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: East Pine Creek Allotment #172

Name of Permittee: Randy Noah #1101191

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:

Permittee	Livestock	Season of Use	Percent Public Land [1]	Grazing Preference		
				Active	Suspended	Total
Randy Noah	20 Cattle	05/15 to 07/15	20%	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.

Due to a 1999 correction of the allotment boundary, there are approximately 80 acres of public land are within East Pine Creek Allotment. This is different than the Rangeland Program Summary (RPS) of the

RMP, which indicated 40 acres of public land within the allotment boundary. RMP allotment maps show that public land is fenced in with approximately 1,560 acres of private land. The permittee has flexibility to manage livestock grazing of the public lands with their private land grazing operation through a term and condition (T&C) of the grazing permit that states "season of use and number of livestock are not restricted to those shown above provided overuse and deterioration does not occur to the federal range". Our data base indicates there are no range improvements on file for this allotment.

Per the 1999 proposed decision, grazing authorization changed
From:

Allotment	Livestock	Season of Use	Percent Public Lands	Preference		
				Active	Suspended	Total
P Legg Individual #172	130 Cattle	04/06 to 06/05	3%	8	0	8

To (same as presented above as current grazing authorization):

Allotment	Livestock	Season of Use	Percent Public Lands	Preference		
				Active	Suspended	Total
East Pine Creek #172	20 Cattle	05/15 to 07/15	20%	8	0	8

East Pine 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 September 10, 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.

Broad Ecological Types

Ecological Type	NRCS Ecological Site		Number of Assessments	Public Lands Assessed	
	New	Old		Percent	Acreage
Loamy 16-22 inch precipitation zone	010XY003I	B10-03	1	100%	79

Field mapping showed on-the-ground boundary fences do not match allotment boundaries as described in the RMP. Therefore, assessment data is based on field mapping which showed there are 79 acres of public land (39 percent) and 123 acres of private land (61 percent) within the existing fencelines. All other private land within the RMP allotment boundary is fenced away from the public lands. 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 transects.
2. Estimated canopy cover of plant groups.
3. Estimated stocking level
4. Actual Grazing Use Reports
5. 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. Only the moderately deep to deep soils group is found within East Pine Creek Allotment. Results from filed assessment are displayed in the following tables, by indicator then by ecological grouping.

Rangeland Health

Moderately Deep to Deep 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**	**10**

All public lands, consisting of the approximate 79 acres, are in this soils group. All indicators are within the acceptable range of similarity to the reference ecological site, as described by NRCS for a Potential Natural Community.

Rangeland Health Changes

Moderately Deep to Deep Soils Group

It was stated in the 1999 determination that "public land within the allotment was found to have more than adequate ground cover to protect the watershed."

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
Deeper Soils	14%	12%	05%	03%	0	66%

"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.
"Cryptogams" are microorganisms (eg., lichens, algae) and non-vascular plants (eg., moss, lichens) that grow on or just below the soil surface.
"Vascular Plants" include canopy cover, as well as basal cover.

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 to be used at the permittees discretion over 80 acres of public land for 8 AUMs. Actual use records indicate grazing usually occurs late, typically in October or November (which is authorized through the unrestricted term and condition of the grazing permit). Based on ecological site descriptions and estimated suitability, stocking rate is estimated to be 5.2 acres/AUM.
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.

Conformance Rationale for Standard 1 and applicable Guidelines for Watersheds:

Based on GIS mapping, the 79 acres of public land within East Pine Creek Allotment constitute approximately 39 percent of the allotment. All public lands are within the moderately deep to deep soils group on which one field assessment was conducted. From this assessment, it was found that all rangeland health indicators are within an acceptable range of similarity to the reference ecological site description.

[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	6 ☒ Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.

not significant factors (list important causal agents)	
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 Loamy ecological site is found within East Pine Creek Allotment. Information collected from the field assessment is displayed in the following tables.

Rangeland Health

Loamy Ecological Sites, 16 to 22 inch precipitation zone; new Ecological Site #010XY003I
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				**2**	**7**

There is a moderate canopy cover of xeric big sagebrush, bitterbrush, Wyeth's buckwheat, chokecherry, bitter cherry, serviceberry and snowberry associated with an understory dominated by bluebunch wheatgrass. Sub-dominant species include arrowleaf balsamroot, Great Basin wild rye, blue wild rye, Sandberg bluegrass and white stoneseed.

Life Forms	Current Composition (biomass production estimation)	Composition at PNC*
Graminoids (grass and grasslike)	38%	50% to 60%
Forbs	20%	15% to 25%
Shrubs	42%	15% to 25%

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

Rangeland Health Change

It was stated in the 1999 determination that "the upland plant community is an example of late seral north slope loamy. Very little utilization was observed. The shrubs appeared healthy, with recruitment of new plants."

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 to be used at the permittees discretion over 80 acres of public land for 8 AUMs. Actual use records indicate grazing usually occurs late, typically in October or November (which is authorized through the unrestricted term and condition of the grazing permit). Based on ecological site descriptions and estimated suitability, stocking rate is estimated to be 5.2 acres/AUM.
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.

Conformance Rationale for Standard 4 and applicable Guidelines for Native Plant Communities:

Based on GIS mapping, the 79 acres of public land within East Pine Creek Allotment constitute approximately 39 percent of the allotment. All public lands are within the loamy ecological site on which one field assessment was conducted. From this assessment, it was found that all rangeland health indicators are within an acceptable range of similarity to the reference ecological site description.

[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 was documented in an isolated pocket near the assessment site. Since these invasive species did not comprise a separate community (Scotch thistle was 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 East Pine 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. East Pine Creek Allotment lies on the northern edge of greater sage-grouse range in this portion of Idaho. The allotment occurs in historic Columbian sharp-tailed grouse habitat; although no populations are currently known to occur in the immediate area.

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 East Pine Creek Allotment.

Rangeland Health

Wildlife habitat, over a majority of East Pine Creek Allotment, is adequate for upland dependent special status species. There is moderate canopy cover of xeric big sagebrush, bitterbrush, Wyeth's buckwheat, chokecherry, bitter cherry, serviceberry and snowberry with an understory dominated by bluebunch wheatgrass. Sub-dominant species include arrowleaf balsamroot, Great Basin wild rye, blue wild rye, Sandberg bluegrass, and white stoneseed. The allotment lies on the fringe of sage grouse habitat and occurs within historic Columbian sharp-tailed grouse range.

Rangeland Health Change

Wildlife habitat is suitable for ground and shrub-steppe nesting birds as well as small mammals, reptiles, and predators. Public land portions of East Pine Creek Allotment provide suitable Columbian sharp-tailed grouse habitat and sage grouse habitat at potential.

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. At this time these guidelines do not apply to livestock management.
Guidelines 11, 12, and 18 *(grazing management practices):* Public land grazing is authorized on a season-long basis. Actual use records indicate grazing usually occurs late, typically in October or November (authorized the unrestricted term and condition of the grazing permit).
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

Conformance Rationale for Standards 8 and applicable Guidelines for Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals

Based on GIS mapping, the 79 acres of public land within East Pine Creek Allotment constitute approximately 39 percent of the allotment. All public lands are within the moderately deep to deep soils group and loamy ecological site on which one field assessment was conducted. From that one field assessment, it was found that all rangeland health indicators for watershed and native plant communities are within an acceptable range of similarity to the reference ecological site description.

[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 30 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 applicable Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management are being met.

Rangeland health data was collected through one field assessment. Determinations of rangeland health and conformance with applicable standards and guidelines are made on an allotment as a whole unit. Therefore, East Pine Creek Allotment is meeting standards for watershed health, native plant communities and habitat for threatened and endangered species.

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

Rosemary Thomas
Four Rivers Field Manager

Date