EVALUATION AND DETERMINATION
Achieving the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health
and
Conformance with the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management

Field Office: 110-Four Rivers **Determination Date**:

Grazing Allotment Name and Number: Deer Creek Allotment #151

Name of Permittee: Kenneth Seid #1101134

Introduction
Idaho has eight Standards for Rangeland Health and 20 Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management that are used as management goals for the betterment of the environment, protection of cultural resources, and sustained productivity of the range. These standards and guidelines, which provide the resource measures and guidance needed to ensure healthy, functional rangelands went into effect August 12, 1997 when approved by the Secretary of the Interior. Idaho's Standards and Guidelines were developed by the 45 members of Idaho's three Resource Advisory Councils, with the specific intent of providing for the multiple use of public lands. Indicators of rangeland health for the various standards are a list of typical physical and biological factors and processes that can be measured and/or observed. Only indicators appropriate to a particular site are used to provide information necessary to determine the health and condition of public rangelands.

This document is used to determine if rangeland health standards are being achieved and if livestock management is conforming with applicable guidelines. To step through the determination process, this document has been set up to:

- First, discuss activities associated with all the standards such as grazing permit administration, RMP directions, and how the field assessments were conducted.
- Second, evaluate and determine conformance for the applicable standards. This is done through a series of discussion on rangeland health, the changes to rangeland health, livestock management, and rationale statements.
- Third, present the Field Manager rationale statement and conformance determination of the entire allotment to Idaho's standards for rangeland health.

Permit Administration
Current grazing authorization; expires February 28, 2009:

Allotment	Livestock	Season of Use	Percent Public Land [1]	Grazing Preference		
				Active	Suspended	Total
Deer Creek #151	40 Cattle	04/16 to 05/30	14%	8	0	8

1. Per the grazing regulations, percent public land should be determined by the proportion of livestock forage available on public lands within the allotment compared to the total amount available from both public lands and those land owned or controlled by the permittee. In many cases this percentage was determined on a geographic basis.

The Rangeland Program Summary (RPS) of the RMP indicates there are 80 acres of public land within Deer Creek Allotment. RMP allotment maps show that public land is fenced in with approximately 500 acres of private land. Our current data base indicates we have no range improvements on file.

Deer Creek Allotment is in the "custodial" management category with M-1 moderate use goals and guidelines. Through the RMP, custodial management is defined as management to prevent resource

deterioration. General goals and guidelines for M-1 moderate use areas, as described in the RMP, are to provide production and use of forage, timber, minerals and energy, other consumptive resources and recreation while maintaining or enhancing natural systems. These lands provide wildlife and livestock forage. Management is to maintain or enhance forage production for livestock and wildlife while maintaining site productivity, water quality and stream stability, and providing for other uses.

The overall RMP objective is to improve soil, vegetation, watershed, wildlife habitat, other resource values and conditions, and to provide vegetation for livestock, wildlife and other consumptive and non-consumptive uses. Forage production will be balanced with forage consumption to allow scheduled livestock use to occur in a manner that will maintain and/or improve vegetative condition. The range resource management guideline states that grazing preference will be at a level to ensure adequate forage is also available for wildlife and there are sufficient reserves to maintain plant vigor, to stabilize soils, and to provide cover for wildlife and other non-consumptive uses.

Field Assessments

One rangeland health field assessments were completed on July 01, 2002, using the *Interagency Technical Reference 1734-6, Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health*, as the guide. The Adams and Washington Counties Soil Survey, published by NRCS, was used as a base map from which soil polygons were field checked for correlation to ecological site descriptions. Each ecological site has been combined into broader groupings when discussing applicable rangeland health standards.

Broad Ecological Types

Ecological Type	NRCS Ecological Site		Number of Assessments	Public Lands Assessed	
	New	Old		Percent	Acreage
Very Shallow 12-20 inch precipitation zone	010XY002I	B10-02	1	100%	80

Field mapping showed on-the-ground boundary fences does not match allotment boundaries as described in the RMP. Therefore, assessment data is based on field mapping which showed 80 acres of public land (13 percent) and 528 acres of private land (87 percent) within the existing fencelines. Since the field assessment was based on existing fencelines, written assessments, evaluations, and determinations reflect what was mapped, not the RMP figures. These percentages indicate composition of public land, and other lands, within the allotment boundary on a geographic basis, which is different from the percent public land term of the grazing permit.

In addition to rangeland health field assessments, the following data was used to evaluate conformance with applicable Standards and Guidelines for this allotment, and can be found in the allotment specific appendix of the April 2005, Goodrich Watershed Assessment (allotments with blocked units of public land):

1. 100-point ground cover transect
2. Estimated canopy cover of plant groups.
3. Coordination with current livestock grazing permittees
4. Range Readiness monitoring

Range readiness is an estimation of the appropriate time when livestock grazing may begin without causing permanent damage to soils and vegetation. Range readiness field exams in the general Goodrich area were conducted for three years, following public review of the Goodrich Watershed Assessment. Beginning in 2004, range readiness sites were visited periodically (between mid-March through mid-June) to determine when soils became firm following spring thaw, and when key forage species have reached the stage of growth where livestock grazing would not harm the plant.

Standard 1: Watersheds

☐ Standard doesn't apply

Watersheds provide for the proper infiltration, retention, and release of water appropriate to soil type, vegetation, climate and landform to provide for proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow.

Evaluation and Information Sources *(required, regardless of which box is checked)*

To examine watershed indicators, all ecological sites were grouped into a moderately deep to deep soils group and a shallow to very shallow stony soils group. The very shallow stony soils group is the only site found within Deer Creek Allotment. Results from filed assessment are displayed in the following tables, by indicator then by ecological grouping.

Rangeland Health

Shallow to Very Shallow Stony Soils Group

Number of assessments: 1 Represents 100% of public land in the allotment

Indicators	Extreme	Moderate to Extreme	Moderate	Slight to Moderate	None to Slight
Rills					1
Water Flow Patterns					1
Pedestals/Terracettes			1		
Bare Ground				1	
Gullies					1
Wind Erosion					1
Soil Surface Resistance to Erosion				1	
Soil Surface Loss or Degradation				1	
Compaction Layer					1
Plant Community Composition and Distribution Relative to Infiltration and Runoff					1
Reproductive Capability of Native Plants					1
Total			**1**	**3**	**7**

There are approximate 80 acres of public land in this soils group. All rangeland health indicators are within an acceptable range of similarity to the reference ecological site description even with one indicator showing a moderate departure.

Ground cover was measured through a 100-point transect conducted at the field assessment sites.

Ecological Site	Litter	Standing Dead Vegetation	Bare Ground	Rock/Gravel	Cryptogams	Vascular Plants
Shallow Soils	05%	02%	02%	27%	0	54%

Standing dead vegetation includes both annual and dead perennial plants that have not been broken at the soil surface level. If broken, it becomes a form of litter. Vascular plants include canopy cover, as well as basal cover.

Rangeland Health Changes

Shallow to Very Shallow Stony Soils Group

All rangeland health indicators are within an acceptable range of similarity.

Livestock Grazing Management

A description of each Guideline for Livestock Grazing Management is attached to this Evaluation and Determination. Following are guidelines applicable to Standard 1:

Guidelines 1, 3, and 8 *(grazing management practices):* Livestock grazing of the allotment is authorized for spring use between mid-April through the end of May over 80 acres for 8 AUMs. Based on ecological site descriptions and estimated suitability, stocking rate is estimated to be 36.0 acres/AUM, due to the low productivity of the site. Intensive herding helps keep stock moving and not concentrated in any one spot
Guidelines 6 and 17 *(development of management facilities)*: At this time there are no known proposals for new range improvements. If projects are proposed in the future, these guidelines will be followed, however at this time these guidelines do not apply to livestock management.
Guideline 16 *(burned area rehabilitation)*: If possible, natural regeneration will be allowed following a wildfire. If a seeding would be needed, future wildfire rehabilitation projects will include native seeds, as much as economically possibly and as seed availability permits. Seed mixes will represent the appropriate ecosystem diversity. If projects are proposed in the future, these guidelines will be followed. At this time this guideline does not apply to livestock management.

It is documented on the Rangeland Health Evaluation Summary Worksheet that there is evidence of rodent activity, along with livestock and deer use.

Conformance Rationale for Standard 1 and applicable Guidelines for Watersheds:
The 80 acres of public land within Deer Creek Allotment constitute approximately 13 percent of the allotment. All indicators were found to be within acceptable departure of the ecological description for a low producing shallow site.

[Check box 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5, and either box 6 or 7.]

1 ☒ Meeting the Standard	5 ☐ Not Meeting the Standard, cause not determined
2 ☐ Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress towards	
3 ☐ Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are not significant factors (list important causal agents)	6 ☒ Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.
4 ☐ Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are significant factors (list important causal agents)	7 ☐ Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (list Guidelines No(s) in non-conformance)

Standard 2: Riparian Areas and Wetlands ☒ Standard doesn't apply

Riparian-wetland areas are in properly functioning condition appropriate to soil type, climate, geology, and landform to provide for proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow.

and

Standard 3: Stream Channel/Floodplain ☒ Standard doesn't apply

Stream channels and floodplains are properly functioning relative to the geomorphology (e.g., gradient, size, shape, roughness, confinement, and sinuosity) and climate to provide for proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow.

Evaluation and Information Sources *(required, regardless of which box is checked)*:
Based on field assessments, and the use of topographic maps and aerial photos, no riparian areas or wetlands were found on this allotment.

Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities) ☐ Standard doesn't apply

Healthy, productive, and diverse native animal habitat and populations of native plants are maintained or promoted as appropriate to soil type, climate, and landform to provide for proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow.

Evaluation and Information Sources *(required, regardless of which box is checked)*

To examine native plant community indicators, ecological sites were grouped into Loamy, Shallow Stony, Very Shallow, and unclassified (forested areas) sites. Only Very Shallow ecological site is found within Deer Creek Allotment. Information collected from the field assessment is displayed in the following tables.

Rangeland Health

Very Shallow Ecological Sites, 12 to 20 inch precipitation zone; Ecological Site #010XY002I

Number of assessments: 1 Represents 100% of public land in the allotment

Indicators	Extreme	Moderate to Extreme	Moderate	Slight to Moderate	None to Slight
Soil Surface Resistance to Erosion				1	
Soil Surface Loss or Degradation				1	
Compaction Layer					1
Functional/Structural Groups					1
Plant Mortality/Decadence					1
Litter Amount				1	
Annual Production					1
Invasive Plants				1	
Reproductive Capability of Native Plants					1
Total				**4**	**5**

This site has a moderate canopy cover of low-stature shrubs which is represented by slender leaf buckwheat and thyme leaf buckwheat. The understory is sparse but dominated by Sandberg bluegrass, bottlebrush squirreltail, biscuitroot, onion, bighead clover and arrowleaf balsamroot.

Life Forms	Current Composition (biomass production estimation)	Composition at PNC*
Graminoids (grass and grasslike)	35%	35% to 45%
Forbs	25%	15% to 25%
Shrubs	40%	35% to 45%

* PNC = Potential Natural Community as described in the NRCS ecological site description

Rangeland Health Change

Very Shallow Ecological Sites, 12 to 20 inch precipitation zone; Ecological Site #010XY002I

All indicators were found to be in the "none to slight" or "slight to moderate" departure group. Rush skeletonweed was found to be scattered throughout the plant community.

Livestock Grazing Management

A description of each Guideline for Livestock Grazing Management is attached to this Evaluation and Determination. Following are guidelines applicable to Standard 4:

Guidelines 4, 9, 12, and 18 *(grazing management practices)*: Livestock grazing of the allotment is authorized for spring use, between mid-April through the end of May, over 80 acres for 8 AUMs. Based on ecological site descriptions and estimated suitability, stocking rate is estimated to be 36.0 acres/AUM,

due to shallow, low producing soils. Intensive herding helps keep stock moving and not concentrated in any one spot
Guidelines 6, 17, and 20 *(development of management facilities)*: At this time there are no known proposals for new range improvements. If projects are proposed in the future, these guidelines will be followed. At this time these guidelines do not apply to livestock management on this allotment.
Guidelines 14, 15, and 16 *(rehabilitation)*: If possible, natural regeneration will be allowed following a wildfire. If a seeding would be needed, future wildfire rehabilitation projects will include native seeds, as much as economically possibly and as seed availability permits. Seed mixes will represent the appropriate ecosystem diversity. If projects are proposed in the future, these guidelines will be followed. At this time these guidelines do not apply to livestock management on this allotment.

It is documented on the Rangeland Health Evaluation Summary Worksheet that there is evidence of rodent activity, along with livestock and deer use.

Conformance Rationale for Standard 4 and applicable Guidelines for Native Plant Communities:
The 80 acres of public land within Deer Creek Allotment constitute approximately 13 percent of the allotment. Based on the rangeland health assessments all public lands are meeting the standard. Conformance with all applicable livestock grazing management guidelines was indicated.

[Check box 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5, and either box 6 or 7.]

1 ☒ Meeting the Standard	5 ☐ Not Meeting the Standard, cause not determined
2 ☐ Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress towards	
3 ☐ Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are not significant factors (list important causal agents)	6 ☒ Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.
4 ☐ Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are significant factors (list important causal agents)	7 ☐ Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (list Guidelines No(s) in non-conformance)

Standard 5: Seedings

☒ Standard doesn't apply

Rangelands seeded with mixtures, including predominately non-native plants, are functioning to maintain life form diversity, production, native animal habitat, nutrient cycling, energy flow, and the hydrologic cycle.

Evaluation and Information Sources *(required, when boxes 1 through 7 are checked)*
Based on field assessments, aerial photos, and file information, no seedings were found on this allotment.

Standard 6: Exotic Plant Communities, other than Seedings

☒ Standard doesn't apply

Exotic plant communities, other than seedings, will meet minimum requirements of soil stability and maintenance of existing native and seeded plants.

Evaluation and Information Sources *(required regardless of which box is checked)*:
Scotch thistle has been mapped on Deer Creek Allotment. Since noxious weeds and other invasive species do not comprise a community of themselves (they were found throughout the existing native community), their existence was addressed in Standard 4 for Native Plant Communities.

Standard 7: Water Quality

☒ Standard doesn't apply

Surface and ground water on public lands comply with the Idaho Water Quality Standards.

Evaluation and Information Sources ***(required, regardless of which box is checked)***
Based on field assessments, and the use of topographic maps and aerial photos, no riparian areas or wetlands were found, therefore water quality does not apply to public lands within this allotment.

Standard 8: Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals

☐ Standard doesn't apply

Habitats are suitable to maintain viable populations of threatened and endangered, sensitive, and other special status species.

Evaluation and Information Sources ***(required, regardless of which box is checked)***:

Plants

There are currently no known populations of threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant species in Deer Creek Allotment.

Wildlife

Wildlife habitat quality was inferred from data collected while examining the allotment for standards 1 and 4. No field visits were specifically conducted to evaluate special status wildlife species or their habitat.

Fisheries

There are no riparian areas or waterway through this allotment, as documented in Standards 2 and 3, therefore condition of special status fish species or their habitat does not apply to Deer Creek Allotment.

Rangeland Health

Wildlife

Two active sage grouse leks occur within two miles of Deer Creek Allotment – placing it within nesting range for the birds.

Rangeland Health Change

Wildlife

All public lands are in good condition, producing at near potential for the area. There is a good balance of grasses, forbs and shrubs throughout the allotment to provide food and cover for wildlife. The allotment does afford good quality early-brood rearing habitat. This intact habitat will produce an abundance of insect life to provide food for birds and other special status animals that are dependent on them.

Livestock Grazing Management

A description of each Guideline for Livestock Grazing Management is attached to this Evaluation and Determination. Following are guidelines applicable to Standard 8:

Guidelines 6, 17, and 20 *(development of management facilities):* At this time there are no known proposals for new range improvements. If projects are proposed in the future, these guidelines will be followed, however at this time these guidelines do not apply to livestock management.
Guidelines 11, 12, and 18 *(grazing management practices):* Livestock grazing of the allotment is authorized for spring use, between mid-April through the end of May, over 80 acres of public land for 8 AUMs.

Guidelines 14, 15, and 16 *(rehabilitation):* If possible, natural regeneration will be allowed following a wildfire. If a seeding would be needed, future wildfire rehabilitation projects will include native seeds, as much as economically possibly and as seed availability permits. Seed mixes will represent the appropriate ecosystem diversity. If projects are proposed in the future, these guidelines will be followed. At this time these guidelines do not apply to livestock management.

It is documented on the Rangeland Health Evaluation Summary Worksheet that there is evidence of rodent activity, deer use, and varying degrees of livestock use, including trailing activities.

Conformance Rationale for Standard 8 and applicable Guidelines for Native Plant Communities:
The 80 acres of public land within Deer Creek Allotment constitute approximately 13 percent of the allotment. Based on the rangeland health assessments all public lands are meeting the standard. Conformance with all applicable livestock grazing management guidelines was indicated.

[Check box 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5, and either box 6 or 7.]

1 ☒ Meeting the Standard	5 ☐ Not Meeting the Standard, cause not determined
2 ☐ Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress towards	
3 ☐ Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are not significant factors (list important causal agents)	6 ☒ Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.
4 ☐ Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are significant factors (list important causal agents)	7 ☐ Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (list Guidelines No(s) in non-conformance)

Field Manager's Determination Rationale

Based on information detailed in Appendix B, Assessment 20 of the April 2005, Goodrich Watershed Assessment (allotments with blocked units of public land) and summarized above, I have determined that all applicable Standards for Rangeland Health (1, 4 and 8) and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management are being met.

Rangeland health data was collected through one field. Determinations of rangeland health and conformance with applicable standards and guidelines are made on an allotment as a whole unit. Therefore, Deer Creek Allotment is meeting standards for watershed health and native plant communities, and habitat for threatened and endangered species. The intensive herding practice of the permittee, that keep livestock moving, and not concentrated in any one area, has helped maintain compliance.

/s/ *Rosemary Thomas* 9/28/2007

Rosemary Thomas
Four Rivers Field Manager

Date