<sup>1</sup> EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS analyzed three alternatives for the Chipmunk Field FFR allotment, four alternatives for the Texas Basin FFR allotment, and five alternatives for the Alkali-Wildcat and Rats Nest (Wild Rat), Elephant Butte and Sands Basin allotments to fully process permits for livestock grazing management practices.

<sup>2</sup> Permittees on the Alkali-Wildcat and Rat's Nest allotments included in their applications a proposal to restructure these allotments to create the Wild Rat allotment.

<sup>3</sup> 43 CFR Subpart 4100 is the federal regulations that govern public land grazing administration.

This proposed decision will:

- Describe current conditions and issues on the allotments;
- Briefly discuss the alternative grazing management systems that the BLM considered in the EIS;
- Respond to the applications for grazing permit renewal for use in the Jump allotments;
- Outline my proposed decision to select Alternative 3 in Alkali-Wildcat and Rats Nest (Wild Rat), Alternative 2 in Chipmunk Field FFR, Alternative 3 in Elephant Butte, Alternative 4 in Sands Basin and Alternative 3 in Texas Basin FFR allotments; and
- My rationale for proposing these alternatives.

## Background

### *Allotment Setting*

#### *Alkali-Wildcat and Rats Nest (Wild Rat) Allotments*

The Alkali-Wildcat allotment is located in northwestern Owyhee County, Idaho, approximately 10 miles south of Marsing, Idaho (Map 1). The allotment lies in salt desert shrub land flats and western foothills of the Owyhee Mountains. Jump Creek forms a portion of the northern boundary and Highway 95 forms part of the eastern boundary. Elevations range from approximately 2,500 feet north near Jump Creek to 4,300 feet on the southernmost boundary of the allotment. This one-pasture allotment is primarily grazed April through May annually. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administers 100 percent of the 5,161 acres in the allotment (see Map 1).

The Rats Nest allotment is located in northwestern Owyhee County, Idaho, approximately 10 miles south of Marsing, Idaho (Map 1). The allotment lies in the Owyhee Mountains and includes the land feature Shares Snout. The northern boundary is the Elephant Butte allotment, and to the south, west, and east lay the Hardtrigger and Shares Basin allotments. Elevations range from approximately 2,600 feet to more than 4,800 feet at Shares Snout. This one-pasture allotment is primarily grazed April through May annually. The BLM administers 88 percent (4,891 acres) of the 5,531 acres in the allotment, with private control of 12 percent (640 acres). The Rats Nest allotment also includes a portion of the Hardtrigger Wild Horse Management Area. In accordance with the 1999 ORMP, the appropriate management level (AML) is 98 horses, although the population may range from 66 to 130 horses in any given year. See Map 1.

#### *Chipmunk Field FFR Allotment*

The Chipmunk Field FFR allotment consists of one pasture and has 559 acres of public land, 12,379 acres of private land, and 32 acres of state land, for a total of 12,970 acres (4 percent public land). Because this allotment includes a large acreage of private land, under the current permit, the livestock numbers and dates have varied annually as determined by the permittee, provided that the 72 animal unit months (AUMs<sup>4</sup>) permitted were not exceeded and unacceptable impacts to public land resources did not occur. See Map 2.

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<sup>4</sup> Animal unit month (AUM) means the amount of forage necessary for the sustenance of one cow or its equivalent for a period of one month.

### ***Elephant Butte Allotment***

The Elephant Butte allotment is located approximately 10 miles south of Marsing, Idaho (Map 3). The allotment lies in the salt desert shrub land flats and foothills of the Owyhee Mountains. The northern boundary adjoins private cropland, the southern boundary includes portions of the Owyhee Foothills, and Highway 95 forms the western boundary. Elevations range from approximately 2,200 feet in the flats to 3,356 feet near Alkali Spring in the southwest corner of the allotment. The BLM administers 78 percent (7,989 acres) of the 10,224 acres in the allotment, with state and private control of less than 1 percent (24 acres) and 22 percent (2,211 acres), respectively. A five-pasture rotation has been the normal livestock operation in this allotment and usually starts around mid-March and May; winter use occurs in pasture 6 during December. See Map 3.

### ***Sands Basin Allotment***

The Sands Basin allotment is located in western Owyhee County, Idaho, approximately 15 miles south of Homedale, Idaho (Map 4). The allotment lies on the western end of the Owyhee Mountains and includes Sands Basin itself. Strodes Basin and Poison Creek allotments form the northern boundary, the Rockville allotment forms the eastern and southern boundaries, and the Oregon state line forms the western boundary. Elevations range from 3,800 feet along Jump Creek to over 5,100 feet in pasture 4. This four-pasture allotment is grazed April through May, with winter grazing occurring in pasture 2 during November. The BLM administers 80 percent (10,861 acres) of the 13,522 acres in the allotment, with state and private control of 9 percent (1,279 acres) and 10 percent (1,382 acres), respectively. The Sands Basin allotment also serves as the Sands Basin Wild Horse Management Area. In accordance with the 1999 ORMP, the appropriate management level (AML) is 49 horses, but the population may range from 33 to 64 horses in any given year. See Map 4.

### ***Texas Basin FFR Allotment***

The Texas Basin FFR allotment is located approximately 20 miles northeast of Jordan Valley, Oregon, in Owyhee County, Idaho, and consists of two pastures. The allotment has 91 acres of public land and 1,906 acres of private land, for a total of 1,997 acres (5 percent public land, 95 percent private land). Because this allotment includes a large acreage of private land, under the current permit, the livestock numbers and dates have varied annually as determined by the permittee, provided that the 5 animal unit months (AUMs) permitted were not exceeded and unacceptable impacts to public land resources did not occur. See Map 5.

The Jump allotments lie within the Owyhee Uplands, a sagebrush steppe semi-arid landscape of shrubs and widely spaced bunchgrasses and native vegetation communities. Limited precipitation with cold winters and dry summers constrain plant and animal communities. Where deeper soils exist, the native vegetation is primarily Wyoming big sagebrush with an understory of native perennial bunchgrasses. Low sagebrush can be found in areas of shallow soils with the same native perennial bunchgrass understory. The effective average annual precipitation for these vegetation communities is approximately 8 inches for the drier sites and 13 inches for the more moist sites; precipitation occurs primarily during the winter.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to the affected environment sections of EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS.

### *Current Grazing Authorization*

You currently graze livestock on the Jump allotments pursuant to a grazing permit issued by the BLM. The terms and conditions of that grazing permit are as follows:

**Table LVST-1: Terms and conditions for Chipmunk Grazing Association**

Allotment	Livestock		Grazing Period		% PL	Type Use	AUMs
	Number	Kind	Begin	End			
00514 Alkali-Wildcat	234	Cattle	4/1	5/31	100	Active	469
00523 Chipmunk Field FFR	71	Cattle	12/01	12/31	100	Active	72
00513 Elephant Butte	21	Cattle	04/01	5/31	100	Active	85
	21	Cattle	11/1	12/31	100		
00522 Rats Nest	323	Cattle	4/1	5/27	92	Active	557
00521 Sands Basin	600	Cattle	4/1	6/5	70	Active	999
	123	Cattle	10/1	10/31	70		
00472 Texas Basin	5	Cattle	12/1	12/31	100	Active	5

Other terms and conditions:

1. The number of livestock and the season of use on the fenced federal range (FFR) allotments are at the permittee's discretion.
2. Grazing use will be in accordance with the grazing schedule identified in the final decision of the Owyhee Field Office Manager dated \_\_\_\_\_. Livestock grazing will be in accordance with your allotment grazing schedule(s). Changes to the scheduled use require approval.
3. Turn-out is subject to the Boise District range readiness criteria.
4. The permittee's certified actual use report is due within 15 days of completing the authorized annual grazing use.
5. Salt and/or supplements shall not be placed within one-quarter (1/4)-mile of springs, streams, meadows, aspen stands, playas, special status plant populations or water developments.
6. Trailing activities must be coordinated with the BLM prior to initiation. A trailing permit or similar authorization may be required prior to crossing public lands.
7. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(B), the permittee must notify the BLM field manager, by telephone with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony (as defined in 43 CFR 10.2) on federal lands. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4 (C), the permittee must immediately stop any ongoing activities connected with such discovery and make a reasonable effort to protect the discovered remains or objects.
8. Livestock enclosures located within the grazing allotment are closed to all domestic grazing use.
9. Range improvements must be maintained in accordance with the cooperative agreement and range improvement permit in which you are a signatory or assignee. All maintenance of range improvements within designated Wilderness requires prior consultation with the authorized officer.
10. All appropriate documentation regarding base property leases, lands offered for exchange-of-use, and livestock control agreements must be approved prior to turn out. Leases of land and/or

- livestock must be notarized prior to submission and be in compliance with Boise District Policy.
11. Failure to pay the grazing bill within 15 days of the due date specified shall result in a late fee assessment of \$25.00 or 10 percent of the grazing bill, whichever is greater, not to exceed \$250.00. Payment made later than 15 days after the due date shall include the appropriate late fee assessment. Failure to make payment within 30 days may be a violation of 43 CFR § 4140.1(b)(1) and shall result in action by the authorized officer under 43 CFR § 4150.1 and § 4160.1.
  12. Utilization may not exceed 50 percent of the current year's growth.
  13. A minimum 4-inch stubble height will be left on herbaceous vegetation within the riparian area along 0.75 miles of Jump Creek at the end of the growing season.
  14. Early use (March 1 to March 31) may be authorized on an annual basis in the Elephant Butte allotment.
  15. Gates in management fences located inside wild horse herd management areas will be opened within 15 days after the authorized grazing period.
  16. Fall use (October 1 to November 30) may be authorized on an annual basis in the Sands Basin allotment.

**Table LVST-2: Terms and conditions for Ted Blackstock**

Allotment	Livestock		Grazing Period		% PL	Type Use	AUMs
	Number	Kind	Begin	End			
00514 Alkali-Wildcat	77	Cattle	4/1	5/31	100	Active	155
00513 Elephant Butte	67	Cattle	3/15	5/31	88	Active	305
	86	Cattle	11/1	12/31	88		

**Other terms and conditions:**

1. Grazing use will be in accordance with the grazing schedule identified in the final decision of the Owyhee Field Office Manager dated \_\_\_\_\_. Livestock grazing will be in accordance with your allotment grazing schedule(s). Changes to the scheduled use require approval.
2. Turn-out is subject to the Boise District range readiness criteria.
3. The permittee's certified actual use report is due within 15 days of completing the authorized annual grazing use.
4. Salt and/or supplements shall not be placed within one-quarter (1/4)-mile of springs, streams, meadows, aspen stands, playas, special status plant populations or water developments.
5. Trailing activities must be coordinated with the BLM prior to initiation. A trailing permit or similar authorization may be required prior to crossing public lands.
6. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(B), the permittee must notify the BLM field manager, by telephone with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony (as defined in 43 CFR 10.2) on federal lands. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4 (C), the permittee must immediately stop any ongoing activities connected with such discovery and make a reasonable effort to protect the discovered remains or objects.
7. Livestock exclosures located within the grazing allotment are closed to all domestic grazing use.
8. Range improvements must be maintained in accordance with the cooperative agreement and range improvement permit in which you are a signatory or assignee. All maintenance of range improvements within designated Wilderness requires prior consultation with the authorized officer.
9. All appropriate documentation regarding base property leases, lands offered for exchange-of-use, and livestock control agreements must be approved prior to turn out. Leases of land and/or livestock must be notarized prior to submission and be in compliance with Boise District Policy.

10. Failure to pay the grazing bill within 15 days of the due date specified shall result in a late fee assessment of \$25.00 or 10 percent of the grazing bill, whichever is greater, not to exceed \$250.00. Payment made later than 15 days after the due date shall include the appropriate late fee assessment. Failure to make payment within 30 days may be a violation of 43 CFR § 4140.1(b) (1) and shall result in action by the authorized officer under 43 CFR § 4150.1 and § 4160.1.
11. Utilization may not exceed 50 percent of the current year's growth.
12. A minimum 4-inch stubble height will be left on herbaceous vegetation within the riparian area along 0.75 miles of Jump Creek at the end of the growing season.
13. Early use (March 1 to March 31) may be authorized on an annual basis in the Elephant Butte allotment.

As part of a settlement agreement, the following additional terms and conditions were added to the above permits in March of 2000:

- Key herbaceous riparian vegetation, where stream bank stability is dependent upon it, will have a minimum stubble height of 4 inches on the stream bank, along the greenline, after the growing season;
- Key riparian browse vegetation will not be used more than 50 percent of the current annual twig growth that is within reach of the animals;
- Key herbaceous riparian vegetation on riparian areas, other than the stream banks, will not be grazed more than 50 percent during the growing season, or 60 percent during the dormant season; and
- Stream bank damage attributable to grazing livestock will be less than 10 percent on a stream segment.

The current permit authorizes annual use as seen in Table 3, below. However, based on recent management actions over the last ten years, it is clear that in most years you have used the allotment with different livestock numbers and seasons compared to the numbers and dates identified in the Mandatory Terms and Conditions, utilizing the flexibility that was authorized in the grazing permit resulting in average actual use.

**Table LVST-3: Average actual use compared to active use AUMs**

Allotment Name	Baseline Active AUMs	Average Actual Use	Percent Difference Active vs. Average Actual Use AUMs
Alkali-Wildcat	624	312	-50%
Chipmunk Field FFR	72	72	0%
Elephant Butte	390	320	-18%
Rats Nest	557	458	-18%
Sands Basin	999	883	-12%
Texas Basin FFR	5	5	0%

Actual use is important when considering the renewal of a grazing permit because it was actual use and not authorized levels of use that resulted in current conditions on the allotments. In other words, the current condition of the allotments is not the result of what was authorized under the

current permit, but rather is the result of a varied number of AUMs and seasons of use over the past several years.

### ***Resource Conditions***

The BLM completed rangeland health assessments, evaluations, specialist reports and determinations for the Alkali-Wildcat and Rats Nest, Elephant Butte, and Sands Basin allotments in 2013 and for the Chipmunk Field FFR and Texas Basin FFR allotments in 2007. Those documents concluded that some of the resources on these allotments were not meeting the Idaho S&Gs.

The Alkali-Wildcat allotment is used as a single pasture. Standards 1 and 4 are not being met, and livestock grazing is not a causal factor. Standards 2, 3, and 8 are not being met and current livestock grazing is a causal factor. Standard 7 is being met; Standards 5 and 6 are not applicable to this allotment.

The Rats Nest allotment consists of a single pasture. Standard 7 applies to the Rats Nest allotment and is being met. Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, and 8 are not being met, and current livestock grazing and wild horse use are causal factors. Standards 5 and 6 are not applicable to this allotment.

The Chipmunk Field FFR allotment has one pasture. Standards 1, 4, and 8 are being met, and Standards 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 do not apply to this allotment.

The Elephant Butte allotment has five pastures. Standards 2, 3, and 7 apply to the Elephant Butte allotment and are being met. Standards 1, 6, and 8 are not being met and current livestock grazing is a causal factor. Standards 4 and 5 are not applicable to this allotment.

The Sands Basin allotment has four pastures. Standard 5 applies to the Sands Basin allotment and is being met in pastures 1 and 2. Standards 1, 2, 3, 4 (pasture 4), 6 (pasture 3), 7, and 8 are not being met, and current livestock grazing practices and wild horse use are significant causal factors.

The Texas Basin FFR allotment has two pastures, and Standards 1, 4, and 8 are being met. Standards 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 do not apply to this allotment.

### **Alkali-Wildcat Allotment**

#### ***Soils - Uplands***

Historic livestock grazing management practices, wildfire, and exotic species are significant causal factors for not meeting watershed standards in the Alkali-Wildcat allotment. Accelerated soil erosion, such as water flow patterns and pedestalled bunchgrasses, reflect a decrease in watershed function and are primarily associated with historic grazing practices and growing-season use. Ground cover trend is inconclusive due to high variability, although one site was influenced by a fire in the 1960s and may still lack proper protection.

Much of the decline in soil stability and hydrologic function can be associated with a change in deep-rooted bunchgrasses, like bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*), to more shallow-rooted species, such as Sandberg bluegrass (*Poa secunda*). The lack of species diversity and the localized invasion of annuals have compromised soil nutrient replenishment. This decreased

ecological function leads to a lack of capacity for proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow, and indicates soil and hydrologic function are compromised from historic livestock grazing such that the Alkali-Wildcat allotment is not meeting Standard 1.

#### *Vegetation - Uplands*<sup>6</sup>

Approximately 65 percent of this one-pasture allotment has burned since the early 1960s, with the most recent fire in 2012. Post-fire seeding occurred in the 1960s, with only remnant crested wheatgrass remaining. This allotment is dominated by a sagebrush/rabbitbrush overstory, with Sandberg bluegrass and invasive annuals co-dominating the understory and bluebunch wheatgrass a minor component. Historic grazing practices, wildfire, and exotic vegetation are the drivers in failing to meet Standard 4. The Rangeland Health Field Assessment (RHFA) data for the allotment identify a shift toward shallower-rooted bunchgrasses and evidence of soil surface erosion contributing to the departure from site potential and a lack of ecological balance. Trend data support RHFA findings with a documented short-term increase of annual grasses and sprouting shrubs.

#### *Water Resources and Riparian/Wetland Areas*<sup>7</sup>

Alkali-Wildcat is a one-pasture allotment and is not meeting Standards 2 and 3 because of current livestock grazing. Jump Creek, its tributaries, and the tributaries of Squaw Creek are the primary drainages in the Alkali-Wildcat allotment that support riparian-wetland vegetation. Approximately 3.0 total miles of Jump Creek exist within the allotment. As was analyzed in the EIS (Section 3.5.1), approximately 0.75 perennial miles were assessed, rated as being functional at-risk (FAR) and determined not to be meeting Standards 2 and 3. Additionally, Wildcat Spring (a previously developed spring) was determined not to be meeting Standards 2 and 3 because the spring has lost its form and function as a riparian-wetland area and lacks hydric vegetation due to continuous livestock grazing. BLM determined that the FAR-rated reaches of Jump Creek and all of Wildcat Spring are not meeting the Standards, and current livestock grazing management practices are a significant causal factor because continuous spring (April 1 and May 31) grazing is occurring and no deferment or rest treatments have been incorporated as part of a grazing rotation. In addition, Jump Creek and Wildcat Spring primarily serve as the only reliable livestock water during the grazing season and are being heavily utilized annually.

Current livestock grazing management practices are significant causal factors for not meeting Standards 2 and 3. The grazing schedules that have been implemented in recent years have not provided rest years, there have been relatively high stocking levels, and the residual vegetation has not been sufficient to maintain or improve riparian-wetland function. Livestock developments were not designed to protect the riparian-wetland water source, and the streams lack the hydric vegetative cover and bank-stabilizing species necessary for the maintenance of stable stream channels.

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<sup>6</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.3.1 and Appendix E.

<sup>7</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.5.1 and Appendix E.

Standard 7 is being met because none of the streams that occur within the allotment are on IDEQ's 303(d) list of impaired waters.

### *Special Status Plants*<sup>8</sup>

No special status plants are known to occur on the Alkali-Wildcat allotment; therefore this will not be discussed further for this allotment.

### *Wildlife/Wildlife Habitats and Special Status Animals*<sup>9</sup>

This allotment is managed as a native plant community and is not meeting Standard 4. The combination of historic grazing, invasion of exotic annual grasses, and wildfire have resulted in the vegetation community transitioning from a reference site community of perennial grasses (i.e., bluebunch wheatgrass) to a less-desirable community of more grazing-tolerant species such as Sandberg bluegrass and cheatgrass (see Standard 4). This transition exposes the understory and reduces effective nesting, escape, hiding, travel, and foraging cover values for all wildlife associated with sagebrush steppe communities. Because upland habitat values are changing to a less-desirable vegetation state, this allotment is failing to provide adequate upland habitat conditions for sagebrush steppe-associated wildlife and therefore is not meeting Standard 8.

### **Riparian Habitat**

This allotment was determined to be failing Standards 2 and 3 because streams and springs within this allotment are not properly functioning due to current grazing practices (see riparian discussion above). Standard 7 is meeting water quality requirements. Streams, springs, and wetlands that are non-functional (NF) or are FAR are lacking adequate riparian vegetation composition and distribution to provide the structure and function to support a productive environment. Because Standards 2 and 3 are not being met, this allotment is failing to provide adequate riparian habitat conditions for aquatic and terrestrial species and is therefore not meeting Standard 8.

### **Focal Species**

Ninety-one percent of this allotment falls within modeled preliminary priority habitat (PPH)/priority general habitat (PGH) for sage-grouse. A total of two sage-grouse breeding habitat assessments were collected in 2012 and indicated:

- Pasture 1 - Providing unsuitable breeding habitat conditions for sage-grouse;

The unsuitable rating is due to the lack of large deep-rooted perennial grasses (i.e., bluebunch wheatgrass) in the understory. This condition fails to provide the understory composition and structure for effective nesting, security, and foraging cover values for sage-grouse. This allotment is failing to provide suitable sage-grouse habitat conditions, as indicated by the upland vegetation problems (including a dominance of exotic annuals) that have led to a failure to meet Standard 4, and therefore is not meeting Standard 8.

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<sup>8</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.7.1 and Appendix E.

<sup>9</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.6.1 and Appendix E.

Columbia River redband trout are known to occur within the Jump Creek system. Evaluation of Standards 2 and 3 identified streams and springs within this system that are not properly functioning due to current grazing practices (see riparian discussion above). Redband trout require intact channels with well-developed riparian communities that stabilize banks to minimize erosion and create undercuts, minimize impacts of flood events and filter sediments, provide shade to reduce water temperatures, and contribute woody debris to create channel structure and regulate seasonal flows. Because these in-stream and near-stream habitat characteristics are not fully represented, this allotment is not providing adequate riparian conditions to sustain viable populations of redband trout and is therefore not meeting Standard 8.

### **Chipmunk Field FFR Allotment**

#### *Soils - Uplands*

The 2006 rangeland health evaluation indicated that slight water flow patterns, pedestaling, terracettes, and plant litter movement were observed at the evaluation site. The remainders of the indicators for Standard 1 rated as a none-to-slight departure from expected conditions and were nearly as expected for proper functioning conditions at the ecological site.

#### *Vegetation - Uplands*<sup>10</sup>

This one-pasture allotment is dominated by native plant communities and is meeting Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities). The dominant visual aspect is a mix of mountain big sagebrush, antelope bitterbrush, and rabbitbrush, with a bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue, squirreltail, and Sandberg bluegrass understory. Some cheatgrass is present; however, the native plant community is vigorous and healthy and able to compete for resources. All indicators of biotic integrity are near expected conditions for this ecological site.

#### *Water Resources and Riparian/Wetland Areas*

No riparian resources are found on the Chipmunk Field FFR allotment.

#### *Special Status Plants*<sup>11</sup>

Soft blazingstar is known to occur within this allotment, although the condition of the occurrence is unknown. Although cattle have been known to occasionally graze this species, it is likely marginally palatable and occurs on sparsely vegetated fragile soil inclusions; therefore, it is unlikely to be impacted by livestock herbivory. The native plant community is being maintained, and thus, it is expected that the habitat of this species is being maintained. Therefore, even though the condition of the occurrence is unknown, it is unlikely this species is impacted by livestock grazing other than trailing.

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<sup>10</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.3.1 and Appendix E.

<sup>11</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.7.1 and Appendix E.

### *Wildlife/Wildlife Habitats and Special Status Animals<sup>12</sup>*

There is no site-specific wildlife assessment information available for these allotments; however, given that there is no wildlife habitat information available to aid in characterizing condition of composition and structure (i.e., sage-grouse breeding habitat assessments), and absent any information to the contrary, BLM resource specialists have concluded that because Standard 4 is being met (there is a mix of mountain big sagebrush, antelope bitterbrush, and rabbitbrush, with a bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue, squirreltail, and Sandberg bluegrass understory), the native plant community is providing adequate upland overstory/understory composition and structure for identified focal and other shrub steppe associated species and is thus meeting Standard 8.

No riparian resources are found on the Chipmunk Field FFR allotment.

### **Elephant Butte Allotment**

#### *Soils - Uplands*

This is a five-pasture allotment. Current livestock grazing management is a significant causal factor for not meeting upland watershed Standard 1 in portions of pasture 2. Signs of increased erosion, such as water flow patterns and pedestaled bunchgrasses, reflect a decrease in watershed function, while short-term declines in more durable soil cover are evident in microbiotic crusts, rocks, gravel, and persistent litter. A decline in soil structure, organic matter, and non-persistent litter, along with an increase in bare ground, are also apparent. Although native plant conditions are noted to be in excellent condition along some steeper slopes within pasture 2, the more easily accessible lower elevations and gentler grades display a decline in watershed function. With actual use occurring during the spring and winter, wet soils are especially susceptible to mechanical damage and to increasing bare ground. Livestock grazing under wet conditions has thus been the main cause for the physical impacts to soils.

Aside from pasture 2, RHFAs for the allotment show very little to no distinct physical degradation for watershed indicators because most surfaces in the allotment have a high rock and gravel content that protect soils from erosional forces. That is especially the case on the calcareous soils of the salt shrub desert along the gently sloping to flat alluvial plains above the Snake River valley.

#### *Vegetation - Uplands*

The dominating presence of non-native annual weeds is the determining factor for evaluating the rangeland health of the Elephant Butte allotment under Standard 6 (Exotic Plant Communities). Fire has affected all pastures except pasture 4. Pasture 1 was mildly affected by fire in the 1980s, with only 3 percent burned. Approximately 18 percent of pasture 3 burned in 2002. Pastures 2 and 5 have had multiple fires throughout several years, with 67 percent and 57 percent of the area burned, respectively. There is no record of post-fire seeding occurring within the allotment. Invasive annuals dominate the understory of these pastures, with a subdominant overstory of mixed shrubs consisting of Wyoming big sagebrush, shadscale saltbush, spiny hopsage, or budsage. Remnant native vegetation is being maintained in pastures 1, 3, 4, and 5, and these pastures are meeting Standard 6. Perennial grasses and annual weeds are static, according to trend data, and

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<sup>12</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.6.1 and Appendix E.

shrub cover is declining. Pasture 2 is not meeting Standard 6, with current grazing management practices identified as a significant causal factor due to mechanical damage during spring use (see soil discussion above). Recent data show remnant native populations are degraded, although some native species populations in higher elevation are in excellent condition. Trend data within the native vegetation show a significant increase in cheatgrass in the short term and a static trend in perennial grasses. Shrub cover is decreasing for shadscale saltbush and increasing, at one site, for low sagebrush. Whitetop is present at one site in pasture 2, has been chemically treated, and will continue to be monitored and treated as a part of the Boise District weed program. This noxious weed site is not a factor in the pasture failing to meet Standard 6.

#### *Water Resources and Riparian/Wetland Areas*

Approximately 0.5 perennial miles of Squaw Creek occur in pasture 2 of the allotment. The stream is inaccessible to livestock and has twice been assessed in proper functioning condition (PFC). The two springs that occur in pastures 2 and 3 are developed, with the water source supplying cattle troughs. The riparian-wetland areas that are associated with the springs/seeps have lost their form and function and were not assessed using the PFC protocol. The two areas are currently occupied by upland species and weeds. Standard 7 is being met because IDEQ has identified that all of the streams that traverse BLM lands within the allotment are fully supporting the beneficial uses assigned to the watershed. Therefore, it was determined that current livestock grazing management practices conform with the Idaho Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management applicable to Standards 2, 3, and 7.

#### *Special Status Plants*<sup>13</sup>

There are six special status plants known to occur within this allotment. Cusick's pincushion (*Chaenactis cusickii*) and soft blazingstar (*Mentzelia mollis*) are co-located within the same habitat in pasture 3. Cusick's pincushion is also known to occur in pasture 5. Idaho milkvetch (*Astragalus conjunctus*) occurs in the southern portion of pasture 2. Malheur cryptantha (*Cryptantha propria*), false naked buckwheat (*Eriogonum novonudum*), and Antelope Valley beardtongue (*Penstemon janishiae*) all occur in the same general area in pasture 2.

Livestock present no threats to soft blazingstar and Cusick's pincushion on this allotment. However, this Standard is not being met due to extensive OHV and trash dumping impacts within the habitats of Cusick's pincushion and soft blazingstar in pasture 3.

The Idaho milkvetch population is in good condition and the Standard is being met for this specific species.

The habitats of Malheur cryptantha, false naked buckwheat, and Antelope Valley beardtongue are generally intact. Livestock impacts are limited within these habitats due to the lack of forage within the unique soil inclusions. This Standard is being met for these species' habitats.

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<sup>13</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.7.1 and Appendix E.

### *Wildlife/Wildlife Habitats and Special Status Animals<sup>14</sup>*

Pastures 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are managed as exotic pastures. Upland habitats managed under Standard 6 do not meet the requirements of Standard 8. Due to current livestock grazing and the dominance of exotic species in this allotment, vegetation composition, structure, and function are lacking or absent in these communities and have substantially reduced effective nesting, hiding, escape, travel, and foraging cover values for all upland wildlife species. These exotic communities further create large open spaces, diminish habitat connectivity, and increase sagebrush community fragmentation.

### **Focal Species**

Twenty-two percent of this allotment falls within modeled PPH/PGH habitat for sage-grouse. A total of five sage-grouse breeding habitat assessments collected from 2009 to 2012 indicated:

- Pasture 1 - Non-habitat for sage-grouse
- Pasture 2 - Northern portion: non-habitat for sage-grouse; southern portion: providing suitable breeding habitat conditions
- Pasture 3 - Non-habitat for sage-grouse
- Pasture 4 - Non-habitat for sage-grouse
- Pasture 5 - Non-habitat for sage-grouse

A majority of the acreage in this allotment is non-habitat for sage-grouse because of the shadscale/cheatgrass plant community that does not provide adequate habitat composition, structure and function. This is also consistent with PPH/PGH modeling map that identifies that 78 percent of this allotment is outside the range of sage-grouse habitat. However, in the remaining 22 percent of the allotment, the southern portion of pasture 2 increases in elevation and the sagebrush community becomes more favorable with a desirable canopy cover of bluebunch wheatgrass in the understory. Sage-grouse breeding habitat assessments recorded that this southern portion of the pasture is providing favorable overstory/understory composition of sagebrush and bluebunch wheatgrass for effective nesting, escape, security, and foraging cover for sage-grouse.

### **Rats Nest Allotment**

#### *Soils - Uplands*

Current livestock grazing management practices and wild horses are significant causal factors for not meeting upland watershed Standard 1 in the Rats Nest allotment. Based on the declining conditions reflected in the available trend data, portions of the Rats Nest allotment are not maintaining adequate nutrient, energy, and hydrologic function.

Although rangeland health field assessments identified no soil or hydrologic concerns, contrasting results from four trend sites resulted in higher departure ratings, with bare ground increasing over the short and long term. This undesirable presence of unprotected soils, paired with a decrease in protective non-persistent litter, show that a decline in litter producing deep-rooted bunchgrasses and other vegetation is taking place. There is little indication of improvement for larger vegetation and associated soil and hydrologic function. In pasture 4, signs of increased erosion, such as water

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<sup>14</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.6.1 and Appendix E.

flow patterns and historic and active pedestaled bunchgrasses, reflect a decrease in watershed function. Soil surface resistance to erosion is reduced, especially where native deep-rooted bunchgrasses are missing and where interspaces are not stabilized by persistent cover. Observations during a field trip in 2012 confirmed these impacts, along with mechanical damage from hoof action, increased water flow patterns, soil surface sealing, and an absence of microbiotic crusts.

Year-round wild horse grazing and prolonged impacts from the 1972 Alkali Springs fire also contribute to reduced soil and hydrologic function. Even after four decades, a very distinct dominance of rabbitbrush and lack of sagebrush structural groups is present. The decreased ecological function and impaired soils resulting from repeated spring use in the absence of rest indicate that soil and hydrologic function are compromised and that livestock management is a significant causal factor for not meeting Standard 1 in in the Rats Nest allotment.

#### *Vegetation - Uplands*

Approximately 57 percent of this allotment has been affected by wildfire since the 1970s. This allotment is predominately sagebrush overstory with Sandberg bluegrass understory. Invasive annual grass species are present in trace amounts. Although the RHFA data indicate only a slight to moderate reduction in deep-rooted bunchgrasses, the trend data identify an apparent decrease in deep-rooted bunchgrasses and shrub density at all sites and an increase of invasive annual weeds at half of the sites. Livestock grazing during the critical growing period and season-long wild horse grazing are causal factors for failing to meet Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities). Russian olive and tamarisk are present in the northernmost portion of the allotment. These sites are currently being treated as part of the Boise District weed program monitoring and treatment program and will continue to be treated in the future.

#### *Water Resources and Riparian/Wetland Areas<sup>15</sup>*

Squaw Creek and Rats Nest Gulch are the primary drainages in the Rats Nest allotment that support riparian-wetland vegetation. About 3.5 miles of Rats Nest Gulch were determined to be FAR because there was a high (more than 30 percent) proportion of noxious weeds present, lateral cutting of the stream channel was occurring, and there was a lack of deep-rooted plant species. The three springs that have been evaluated range from NF to FAR. Coyote Spring was recently re-assessed as FAR with a downward trend because there were sloughing and erosion impacts occurring from livestock trailing and hoof shearing; the spring is developed, with the trough placed at the spring source. Upper Rats Nest Spring was rated NF because the riparian-wetland area has lost its extent, form, and function, and there are no hydric species present or the saturated soils to support them.

Current livestock grazing management practices and wild horses are significant causal factors for not meeting Standards 2 and 3. The grazing schedules that have been implemented in recent years have not provided rest years, and the residual vegetation has not been sufficient to maintain or improve riparian-wetland function. Therefore, current livestock grazing management practices do not conform to the Idaho Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management applicable to Standards 2 and 3.

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<sup>15</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.5.1 and Appendix E.

Standard 7 is currently being met in the Rats Nest allotment because the streams are fully supporting the watershed's beneficial uses.

#### *Special Status Plants*<sup>16</sup>

Idaho milkvetch is the only special status plant known to occur within this allotment, and only at one occurrence. Although this occurrence is currently experiencing impacts from wild horses, the site is being maintained.

#### *Wildlife/Wildlife Habitats and Special Status Animals*<sup>17</sup>

##### **Upland Habitat**

The Rats Nest allotment is managed as a native plant community and was determined to be failing to meet Standard 4 due to current livestock grazing practices and wild horses. Evaluation of Standard 4 determined that the vegetation community is transitioning from a reference site community of robust perennial grasses (i.e., bluebunch wheatgrass) to a less-desirable community of more grazing-tolerant species such as Sandberg bluegrass and cheatgrass. This transition exposes the understory and reduces effective nesting, escape, hiding, travel, and foraging cover values for all wildlife associated with sagebrush steppe communities. The data show that the upland community is changing to a less-desirable vegetation state; thus, this allotment is failing to provide adequate upland habitat conditions for sagebrush steppe wildlife species and therefore is not meeting Standard 8. In addition, the interior 12 percent of this pasture is dominated by annual grasses (i.e., cheatgrass), reducing habitat connectivity and fragmenting sagebrush steppe community.

##### **Riparian Habitat**

Evaluation of Standards 2 and 3 identified streams and springs within this allotment that are not properly functioning due to current livestock grazing practices and wild horses. Streams, springs, and wetlands that are NF or are FAR are lacking adequate riparian vegetation composition and distribution to provide the structure and function to support a productive environment. As Standards 2 and 3 are not being met, this allotment is failing to provide adequate habitat conditions to support viable aquatic and terrestrial species populations and therefore is not meeting Standard 8.

##### **Focal Species**

Fifty-nine percent of this allotment falls within modeled PPH/PGH habitat for sage-grouse. A total of eight sage-grouse breeding assessments collected in 2012 identified:

- Pasture 1 - Providing unsuitable breeding habitat conditions for sage-grouse;

The primary cause for not meeting sage-grouse habitat criteria is reduced canopy cover and height of large deep-rooted perennial grasses (i.e., bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue) in the understory,

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<sup>16</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.7.1 and Appendix E.

<sup>17</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.6.1 and Appendix E.

indicating that functional nesting, brood-rearing, escape, and hiding cover values are not fully being provided in these pastures. In addition, the plant community's transition from the reference community to more grazing-tolerant species such as Sandberg bluegrass and cheatgrass further reduces understory cover values for sage-grouse. The presence of annual grassland areas in the interior of the pasture further reduces habitat values by fragmenting the sagebrush community and reducing patch connectivity. Overall, this allotment is failing to provide adequate sage-grouse habitat conditions and therefore is not meeting Standard 8.

Columbia River redband trout are known to occur within the Squaw Creek system. Standards 2 and 3 identified streams and springs within this system that are not properly functioning or meeting water quality parameters due to wild horses and current livestock grazing practices. Redband trout require intact channels with well-developed riparian communities that stabilize banks to minimize erosion and create undercuts, minimize impacts of flood events and filters sediments, provide shade to reduce water temperatures, and contribute woody debris to create channel structure and regulate seasonal flow. Because these in-stream and near-stream habitat characteristics are not fully represented, this allotment is not providing adequate riparian conditions to sustain viable populations of redband trout and therefore is not meeting Standard 8.

### **Sands Basin Allotment**

#### *Soils - Uplands*

Current livestock grazing management practices and wild horse use are significant causal factors for not meeting upland watershed Standard 1 in pastures 3 and 4; pastures 1 and 2 are meeting the Standard. Although soil conditions in pasture 3 are fairly stable, there is an extreme decline in hydrologic function related to invasive annuals. Indicators of hydrologic function associated with litter amount and plant community composition and distribution are compromised in pasture 3 and portions of pasture 4, especially when associated with an unusually thick and extensive cover of silica-rich medusahead litter that is altering the moisture and nutrient regime of the soils. As a result, this direct relationship between soil and overall biotic integrity is at an extreme departure due to a lack of species diversity and dominance of invasive grasses that adversely affect soil and hydrologic function.

In pasture 4, signs of increased erosion, such as water flow patterns and historic and active pedestaled bunchgrasses, reflect a decrease in watershed function. Soil surface resistance to erosion is reduced, especially where native deep-rooted bunchgrasses are missing and where interspaces are not stabilized by persistent cover. Observations during a field trip in 2012 confirmed the above stated impacts along with mechanical damage from hoof action, increased water flow patterns, soil surface sealing, and absent microbiotic crusts. The decreased ecological function and impaired soils, the result of year-long wild horse grazing, and repeated spring use by livestock in the absence of rest, indicate that soil and hydrologic function are compromised and current livestock grazing management practices are significant causal factors for not meeting Standard 1 in the Sands Basin allotment.

#### *Vegetation - Uplands*

Of the four pastures in the Sands Basin allotment, pastures 1 and 2 are dominated by range seedings, and pasture 4 is dominated by native plant communities. Much of pasture 3 has been seeded, but both the seeded and unseeded areas have been substantially invaded by annual grasses.

Therefore, pastures 1 and 2 were evaluated under and are meeting Standard 5 (Seedings), pasture 3 was evaluated under and is failing to meet Standard 6 (Exotic Plant Communities) and pasture 4 was evaluated under and is failing to meet Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities).

**Pastures 1 and 2:** These pastures are meeting Standard 5 (Seedings). Most of pasture 1 burned in 1960 and was aerially seeded after the fire. In pasture 1, Wyoming big sagebrush and rabbitbrush are dominant, with crested wheatgrass between shrubs. Few forbs and native grasses are present. In pasture 1, trend in perennial grasses is mostly static, but an increased occurrence of cheatgrass has been detected in recent years. A majority of pasture 2 was burned and drill-seeded with crested wheatgrass in the early 1980s. Pasture 2 has a diversity of native perennial shrubs, forbs, and grasses intermixed with crested wheatgrass. Cheatgrass is found in patches on one side of the pasture. In pasture 2, both bluebunch wheatgrass and crested wheatgrass have declined since 1988, while Sandberg bluegrass has remained static. The density and frequency of shrubs, including Wyoming big sagebrush, low sagebrush, and rabbitbrush, have increased.

**Pasture 3:** In 2002, this pasture burned almost in entirety and was seeded after the fire. However, since treatment, this pasture has been substantially invaded by annual weeds, which now make up the dominant vegetation in much of the pasture. While there are some inclusions of intact seedings and native communities within pasture 3, the biotic integrity of the pasture has been dramatically compromised due to the dominance of exotic annual species and season-long wild horse use and fire. This pasture is not meeting Standard 6 (Exotic Plant Communities, other than Seedings). Species diversity is low, with trend data reflecting a decline in perennial grasses and shrubs and an increase in annual grasses. Noxious weeds, including Canada thistle and Russian olive, have been chemically treated in this pasture and will continue to be monitored and treated as a part of the Boise District weed program.

**Pasture 4:** Pasture 4 was evaluated under Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities) and found not to be meeting the Standard, with current grazing management practices identified as a primary causal factor due to spring and fall cattle use, coupled with season-long wild horse use. Wildfire also contributed as a causal factor, to a lesser degree. The majority of this pasture burned in the 1960s and was subsequently seeded with crested wheatgrass. The 2002 Trimby fire affected approximately 15 percent of the pasture, which was treated with a native seed mix. The existing condition for most of the pasture is dominated by a sagebrush/rabbitbrush overstory and Sandberg bluegrass, with invasive annuals scattered throughout the understory, according to the Trimby fire ESR (USDI BLM, 2005). Trend data show a decline in sagebrush, bluebunch wheatgrass, and squirreltail, but an increased occurrence of rabbitbrush has been detected in the most recent years. Noxious weeds including puncture vine, purple loosestrife, and whitetop have been chemically treated in this pasture and will continue to be monitored and treated as a part of the Boise District weed program.

#### *Water Resources and Riparian/Wetland Areas*

Standards 2 and 3 are not applicable to pastures 1 and 3 of the Sands Basin; however they are applicable to pastures 2 and 4, which are not meeting the Standards because of current livestock and wild horse grazing.

Jump Creek is the primary perennial drainage in the Sands Basin allotment that supports riparian-wetland vegetation. The stream traverses both BLM and private lands in pastures 2 and 4. About 1.0 mile of Jump Creek that traverses BLM lands was determined to be FAR because there were insufficient deep-rooted, bank-stabilizing plant species present to protect the system during high flows. Sands Basin Spring Complex was rated FAR based on the presence of headcuts that compromise the vertical stability of the wet meadow area. The grazing schedules that have been implemented in recent years have not provided rest years, and the residual vegetation has not been sufficient to maintain or improve riparian-wetland function. Year-long wild horse and current livestock grazing management practices have not provided for meeting Idaho's water quality Standards.

Standard 7 is currently not being met in pasture 4 of the Sands Basin allotment, and the streams that occur on BLM land are not in conformance with the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management because the streams are 303(d) listed for sediment and temperature. The Standard is being met in pastures 1, 2, and 3 because the streams have been de-listed for sediment and are not 303(d) listed for flow alteration.

#### *Special Status Plants*<sup>18</sup>

No special status plants are known to occur on Sands Basin allotment; therefore, this will not be discussed further for this allotment.

#### *Wildlife/Wildlife Habitats and Special Status Animals*<sup>19</sup>

##### **Uplands**

Pastures 1 and 2 are managed as seedings and meeting Standard 5. However, pastures 1 and 2 have inadequate sagebrush occurrence in the overstory and reduced occurrence, structure, and function of perennial grasses and forbs in the understory. It can be anticipated that habitat conditions may improve as sagebrush recolonizes the seedings and diversifies the plant community. However, at this time, pastures 1 and 2 are failing to provide a full complement of upland habitat overstory/understory conditions for most sagebrush steppe wildlife and therefore are not meeting Standard 8.

Pasture 3 is managed as an exotic plant community due to the dominance of cheatgrass and medusahead. Upland habitats managed under Standard 6 frequently do not meet the requirements of Standard 8. Vegetation composition, structure, and function are lacking or absent in these communities substantially reducing effective nesting, hiding, escape, travel, and foraging cover values for all upland wildlife species. These exotic communities further create large open spaces, diminish habitat connectivity, and increase sagebrush community fragmentation.

Pasture 4 is managed as a native plant community but has been determined not to be meeting Standard 4 due to wild horses and current livestock grazing practices. Currently, there is a shift in

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<sup>18</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.7.1 and Appendix E.

<sup>19</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.6.1 and Appendix E.

the potential plant community from a Wyoming sagebrush/bluebunch reference community to a Wyoming sagebrush/Sandberg-cheatgrass community. The downward trend in plant community composition is favoring shallow-rooted grass species that do not provide a robust growth form or structure to provide an effective interface of overstory and understory plant composition, structure, and function for sagebrush steppe dependent species. Based on the downward trend and shift in the plant community, therefore, this allotment is failing to provide adequate upland habitat conditions for sagebrush steppe species and therefore is not meeting Standard 8.

### **Riparian Habitat**

The determination for the Sands Basin allotment found that Standards 2, 3, and 7 were not met, because streams and springs are not properly functioning or meeting water quality parameters, resulting from current grazing practices and wild horses. Streams, springs, and wetlands that are FAR lack adequate riparian vegetation composition and distribution to provide the structure and function to support a productive environment. As Standards 2, 3, and 7 are not being met, the allotment is failing to provide adequate riparian conditions to support viable aquatic and terrestrial species populations and therefore is not meeting Standard 8.

### **Focal Species**

The entire allotment falls within modeled PPH/PGH habitat for sage-grouse. A total of 23 sage-grouse breeding and late brood-rearing habitat assessments collected from 2000 to 2012 identified:

- Pasture 1 - Providing unsuitable breeding habitat conditions;
- Pasture 2 - Providing marginal breeding and suitable late brood-rearing habitat conditions (mesic habitat assessment);
- Pasture 3 - Providing unsuitable breeding habitat conditions;
- Pasture 4 - Providing unsuitable breeding habitat conditions.

All of the pastures within this allotment are failing to provide suitable breeding habitat conditions for sage-grouse. Pastures 1 and 2 were rated as unsuitable and marginal due to less-than-desirable height (pasture 1) and canopy cover (pasture 2) of large perennial grasses and forbs. However, in pasture 2, the unsuitable rating was driven by habitat conditions in the lower basin that were more deficient than suitable conditions on the upper slopes. Because these pastures are failing to provide adequate sage-grouse habitat conditions, the allotment is not meeting Standard 8.

Pasture 3 was determined to be providing unsuitable breeding habitat conditions due to less-than-desirable canopy cover of large perennial grasses (i.e., bluebunch wheatgrass). In addition, pasture 3 is managed as an exotic plant community, which characteristically has reduced habitat quality, reduced connectivity, and increased sagebrush community fragmentation. In addition, pasture 4 was determined to be providing less than desirable canopy cover and height of large perennial grasses. Although sagebrush overstory conditions were variable, undesirable nesting, hiding, and foraging cover values in the understory are occurring in these pastures. Therefore this allotment is failing to provide adequate habitat condition for sage-grouse and is not meeting Standard 8.

Columbia River redband trout are known to occur within the Jump Creek system. Analysis under Standards 2, 3, and 7 identified streams and springs within these systems that are not properly functioning or meeting water quality parameters due to current grazing practices. Redband trout

require intact channels with well-developed riparian communities that stabilize banks to minimize erosion and create undercuts, minimize impacts of flood events and filters sediments, provide shade to reduce water temperatures, and contribute woody debris to create channel structure and regulate seasonal flow. Because these in-stream and near-stream habitat characteristics are not fully represented, this allotment is not providing adequate riparian conditions to sustain viable populations of redband trout and therefore is not meeting Standard 8.

### **Texas Basin FFR Allotment**

#### *Soils - Uplands*

Rangeland health field evaluations indicate that soils are protected by rock and gravel, limiting the amount of bare soil. There were no gullies or rills observed. Some pedestaling was observed on bluegrass plants with exposed roots, indicating recent soil loss. The resistance to soil surface erosion matches that expected for the site, due to abundant rock and gravel.

#### *Vegetation - Uplands*

This one-pasture allotment is dominated by native plant communities and is meeting Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities). The dominant visual aspect is a sagebrush overstory and a Sandberg bluegrass and bluebunch wheatgrass understory, with higher-than-expected shrub cover and scattered cheatgrass. Although bluebunch wheatgrass vigor appeared to be reduced, seedhead production of Sandberg bluegrass was observed. Little recruitment of interspatial bluebunch wheatgrass plants was observed. Livestock grazing occurs after the critical growth period of perennial grasses and appears to be appropriate to maintain soils, plant vigor and infiltration.

#### *Water Resources and Riparian/Wetland Areas<sup>20</sup>*

No riparian resources are present on the Texas Basin FFR allotment.

#### *Special Status Plants<sup>21</sup>*

No special status plants are known to occur on the Texas Basin FFR allotment; therefore this will not be discussed further for this allotment.

#### *Wildlife/Wildlife Habitats and Special Status Animals<sup>22</sup>*

### **Uplands**

This allotment is managed as a native plant community and is meeting Standard 4 (based on the 2007 Determination). Because Standard 4 is being met, an assumption is being made that at least minimally adequate upland habitat values occur and are meeting the needs of upland sagebrush/grass species and therefore is meeting Standard 8.

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<sup>20</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.5.1 and Appendix E.

<sup>21</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.7.1 and Appendix E.

<sup>22</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.6.1 and Appendix E.

## Focal Species

This entire allotment falls within PPH. Two sage-grouse breeding habitat assessments collected in 2012 indicated:

- Pasture 1 – Providing unsuitable sage-grouse breeding habitat conditions;
- Pasture 2 – Providing unsuitable sage-grouse breeding habitat conditions.

In 2012, sage-grouse breeding habitat assessments were conducted and provided new information on spring habitat conditions. The assessments concluded that breeding habitat conditions in pastures 1 and 2 are unsuitable due to the reduced abundance of large perennial grasses that reduce the understory cover element and increase detection by predators. Standard 8 is not providing habitats suitable to maintain viable populations of threatened and endangered, sensitive, and other special status species. This conclusion is inconsistent with the 2007 Determination that stated sage-grouse habitat conditions were suitable.

## *Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management*

The BLM's 2013 Determination for the Alkali-Wildcat and Rats Nest (Wild Rat), Chipmunk Field FFR, Elephant Butte, Sands Basin, and Texas Basin FFR allotments identified grazing management practices that did not conform to the BLM's Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Idaho. Specifically, grazing management did not conform to the following guidelines:

*Guideline 1: Use grazing management practices and/or facilities to maintain or promote significant progress toward adequate amounts of ground cover (determined on an ecological site bases) to support infiltration, maintain soil moisture storage, and stabilize soils.*

*Guideline 2: Locate livestock management facilities away from riparian areas wherever they conflict with achieving or maintaining riparian-wetland functions.*

*Guideline 3: Use grazing management practices and/or facilities to maintain or promote soil conditions that support water infiltration, plant vigor, and permeability rates and minimize soil compaction appropriate to site potential.*

*Guideline 4: Implement grazing management practices that provide periodic rest or deferment during critical growth stages to allow sufficient regrowth to achieve and maintain healthy, properly functioning conditions, including good plant vigor and adequate cover appropriate to site potential.*

*Guideline 5: Maintain or promote grazing management practices that provide sufficient residual vegetation to improve, restore, or maintain healthy riparian-wetland functions and structure for energy dissipation, sediment capture, ground water recharge, streambank stability, and wildlife habitat appropriate to site potential.*

*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 7: Apply grazing management practices to maintain, promote, or progress toward appropriate stream channel and streambank morphology and functions. Adverse impacts due to livestock grazing will be addressed.*

*Guideline 10: Implement grazing management practices and/or facilities that provide for complying with the Idaho Water Quality Standards.*

**Table LVST-4: Evaluation of Standards and Guidelines under current BLM grazing management**

Allotment	Standards Met	Standards not Met, but Making Significant Progress	Standards not Being Met	Standards not Being Met and Current Livestock Grazing Significant Causal Factor	Standards not Applicable	Guidelines
Alkali-Wildcat	7	None	1, 4	2, 3, 8	5, 6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Chipmunk Field FFR	1, 4, 8	None	None	None	2,3,5,6,7	None
Elephant Butte	2, 3, 7	None	None	1, 6, 8	4, 5	1, 3
Rats Nest	7	None	None	1, 2, 3, 4, 8	5, 6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Sands Basin	5	None	None	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8	None	1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10
Texas Basin FFR	1, 4, 8	None	None	None	2,3,5,6,7	None

Since the Alkali-Wildcat, Elephant Butte, Rats Nest, and Sands Basin allotments are not meeting one or more of the Idaho S&Gs because of current livestock management practices, the BLM used these guidelines as a starting point for developing grazing schedules to bring the authorized actions within the allotment into compliance with resource objectives.

### *Issues<sup>28</sup>*

Throughout the internal and external (public) scoping process and project development period, the BLM interdisciplinary team identified the following issues concerning livestock grazing management in one or more of the Chipmunk Group allotments:

1. Risk to California bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis californica*; hereinafter, bighorn sheep) and domestic sheep: Evidence suggests that contact with domestic sheep can transmit disease, cause mortality to bighorn sheep individuals, and reduce long-term herd health. The risk of contact between domestic sheep and bighorn sheep is considerable in the analysis area, and the effects to bighorn sheep are potentially significant.
2. Habitat conditions for greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*; hereinafter, sage-grouse): Sage-grouse habitat health is directly related to upland vegetation and watershed

<sup>28</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 1.5.

conditions. Specific areas of the Chipmunk Group allotments contain altered sagebrush community composition, structure, and function that are affecting sage-grouse and other sagebrush habitat-dependent species.

3. **Riparian vegetation conditions:** Livestock grazing is affecting riparian condition and aquatic habitat by changing the health and composition of riparian vegetation communities.
4. **Fish and amphibian habitat conditions:** Stream, floodplain, wetland, and mesic (moderately moist) habitat conditions are directly related to conditions within the riparian vegetation community. Altering of the riparian community may affect the health and sustainability of fish and amphibian populations.
5. **Upland vegetation and watershed conditions:** Livestock grazing is affecting upland vegetation by reducing or removing native vegetation communities that protect watershed soil and hydrologic function.
6. **Special Status Plant Species:** Livestock grazing is adversely affecting special status plants by altering surrounding upland vegetation, habitat and reproduction of individuals.
7. **Noxious and invasive weeds:** Livestock grazing and trailing has the potential to increase or spread noxious and invasive weeds.
8. **Livestock trailing:** Trailing may adversely affect upland vegetation, soils, weeds and riparian vegetation.
9. **Socioeconomic impacts:** Livestock grazing affects local and regional socioeconomic activities generated by livestock production.
10. **Wildfire fuels:** Livestock grazing has the potential to change vegetation that may affect wildfire.
11. **Climate Change:** The issue of climate change and its relationship to the proposed federal action of renewing grazing permits is twofold. Livestock grazing in Owyhee County contributes CO<sub>2</sub> and methane emissions to the earth's atmosphere. In addition, climate change, itself a stressor on the sagebrush-steppe semi-arid ecosystem found in the Owyhee Uplands can, when found in conjunction with cattle grazing, further stress the ecosystem's vegetation.
12. **Wild Horse Herd Management Areas (HMA):** Livestock grazing competes with foraging and habitat of wild horses.

### *Analysis of Alternative Actions*

The range of alternatives developed include: Alternative 1 - No Action/Current Condition, Alternative 2 - Permittee's Application, Alternative 5 - Sheep-to-Cattle Conversion (not applicable to these allotments), Alternative 6 - No Grazing, as well as Alternatives 3 and 4, which were developed based on resource constraints. These alternatives were developed in response to current conditions on the Alkali-Wildcat and Rats Nest, Chipmunk Field FFR, Elephant Butte, Sands Basin, and Texas Basin FFR allotments and the issues identified above to ensure that any renewed grazing permit would result in maintaining good conditions and improving unsatisfactory conditions on the allotments. Overall, six alternatives were considered and analyzed in the EIS, with Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 considered in detail and analyzed for the Alkali-Wildcat and Rats Nest (Wild Rat), Elephant Butte, and Sands Basin allotments; Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 6 for the Texas Basin FFR allotment; and Alternatives 1, 2 and 6 for the Chipmunk Field FFR allotment.

The following sections describe the general theme of each of the alternatives for the Jump allotments, for full details refer to the Chipmunk Group 2 Final EIS # DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS and Appendix D for permittees full proposals.

### ***Alternative 1 - No Action***

Alternative 1 would allow a continuation of your current management on the allotments. This includes flexibility in the FFR allotments that would authorize livestock grazing at your discretion. The Jump allotments would be authorized as described on your existing permit. Interim terms and conditions imposed by the U.S. District Court in February 29, 2000 are also included.

### ***Alternative 2 - Permittee Applications<sup>24</sup>***

Alternative 2 would authorize livestock grazing consistent with your application. The management on the Chipmunk and Texas Basin FFR allotments is based on percent public land and the season of use is described as March 1 through February 28, and livestock numbers and AUMs vary depending on total acres of unfenced BLM lands within the allotment boundaries. Flexibility in the FFR allotments would authorize livestock grazing at your discretion.

### ***Alternative 3 - Deferred Grazing<sup>25</sup>***

Alternative 3 would utilize deferment, built around the application of resource constraints where there were issues and/or where Standards were not being met. Stubble height, browse (where applicable), streambank alteration in key riparian areas, and maintenance of perennial grass height on upland key species would be identified as terms and conditions.

### ***Alternative 4 - Season-based<sup>26</sup>***

The grazing schedules for the Jump allotments would include deferment and/or rest under Alternative 4. Resource constraints were applied where there were issues and/or where Standards were not being met.

### ***Alternative 6 - No Grazing***

This alternative would result in no grazing during a 10-year period for the Jump allotments.

## **Proposed Decision**

After considering the current grazing practices, the current conditions of the natural resources, and the alternatives and analysis in the EIS, as well as other information, it is my proposed decision to renew your grazing permit for ten years with modified terms and conditions consistent with the following:

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<sup>24</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Alternative 2 in Section 2.2.2 and due to the complexity of the permittees proposal refer to Appendix D for full details.

<sup>25</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Alternative 3 in Section 2.2.3.

<sup>26</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Alternative 2 in Section 2.2.4.

Chipmunk Field FFR allotment - Alternative 2 as described in EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS

Elephant Butte allotment - Alternative 3 as described in EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS, as modified:

1. A rider will be required a minimum of 1 day per week on the allotment to actively manage cattle away from the natural boundary into Alkali-Wildcat pasture of Wild Rat allotment.

Sands Basin allotment - Alternative 4 as described in EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS

Texas Basin FFR allotment - Alternative 3 as described in EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS

Wild Rat allotment - Alternative 3 as described in EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS, as modified:

1. Instead of deferment in year 3, rest will be incorporated in year 3 for both pastures.

Implementation of these alternatives, as modified, over the next 10 years will maintain performance under Standards in the Chipmunk Field FFR allotment; and allow the Alkali-Wildcat and Rats Nest (Wild Rat), Elephant Butte, Sands Basin and Texas Basin FFR allotments to meet or make significant progress toward meeting the Idaho S&Gs while also moving toward achieving the resource objectives outlined in the ORMP.

The terms and conditions of the renewed grazing permit(s) will be as follows:

**Table LVST-5: Chipmunk Grazing Association Mandatory Terms and Conditions**

Allotment	Livestock		Grazing Period		% PL <sup>27</sup>	Type Use	AUMs
	Number	Kind	Begin	End			
00523 Chipmunk Field FFR	155	Cattle	3/1	2/28	4	Active	72
00521 Sands Basin	600	Cattle	4/1	6/5	70	Active	558
	123	Cattle	10/1	10/31	70		
00472 Texas Basin	9	Cattle	3/1	2/28	5	Active	5
Wild Rat	576	Cattle	4/1	11/14	95	Active	1097
Other terms and conditions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The number of livestock and the season of use on the Chipmunk Field FFR are at the permittees discretion.</li> <li>2. Grazing use will be in accordance with the grazing schedule identified in the final decision of the Owyhee Field Office Manager dated _____. Livestock grazing will be in accordance with your allotment grazing schedule(s). Changes to the scheduled use require approval.</li> <li>3. Turn-out is subject to the Boise District range readiness criteria.</li> </ol>							

<sup>27</sup> PL is based on percentage of BLM lands in the Allotment.

4. The permittee's certified actual use report is due within 15 days of completing the authorized annual grazing use.
5. Salt and/or supplements shall not be placed within one-quarter (1/4)-mile of springs, streams, meadows, aspen stands, playas, special status plant populations or water developments.
6. Trailing activities must be coordinated with the BLM prior to initiation. A trailing permit or similar authorization may be required prior to crossing public lands.
7. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(B), the permittee must notify the BLM field manager, by telephone with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony (as defined in 43 CFR 10.2) on federal lands. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4 (C), the permittee must immediately stop any ongoing activities connected with such discovery and make a reasonable effort to protect the discovered remains or objects.
8. Livestock exclosures located within the grazing allotment are closed to all domestic grazing use.
9. Range improvements must be maintained in accordance with the cooperative agreement and range improvement permit in which you are a signatory or assignee. All maintenance of range improvements within designated Wilderness requires prior consultation with the authorized officer.
10. All appropriate documentation regarding base property leases, lands offered for exchange-of-use, and livestock control agreements must be approved prior to turn out. Leases of land and/or livestock must be notarized prior to submission and be in compliance with Boise District Policy.
11. Failure to pay the grazing bill within 15 days of the due date specified shall result in a late fee assessment of \$25.00 or 10 percent of the grazing bill, whichever is greater, not to exceed \$250.00. Payment made later than 15 days after the due date shall include the appropriate late fee assessment. Failure to make payment within 30 days may be a violation of 43 CFR § 4140.1(b)(1) and shall result in action by the authorized officer under 43 CFR § 4150.1 and § 4160.1.
12. Utilization may not exceed 50 percent of the current year's growth.
13. Gates in management fences located inside wild horse herd management areas will be opened within 15 days after the authorized grazing period.
14. Wild Rat allotment: Grazing in Alkali-Wildcat pasture will be used in the spring 2 in 3 years (4/1-5/31) and will be rested 1 in 3 years. Livestock numbers will not exceed 300 head, not to exceed authorized AUMs. Grazing in Rats Nest pasture will be used in the spring 2 in 3 years (4/1-5/31) and will be rested 1 in 3 years. Livestock numbers will not exceed 276 head, not to exceed authorized AUMs.
15. Sands Basin will be grazed according to the schedule, not to exceed 600 head or AUMs by pasture. Pasture use will not exceed 193 AUMs in pasture 1; 239 AUMs in pasture 2; 188 AUMs in pasture 3; and 319 AUMs in pasture 4.
16. Sands Basin and Wild Rat allotments will maintain a minimum of 6-inch stubble height, 30 percent browse (where applicable), and less than 10 percent bank alteration will be maintained in key riparian areas at the end of the grazing season.
17. Sands Basin and Wild Rat allotments will maintain an average of greater than 18 cm (7 inches) perennial grass height on upland key species.

**Table LVST-6: Ted Blackstock Mandatory Terms and Conditions**

Allotment	Livestock		Grazing Period		% PL	Type Use	AUMs
	Number	Kind	Begin	End			
00513 Elephant Butte	72	Cattle	3/15	5/31	70	Active	417
	72	Cattle	11/1	12/31	70		

Other terms and conditions:

1. Grazing use will be in accordance with the grazing schedule identified in the final decision of the Owyhee Field Office Manager dated \_\_\_\_\_. Livestock grazing will be in

accordance with your allotment grazing schedule(s). Changes to the scheduled use require approval.

2. Turn-out is subject to the Boise District range readiness criteria.
3. The permittee's certified actual use report is due within 15 days of completing the authorized annual grazing use.
4. Salt and/or supplements shall not be placed within one-quarter (1/4)-mile of springs, streams, meadows, aspen stands, playas, special status plant populations or water developments.
5. Trailing activities must be coordinated with the BLM prior to initiation. A trailing permit or similar authorization may be required prior to crossing public lands.
6. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(B), the permittee must notify the BLM field manager, by telephone with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony (as defined in 43 CFR 10.2) on federal lands. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4 (C), the permittee must immediately stop any ongoing activities connected with such discovery and make a reasonable effort to protect the discovered remains or objects.
7. Livestock exclosures located within the grazing allotment are closed to all domestic grazing use.
8. Range improvements must be maintained in accordance with the cooperative agreement and range improvement permit in which you are a signatory or assignee. All maintenance of range improvements within designated Wilderness requires prior consultation with the authorized officer.
9. All appropriate documentation regarding base property leases, lands offered for exchange-of-use, and livestock control agreements must be approved prior to turn out. Leases of land and/or livestock must be notarized prior to submission and be in compliance with Boise District Policy.
10. Failure to pay the grazing bill within 15 days of the due date specified shall result in a late fee assessment of \$25.00 or 10 percent of the grazing bill, whichever is greater, not to exceed \$250.00. Payment made later than 15 days after the due date shall include the appropriate late fee assessment. Failure to make payment within 30 days may be a violation of 43 CFR § 4140.1(b)(1) and shall result in action by the authorized officer under 43 CFR § 4150.1 and § 4160.1.
11. Utilization may not exceed 50 percent of the current year's growth.
12. Grazing in Elephant Butte will be as described in the livestock schedule.
13. Elephant Butte allotment will maintain a minimum of 6-inch stubble height, 30 percent browse (where applicable), and less than 10 percent bank alteration will be maintained in key riparian areas at the end of the grazing season.
14. Elephant Butte allotment will maintain an average of greater than 18 cm (7 inches) perennial grass height on upland key species.
15. A rider will be required at least 1 day per week on the allotment to actively manage cattle away from the natural boundary away from Alkali-Wildcat pasture of Wild Rat allotment.

### ***Livestock Management***

Livestock management will be as described in the schedules below (Tables LVST-7 through -10). No grazing schedule is identified for the Chipmunk Field FFR allotment. This allotment consists of only one pasture and is meeting all standards with the current livestock management.

### **Elephant Butte Allotment**

The grazing schedule identified in table LVST-7 will be established for pastures in the Elephant Butte allotment and made a term and condition of the grazing permit. The Elephant Butte allotment is adding an additional pasture with 1,050 acres from Alkali-Wildcat allotment and establishing pasture 6 by using a natural boundary. Allotment acres were 6,339 and will now be 7,389 acres.

**Table LVST-7: Elephant Butte grazing schedule**

Pasture	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
1	11/1-12/31	3/15-5/31	3/15-5/31
2	3/15-5/31	11/1-12/31	11/1-12/31
3	3/15-5/31	3/15-5/31	11/1-12/31
4	3/15-5/31	11/1-12/31	3/15-5/31
5	11/1-12/31	3/15-5/31	3/15-5/31
6	3/15-5/31	3/15-5/31	11/1-12/31

**Sands Basin Allotment**

The grazing schedule identified in table LVST-8 will be established for pastures in the Sands Basin allotment and made a term and condition of the grazing permit.

**Table LVST-8: Sands Basin grazing schedule**

Pasture	Year 1	Year 2
1	4/1-4/30	Rest
2	5/1-6/5	Rest
3	Rest	4/1-4/30
4	Rest	5/1-6/5

**Texas Basin FFR Allotment**

The grazing schedule identified in table LVST-9 will be established for pastures in the Texas Basin FFR allotment and made a term and condition of the grazing permit.

**Table LVST-9: Texas Basin FFR grazing schedule**

Pasture	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
1	3/1-6/30	3/1-6/30	7/1-2/28
2	7/1-2/28	7/1-2/28	3/1-6/30

**Wild Rat Allotment**

The grazing schedule identified in table LVST-10 will be established for pastures in the Wild Rat allotment and made a term and condition of the grazing permit. This alternative combines Alkali-Wildcat and Rats Nest allotments and moves 1,050 acres from the Alkali-Wildcat pasture to Elephant Butte pasture 6. Alkali-Wildcat pasture acres were 6,211 and now will be 5,161 acres.

**Table LVST-10: Wild Rat grazing schedule**

Pasture	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
1 (Alkali-Wildcat)	4/1-5/31	4/1-5/31	Rest
2 (Rats Nest)	4/1-5/31	4/1-5/31	Rest

***Notes on the Terms and Conditions***

Chipmunk Grazing Association will be offered a grazing permit(s) for a term of 10 years for the Chipmunk Field FFR, Sands Basin, Texas Basin FFR and Wild Rat allotments. Adoption of Alternative 3 in the Wild Rat allotment, as supplemented, will result in a reduction in AUMs from

your current permit; however, the affected 84 active use AUMs will not be transferred to suspension, in conformance with regulatory direction at 43 CFR § 4110.3-2.

Ted Blackstock will be offered a grazing permit(s) for a term of 10 years for the Elephant Butte allotment. Permitted use within allotments will be as follows:

Table PROP 1.6: Permitted Use

Allotment	Active Use AUMs	Suspension AUMs	Permitted Use AUMs
Elephant Butte	417	0	417
Chipmunk Field FFR	72	0	72
Sands Basin	558	0	558
Texas Basin FFR	5	0	5
Wild Rat	1,097	160	1,257

***Other Notes on the Proposed Decision***

Finally, it is my proposed decision not to authorize additional projects<sup>28</sup>. The existing coordinated process to identify, analyze, and authorize as appropriate the restoration, improvement, or development of livestock water sources and other projects remains in place for project-specific consideration outside the permit renewal process. Project maintenance obligations identified in current range improvement permits and cooperative agreements for range improvements are unchanged by this proposed decision. Implementation of this proposed decision is contingent upon maintenance of projects in a functioning condition (i.e., boundary and internal fences are in such good and functioning condition as to assure their ability to accomplish the purposes for which they were constructed, barriers to livestock movement).

**Rationale**

***Record of Performance***

Pursuant to 43 CFR § 4110.1(b)(1), a grazing permit may not be renewed if the permittee seeking renewal has an unsatisfactory record of performance with respect to its last grazing permit. Accordingly, I have reviewed Chipmunk Grazing Association records as a grazing permit holder for the Chipmunk Field FFR, Sands Basin, Texas Basin FFR, and Wild Rat allotments, and Ted Blackstock’s records as a grazing permit holder and have determined that both have a satisfactory record of performance and are qualified applicants for the purposes of a permit renewal.

***Justification for the Proposed Decision***

Based on my review of EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS, the rangeland health assessment/evaluation, determinations, specialist reports and other documents in the project record, it is my proposed decision to select Alternative 2 for the Chipmunk Field FFR allotment, Alternative 3 for the Elephant Butte, Texas Basin FFR and (3, modified) Wild Rat allotments, and Alternative 4 for the Sands Basin allotment. I have made this selection for a variety of reasons, but most importantly because of my understanding that implementation of this decision will best fulfill the BLM’s obligation to manage the public lands under the Federal Land Policy and Management

<sup>28</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 2.4.

Act's multiple use and sustained yield mandate, and will result in the Elephant Butte, Chipmunk Field FFR, Sands Basin, Texas Basin FFR and Wild Rat allotments meeting or making significant progress toward meeting the resource objectives of the ORMP and the Idaho S&Gs.

### *Issues Addressed*

Earlier in this decision, I outlined the major issues that drove the analysis and decision making process for the Elephant Butte, Chipmunk Field FFR, Sands Basin, Texas Basin FFR, and Wild Rat allotments. I want you to know that I focused my attention on the allotment-specific issues as I weighed each alternative and made my decision. My selection of Alternative 2 for the Chipmunk Field FFR allotment, Alternative 3 for the Elephant Butte, Texas Basin FFR, and Wild Rat allotments, and Alternative 4 for the Sands Basin allotment was in large part because of my understanding that these selections best addressed the specific issues, given the BLM's legal and land management obligations. I spent hours with members of my staff and the NEPA Permit Renewal Team to discuss pros and cons for each alternative. Ultimately, I had to choose the alternative that best protects the resource while considering your livestock operation, current resource conditions, and expectations from you as the permittee, and the BLM as the responsible office.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Your allotments are, as you know, members of the Owyhee 68 allotments, which are the subject of a permit renewal process that must be completed by December 31, 2013. The NEPA process for the Owyhee 68 consists of five EAs that support the other decisions and the EIS that supports this particular set of decisions. This multiple-allotment process has required me, as the Field Manager responsible for signing these grazing decisions, to look at these allotments, and the other allotments analyzed in the EAs and the EIS, not just individually but as a members of a group of allotments located in a particular landscape, the BLM Owyhee Field Office. That is, I am looking not just at your individual allotment, reviewing its RHA/Evaluation/Determination, selecting an alternative that will best address this allotment's ecological conditions and BLM's legal responsibilities (for the purposes of this decision), but looking at this allotment from a landscape perspective. Viewed this way, it is clear that there are problems common to the Owyhee 68 allotments.

Of the approximately 60 allotments that have riparian areas, at least 47 are not meeting S&Gs for riparian/water issues due to current livestock management; of approximately 73 allotments, 43 are not meeting the Standard for upland vegetation. In many cases, performance under Standard 8 tracks these results. Despite of the efforts of BLM and the ranching operators, resource conditions are not good. Some of these allotments have been used in the spring year after year; some have had summer-long riparian use every year. As Field Manager for the Owyhees, I have a steward's responsibility to further the health and resilience of this landscape.

Adding to these considerations, we live in a time of uncertainty. Climate change presents an uncertainty whose impacts we cannot clearly discern, but as land stewards, we must factor into our decisions a consideration of how best to promote resiliency on the landscape. Add to this the uncertainty associated with the BLM's organizational capacity to manage this landscape: in a time of budget cutting, staff reductions, and reduced revenues, land management decisions must factor in considerations of the level of on-the-ground management we can reasonably expect to accomplish. These compelling factors create the need to develop grazing management on individual allotments that combines the greatest assurance of ecological resilience with the most likely anticipated organizational ability, and which does this on a landscape level. My challenge is this: looking out at the field office, what intensity of management can I reasonably expect to accomplish, knowing that if monitoring is required to make progress under a particular alternative (for example), and is not performed, the result may be decreasing ecological health for the allotment and, at the time of the next permit renewal, decreased grazing opportunity from public land for the operator. My responsibility and challenge here is to make decisions that lead to success, which includes healthy, sustainable resource conditions and predictability for ranching operators.

*Issue 1: Risk to California bighorn sheep (Ovis canadensis californica; hereinafter, bighorn sheep) and domestic sheep: Evidence suggests that contact with domestic sheep can transmit disease, cause mortality to bighorn sheep individuals, and reduce long-term herd health. The risk of contact between domestic sheep and bighorn sheep is considerable in the analysis area, and the effects to bighorn sheep are potentially significant.*

Because you are not authorized to graze domestic sheep on the Jump allotments, this issue is not applicable.

*Issue 2: Habitat conditions for greater sage-grouse (Centrocercus urophasianus; hereinafter, sage-grouse): Sage-grouse habitat health is directly related to upland vegetation and watershed conditions. Specific areas of the Chipmunk Group allotments contain altered sagebrush community composition, structure, and function that are affecting sage-grouse and other sagebrush habitat-dependent species.*

AND

*Issue 5: Upland vegetation and watershed conditions: Livestock grazing is affecting upland vegetation by reducing or removing native vegetation communities that protect watershed soil and hydrologic function.*

The sage-grouse is an indicator species for the sagebrush ecosystem, thus the attributes of suitable sage-grouse habitat provide an effective barometer for health of the sagebrush ecosystems that dominate the Jump allotments. Sage-grouse habitat quality is inseparable from the vegetation community conditions discussed in Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities). Therefore, the following is a combined rationale for my alternative selections as they relate to the issues of sage-grouse habitat and upland vegetation and watershed conditions.

#### Chipmunk Field FFR Allotment<sup>30</sup>

Upland watershed, vegetative, and wildlife habitat conditions (there are no riparian areas on public land in this allotment) will continue to meet Standards 1, 4, and 8 and the needs for sage-grouse and other wildlife with a continuation of current management (Alternative 2). Current management (reflected in your application) on this allotment has resulted in good vegetative resource conditions, as identified in EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS (Affected Environment sections). Proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow will continue to be maintained or improved, and allows the allotment to continue to meet Standards and achieve ORMP objectives.

#### Texas Basin FFR and Wild Rat Allotments<sup>31</sup>

Watershed, vegetative, and upland/riparian wildlife habitat conditions will improve throughout these allotments under Alternative 3, due to this alternative's focus on improving the health and vigor of plant communities through resource constraints and deferment. Although the Texas

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<sup>30</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.6.4 and Appendix E.

<sup>31</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.6.5 and Appendix E.

Basin FFR allotment is currently meeting Standard 4, recent sage-grouse habitat assessments raised questions about breeding habitat suitability. Spring and early summer grazing for 2 of 3 years, deferred to fall grazing the third year, will, as compared to repeated grazing during the critical growing period, will promote improvement to vegetative health and vigor of upland plant communities, as evidenced by improved composition and structure and thereby benefiting sage-grouse because of increased forage and cover elements for nesting/early brood rearing sage-grouse.

The newly created Wild Rat allotment is currently not meeting Standard 4 (Alkali-Wildcat and Rats Nest) due to current livestock management; here, too, spring and early summer grazing in 2 of 3 years, with rest in the third year (compared to repeated grazing during the critical growing period), will promote improvement to vegetative health and vigor. Increased years of deferment give the allotment opportunity to make significant progress toward meeting upland vegetation health and vigor. A 7-percent reduction in AUMs based on exchange of use to the Elephant Butte allotment in pasture 6 will further recovery to upland vegetation health and vigor and ORMP objectives.

As stated in the EIS, under Alternative 3, “a deferred grazing strategy will be implemented outside the critical growing season intended to stimulate vegetation vigor and reproduction and in time enhance upland shrub steppe and riparian habitat plant composition and structure for wildlife.” Because rest is provided for Wild Rat pastures 1 and 2 (instead of deferment), additional improvements will occur. The decrease in the grazing frequency during the spring growing-season will allow upland native perennial species to complete the annual growth cycle more often in the absence of defoliation by livestock and will improve plant community health and vigor and improve herbaceous composition and structure. Because sage-grouse is an indicator species for the sagebrush ecosystem, those conditions that specify healthy habitat for sage-grouse are indicative of the health of the system in general. Effective upland habitat and sage-grouse habitat composition and structure are closely related to vegetation community conditions discussed in Standard 4. Improved plant community composition and structure will result in greater security cover for nesting and brood-rearing sage-grouse from predators and increasing preferred forb diversity and availability.

I expect the quality and quantity of the upland communities in these two allotments to progress to make significant progress toward meeting desired wildlife habitat management objectives and Standards 1, 4, and 8, primarily because of the benefits sage-grouse will receive due to reduced spring grazing pressure on the plant community and subsequent improvement in conditions of upland and riparian habitats. In the short term (1 to 6 years, two rotations) habitat conditions will show increased forage and cover elements. In the long term (7 to 12 years, four rotations), vegetation composition and structure will be expected to continue making significant progress toward meeting Standard 8 and achieve desired ORMP management objectives.

### Elephant Butte Allotment<sup>32</sup>

The Elephant Butte and Alkali-Wildcat allotments boundaries will be realigned. Acres (1,050) from Alkali-Wildcat will become part of the Elephant Butte allotment, creating a new pasture 6 in

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<sup>32</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.6.5 and Appendix E.

Elephant Butte; the remainder of the Alkali-Wildcat allotment will be combined with Rats Nest to create the new Wild Rat allotment. See Map 3.

The Elephant Butte allotment has six pastures. Elephant Butte is currently meeting Standard 6 on all pastures except pasture 2; the allotment's new pasture 6 is not meeting Standard 4. Restoring areas dominated by exotic annuals to shrubs and deep-rooted perennial grasses will not occur through a simple modification or even cessation of livestock grazing. Rather, such restoration will require targeted vegetation treatments such as seeding and herbicide applications. However, spring grazing 2 in 3 years and deferred to fall use 1 in 3 years and pasture 2 spring grazing 1 in 3 years, compared to repeated grazing during the critical growing period in all years, will allow opportunity to improve vegetative health and vigor on remnant native plant communities. Increased years of deferment allow opportunity to make significant progress toward meeting upland vegetation health and vigor<sup>33</sup>.

The majority of the acreage in the Elephant Butte allotment is non-habitat for sage-grouse because the shadscale/cheatgrass plant community does not provide adequate habitat composition, structure and function. This is also consistent with the PPH/PGH modeling map that identifies that 78 percent of this allotment is outside the range of sage-grouse habitat (Makela & Major, 2012). However, in the remaining 22 percent of the allotment, the southern portion of pasture 2 is providing favorable overstory/understory composition of sagebrush and bluebunch wheatgrass for effective nesting, escape, security, and foraging cover for sage-grouse. Alternative 3 will continue to provide adequate forage and cover for wildlife and healthy plant communities for sage-grouse habitat in pasture 2 of the Elephant Butte allotment as evidenced by improved composition and structure and thereby benefiting sage-grouse because of improving increased foraging forage and cover elements for nesting/early brood rearing sage-grouse.

#### Sands Basin Allotment

The Sands Basin allotment has four pastures. Standard 5 applies to pastures 1 and 2 of the Sands Basin allotment and is being met. Standards 4 (pasture 4) and 6 (pasture 3) are not being met, and current livestock grazing practices and wild horses are significant causal factors.

Alternative 4 will authorize spring grazing the first year and rest the second year of a 2-year rotation as compared to current repeated grazing during the critical growing period. Increased years of rest allow opportunity to make significant progress toward meeting upland vegetation health and vigor. In addition, reductions in AUMs will provide opportunity to make significant recovery to upland vegetation and ORMP objectives.

All pastures in this allotment have been identified as not providing adequate sage-grouse habitat conditions. In pastures 1 and 2, upland habitat conditions for sage-grouse are inadequate because of a reduced overstory/understory occurrence and structure of sagebrush and perennial grasses and forbs. Sage-grouse require large areas of relatively undisturbed sagebrush steppe habitat. The incorporation of deferment and rest into the grazing schedule will reduce grazing pressure and allow sagebrush regeneration and establishment, resulting in greater distribution and abundance of

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<sup>33</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.3.2.4 and Appendix E.

sagebrush, enhancing sagebrush patch size and improving connectivity between fragmented sagebrush habitats, thereby improving sage-grouse habitat condition. However, while full sagebrush recovery and effective overstory structure and function for sage-grouse nesting and hiding cover is expected to take 20 years or more, these changes can begin the recovery process.

Pasture 3 is managed as an exotic plant community. Vegetation composition, structure, and function are lacking or absent in these communities, substantially reducing effective nesting, hiding, escape, travel, and foraging cover for all upland wildlife species. These exotic communities further create large open spaces, diminish habitat connectivity, and increase sagebrush community fragmentation. Alternative 4 will allow a better opportunity for native plant species to compete with invasive annuals and to improve abundance, composition, and structure and will benefit nesting and brood-rearing sage-grouse and other sagebrush steppe species because it will improve forage and cover. I recognize that, due to the competitive advantage of invasive species over native species, recovery of these communities will be very slow and wildlife use will track the health and improvement to the distribution, composition, and structure of the native plant community. However, I believe Alternative 4 provides the best opportunity to protect the vegetation we currently have and move conditions forward, without eliminating livestock use.

Pasture 4 is managed as a native plant community determined to be not meeting Standard 4. Because Standard 4 is not being met, upland habitat conditions for wildlife are also not adequate; this is consistent with sage-grouse breeding habitat assessment information that found this pasture is not providing adequate perennial grass cover. Currently, there is a shift in the potential plant community favoring shallow-rooted grass species that do not provide the robust growth form or structure needed to provide an effective interface of overstory and understory plant composition, structure, and function for sagebrush steppe dependent species. The additional deferment and rest will interrupt grazing pressure and allow plants to recover vigor and health. As a result, the native plant community composition and structure will improve and sage-grouse will benefit from the increase security and nesting cover and the increased availability of forbs.

*Issue 3: Riparian vegetation conditions: Livestock grazing is affecting riparian condition and aquatic habitat by changing the health and composition of riparian vegetation communities.*

**AND**

*Issue 4: Fish and amphibian habitat conditions: Stream, floodplain, wetland, and mesic (moderately moist) habitat conditions are directly related to conditions within the riparian vegetation community. Altering of the riparian community may affect the health and sustainability of fish and amphibian populations.*

#### Chipmunk Field FFR and Texas Basin FFR Allotments

Because riparian areas do not exist on public land on this allotment, Issues 3 and 4 will not be discussed.

### Elephant Butte Allotment<sup>34</sup>

Under Alternative 3, the allotment will become a six-pasture allotment by combining approximately two-thirds of the Alkali-Wildcat allotment (1,050 acres) with the original five pastures of the Elephant Butte allotment. As a result, 0.5 miles of perennial stream, 1.0 miles of intermittent stream, and four springs will be influenced by the impacts of spring grazing during 2 years, and by fall grazing during the third year of a 3-year rotation. Under current management, this configuration is not meeting Standards 2, 3, and 7 within the portion of Alkali-Wildcat that would make up pasture 6. Since the other five pastures are meeting the Standards under current management and the alternative will incorporate one year of deferred grazing, they will continue to be met. The allotment will be used during the spring for 2 years and during the fall the third year of a 3-year rotation, compared to the current situation of grazing during the spring annually. The changes in season of use will eliminate the current use of the riparian areas in both spring and fall annually, and the newly configured allotment will make progress toward meeting Standards 2, 3, and 7. The changes in season of use and active AUM reduction would minimize both the primary and secondary impacts of livestock grazing (see Table RIPN-26 in the EIS).

Under Alternative 3, reduced grazing frequency in riparian areas will improve plant vigor, diversity, and regeneration and improve riparian functions to dissipate energy of high flows, trap sediments, stabilize streambanks, provide shade to streams, deliver woody debris, and improve water quality. Improved herbaceous and woody cover in riparian zones due to deferment and rest reduced grazing pressure will benefit Columbia redband trout and other aquatic species because of reduced trampling of spring spawning and egg laying sites, decreased erosion and sediment loading, enhanced shade and woody debris delivery, greater channel structure and flow regulation, and improve water quality in Squaw Creek.

### Sands Basin Allotment

Alternative 4 implements a 2-year rotation for the Sands Basin allotment, with 1 year of spring use and 1 year of rest. Consequently, 1.4 miles of perennial stream, 2.8 miles of intermittent stream, and four springs would be affected by the impacts associated with spring grazing once every 2 years. Implementing a year of rest and allowing only spring use, compared to current spring and fall use, would allow the riparian areas and water resources that occur in pastures 2 and 4 to meet Rangeland Health Standards 2, 3, and 7. The reduction in AUMs over the life of the permit, coupled with the seasonal grazing restrictions, would allow quicker progress than Alternatives 1 and 2 toward attaining desired conditions. These changes will minimize both the primary and secondary impacts of livestock grazing because the removal of hydric vegetation and riparian area trampling will be minimized. Additionally, the floodplains ability to retain moisture would improve, erosion would decrease, stream temperatures would decrease, and aquatic species habitat would improve.

I anticipate that the quality and quantity of the riparian communities in the Sands Basin allotment (pastures 2 and 4) will make significant progress toward meeting desired habitat management

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<sup>34</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.5.1 and Appendix E.

objectives and meeting Standard 8. Under Alternative 4<sup>35</sup>, reduced grazing frequency and rest in riparian areas will improve plant vigor, diversity, and regeneration and improve riparian functions to dissipate energy of high flows, trap sediments, harden streambanks, provide shade to streams, deliver woody debris, and improve water quality. Improved herbaceous and woody cover in riparian zones due to deferment/rest and reduced grazing pressure will benefit Columbia redband trout and other aquatic species because of reduced trampling of spring spawning and egg laying sites, decreased erosion and sediment loading, enhanced shade and woody debris delivery, greater channel structure and flow regulation, and improve water quality.

In the short term (1 to 6 years, two rotations) focal species habitat conditions will show measurable and observable improvement as riparian habitat conditions improve. In the long term (7 to 12 years), riparian habitat composition and structure and aquatic habitat conditions should be much improved and making significant progress toward meeting desired management objectives as well as Standard 8 for wildlife.

#### Wild Rat Allotment

Under Alternative 3, the Wild Rat allotment will consist of two pastures including approximately one-third of the Alkali-Wildcat and Rats Nest allotments (Map 1). Currently, the pastures are not meeting the riparian Standards 2 and 3. Standard 7 is being met. Alternative 3, as modified, will rest the allotment 1 of 3 years, and eliminate grazing 1 in every 3 years. The removal of herbaceous riparian vegetation and soil compaction will decrease, and streambanks will stabilize improving aquatic species habitat. Since this alternative would have one year of rest, the newly configured allotment will make progress toward meeting Standards 2 and 3<sup>36</sup>.

Reduced grazing frequency in riparian areas will improve plant vigor, diversity, and regeneration and improve riparian functions to dissipate energy of high flows, trap sediments, harden streambanks, provide shade to streams, deliver woody debris, and improve water quality. Improved herbaceous and woody cover in riparian zones will benefit Columbia redband trout and other aquatic species by reduced trampling of spring spawning and egg laying sites, decreased erosion and sediment loading, enhanced shade and woody debris delivery, greater channel structure and flow regulation, and improve water quality in Jump Creek<sup>37</sup>.

In the short term (1 to 6 years, two rotations) focal species habitat conditions will show measurable and observable improvement in riparian herbaceous and woody plant habitat conditions. In the long term (7 to 12 years), riparian habitat composition and structure and aquatic habitat conditions should be much improved and making significant progress toward meeting desired management objectives, as well as Standard 8 for wildlife.

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<sup>35</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.6.6 and Appendix E.

<sup>36</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.5.2.4 and Appendix E.

<sup>37</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.6.5 and Appendix E.

*Issue 6: Special Status Plant Species: Livestock grazing is adversely affecting special status plants by altering surrounding upland vegetation, habitat and reproduction of individuals.*

#### Texas Basin FFR and Sands Basin Allotments

No special status plant species exist on the public lands in these allotments; therefore, Issue 6 will not be addressed.

#### Chipmunk Field FFR Allotment

Even though the condition of the soft blazingstar occurrence is unknown, it is likely that impacts associated with livestock grazing will be marginal, given the upland vegetation of this allotment is meeting Standard 4, which is necessary to maintain suitable habitat of this species. However, concern remains for the potential impact of spring livestock grazing (trampling when soils are moist and fragile and herbivory during the growing season) in consecutive years and the subsequent prolonged recovery of special status plants. There is insufficient information to determine if this alternative will make significant progress toward meeting Standard 8; however, it is likely this occurrence will remain in its current state and not decline given the stable conditions of the uplands.

#### Elephant Butte Allotment

Concerns exist regarding the stress on special status plants in pastures 3 (Cusick's pincushion) and 5 (soft blazingstar), due to a longer duration of critical growing season use in 2 out of 3 years than in Alternative 1. The longer time frame increases the likelihood of herbivory and trampling when the fragile soil of the habitat are moist and most susceptible to damage, and seedling plants will be uprooted and killed, reducing seed set for the population. One benefit of the early spring use (starting 3/15) is that livestock graze invasive grasses before native perennial bunchgrasses are available, thus potentially reducing invasives in special status plant habitats.

#### Wild Rat Allotment

This alternative will continue to meet Standard 8 in the short term (less than 10 years) by maintaining the current condition of Idaho milkvetch within the Rats Nest portion of the allotment. The addition of deferment to a current condition of spring use in all years will allow for maintenance of this species and upland vegetation over the life of the permit. However, recommendations for recovery between spring grazing cycles are 2 years deferment to 1 year critical growing season use.

*Issue 7: Noxious and invasive weeds: Livestock grazing and trailing has the potential to increase or spread noxious and invasive weeds.*

#### Chipmunk Field FFR Allotment

Because no noxious and invasive weeds are known exist on public land, Issue 7 is not applicable for the Chipmunk Field FFR allotment.

### Elephant Butte, Sands Basin, Texas Basin FFR and Wild Rat Allotments<sup>38</sup>

My selection of Alternative 3 for the Elephant Butte, Texas Basin FFR and Wild Rat allotments and Alternative 4 for the Sands Basin allotment will maintain or improve riparian and vegetative communities, because both alternatives were designed to improve rangeland health conditions. Acknowledging that any grazing has the potential to introduce and spread invasive weeds and non-native annual grasses, a reduction in active use and deferment or rest in the alternatives selected will result in proportionally less soil surface disturbance and fewer animals to carry seed to, from and within the allotment in fur, on hooves, and in their digestive system. Compared to Alternatives 1 and 2, the risk of invasive species spreading is lower under Alternatives 3 and 4 as native perennial species health and vigor is improved and progress is made toward the ORMP vegetation management objective. Alternatives 3 and 4 will promote native perennial species and therefore reduce the competition of invasive species establishment.

The Elephant Butte, Texas Basin FFR, and Wild Rat allotments have 19 occurrences of weed species, but this is not a significant cause of the failure to meet Standard 4 in these allotments<sup>39</sup>. Although no allotments were identified as having noxious weed occurrences at levels to cause the allotment to fail to meet Rangeland Health Standards, the Sands Basin allotment was identified as having 33 occurrences, a relatively high level (more than 15) and richness of noxious weeds (more than three species). Although any grazing has the potential to introduce and spread invasive weeds and non-native annual grasses, the reduction in active use inherent in Alternatives 3 and 4 will result in proportionally less soil surface disturbance and fewer animals to carry seed to and from the allotment in fur, on hooves, and in their digestive system. The decrease in the grazing frequency of growing-season use will allow native perennial species to complete the annual growth cycle more often in the absence of defoliation by livestock grazing, thus increasing their vigor and resilience, and making them more competitive with weed species. As compared to Alternatives 1 and 2, the risk of invasive species spreading is lower under Alternatives 3 and 4 as health and vigor of native perennial species is improved and progress is made toward meeting the ORMP vegetation management objective. Available sites for invasive species establishment will be reduced through competition with healthy native perennial species. BLM's coordinated and ongoing weed control program will still be required in any alternative of livestock grazing in the allotment.

*Issue 8: Livestock trailing: Trailing may adversely affect upland vegetation, soils, weeds and riparian vegetation.*

### Elephant Butte, Chipmunk Field FFR, Sands Basin, Texas Basin FFR and Wild Rat Allotments

Effects from livestock trailing/crossing will include minor trampling and up to 10 percent utilization. Due to the short duration of trailing, grazing effects from cattle trailing are expected to be minimal. Direct grazing from sheep trailing will occur where sheep are trailed off existing roadbeds. However, because both sheep and cattle trailing will occur on such a small proportion of the landscape and for a limited duration, effects from trailing are expected to be insignificant. A slight increase in the spread of weeds could occur, but the short distance and duration will limit the

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<sup>38</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.3.2 and Appendix E.

<sup>39</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 3.3.1 and Appendix E.

amount and possibility. Additionally, if noxious weeds are detected in the future, easy access will be available for treatment. Range readiness determinations are essential and will reduce mechanical damage to soils when soils are saturated early in the spring during the peak spring melt events. The duration of trailing activities to be authorized will require active trailing in most cases. Management actions as described above, will allow upland plant communities, soils, watersheds, weeds, and riparian areas to meet or make significant progress toward meeting Idaho Rangeland Health Standards and ORMP objectives.

*Issue 9: Socioeconomic impacts: Livestock grazing affects local and regional socioeconomic activities generated by livestock production.*

#### Elephant Butte, Chipmunk Field FFR, Sands Basin, Texas Basin FFR and Wild Rat Allotments

Over the long term, your grazing operation relies upon maintenance of the natural resources, including productive and healthy rangelands capable of supplying a reliable forage base. Selection of an alternative based in unsustainable grazing practices that do not meet rangeland health standards will result in less-reliable amounts of forage over the long term, in addition to reducing economic opportunities from ecosystem services and alternate socioeconomic resources, such as recreation, that rely on healthy, functional, and aesthetically pleasing open spaces and wildlife habitats.

I have considered a wide range of issues at the allotment level, including the social and economic impacts that result from modifying grazing authorizations. We worked hard to develop a socio-economic analysis that would, as accurately as possible, provide the best information about socio-economic impacts expected from the different alternatives, and I have utilized this information in making my proposed decision.

I have minimized reductions in grazing use levels on allotments where current levels are compatible with meeting rangeland health standards and ORMP objectives and where not compatible, have attempted to select alternatives designed to meet resource needs.

*Issue 10: Wildfire fuels: Livestock grazing has the potential to change vegetation that may affect wildfire.*<sup>40</sup>

#### Elephant Butte, Chipmunk Field FFR, Sands Basin, Texas Basin FFR and Wild Rat Allotments

During the NEPA process, some asked the BLM to consider using grazing to limit wildfire. The BLM has considered the issue and determined that it will be theoretically possible to use targeted grazing to create fuel breaks on these allotments with the hope that those fuel breaks will help control the spread of large wildfires in the area. However, the resource costs associated with this strategy are such that I have decided against it. Ultimately, implementation of Alternative 2 for the Chipmunk Field FFR allotment, Alternative 3 for the Elephant Butte, Texas Basin FFR and Wild Rat allotments, and Alternative 4 for the Sands Basin allotment will not significantly alter the BLM's ability to fight wildfire in the area.

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<sup>40</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 2.4 Alternatives considered and dismissed.

Although a number of sources identify the potential to use grazing to reduce fine fuels on a landscape scale, identified benefits are greatest with targeted grazing that strategically maintains fuel breaks to aid fire suppression actions. Landscape-scale fuels reduction with livestock grazing has its greatest application in grass-dominated vegetation types and specifically within seedings of grazing tolerant introduced grasses and annual grasses. Such conditions do not exist on these allotments at a pasture-wide scale. In addition, the levels of livestock grazing and the season of yearly use necessary to reduce fine fuels prior to the fire season are not conducive to sustaining native perennial herbaceous species. This is one of the main reasons a targeted grazing system to control fire is not viable on these allotments at this time. The BLM's current permit renewal is focused on improving native upland and riparian plant communities on these allotments, and targeted grazing to create fuel breaks will not support that improvement.

The selected alternatives retain a level of grazing use that reduces the accumulation of fine fuels, and thus will lessen the spread of large wildfires when fire weather conditions are less extreme. More importantly, it is designed to benefit and promote the health and vigor of native perennial species on the allotment, thereby limiting the dominance of annual species and so limiting the accumulation of continuous fine fuels and extreme fire behavior, while enhancing post-fire recovery.<sup>41</sup>

*Issue 11: Climate Change: Livestock grazing is inter-related to the effects of annual grass invasion and wildfire frequency which are expected to worsen as a result of climate change.*

Elephant Butte, Chipmunk Field FFR, Sands Basin, Texas Basin FFR and Wild Rat Allotments  
Climate change is another factor I considered in building my decision around Alternative 2 for the Chipmunk Field FFR allotment, Alternative 3 for the Elephant Butte, Texas Basin FFR and Wild Rat allotments, and Alternative 4 for the Sands Basin allotment. Climate change is a stressor that can reduce the long-term competitive advantage of native perennial plant species. Since livestock management practices can also stress sensitive perennial species in arid sagebrush steppe environments, I considered the issues together, albeit based on the limited information available on how they relate in actual range conditions. Although the factors that contribute to climate change are complex, long-term, and not fully understood, the opportunity to provide resistance and resilience within native perennial vegetation communities from livestock grazing induced impacts is within the scope of this decision. The selected alternatives combined seasons, intensities, and durations of livestock use to promote long-term plant health and vigor. Assuming that climate change affects the arid landscapes in the long-term, the native plant communities on these allotments will be better armed to survive such changes. The native plant health and vigor protected under these alternatives will provide resistance and resilience to additional stressors, including climate change.

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<sup>41</sup> For more detailed discussion, please refer to EIS number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0014-EIS Section 2.4.

*Issue 12: Wild Horse Herd Management Areas (HMA): Livestock grazing competes with foraging and habitat of wild horses.*

Sands Basin and Wild Rat Allotments<sup>42</sup>

I recognize that a portion of the livestock impacts on these allotments is the result of wild horse use; as you know, changes in HMA management are outside the scope of this decision. Wild horse herd management areas exist on these allotments and it is my responsibility to manage the resources on these allotments using the tools available to me. Where there are impacts to upland or riparian areas caused by cattle and wild horse use, I can address only that part of the problem over which I have control. Selection of Alternative 3 for the Wild Rat allotment and Alternative 4 for the Sands Basin allotment will improve range resources; such benefit will accrue both to your operations and to the wild horse herds by ensuring a lower amount of competition for available forage throughout the grazing season, and improving wild horse habitat.

***Additional Rationale***

I did consider selecting Alternative 6 (No Grazing) for these allotments; however, based on all the information used in developing my decision, I believe that the BLM can meet resource objectives and still allow grazing on the allotments. In selecting Alternative 2 for the Chipmunk Field FFR allotment, Alternative 3 for the Elephant Butte, Texas Basin FFR and Wild Rat allotments (modified), and Alternative 4 for the Sands Basin allotment, rather than Alternative 6, I especially considered (1) BLM's ability to meet resource objectives using the selected alternatives, (2) the impact of implementation of Alternative 6 on the your operation and on regional economic activity, and (3) your past performance under previous permits. The resource issues identified are primarily related to the improper seasons and site-specific intensities of grazing use. By implementing these alternatives, the resource issues identified will be addressed. The suspension of grazing for a 10-year period is not the management decision most appropriate at this time in light of these factors.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> I understand the wild horse numbers are above the high end of the AML on the Sands Basin and Hardtrigger HMA's, which is also causing deteriorated range conditions and non-attainment of the Standards. The Idaho BLM has requested gathers on both HMAs. The Hardtrigger HMA was scheduled to be gathered in October 2012 and October 2013. This gather was cancelled both times due to higher emergency gathers and a lack of funding for gathering/holding horses. The Sands Basin HMA was proposed to be gathered in September 2013, but was also cancelled due to higher emergency gathers and a lack of funding for gathering/holding horses. I will continue to request gathers be conducted on these HMA's, but I am only addressing livestock management issues in this decision as stated in the Purpose and Need.

<sup>43</sup> A tremendous amount of thought and effort went into developing grazing management systems that are responsive to your allotments' specific resource needs, geography, and size. We attempted to address all resource and operational concerns and the resource and stewardship requirements mandated to the BLM. We recognize that each allotment has different ecology and management capability due to the size and location/topography that result in various issues and priorities; all attempts to coordinate grazing throughout the entire allotment were made by me and my staff with you and informed by the interested public with these features in mind. I recognize the difficulty of not only responding to BLM's (mandated) needs to protect the resources, but recognize as well the needs and capability that you, the permittees, have. I believe I have balanced those needs of the resource and your capabilities with the information I have to the extent possible.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it is my decision to select Alternative 2 for the Chipmunk Field FFR allotment, Alternative 3 for the Elephant Butte, Texas Basin FFR and Wild Rat allotments (as modified), and Alternative 4 for the Sands Basin allotment because livestock management practices under these alternatives best meet the ORMP objectives allotment-wide and the Idaho S&Gs. Alternatives 1 and 2 fail to implement livestock management practices on the Elephant Butte, Sands Basin and Wild Rat allotments that would meet the objectives and standards. Specifically, both alternatives fail to implement actions that would meet Standards 2 (Riparian Areas and Wetlands), 3 (Stream Channel/Floodplain), and Standard 8 (Threatened and Endangered Animals). Alternative 6 has the potential to remove significant economic activity from Owyhee County and southwest Idaho, a region where livestock production and agriculture is a large portion of the economy. That, in conjunction with current resource conditions and the improvement anticipated by implementation of the alternatives leads me to believe elimination of livestock grazing from the Elephant Butte, Chipmunk Field FFR, Sands Basin, Texas Basin FFR, and Wild Rat allotments is unnecessary at this point.

## Authority

The authorities under which this decision is being issued include the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, as amended, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as promulgated through Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Subpart 4100 Grazing Administration - Exclusive of Alaska. My decision is issued under the following specific regulations:

- 4100.0-8 Land use plans; The ORMP designates the Elephant Butte, Chipmunk Field FFR, Sands Basin, Texas Basin FFR and Wild Rat allotments available for livestock grazing;
- 4130.2 Grazing permits or leases. Grazing permits may be issued to qualified applicants on lands designated as available for livestock grazing. Grazing permits shall be issued for a term of 10 years unless the authorized officer determines that a lesser term is in the best interest of sound management;
- 4130.3 Terms and conditions. Grazing permits must specify the term and conditions that are needed to achieve desired resource conditions, including both mandatory and other terms and conditions; and
- 4180 Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration. This proposed decision will result in taking appropriate action to modifying existing grazing management in order to make significant progress toward achieving rangeland health.

## Right of Protest and/or Appeal

Any applicant, permittee, lessee or other interested publics may protest the proposed decision under Sec. 43 CFR § 4160.1 and 4160.2, in person or in writing within 15 days after receipt of such decision to:

Loretta V. Chandler  
Owyhee Field Office Manager  
20 First Avenue West  
Marsing, Idaho 83639

The protest, if filed should clearly and concisely state the reason(s) why the proposed decision is in error.

In accordance with 43 CFR § 4160.3(a), in the absence of a protest, the proposed decision will become the final decision of the authorized officer without further notice unless otherwise provided in the proposed decision.

In accordance with 43 CFR § 4160.3(b), upon a timely filing of a protest, after a review of protest received and other information pertinent to the case, the authorized officer shall issue a final decision.

Any applicant, permittee, lessee or other person whose interest is adversely affected by the final decision may file an appeal in writing in for the purpose of a hearing before an administrative law judge in accordance with 43 CFR § 4160.3(c), 4160.4, 4.21, and 4.470. The appeal must be filed within 30 days following receipt of the final decision or within 30 days after the date the proposed decision becomes final. The appeal may be accompanied by a petition for a stay of the decision in accordance with 43 CFR § 4.471 pending final determination on appeal. The appeal and petition for a stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer, as noted above. In accordance with 43 CFR § 4.401, the BLM does not accept fax or email filing of a notice of appeal and petition for stay. Any notice of appeal and/or petition for stay must be sent or delivered to the office of the authorized officer by mail or personal delivery.

Within 15 days of filing the appeal, or the appeal and petition for stay, with the BLM officer named above, the appellant must also serve copies on other person named in the copies sent to section of this decision in accordance with 43 CFR 4.421 and on the Office of the Field Solicitor located at the address below in accordance with 43 CFR § 4.470(a) and 4.471(b).

Boise Field Solicitors Office  
University Plaza  
960 Broadway Ave., Suite 400  
Boise Idaho, 83706

The appeal shall state the reasons, clearly and concisely, why the appellant thinks the final decision is in error and otherwise complies with the provisions of 43 CFR § 4.470.

Should you wish to file a petition for a stay, see 43 CFR § 4.471 (a) and (b). In accordance with 43 CFR § 4.471(c), a petition for a stay must show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

- (1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied.
- (2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits.

- (3) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and
- (4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

As noted above, the petition for stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer and served in accordance with 43 CFR § 4.471.

Any person named in the decision that receives a copy of a petition for a stay and/or an appeal, see 43 CFR § 4.472(b) for procedures to follow if you wish to respond.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 208-896-5913.

Sincerely,



Loretta V. Chandler  
Field Manager  
Owyhee Field Office

## Works Cited

Makela, P., & Major, D. (2012). *A framework to identify greater sage-grouse preliminary priority habitat and preliminary general habitat in Idaho*. White Paper, USDI BLM, Boise, ID.  
 USDI BLM. (2005). *Trimble Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Closeout Report*.

Copies sent to:

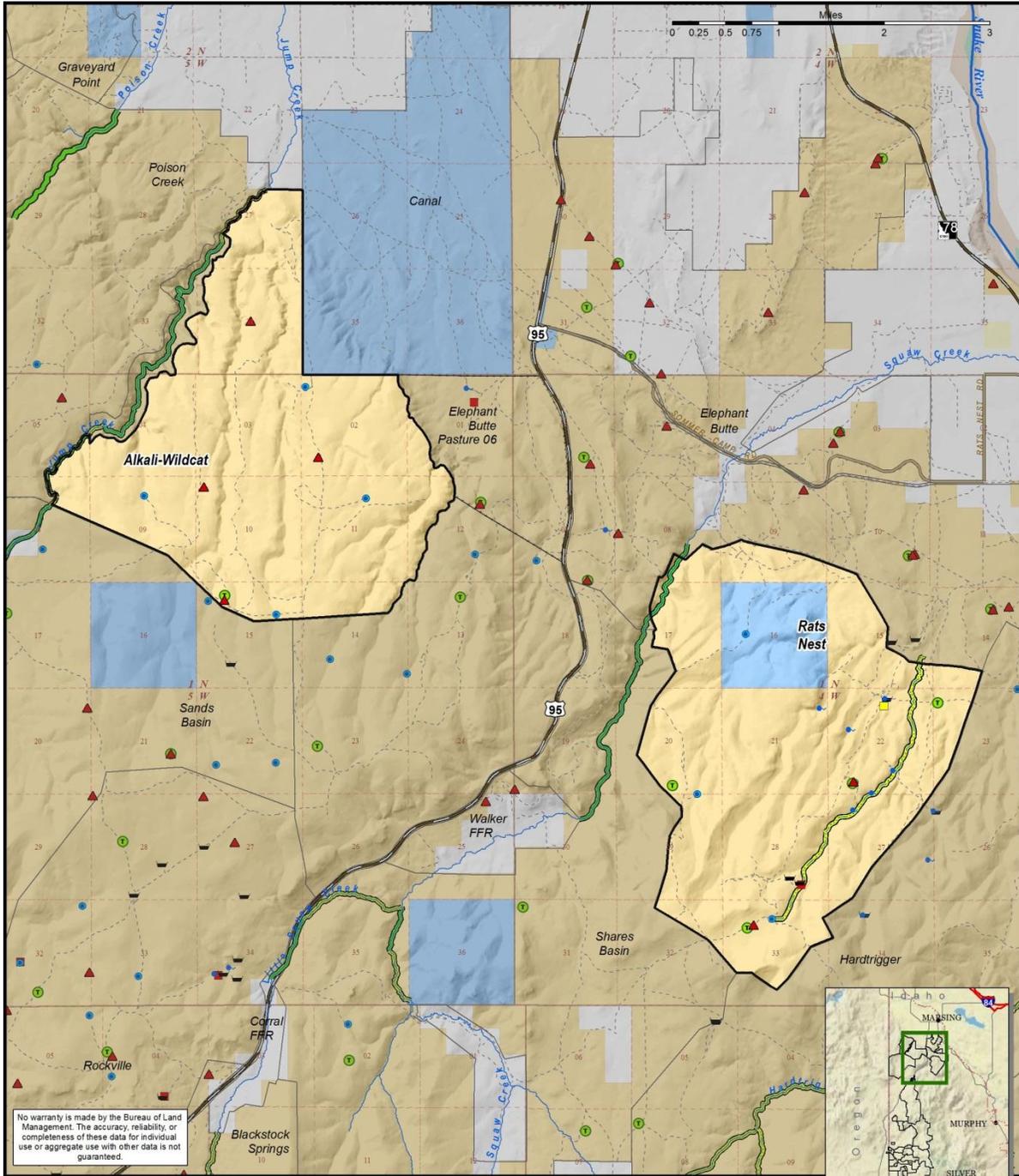
Company Name	Title	First Name	Last Name	Address 1	City	ST	Zip	# copies
Boise District Grazing Board		Stan	Boyd	PO Box 2596	Boise	ID	83701	1
Chipmunk Grazing Association		Elias	Jaca	PO Box 175	Marsing	ID	83639	2
Colyer Cattle Co.		Ray & Bonnie	Colyer	31001 Colyer Rd.	Bruneau	ID	83604	3
Elordi Cattle Co.		Jim	Elordi	PO Box 55	Jordan Valley	OR	97910	4
Elordi Sheep Camp, Inc.		Richard	Elordi	14448 Bighorn Dr.	Nampa	ID	83651	5
Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation	President	Jim	Jeffress	PO BOX 8224	Boise	ID	82707	6
Friends of Mustangs		Robert	Amidon	8699 Gantz Ave.	Boise	ID	83709	7
Gusman Ranch Grazing Association LLC		Forest	Fretwell	27058 Pleasant Valley Rd.	Jordan Valley	OR	97910	8
Holland & Hart LLP				PO Box 2527	Boise	ID	83701	9
Idaho Conservation League		John	Robison	PO Box 844	Boise	ID	83701	10
Idaho Dept. of Agriculture		John	Biar	PO Box 790	Boise	ID	83707	11
IDEQ				1410 N. Hilton	Boise	ID	83701	12
Idaho Dept. of Lands				PO Box 83720	Boise	ID	83720	13
Idaho Dept. of Parks & Recreation	Director			PO Box 83720	Boise	ID	83720	14
Idaho Farm Bureau Fed.				PO Box 167	Boise	ID	83701	15
Intermountain Range Consultants		Bob	Schweigert	5700 Dimick Ln.	Winnemucca	NV	89445	16
International Society for the Protection of Horses & Burros		Karen	Sussman	PO Box 55	Lantry	SD	57636	17
Jaca Livestock		Elias	Jaca	817 Blaine Ave.	Nampa	ID	83651	18
Juniper Mtn. Grazing Association		Michael	Stanford	3581 Cliffs Rd.	Jordan Valley	OR	97910	19
Land & Water Fund		William	Eddie	PO Box 1612	Boise	ID	83701	20
LS Cattle Co.	c/o	Jeff	Stanford	PO Box 217	Jordan Valley	OR	97910	21
LS Cattle Co		Jerry	Stanford	PO Box 281	Jordan Valley	OR	97910	22
LU Ranching	c/o	Bill	Lowry	PO Box 132	Jordan Valley	OR	97910	23
LU Ranching		Tim	Lowry	PO Box 132	Jordan Valley	OR	97910	24

Company Name	Title	First Name	Last Name	Address 1	City	ST	Zip	# copies
Moore Smith Buxton & Turcke		Paul	Turcke	950 W. Bannock, Ste. 520	Boise	ID	83702	25
Natural Resources Defence Council		Johanna	Wald	111 Sutter St., 20 <sup>th</sup> Floor	San Francisco	CA	94104	26
Oregon Division State Lands				1645 NE Forbes Rd., Ste. 112	Bend	OR	97701	27
Owyhee Cattlemen's Association				PO Box 400	Marsing	ID	83639	28
Owyhee County Commissioners				PO Box 128	Murphy	ID	83650	29
Owyhee County Natural Resources Committee		Jim	Desmond	PO Box 38	Murphy	ID	83650	30
Poison Creek Grazing Association LLC		Tim	Mackenzie	PO Box 443	Homedale	ID	83628	31
R&S Enterprise		Ray	Mitchell	265 Millard Rd.	Shoshone	ID	83352	32
Ranges West				2410 Little Weiser Rd.	Indian Valley	ID	83632	33
Resource Advisory Council	Chair.	Gene	Gray	2393 Watts Lane	Payette	ID	83661	34
Schroeder & Lezamiz Law Offices				PO Box 267	Boise	ID	83701	35
	Senator	Mike	Crapo	251 East Front Street, STE 205	Boise	ID	83702	36
	Senator	James E.	Risch	350 N. 9 <sup>th</sup> Street STE 302	Boise	ID	83702	37
Shoshone-Bannock Tribes	Tribal Chair	Nathan	Small	PO Box 306	Ft. Hall	ID	83203	38
Sierra Club				PO Box 552	Boise	ID	83701	39
Soil Conservation District		Cindy	Bachman	PO Box 186	Bruneau	ID	83604	40
State Historic Preservation Office				210 Main St.	Boise	ID	83702	41
State of Nevada Div. of Wildlife				60 Youth Center Rd.	Elko	NV	89801	42
The Fund for the Animals, Inc.		Andrea	Lococo	1363 Overbacker	Louisville	KY	40208	43
The Nature Conservancy				950 W. Bannock, Ste. 210	Boise	ID	83702	44
The Wilderness Society				950 W. Bannock St., Ste. 605	Boise	ID	83702-5999	45
U.S.F.W.S. Idaho State Office				1387 S. Vinnell Way, Ste. 368	Boise	ID	83709	46
USDA Farm Services				9173 W. Barnes	Boise	ID	83704	47
Western Watershed Projects		Katie	Fite	PO Box 2863	Boise	ID	83701	48
Western Watershed Projects				PO Box 1770	Hailey	ID	83333	49
		Doug	Burgess	2725 Mule Springs Rd.	Homedale	ID	83628	50
		Ted	Blackstock	6754 Opaline Rd.	Given Springs	ID	83641	51
		Alan	Johnstone	2740 Egurrola Ln.	Homedale	ID	83628	52
		Tim	McBride	1445 US 95 South	Jordan Valley	OR	97910	53

Company Name	Title	First Name	Last Name	Address 1	City	ST	Zip	# copies
		Conrad	Bateman	740 Yakima St.	Vale	OR	97918	54
		Gene	Bray	5654 W El Gato Ln.	Meridian	ID	83642	55
		Sean & Andrea	Burch	PO Box 284	Jordan Valley	OR	97910	56
		Chad	Gibson	16770 Agate Ln.	Wilder	ID	83676	57
		Chad & Dannelle	Hensley	4300 Choctaw Dr.	Nampa	ID	83686	58
		Russ	Heughins	10370 W Landmark Ct.	Boise	ID	83704	59
		Dan	Jordan	30911 Hwy. 78	Oreana	ID	83650	60
		Floyd	Kelly Breach	9674 Hardtrigger Rd.	Given Springs	ID	83641	61
		Kenny	Kershner	PO Box 300	Jordan Valley	OR	97910	62
		Vernon	Kershner	PO Box 38	Jordan Valley	OR	97910	63
		Lloyd	Knight	PO Box 47	Hammett	ID	83627	64
		Sandra	Mitchell	PO Box 70001	Boise	ID	83707	65
		Brett	Nelson	9127 W. Preece St.	Boise	ID	83704	66
		Ramona	Pascoe	PO Box 126	Jordan Valley	OR	97910	67
		Anthony & Brenda	Richards	8935 Whiskey Mtn. Rd., Reynolds Creek	Murphy	ID	83650	68
		John	Romero	17000 2X Ranch Rd.	Murphy	ID	83650	69
		Bob	Salter	6109 N. River Glenn	Garden City	ID	83714	70
		John	Townsend	8306 Road 3.2 NE	Moses Lake	WA	98837	71
		John	Richards	8933 State Hwy. 78	Marsing	ID	83639	72
	Congressman	Raul	Labrador	33 E. Broadway Ave STE 251	Meridian	ID	83642	73
	Congressman	Mike	Simpson	802 West Bannock STE 600	Boise	ID	83702	74
		John	Isernhagen	2618 Cow Creek Rd.	Jordan Valley	OR	97910	75
		Marti & Susan	Jaca	21127 Upper Reynolds Cr. Rd.	Murphy	ID	83650	76
		Ed	Moser	22901 N. Lansing Ln.	Middleton	ID	83644	77
		Bill	Baker	2432 N. Washington	Emmett	ID	83617-9126	78
Lequerica & Sons Inc.		Tim	Lequerica	PO Box 135	Arock	OR	97902	79
Office of Species Conservation		Cally	Younger	304 N. 8 <sup>th</sup> STE 149	Boise	ID	83702	80



Map 1, Alkali-Wildcat (00514) and Rat's Nest (00522) Allotments (Wild-Rat)



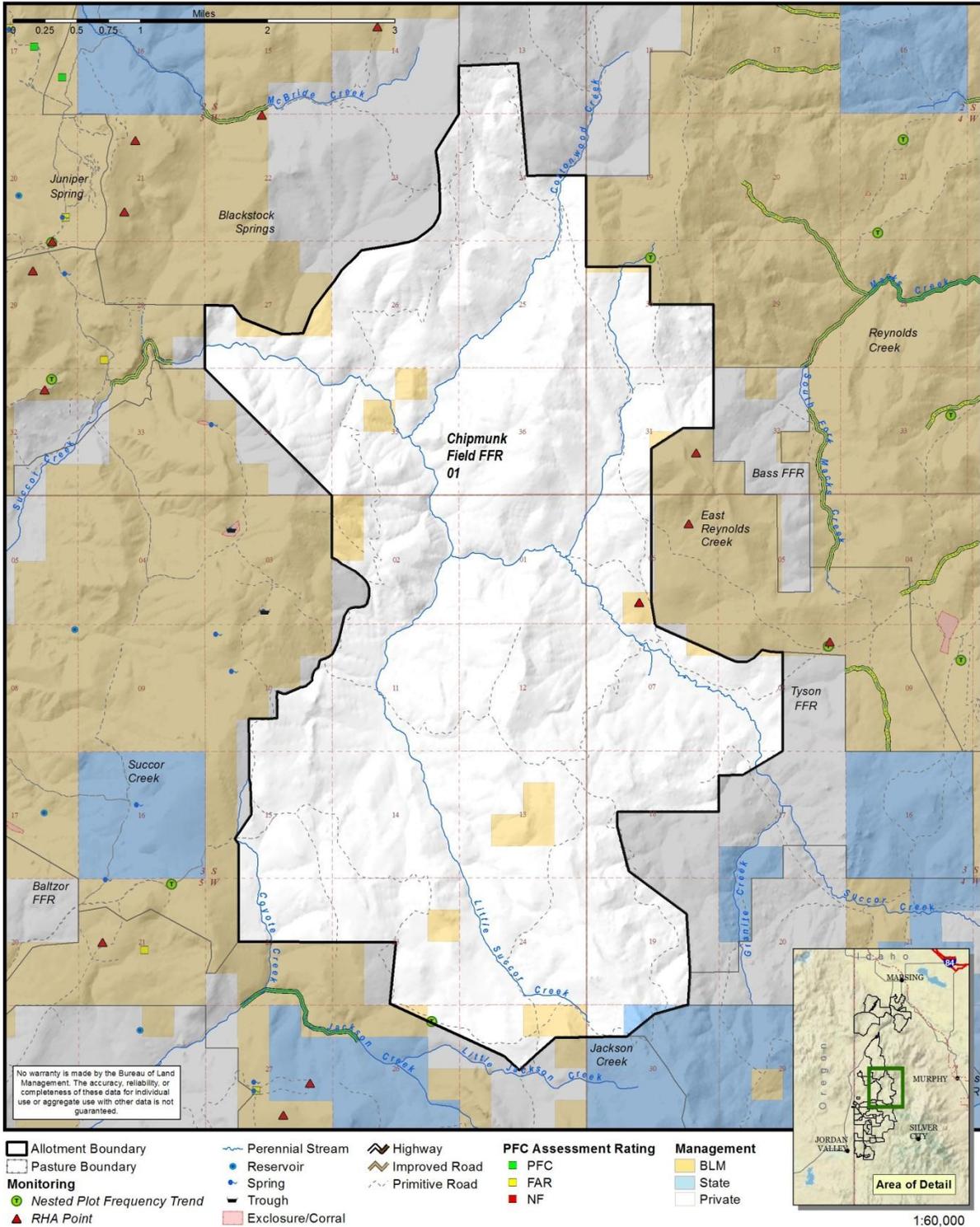
No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management. The accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data is not guaranteed.

- |                             |                  |                  |                              |                   |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Allotment Boundary          | Reservoir        | Perennial Stream | <b>PFC Assessment Rating</b> | <b>Management</b> |
| <b>Monitoring</b>           | Spring           | Highway          | PFC                          | BLM               |
| Nested Plot Frequency Trend | Trough           | Improved Road    | FAR                          | State             |
| RHA Point                   | Exclosure/Corral | Primitive Road   | NF                           | Private           |

1:75,000

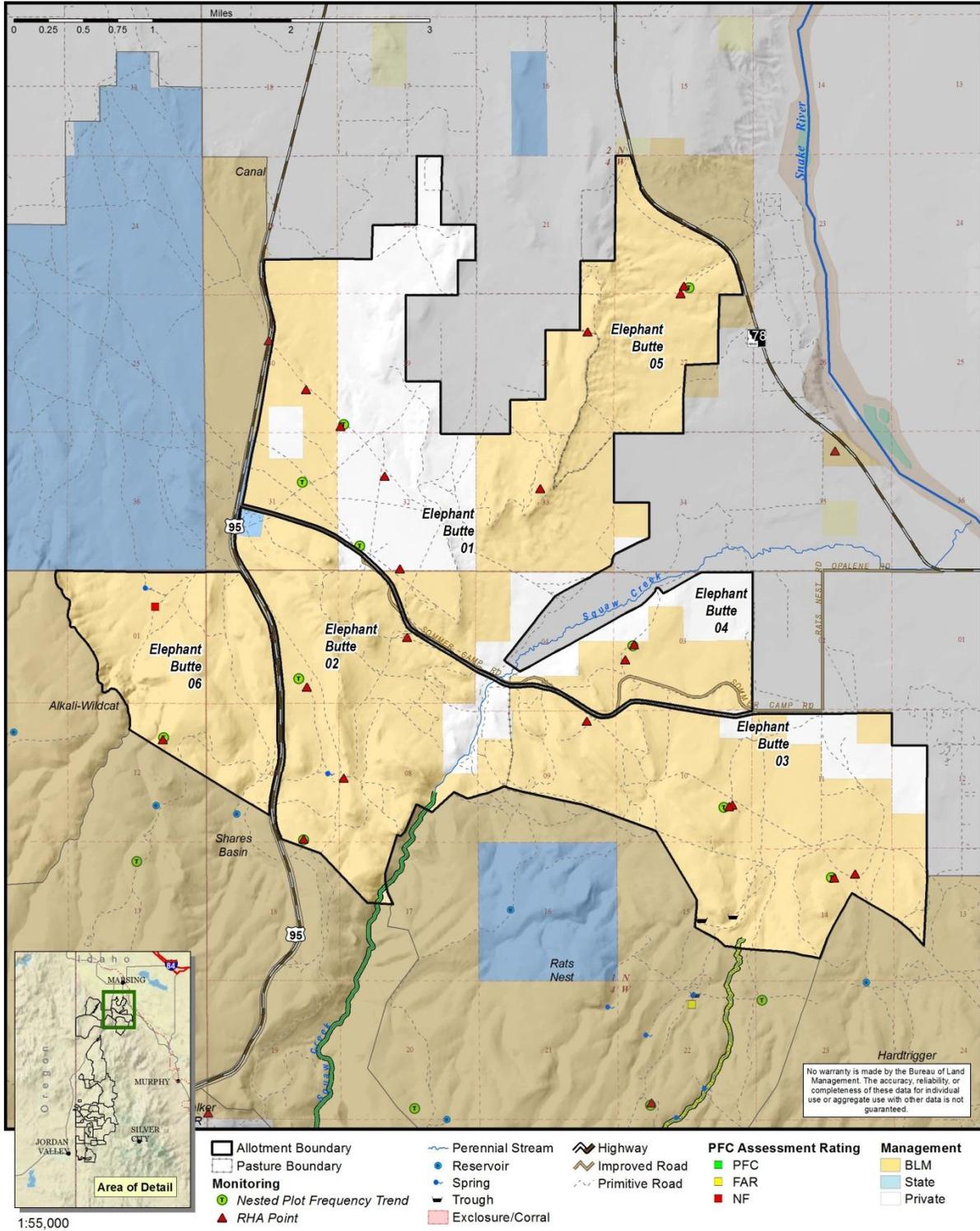


# Map 2, Chipmunk Field FFR (00523) Allotment



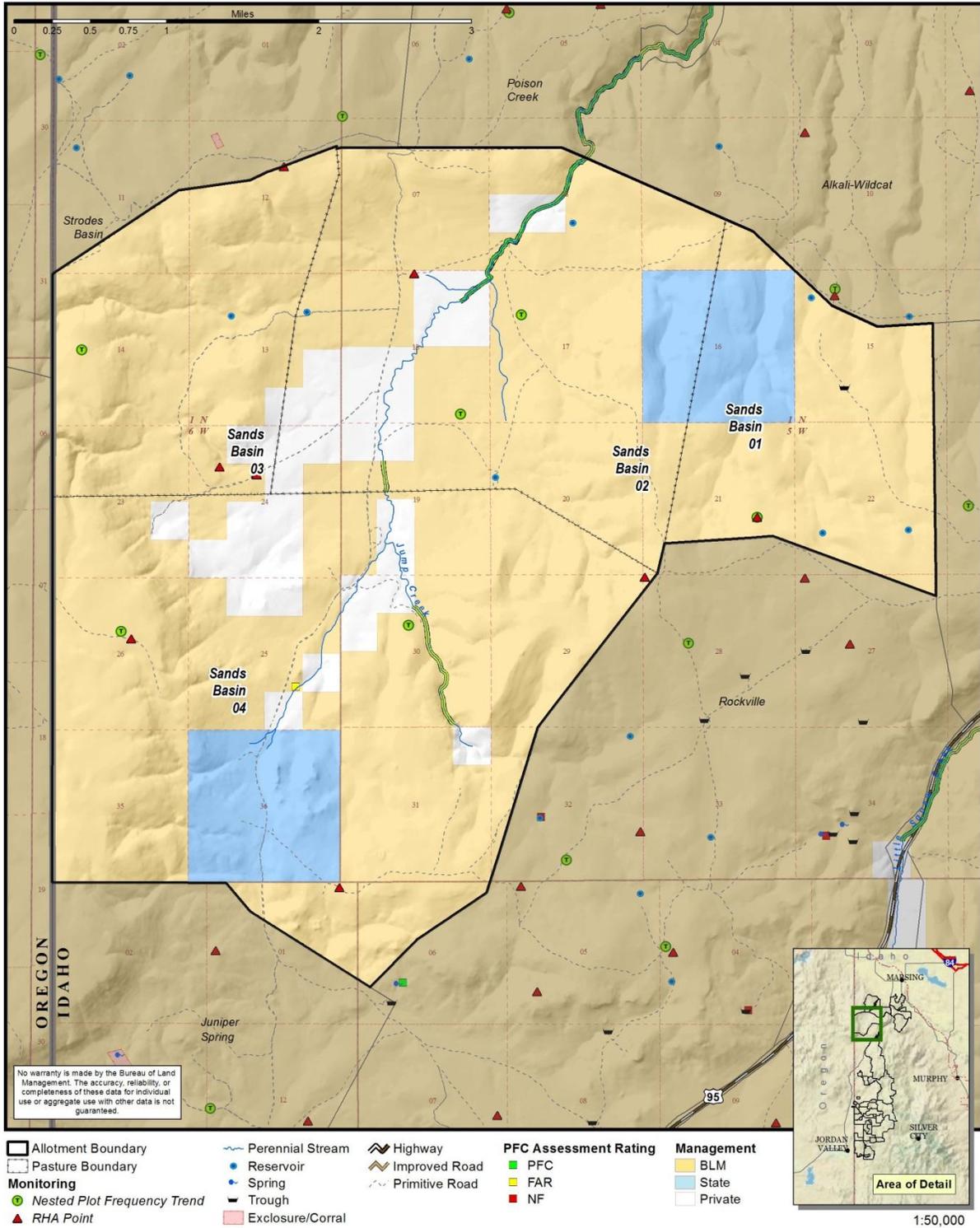


### Map 3, Elephant Butte (00513) Allotment



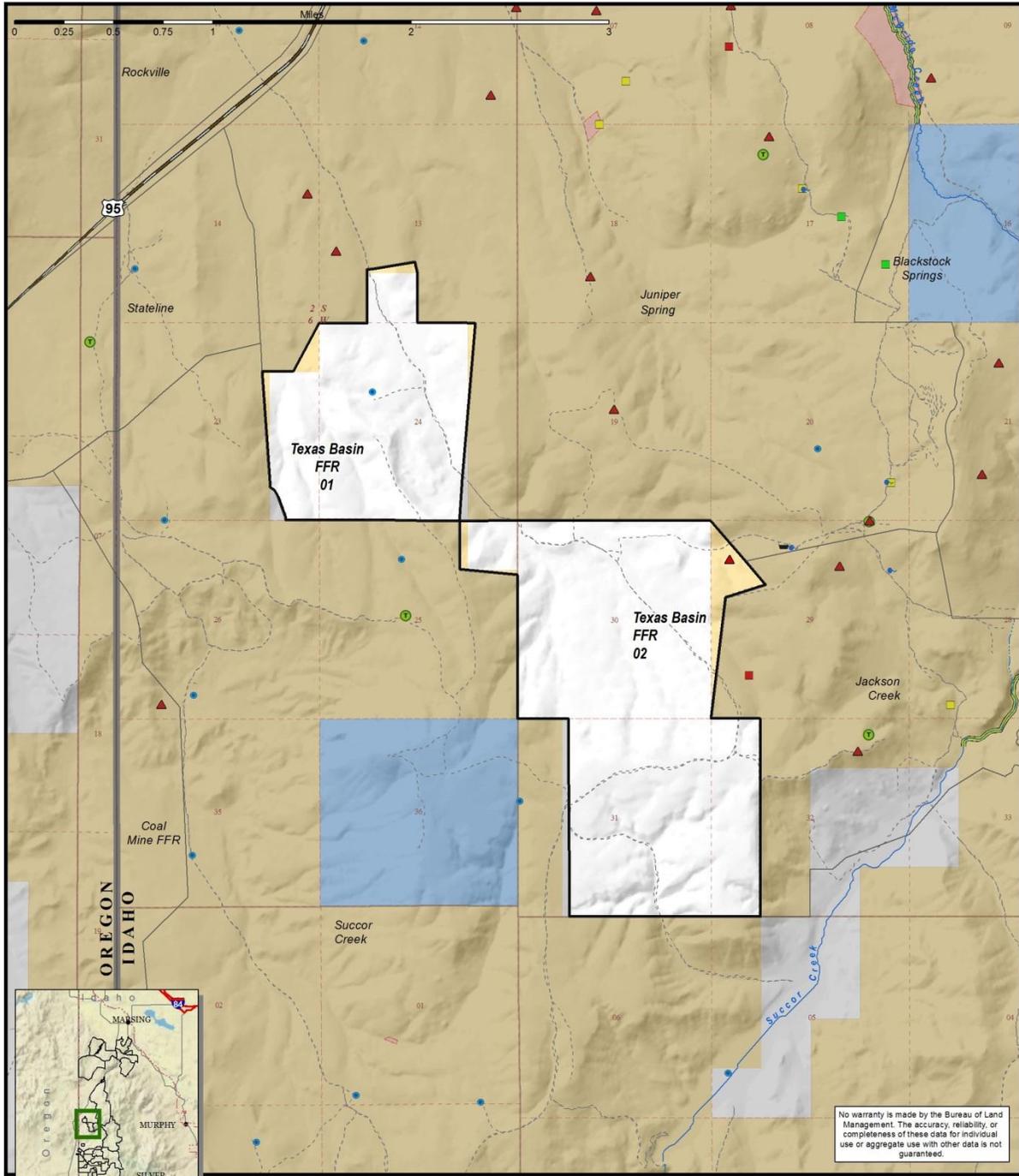


# Map 4, Sands Basin (00521) Allotment





# Map 5, Texas Basin FFR (00472) Allotment



1:40,000

- |                             |                  |                  |                              |                   |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Allotment Boundary          | Perennial Stream | Highway          | <b>PFC Assessment Rating</b> | <b>Management</b> |
| Pasture Boundary            | Reservoir        | Improved Road    | PFC                          | BLM               |
| <b>Monitoring</b>           | Spring           | Primitive Road   | FAR                          | State             |
| Nested Plot Frequency Trend | Trough           | Exclosure/Corral | NF                           | Private           |
| RHA Point                   |                  |                  |                              |                   |

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