

**Executive Summary and Authorized Officer's
Determination of Land Health Standards on
Public Lands Managed by the BLM within the
Canyon-Big Timber Watershed
Bureau of Land Management
Salmon Field Office
Salmon, Idaho**

This document summarizes the findings of the Canyon-Big Timber Watershed (CBT) Assessment completed in 2010. Seventeen BLM allotments within the watershed were assessed and evaluated for conformance with rangeland health standards in the *Canyon-Big Timber Watershed Assessment Report*. These lands encompass approximately 129,000 acres of public lands managed by the BLM which represents approximately 40% of the total land base within the CBT area.

The issue of scale must be kept in mind in evaluating each standard. It is recognized that isolated sites within a landscape may not be meeting the standards. However, considering broader scope and scale, the area may be meeting standards overall. No single indicator provides sufficient information to determine rangeland health; they are used in combination to provide information necessary to determine rangeland health. Alternatively, just because a standard is being met doesn't mean that the conditions on the ground represent desired resource condition or objectives. For example, an upland site with reduced composition of bunchgrasses may meet the upland health standard if it sustains a native plant community, even if it is dominated by low producing, low palatability grasses, shrubs and or forbs. While such a site may have stable soils and allow for proper hydrologic function, it won't provide the livestock forage or wildlife cover that it would if it was dominated by taller, more robust plants.

Table 1 summarizes the determination of rangeland health standards by BLM management unit. As required by 43CFR 4180 this Determination of Standards document also discloses whether existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use on public lands managed by the BLM are significant contributing factors in failing to achieve the Standards for Rangeland Health and conform with the guidelines for livestock grazing management established for public lands managed by the BLM in Idaho.

The *Canyon-Big Timber Watershed Assessment Report* describes the existing condition of public lands managed by the BLM within the watershed. The report also recommends management objectives for improving resource conditions where needed. Please refer to the *Canyon-Big Timber Watershed Assessment Report* for a complete discussion of resource conditions, concerns and management objectives. The *Canyon-Big Timber Watershed Assessment Report* may be reviewed at the Salmon Field Office, or on the internet at <https://www.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/projectSummary.do?methodName=renderDefaultProjectSummary&projectId=7903>

Since the completion of the watershed assessment (USDI-BLM, 2010), the ID-team has reviewed each allotment that was not meeting all of the applicable Rangeland Health Standards and determined what the significant causal factors were for not meeting the Standard. During that review the ID-team felt that some of the calls were made incorrectly in the Assessment Report and amended the

calls during the determination process. The data for Leadore Hill Allotment was reviewed and it was concluded that the allotment was meeting Standards 2 and 3 even with the short segment of Little Timber Creek that was dewatered for private irrigation since the majority of stream and riparian habitat in the allotment is in PFC. The Leadville allotment was seeded in the fall of 2010 and has been rested since, leading to the allotment making significant progress towards meeting Standard 4. The data for Nez Perce Allotment was reviewed and it was concluded that even though Deer Creek is dewatered for private irrigation the majority of the stream and riparian habitat on the allotment is PFC, thus the allotment is meeting Standards 2 and 3. In 2010, an enclosure fence was completed in the Spring Canyon Allotment resulting in the allotment making significant progress towards meeting Standards 2 and 3. Like Leadore Hill, the majority of the stream and riparian habitat in the Timber Creek Allotment is in PFC and the short segment of Little Timber Creek that is dewatered for private irrigation did not warrant a conclusion of not meeting for Standards 2, 3 and 8. The following table (Table 1) reflects these changes from the assessment.

Table 1. Land Health Summary by BLM Management Unit

Allotment Name	Are Rangeland Health Standards Being Met?								Significant Factors in Failing to Achieve Standards
	1 Watersheds	2 Riparian	3 Stream Channel	4 Native Plants Communities	5 Seedings	6 Exotic Plant Communities	7 Water Quality	8 T&E Plants & Animals	
Bull Creek	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Meeting all applicable standards.
Center Ridge	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	No	Yes	Grazing management on state and private lands and roads.
Chamberlain Creek	Yes	No	No	Yes	N/A	N/A	No	No ²	Existing BLM grazing management for Standards 2, 3 and 8. Grazing management on state and private lands and roads for Standard 7.
Dump	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Meeting all applicable standards.
Free Strip	Yes	No; progress	No; progress	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	BLM grazing management was changed in 2007 and allotment is now making significant progress toward meeting Standards.
Hawley Creek	Yes	No	No	No; progress	N/A	N/A	No	No ²	BLM grazing management was changed in 2007 and allotment is now making significant progress toward meeting Standard 4. Private irrigation diversion dewatering stream for Standards 2, 3 and 8. Grazing management on state and private lands, private irrigation practices and roads for Standard 7.
Jakes Canyon	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	N/A	N/A	No	Yes	Historic BLM grazing management for Standard 4. Grazing management on private lands for Standard 7.
Leadore	Yes	No; progress	No; progress	No; progress	N/A	N/A	Yes	No; progress ^{1, 2, 3, 4}	BLM grazing management was changed in 2008 and allotment is now making significant progress toward

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									meeting all Standards.
Leadore Hill	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	While reviewing the Standards for determination of causal factors, the ID team concluded that the allotment is meeting all applicable standards. Even with a short segment of Little Timber Creek dewatered from private irrigation practices, the majority of stream/riparian habitat in the allotment is in PFC.
Leadville	Yes	No	No	No; progress	Yes	N/A	No	No ²	Allotment was seeded in 2010 and is now making significant progress toward meeting Standard 4. Private irrigation diversion dewatering stream for Standards 2, 3 and 8. Grazing management on private lands and private irrigation practices for Standard 7.
Nez Perce	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	No	No ²	While reviewing the Standards for determination of causal factors, the ID team concluded that the allotment is meeting Standards 2, 3 and 8 in regards to Steelhead. Grazing management on private lands and private irrigation practices for Standard 7. Private irrigation diversion dewatering Deer Creek for Standard 8 in regards to bull trout.
Powderhorn	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	No	No ²	Existing BLM grazing management for Standards 2, 3 and 8. Grazing management on private and state lands and roads for Standard 7.
Purcell Creek	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Meeting all applicable standards.
Spring Canyon	Yes	No; progress	No; progress	Yes	N/A	N/A	No	Yes	Exclosure fence was constructed in 2010 and the Allotment is now making significant progress toward meeting Standards 2 and 3. Grazing management on private lands for Standard 7.

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Tex Creek	Yes	No	No; progress	Yes	Yes	N/A	No	No; progress ²	Changes in private irrigation practices have resulted in more water in the stream which has resulted in significant progress toward meeting Standards 3 and 8. Grazing management on private and state lands, private irrigation practices and roads for Standard 7. BLM grazing management for Standard 2.
Timber Creek	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	While reviewing the Standards for determination of causal factors, the ID team concluded that the allotment is meeting all applicable standards. Even with a short segment of Little Timber Creek dewatered from private irrigation practices, the majority of stream/riparian habitat is in PFC.
Two Dot (Leadore E. Past.)	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Meeting all applicable standards.
N/A – Not applicable ¹ Allotment is not meeting Standard 8 for greater sage-grouse. ² Allotment is not meeting Standard 8 for bull trout. ³ Allotment is not meeting Standard 8 for steelhead. ⁴ Allotment is not meeting Standard 8 for Chinook salmon. Failing to achieve, or make significant progress towards achieving, Standard and current BLM grazing management is a significant factor.									

Authorized Officer's Determination:

Based on my review of the *Canyon-Big Timber Watershed Assessment Report*, the interdisciplinary team's recommendations and other relevant data and information, the following allotments **meet, or are making significant progress toward meeting**, all eight Standards for Rangeland Health.

- | | | |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Bull Creek | 4. Leadore | 7. Two Dot (Leadore East Pasture) |
| 2. Dump | 5. Leadore Hill | 8. Timber Creek |
| 3. Free Strip | 6. Purcell Creek | |

In addition, while the following allotments **do not meet** one or more of the Standards for Rangeland Health, I have determined that current BLM authorized activities, including livestock management, are not significant causal factors in failing to meet those standards.

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. Center Ridge | 3. Jakes Canyon | 5. Nez Perce |
| 2. Hawley Creek | 4. Leadville | 6. Spring Canyon |

The following allotments **do not meet** one or more of the Standards for Rangeland Health and/or don't conform to the guidelines established for livestock grazing management. I have determined that current livestock management is a significant contributing factor in at least one of these standards not being met.

1. Chamberlain Creek

2. Powderhorn

3. Tex Creek

Guidelines that are not being met under current BLM grazing management for these allotments are:

Chamberlain Creek

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.

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.

11. Use grazing management practices developed in recovery plans, conservation agreements, and Endangered Species Act, Section 7 consultations to maintain or improve habitat for federally listed threatened, endangered, and sensitive plants and animals.

Powderhorn

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.

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.

11. Use grazing management practices developed in recovery plans, conservation agreements, and Endangered Species Act, Section 7 consultations to maintain or improve habitat for federally listed threatened, endangered, and sensitive plants and animals.

Tex Creek

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.

Pursuant to 43 CFR 4180.2(c), the authorized officer shall take appropriate action as soon as practicable but not later than the start of the next grazing year upon determining that existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use on public lands managed by the BLM are significant factors in failing to achieve the standards and conform with the guidelines that are made effective under this section. Appropriate action means implementing actions that will result in significant progress toward fulfillment of the standards and significant progress toward conformance with the guidelines. Practices and activities subject to standards and guidelines include the development of grazing-related portions of activity plans, establishment of terms and conditions of permits, leases and other grazing authorizations, and range improvement activities such as vegetation manipulation, fence construction and development of water.

An environmental assessment which will propose and analyze management alternatives necessary to address or correct identified resource concerns will be prepared.

Authorized Officer's Signature:



6/28/12

Field Manager

Date

The *Canyon-Big Timber Watershed Assessment Report* recommended the following management objectives for improving resource conditions. During the 2010 field season the Salmon Field Office ID team and partners scoped the objectives and developed the following recommendations:

Non-native vegetation (none of the objectives below are needed for allotment(s) to move toward meeting Standard(s)):

- 1) Protect pink agoseris in the Chamberlain Creek Allotment from competition from non-native plants.
 - ◆ The non-native plants will be treated under the Challis-Salmon Integrated Weed Control Program Programmatic Environmental Assessment EA#ID-330-2008-EA-30.
- 2) Eradicate or reduce bulbous bluegrass where it is present along Tenmile Creek in the Powderhorn Allotment.
 - ◆ The bulbous bluegrass will be treated under the Challis-Salmon Integrated Weed Control Program Programmatic Environmental Assessment EA#ID-330-2008-EA-30.
- 3) Eradicate or reduce leafy spurge where it is present in the Canyon Creek drainage. This includes the BLM Jakes Canyon and Leadville allotments and the SCNF Grizzly Hill Allotment.
 - ◆ The leafy spurge on public lands managed by the BLM will be treated under the Challis-Salmon Integrated Weed Control Program Programmatic Environmental Assessment EA#ID-330-2008-EA-30.
- 4) Eradicate or reduce spotted knapweed where it is present in the Gilmore area. This includes the BLM Spring Canyon Allotment and the SCNF Gilmore Allotment.
 - ◆ The spotted knapweed on public lands managed by the BLM will be treated under the Challis-Salmon Integrated Weed Control Program Programmatic Environmental Assessment EA#ID-330-2008-EA-30.

Forest and Woodland (1 and 2 are needed for allotment(s) to move toward meeting Standard(s)):

- 1) Reduce conifer encroachment into aspen stands along Clear Creek in the Powderhorn Allotment.
 - ◆ The ID team decided that the conifer encroachment into the aspen stands, while a factor, was not a significant factor in not meeting the Standards. The ID team decided to focus on changes to BLM grazing management which was the significant factor leading to not meeting the Standards.
- 2) Improve regeneration survival in aspen stands in the Chamberlain Creek Allotment.
 - ◆ The ID team suggested grazing management changes which will be analyzed in an Environmental Assessment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.
- 3) Reduce the wildfire hazard around private land in the BLM Spring Canyon Allotment and the SCNF Gilmore Allotment.

- ◆ The ID team suggested vegetation manipulation projects for the public lands managed by the BLM which will be analyzed in an Environmental Assessment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.
- 4) Reduce conifer encroachment into aspen stands along Big Timber Creek in the Timber Creek Allotment.
 - ◆ The ID team suggested vegetation manipulation projects which will be analyzed in an Environmental Assessment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.
- 5) Improve regeneration survival in aspen stands in the SCNF Grizzly Hill Allotment.
 - ◆ The ID team did not scope this project since it was entirely on USFS managed lands.
- 6) Reduce the wildfire hazard and improve forest health in the SCNF Grizzly Hill and Mollie Gulch allotments.
 - ◆ The ID team did not scope this project since it was entirely on USFS managed lands.
- 7) Reduce conifer encroachment into aspen stands in the SCNF Swan Basin Allotment.
 - ◆ The ID team did not scope this project since it was entirely on USFS managed lands.

Mesic Shrubland and Grassland (Riparian) (1 through 7 are needed for allotment(s) to move toward meeting Standard(s)):

- 1) Improve riparian habitat along Clear Creek from “Functional-at-Risk (FAR) - downward trend” to at least an upward trend in the Powderhorn Allotment.
 - ◆ The ID team suggested grazing management changes which will be analyzed in an Environmental Assessment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.
- 2) Improve riparian habitat along Pass Creek from “FAR-static” to at least an upward trend in the Chamberlain Creek Allotment.
 - ◆ The ID team suggested grazing management changes which will be analyzed in an Environmental Assessment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.
- 3) Improve riparian habitat along McGinty Creek from “non-functional (NF)” and “FAR-static” to at least an upward trend in the Chamberlain Creek Allotment.
 - ◆ The ID team suggested grazing management changes which will be analyzed in an Environmental Assessment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.
- 4) Improve riparian habitat around the Tex Creek ponds in the Tex Creek Allotment.
 - ◆ The ID team suggested range improvement projects which will be analyzed in an Environmental Assessment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.
- 5) Improve riparian habitat along Texas Creek from “FAR-static” trend to at least an upward trend in the Spring Canyon Allotment.
 - ◆ This was partially completed in 2010. The ID team suggested changes to the existing enclosure which will be analyzed in an Environmental Assessment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.
- 6) Improve riparian habitat along Whiskey Spring and Chippie creeks from “NF”, “FAR-down”, and “FAR-static” to at least an upward trend in the Free Strip Allotment.

- ◆ The ID team felt that the changes in grazing management that were made in 2007 will result in the riparian habitat trending upwards in functionality.
- 7) Improve riparian habitat at Poison Spring in the Center Ridge Allotment.
 - ◆ The ID team suggested grazing management changes which will be analyzed in an Environmental Assessment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

Semi-desert Shrubland and Grassland (1 and 2 are needed for allotment(s) to move toward meeting Standard(s)):

- 1) Increase the cover of bluebunch wheatgrass and the diversity and cover of forbs within the Leadville Allotment, while maintaining Wyoming big sagebrush.
 - ◆ The allotment will be aerated and seeded as described in the Leadville Restoration Project Environmental Assessment EA#ID-340-2009-EA-3571.
- 2) Increase the cover of bluebunch wheatgrass and the diversity and cover of forbs within the Jakes Canyon Allotment, while maintaining Wyoming big sagebrush.
 - ◆ The ID team suggested grazing management changes and/or a range improvement project which will be analyzed in an Environmental Assessment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.
- 3) Reduce conifer encroachment into mountain big sagebrush in the BLM Spring Canyon Allotment and the SCNF Gilmore Allotment.
 - ◆ The ID team suggested vegetation manipulation projects for the public lands managed by the BLM which will be analyzed in an Environmental Assessment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

Infrastructure (none are needed for allotment(s) to move toward meeting Standard(s)):

- 1) Prevent water from eroding road in the Chamberlain Creek Allotment.
 - ◆ Since the water causing the erosion is under a private water right the ID team could not develop a solution at this time, but will continue to work with the water right holder as opportunity develops.
- 2) Adjust fences for wildlife needs in the Bull Creek and Hawley Creek allotments.
 - ◆ The ID team agreed that the fences would be modified as needed.
- 3) Adjust private/BLM allotment fences in the Leadore Allotment.
 - ◆ The ID team agreed to remove one fence on the allotment.

Archeology (none are needed for allotment(s) to move toward meeting Standard(s)):

- 1) Protect archeological site from disturbance in the Hawley Creek Allotment.
 - ◆ The ID team decided that we would explore money and partners to determine the importance of the site.
- 2) Protect archeological site from disturbance in the Timber Creek Allotment.
 - ◆ The ID team decided that we would explore money and partners to determine the importance of the site.

Common throughout the area (none are needed for allotment(s) to move toward meeting Standard(s)):

- 1) Adjust fences so bottom wire is at least 18 inches above the ground in pronghorn antelope habitat.
 - ◆ Fences will be modified as funding becomes available.
- 2) Adjust fences so top wire is less than 38 inches above the ground.
 - ◆ Fences will be modified as funding becomes available
- 3) Develop and implement a “wildland fire for resource benefit” fire management strategy. As part of this strategy, investigate and document potential control lines for wildland fire management following existing roads, which roughly segregates forest and woodlands of the Beaverhead Mountains of the Bitterroot Range and the Lemhi Mountains, from rangelands of the upper Lemhi drainage.
 - ◆ The ID team suggested that the current Salmon Field Office Fire Management Plan be amended to include new information and provide direction for implementation of a “wildland fire for resource benefit” fire management strategy.
- 4) Issue “trailing” permit(s) where appropriate for cattle trailing in the CBT area.
 - ◆ The ID team suggested analyzing crossing permits with an Environmental Assessment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

In addition the ID team recommends that the following projects be abandoned and the remaining materials on public lands managed by the BLM be removed. These projects are either non-functional and/or are no longer needed for grazing management.

- 1) Clear Creek Drift Fence on the Powderhorn Allotment.
- 2) Trouble Pipeline on the Leadville Allotment.
- 3) The fence on the west side of Bell Field in the Free Strip Allotment.
- 4) M-P Division Fence in the Chamberlain Creek Allotment.
- 5) 18 mile Study Exclosure in the Powderhorn Allotment.
- 6) Old Van Sickle Fence, the maintained one will not be abandoned, in the Powderhorn Allotment.
- 7) Chamberlain Pipeline in the Chamberlain Creek Allotment.
- 8) Unnamed Pipeline along McGinty Creek in the Chamberlain Creek Allotment.