



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Elko Field Office  
3900 East Idaho Street  
Elko, Nevada 89801-4611  
<http://www.nv.blm.gov>



In Reply Refer To:  
4130 (NV-012)  
JAN 31 2000

Dear Interested Public:

On June 1, 1999 after completing informal section 7 consultation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), a Final Decision Effective Upon Issuance for the Little Humboldt Allotment was issued to Hammond Ranches, Inc. This decision implemented interim changes to the current Hammond Ranches, Inc. grazing permit designed to improve Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT), a federally listed threatened species habitat in the South Fork Little Humboldt River (SFLHR) drainage. This decision was effective immediately, pending completion of the Little Humboldt Allotment Evaluation and issuance of a Final Multiple Use Decision.

An appeal and petition for stay to the final decision was filed by Hammond Ranches, Inc. on July 8, 1999. On August 3, 1999, the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) issued an order staying BLM's June 1, 1999 decision. When the Office of Hearings and Appeals stays a final decision, grazing use is authorized at the previous years level of use until the stay is resolved as outlined in 43 CFR 4160.3 (d). In this case Hammond Ranches, Inc. would be authorized at the 1998 licensed levels of use as follows:

Hammond Ranches, Inc. 1998 authorized use levels within the Little Humboldt Allotment.

ALLOTMENT	LIVESTOCK NUMBER & KIND	BEGIN PERIOD	END PERIOD	%PL	TYPE USE	AUMS
Little Humboldt	68 cattle	4/1	11/30	97	Active	529
	1000 cattle	4/1	4/30	97	Active	957
	1300 cattle	5/1	5/31	97	Active	1,285
	1400 cattle	6/1	7/30	97	Active	2,678
	1300 cattle	8/1	8/31	97	Active	1,285
	1000 cattle	9/1	9/30	97	Active	957
	500 cattle	10/1	10/31	97	Active	494
	97 cattle	11/1	11/30	97	Active	93
<b>Total</b>						<b>8,278</b>

The 1998 grazing use described above allows for season long grazing within the Little Humboldt Allotment and within the South Fork Little Humboldt drainage. Because the stay allows for grazing to be different than that outlined in BLM's June 1, 1999 decision, the BLM is now required to complete formal section 7 consultation with the USFWS for any grazing use authorized in 2000.

Therefore, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposes two management alternatives for implementation beginning in 2000 in the Little Humboldt Allotment: 1) the status quo 1998 levels of use outlined above and 2) the attached copy of proposed management changes to be implemented in 2000.

Please provide this office with any comments you may have to the proposed management alternatives by February 11, 2000. In addition, if you would like to receive further information on any of the proposed range improvement(s) outlined in the enclosed management proposal please notify this office in writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clinton R. Oke', with a horizontal line underneath.

CLINTON R. OKE  
Assistant Field Manager  
Renewable Resources

Enclosure: as stated above

**PROPOSED SHORT-TERM GRAZING MANAGEMENT CHANGES WITHIN THE LITTLE HUMBOLDT ALLOTMENT BEGINNING IN THE 2000 GRAZING SEASON**

The proposed action includes short-term changes in current livestock grazing practices to be implemented beginning in 2000 and construction of range improvements in 2000 and 2001. A more comprehensive plan addressing other resource issues and long-term grazing management will be developed by BLM through its allotment evaluation process.

*LIVESTOCK GRAZING MANAGEMENT*

Grazing is proposed to be authorized in the Jakes Creek Allotment and Little Humboldt Allotments for 2000 as shown in Table 1. Grazing in the Jakes Creek Allotment is relevant to the Little Humboldt Allotment since the boundary between the two areas is unfenced.

Table 1. Hammond Ranches, Inc. proposed 2000 grazing authorization in the Little Humboldt and Jakes Creek Allotments.

ALLOTMENT	LIVESTOCK NUMBER & KIND <sup>1</sup>	BEGIN PERIOD <sup>2</sup>	END PERIOD	%PL	TYPE USE	AUMs <sup>3</sup>
Little Humboldt	1500 Cattle	4/1	8/15	97	Active	6,553
	300 Cattle	8/16	8/31	97	Active	153
	50 Cattle	9/1	10/31	97	Active	97
<b>Total</b>						<b>6,803</b>
<b>Scheduled Non-use</b>						<b>1,092</b>
Jakes Creek	551 Cattle	3/1	3/31	34	Active	191
	335 Cattle	10/1	11/15	34	Active	172
FFR	4 Cattle	4/1	2/28	100	Custodial Grazing	50
<b>Total</b>						<b>413</b>

<sup>1</sup> The livestock permittee will have the flexibility to adjust livestock numbers as long as the total number of AUMs of permitted use are not exceeded.

<sup>2</sup> Flexibility within the seasons of use outlined above will be allowed as long as they are within the season of use specified on Hammond Ranches, Inc.'s term grazing permit with exception of the SFLHR drainage which will be used in accordance with the terms and conditions listed below.

<sup>3</sup> Hammond Ranches, Inc. total permitted use for the Little Humboldt Allotment is 8,279 AUMs of which 384 AUMs have been placed in suspension for protection purposes (fire closure). Hammond Ranches, Inc. total permitted use for Jakes Creek Allotment is 413 AUMs.

Proposed cattle movements between and within the Little Humboldt and Jakes Creek allotments are as follows:

On March 1<sup>st</sup> approximately 551 head of cattle will be turned into the Jakes Creek

Allotment in the area west of the proposed Jakes Creek Fence as shown on Map 1. These cattle will remain in the allotment until March 31<sup>st</sup>.

On April 1<sup>st</sup> the cattle in the Jakes Creek Allotment as well as an additional 949 head of cattle from the ranch for a total of 1500 head will be moved into the Little Humboldt Allotment in the lower portions of the Jakes Creek drainage and in the area below the Owyhee Bluffs around the Little Humboldt Seeding as well as in the seeding itself..

The majority of the cattle will remain on the Little Humboldt Allotment until August 15<sup>th</sup>. Of the 1500 cattle only approximately 1000 head will reach the SFLHR drainage around the end of May to early June depending on the depth of snow and weather conditions. The remaining 500 head of cattle will remain in the general area in which they were initially turned out.

All livestock will be removed from the SFLHR drainage (including Sheep, Secret, and Pole Creeks) no later than July 15<sup>th</sup>. Livestock will be removed sooner than July 15<sup>th</sup> if any of the following utilization criteria are met (refer to Appendix 1):

**Riparian Herbaceous Vegetation:** Average utilization at the time of collection reaches or exceeds 35% for any of the following streams: South Fork Little Humboldt River, Sheep Creek, and Secret Creek. Utilization data will be averaged by individual stream.

**Woody Riparian Vegetation:** Average utilization at the time of collection reaches or exceeds 25% for any of the following streams: South Fork Little Humboldt River, Sheep Creek, and Secret Creek. Utilization data will be averaged by individual stream.

The permittee will be required to implement appropriate actions (i.e. riding, herding, and salting) in ensure riparian utilization criteria will not be exceeded.

**Note:** Because of a lack of complete fencing control, cattle could potentially have access to the SFLHR drainage after July 15<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, the ranch will continually ride to remove any livestock entering the SFLHR drainage after July 15<sup>th</sup> or prior to July 15<sup>th</sup> if utilization criteria have been reached.

Cattle removed from the SFLHR drainage area will then be moved through the proposed Owyhee Rim Fence as shown on Map 2 into the area above the Spring Creek drainage as well as below the Owyhee Bluffs.

The majority of the cattle will remain in the Little Humboldt Allotment until August 15<sup>th</sup> at which time they will begin to be removed back onto private land. Of these cattle approximately 335 head will be moved back onto the Jakes Creek Allotment until November 15<sup>th</sup>.

## *RANGE IMPROVEMENTS*

The following range improvements are necessary to implement the above described changes in grazing management and will be constructed in 2000 and 2001:

### 2000 Proposed Range Improvements

1. BLM will construct approximately 4.5 miles of new fence (Owyhee Rim Fence) located on public land in T.39N., R.46E., Sec. 7, 18 and T.39N., R.45E., Sec. 13, 23, 24, 25 and 26 as shown on Map 2 by June 30, 2000.

This fence will create a boundary between LCT streams and the area below the Owyhee Bluffs. This boundary is necessary to prevent livestock from re-accessing the SFLHR drainage after July 15<sup>th</sup>, or after riparian utilization criteria have been met. The fence is not expected to present a barrier to wild horses since most censused horse use occurs in the vicinity of Castle Springs, an area north and east of the SFLHR drainage. The appropriate clearances and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation will be completed by the BLM. Potential conflicts involving wild horses will be addressed through this process.

2. Hammond Ranches, Inc. will construct approximately seven miles of permanent boundary fence (Jakes Creek Boundary Fence) of which approximately 4.5 miles is located on public land as soon as possible in T39N., R43E., Sec. 13, 14, 24 and T39N., R44E., Sec. 19, 30, 31, 32 (see Map 1). Fence construction on the public portions will begin after the appropriate clearances and NEPA documentation has been completed and approved by the BLM..

This fence will effectively create a physical boundary between the northern half of Jakes Creek Allotment and the Tall Corral Allotment which is licensed as part of the Little Humboldt Allotment. This will effectively reduce the drift between the two allotments and potential for cattle access to the SFLHR drainage.

**Note:** Hammond Ranches, Inc. will fence the following private lands out of the allotment in the spring/summer of 2000 (see Map 2) as soon as weather conditions permit. Grazing on these lands would therefore be independent from that authorized on public lands in the Little Humboldt Allotment by BLM.

T40N, R45E, Sec. 26; W $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ ; SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , to the west side of road.

This parcel encompasses the SFLHR from the road crossing at Pole Creek, upstream for 3/4 mile.

T40N, R45E, Sec. 35; E $\frac{1}{2}$ E $\frac{1}{2}$ ; SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ .

T40N, R45E, Sec. 36; W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ ; W $\frac{1}{2}$  SE $\frac{1}{4}$ ; NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ .

T39N, R45E, Sec. 1; N½NW¼; SE¼NW¼.  
T39N, R45E, Sec. 2; NW¼.

This parcel encompasses the SFLHR near the above section for approximately 1.5 miles upstream, including approximately 0.5 miles of Sheep Creek from the confluence with the SFLHR, all of Oregon Flat, and approximately 1.0 miles of Oregon Canyon Creek upstream from the confluence with SFLHR.

The Hammond Ranch, Inc. in cooperation with BLM, also plans to evaluate opportunities for limited gap fencing and development of water in uplands to reduce livestock impacts to LCT streams. The need for additional fencing within the wild horse herd management area may be identified and proposed in the Little Humboldt Allotment Evaluation for improving LCT habitat conditions. At that time associated impacts of additional fencing on wild horses will be addressed.

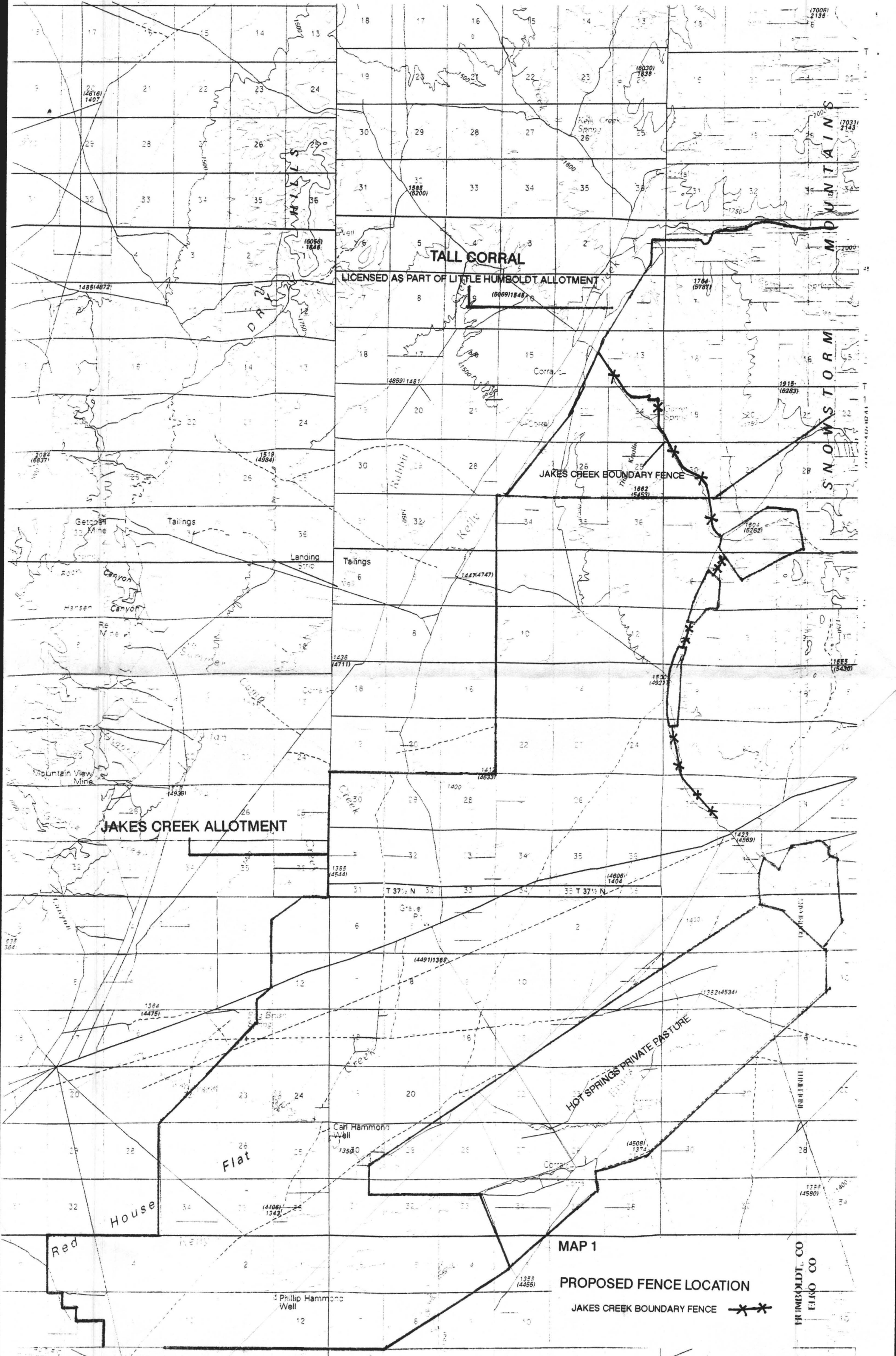
#### 2001 Proposed Range Improvement

1. The BLM will construct approximately six miles of new fence (Basin Fence) located on public land in T39N., R45E., Sec. 33, 28, 21, 20, 17, 8, 5, 6 and T40N., R45E., Sec 31 in the spring/summer of 2001 as shown on Map 2. Fence construction will begin after the appropriate clearances and NEPA documentation has been completed by the BLM. Potential conflicts involving wild horses will be addressed through this process.

This fence will create a boundary between the SFLHR drainage and cattle access points from the western slopes of the Snowstorm Mountains in the allotment. This fence in conjunction with the above fences will allow for further control of cattle entering the SFLHR drainage<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>The proposed fence will prevent wild horses from utilizing approximately 17,000 acres of the Little Humboldt Herd Management Area. In fifteen years of census flights, only two flights have found a significant number of horses in the area west of the proposed fence. These counts found 120 horses in January 1993 and 67 horses in June of 1988. Other census flights have found either no horses or between two and nine head.



TALL CORRAL

LICENSED AS PART OF LITTLE HUMBOLDT ALLOTMENT

JAKES CREEK ALLOTMENT

HOT SPRINGS PRIVATE PASTURE

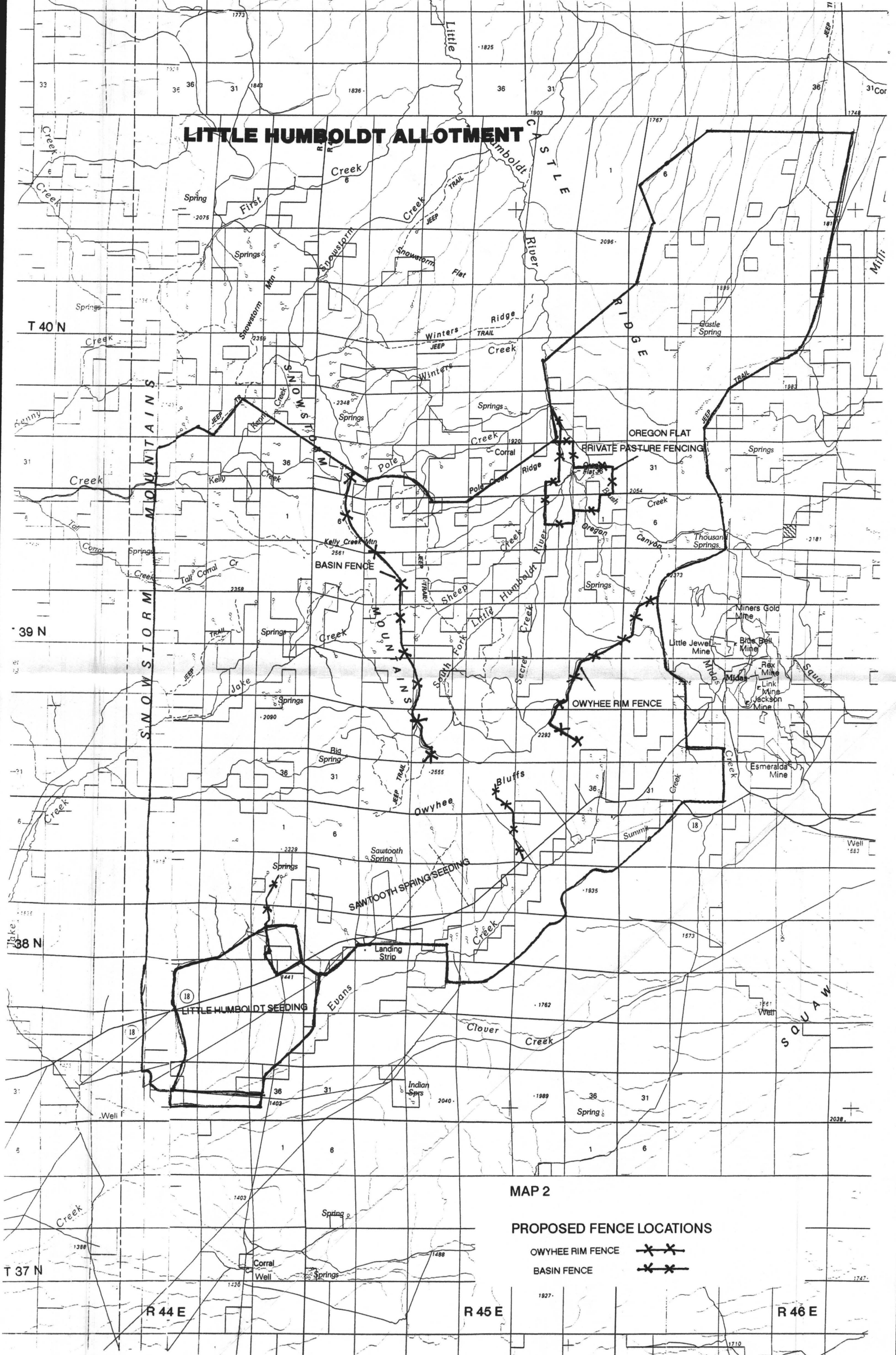
MAP 1

PROPOSED FENCE LOCATION

JAKES CREEK BOUNDARY FENCE \* \* \*



HUMBOLDT CO  
ELIHO CO

# LITTLE HUMBOLDT ALLOTMENT



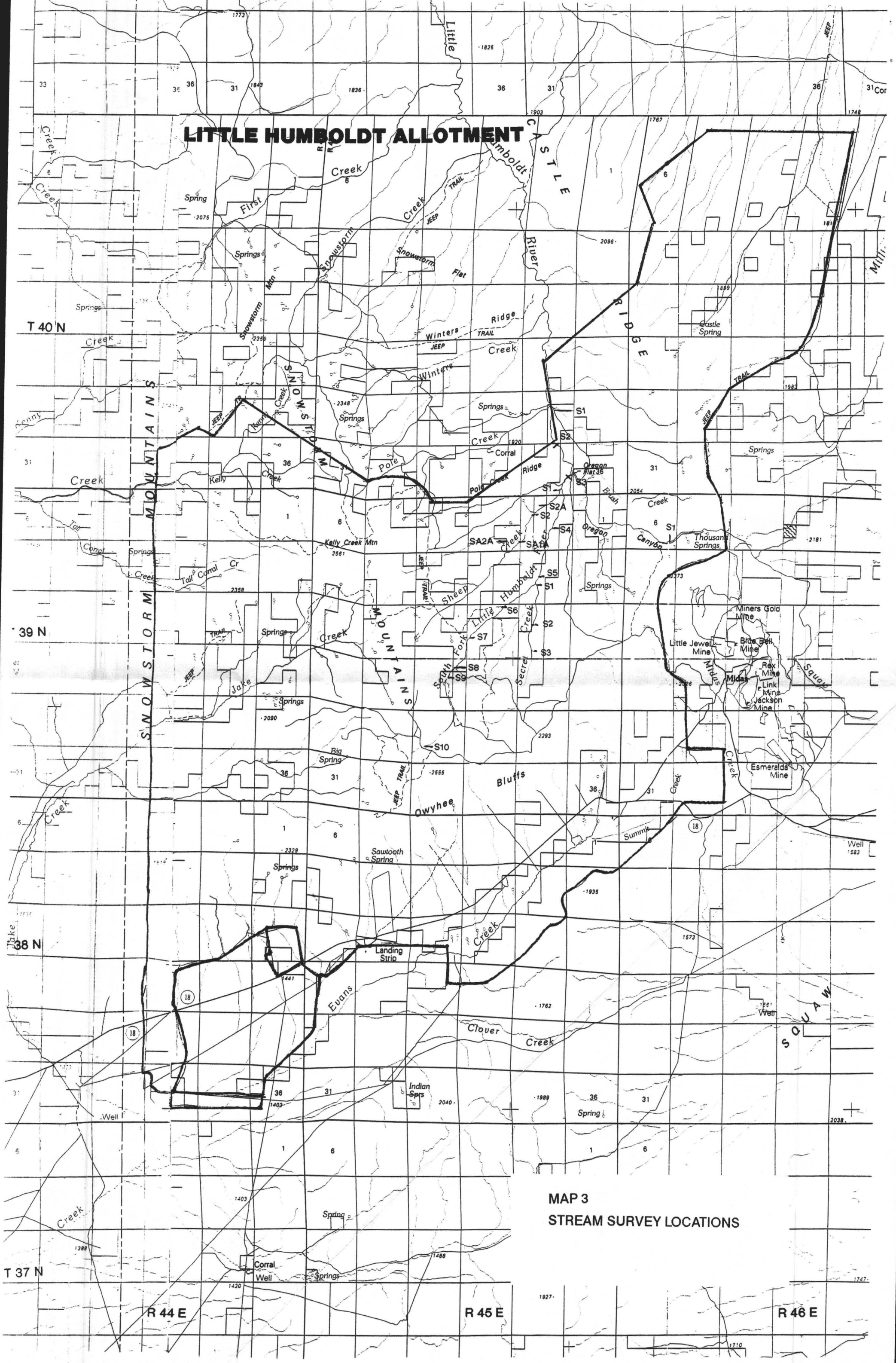
MAP 2

## PROPOSED FENCE LOCATIONS

- OWYHEE RIM FENCE 
- BASIN FENCE 



# LITTLE HUMBOLDT ALLOTMENT



MAP 3  
STREAM SURVEY LOCATIONS

## APPENDIX I - MONITORING

### *Study Site Locations (refer to map 3)*

Monitoring will be at the following study sites ("critical areas" as defined by Interagency Technical Reference 1996)<sup>4</sup>:

STREAM*	BLM STREAM SURVEY STATION	LAND STATUS
South Fork Little Humboldt River	S-5	Private
South Fork Little Humboldt River	S-6	Private
Sheep Creek	S-2	Public
Sheep Creek	S-2A	Private
Sheep Creek	S-3	Private
Secret Creek	S-1	Private
Secret Creek	S-2	Private

\*Although Pole Creek supports LCT and occurs within the Little Humboldt, it was not included as monitoring site for the following reasons: the majority of the stream occurs in the Bullhead Allotment; no information is available on current conditions; and, actions resulting in improvement of other LCT streams in the allotment are expected to benefit this stream as well.

**Rationale:** These sites are accessible to livestock and provide a basis for evaluating livestock impacts to LCT streams. In addition, stream survey data and photographs spanning more than 20 years exist for all these sites with the exception of S-3 and S-2 on Sheep Creek. Only data for 1999 are available for these two stations.

### *Monitoring Methods*

#### **Riparian Herbaceous**

A height-weight relationship for grazed and ungrazed herbaceous riparian vegetation will be established using methods described in the Interagency Technical Reference (1996) and as modified by BLM (1999).

A height-weight relationship for overall herbaceous riparian vegetation will be developed from ungrazed vegetation present in cages and/or exclosures. Stubble heights of grazed vegetation

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<sup>4</sup>The 1996 Interagency Technical Reference-Utilization Studies and Residual Measurements defines critical areas as areas that should be evaluated separately from the remainder of the management unit because they contain special or unique values. Critical areas could include fragile watersheds, sage grouse nesting grounds, riparian areas, areas of critical environmental concern, etc.

will be recorded and converted to a percent utilization based on the height-weight relationship developed on site. Data will be collected along transects established at study sites. The transects will parallel the stream channel and will be established in the active floodplain or "floodprone area" (as defined by Rosgen 1996). In general, the transects will be located within five feet of the shoreline (bankful channel edge) as described by Platts (1990). A minimum of 25 hits will be recorded for each transect.

Data will be averaged for transects and for study sites for each stream.

#### **Woody Riparian Herbaceous (aspen and willow)**

Utilization estimates of woody riparian vegetation will be made for grazed areas based on comparisons to ungrazed plants using the key forage plant method (Nevada Range Studies Task Group 1984) and as modified by BLM (1999).

The current year's average ungrazed leader growth for aspen and willow will be determined from plants in cages and/or exclosures. Utilization of plants in grazed areas will then be estimated based on comparisons to ungrazed plants. Data will be collected along transects established at study sites. Only those aspen and willow which are available to livestock and which are located in or adjacent to the active floodplain will be sampled. A minimum of 25 hits will be recorded for each transect.

Data will be averaged for transects and for study sites for each stream.