



# United States Department of the Interior



## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Eagle Lake Field Office  
2950 Riverside Drive  
Susanville, CA 96130  
[www.ca.blm.gov/eaglelake](http://www.ca.blm.gov/eaglelake)

8-24-09  
AUG 24 2009

In Reply Refer To:  
4100 P  
CA 350

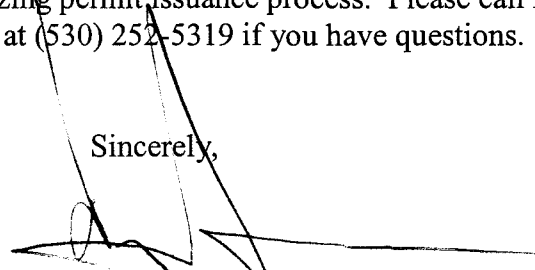
Dear Interested Party,

The Eagle Lake Field Office has fully processed two grazing permits associated with grazing allotments within the field office boundary in the Honey Lake Beckwourth Planning Unit. A scoping letter was sent to you on March 2008, providing a description of the proposed actions with a request for comments and issues. Comments received during scoping were used in determining the issues needing analysis.

A Environmental Assessment (EA#CA-350-2008-08) was written evaluating the issuance of two grazing permits for the West Fort Sage Allotment. Enclosed is a copy of the Proposed Grazing Decisions, NEPA Documents, Evaluation and Determination of Land Health Standard for each allotment and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

Thank you for participating in the grazing permit issuance process. Please call Rangeland Management Specialist Patrick Farris at (530) 252-5319 if you have questions.

Sincerely,



Dayne Barron  
Field Manager

Enclosures – 8

1. Proposed Grazing Decision Grazing Permit Issuance for the West Fort Sage Allotment.
2. EA # CA-350-2008-008 West Fort Sage
3. Evaluation and Determination of Range Land Health for the West Fort Sage Allotment
4. Appendix A (Standard Terms and Conditions)
5. Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the West Fort Sage Allotment



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AUG 24 2009

Dear Permittee and Interested Parties,

I have to apologize for forgetting to add the cover letter for an Environmental Assessment (EA) written for the West Fort Sage Allotment (EA#CA-350-2008-08), which was mailed out a few days ago. The West Fort Sage Allotment is located near Doyle along the western slopes of the Fort Sage Mountains. I hope you have received all of the NEPA documents which were sent out regarding this permit renewal. Again if you have any questions you may contact Pat Farris at 530-252-5319, again my apologies for this mistake.

Sincerely,

Patrick Farris

Rangeland Management Specialist

Enclosed:

Cover letter

**Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)  
For  
EA # CA-350-2008-08  
West Fort Sage Allotment (00511)  
10 Year Grazing Authorization**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has conducted an environmental assessment (EA No.CA-350-2008-08) analyzing the impacts of authorizing grazing on the West Fort Sage Allotment (#00511) for a period of 10 years.

Based upon review of the EA and its associated administrative record, I have selected Alternative A (Proposed Action): Authorize Grazing on the West Fort Sage Allotment: with Potential Changes in Water Management. The selected alternative would most effectively meet the purpose and need of the action, as compared to the other two alternatives analyzed.

**PROPOSED ACTION**

Alternative A is described in Section 2.1.1 of the attached EA, page 12, and consists of authorizing grazing on the West Fort Sage Allotment for the next 10 years. Grazing would be authorized on the allotment under the current Mandatory Terms and Conditions:

**Table 1.** Current Mandatory Terms and Conditions on the West Fort Sage Allotment

Allotment		Livestock		Grazing Period		% P.L. Use	Type Use	AUMs		
No.	Name	No.	Class	Begin	End			Active	Suspended	Total
00511	Barnum	51	Cattle	04/01	08/31	100	Active	257	0	257
00511	Marx	54	Cattle	04/16	08/31	100	Active	245	0	245

**Additional Terms and Conditions**

1. The authorized officer is requiring that an Actual Use Report (Form 4130-5) be submitted within 15 days after completing your annual grazing use.
2. Livestock numbers identified in the term grazing permit are a function of seasons of use and permitted use for each allotment. Deviations from those livestock numbers and seasons of use may be authorized on an annual basis, where such deviations would not prevent attainment of the multiple-use objectives for the allotment. Changes in permitted use must be documented in the annual grazing application or modification of the annual application.
3. The season of use, livestock numbers, and AUMs shall remain unchanged from the current permitted use.

4. If water needs to be hauled for cattle use within BLM lands for any reason, the proposed site will have to be cleared with the BLM resource staff along with the proper NEPA document.
5. After completion of the 2009 spring maintenance projects, a new Cooperative Range Improvement Agreement will be implemented addressing these projects. Stipulations will be added to ensure that maintenance of these water developments is undertaken by the permittees. If these stipulations are not met, the BLM would implement restrictions on season of use.

#### **PLAN CONFORMANCE AND CONSISTENCY:**

The proposed action is in conformance with the Northeastern California and Northwestern Nevada Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing signed July 2000, and further amended by the Eagle Field Office Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision, April 2008.

The proposed action would occur in an area identified as available for livestock grazing in the RMP. Although it is not specifically provided it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decisions (objectives, terms, and conditions) and, if applicable, implementation plan decisions:

1. "Authorize 52,250 AUMs of livestock use annually."
2. "Maintain livestock grazing within 54 allotments."
3. Grazing use on the West Fort Sage Allotment is specified in Appendix J on page A-103 Volume 2 of The Eagle Lake Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision, April 2008.

The status of the standards was documented in the "Evaluation and Determination of Rangeland Health for the West Fort Sage Allotment (00511) in spring of 2009. It was determined that the Upland Soils Standard is being met for the allotment. The Biodiversity Standard, overall, is also being met for the allotment. It was determined in 2002 that a history of wildfires was a causal factor for the failure of three developed spring projects and for the biotic integrity rating as a moderate departure from rangeland health in four of the upland health sites from the 2002 Upland Health Assessments.

The Summit Pasture of the allotment has not had any official documentation of designated upland health sites as discussed in the Determination of Rangeland Health document. Current observations have revealed that the pasture is all the standards for upland health with concerns within spring developments. These issues were and are currently being resolved with maintenance projects schedule for the spring developments in summer of 2009 with projected finish date of August 31, 2009. It was my determination that livestock grazing is not a causal factor in failing to achieve the Biodiversity Standard and Riparian Functional Assessment Standard and that a change in livestock management would not affect the current or future status of the standard.

## ALTERNATIVES

In addition to the selected alternative, the EA considered two other alternatives. Alternative B is the "No Action" alternative, and would authorize grazing on the West Fort Sage Allotment under the current terms and conditions (described in Alternative A -Table 2), but would abandon the Doyle Well if it reveals to be non-functional and would abandon all water haul sites for the Seeded Pasture. Alternative C (No Livestock Grazing) would not authorize this grazing permit, or any livestock grazing on the West Fort Sage Allotment.

### FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT DETERMINATION:

Based upon a review of the attached EA and the supporting documents, I have determined that Alternative A (Proposed Action), which I have selected, is not a major federal action and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. For this reason no environmental impact statement needs to be prepared. This finding is based on the following rationale and discussion of context and intensity of the action.

#### **Rationale**

Following is the rationale for why the identified issues discussed in the EA will not be significantly affected or affect the action.

Upland Soil Standard: It has been determined that the Upland Soil Standard is being met on the allotment under current livestock grazing. The proposed action does not change the current allowable use on the allotment.

Biodiversity Standard: It has been determined that the Biodiversity Standard is being met within the allotment overall. The 2008 Land Health Determination for the allotment found that livestock grazing was not a causal factor for one or more sites bordering on meeting ("moderate") the biotic integrity for land health standards. The cause of average attainment of the standard within four of the UH assessments was associated with the effects of past wildfires, the increase of invasive annual plants within the burned areas, and past BLM seeding projects post wildfire. The vegetative composition within the Seeded Pasture of the allotment has likely passed an ecological threshold from which the natural vegetative composition will not fully return to its natural state. Based on the current rating of standards, and the amount of livestock use authorized, there would not be a significant impact on Biodiversity under proposed livestock use.

Monitoring, including utilization studies, will be implemented within the allotment. There has not been enough utilization from cattle in the recent past to warrant any type of grazing evaluation. With new permittees in the area, along with wild horse use and any unknown use which may occur, monitoring will aid in understanding how livestock and horses tend to graze the allotment.

Cultural Resources: One site has been documented as having been impacted by grazing. A plan has been developed in consultation with Susanville Indian Rancheria to eliminate livestock grazing in the main area of concentration for the site. If the impacts continue or increase,

additional measures will be implemented to reduce or eliminate the damage being done by livestock or wild horses. At the same time, additional monitoring and inventory will be conducted in accordance with the 2007 Protocol Agreement and the National Historic Preservation (NHPA) Section 106 compliance requirements for range improvement procedures.

Riparian Functional Standard:

Three of the spring sources (riparian/wetland sites) were assessed as not meeting PFC, but on an upward trend. Wildfires, livestock, and wild horse use all contributed to the assessment conclusions. It was determined that wildfires burned the enclosure fences, water troughs, and piping. This allowed livestock and wild horse access to these wetland sites which eventually impacted each site. Alternative A is designed to improve and protect these springs (and associated riparian and wetland communities), by preventing ground disturbance within the spring sources and riparian areas. Three wetland springs (lentic), have recently been fenced off to exclude all grazing. This will result in more diverse and vigorous riparian/wetland plant communities, and a stabilization of the soils in these areas. Forage and cover are also predicted to increase, resulting in improved habitat for wildlife.

**Context:** The project area is an action involving one grazing allotments with approximately 9,000 acres of BLM administered land. These lands do not have international, national, regional, or state-wide importance, but on a local level they are important to the local economy and public land health.

**Intensity:** The following discussion is based on the relevant factors that should be considered in evaluating intensity as described in 40 CFR 1508.27:

**1. Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that on balance the effect will be beneficial.**

There are no expected significant impacts from implementation of the proposed action. Livestock grazing will continue as it has in the past with an emphasis on pasture rotation and managing grazing to improve land health. Livestock numbers and AUMs will remain the same within allotment. Current livestock numbers and season of use will have little impact to plant vigor, the ability to produce seeds or seedlings, and plant production are expected to continue to improve. Upland vegetation improvement will help to reduce the spread of invasive annuals from the current amounts.

I have determined that none of the direct, indirect or cumulative impacts associated with Alternative A, are significant individually or combined.

**2. The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety.**

The proposed action is located within a rural setting. Grazing at similar levels, described in alternative A, has occurred in the same location for over 100 years. Since grazing has been authorized within the affected area there have been no instances where public health or safety has been affected.

**3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.**

A discussion of these unique geographic areas and anticipated environmental issues can be found in section 1.6.2 page 10-11 of the attached EA. This area is known for its cultural resources, wildlife habitat, and recreational use. Current activities are maintaining and improving unique areas.

**4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.**

The proposed action was scoped with all known interested and affected parties as well as cooperating agencies and governments. After review of the comments received from scoping and throughout the NEPA process, I have determined that the effects described in the EA are not highly controversial.

**5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.**

Grazing is a common action authorized by the BLM, the effects from which have been thoroughly analyzed in NEPA documents and scientific publications. The analysis provided in the attached EA does not indicate that this action would involve any unique or unknown risks.

**6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.**

The authorization of grazing through the issuance of a grazing lease is not precedent setting. Grazing has been authorized on the allotment under the same active use as provided for in the selected alternative for over 20 years.

**7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts – which include connected actions regardless of land ownership.**

There are no related or connected actions associated with the selected Alternative A which were not analyzed or considered cumulative impacts.

**8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.**

Portions of the West Fort Sage Allotment were inventoried (SU2-2008-44) on May 27, 2008 in accordance with the procedures outlined in the 2007 *Supplemental Procedures for Livestock Grazing Permit/Lease Renewals: A Cultural Resources Amendment to the State Protocol Agreement between California Bureau of Land Management and the California State Historic Preservation Officer*. Additional survey within the allotment occurred on August 18, 19, 25, and 26, 2008 (SU2-2008-49). A contracted survey that crosses through the allotment occurred September 5 to October 5, 2007 and from February 15 to March 5, 2008 (SU2-2007-20).

There are six previously identified cultural resource sites located within the West Fort Sage Allotment. One site has been documented as having been impacted by grazing. A plan has been developed to eliminate livestock grazing with the main concentration area of the site. The site will be monitored for any additional impacts due to grazing. If the impacts continue or increase, additional measures will be implemented to reduce or eliminate the damage being done by livestock or wild horses. At the same time, additional monitoring and inventory will be conducted in accordance with the 2007 Protocol Agreement and the National Historic Preservation (NHPA) Section 106 compliance requirements for range improvement procedures.

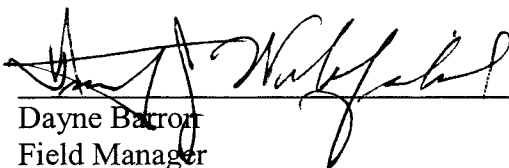
I have determined that the effects described in the EA are not highly controversial but further inventory will continue to occur. If sites which have previously been impacted by livestock and wild horses continue to be impacted, action will be administered to protect the sites.

**9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.**

There are no threatened or endangered plants or animals known to occur within the project or the surrounding area.

**10. Whether the action threatens a violation of a federal, state, local regulation or policy imposed for the protection of the environment, where nonfederal requirements are consistent with federal requirements.**

The action does not violate any known federal, state, or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

*gar*   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dayne Barron  
Field Manager

8/20/09  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date





# United States Department of the Interior



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In Reply Refer To:  
4160P  
(CA-350) P

August 20, 2009

Certified No. 7007 2560 0001 9164 4000  
Return Receipt Requested  
Lambert and Marcia Barnum  
PO Box 1071  
San Andreas, CA 95249

15 days

Certified No. 7007 2560 0001 9164 4017  
Charles H. Marx  
5200 Churn Creek Rd.  
Redding, CA 96002

## NOTICE OF PROPOSED DECISION

### GRAZING LEASE ISSUANCE FOR THE WEST FORT SAGE ALLOTMENT

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Barnum:

#### INTRODUCTION

This proposed decision authorizes the issuance of a 10 year grazing permit to Lambert and Marcia Barnum authorizing use on the West Fort Sage Allotment (00511). The allotment encompasses approximately 9,000 acres of public land. The allotment is located approximately 2.5 miles east of Doyle, CA on the western slopes of the Fort Sage Mountains.

The proposed decision authorizes a 10 year grazing permit to Lambert and Marcia Barnum for the West Fort Sage Allotment, which expired and was renewed under the Appropriations Act in 2004. The current grazing permit authorizes a total of 502 animal unit months (AUMs) from 04/01 – 08/31. You are authorized to graze 257 AUMs from 04/01 – 08/31 under your current permit with the remaining AUMs held by the other permittee.

#### BACKGROUND

I considered the following information as it affects my proposed decision:

## A. Grazing Permit & Preference

You continue to hold grazing preference for the West Fort Sage Allotment through ownership of the base property. Your current grazing permit and preference was issued to you in April 2004 in accordance with Sec. 325, Title III, H.R. 2691, Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2004 (P.L. 108-108), which was enacted on November 10, 2003. In accordance with Public Law 108-108 the terms and conditions contained in the expired permit were incorporated into the permit until such time as the permit could be fully processed in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, at which time the permit may be canceled, suspended, or modified, in whole or in part, to meet the requirements of such applicable laws and regulations.

Lambert and Marcia Barnum continues to hold the grazing permit for the West Fort Sage Allotment which will expire 2009. A current Environmental Assessment (EA # CA-350-2008-08) was initiated and impacts were analyzed prior to authorizing grazing on the West Fort Sage Allotment (#00511) for the next 10 years.

No changes were made to the current management or authorized livestock numbers, season of use, or active animal unit months (AUMs). The current mandatory terms and conditions shall remain the same as they have in the past for your permit with updated "Additional Terms and Conditions."

**Table 1: Current Authorized Livestock Use**

Allotment		Livestock		Grazing Period		% P.L. Use	Type Use	AUMs		
No.	Name	No.	Class	Begin	End			Active	Suspended	Total
00511	West Fort Sage	51	Cattle	04/01	08/31	100	Active	257	0	257

### **Additional Terms and Conditions**

1. The authorized officer is requiring that an Actual Use Report (Form 4130-5) be submitted within 15 days after completing your annual grazing use.
2. Livestock numbers identified in the term grazing permit are a function of seasons of use and permitted use for each allotment. Deviations from those livestock numbers and seasons of use may be authorized on an annual basis, where such deviations would not prevent attainment of the multiple-use objectives for the allotment. Changes in permitted use must be documented in the annual grazing application or modification of the annual application.
3. The season of use, livestock numbers, and AUMs shall remain unchanged from the current permitted use.
4. If water needs to be hauled for cattle use within BLM lands for any reason, the proposed site will have to be cleared with the BLM resource staff along with the proper NEPA document.
5. After completion of the 2009 spring maintenance projects, a new Cooperative Range Improvement Agreement will be implemented addressing these projects. Stipulations will be added to ensure that maintenance of these water developments is undertaken by the permittees. If these stipulations are not met, the BLM would implement restrictions on season of use.

## **B. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Compliance**

An external scoping was sent to interested publics/groups and cooperative agencies/governments in March 2008. One comment letter was received from an interested group expressing concerns. Based on review and analysis of the received comments/concerns, a BLM interdisciplinary team determined that the concerns were not issues needing further examination in an Environmental Analysis. These concerns are addressed in (EA) (CA-350-2008-08) under the Exceptions Review Table in question #3.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) (CA-350-2008-08) was completed in August 2009, which analyzed issuing a 10 year grazing permit for the West Fort Sage Allotment (see proposed action in the EA). It was determined that proposed action (issuing a grazing permit) was the proper NEPA document for this permit renewal due to comments received with wildlife and special status plant concerns. As well as to address the water and spring issues/concerns with the existing spring developments.

Renewal of the West Fort Sage Allotment grazing permit was not categorically excluded (CX) from detailed analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act as identified in 516 DM 11.9(D) (11). This was the decision due to the concerns from public and permittees on water sources within the allotment.

## **C. Land Health Standards**

The Upland Health Evaluation and Determination was completed in June 2009. Based on the evaluation a determination was made that all the standards are being met on the allotment. For a detailed discussion, see the Evaluation and Determination for the North Fort Sage Allotment.

### **Field Managers Proposed Decision**

Therefore, it is my proposed decision to authorize you a 10 year grazing permit for the West Fort Sage Allotment under the following grazing preference and terms and conditions:

**Table 2. Mandatory Terms and Conditions**

Allotment		Livestock		Grazing Period		% P.L. Use	Type Use	AUMs		
No.	Name	No.	Class	Begin	End			Active	Suspended	Total
00511	West Fort Sage	51	Cattle	04/01	08/31	100	Active	257	0	257

### **Additional Terms and Conditions:**

1. The authorized officer is requiring that an Actual Use Report (Form 4130-5) be submitted within 15 days after completing your annual grazing use.
2. Livestock numbers identified in the term grazing permit are a function of seasons of use and permitted use for each allotment. Deviations from those livestock numbers and seasons of use may be authorized on an annual basis, where such deviations would not prevent attainment of the multiple-use objectives for the allotment. Changes in permitted use must be documented in the annual grazing application or modification of the annual application.
3. The season of use, livestock numbers, and AUMs shall remain unchanged from the current permitted use.

4. If water needs to be hauled for cattle use within BLM lands for any reason, the proposed site will have to be cleared with the BLM resource staff along with the proper NEPA document.
5. After completion of the 2009 spring maintenance projects, a new Cooperative Range Improvement Agreement will be implemented addressing these projects. Stipulations will be added to ensure that maintenance of these water developments is undertaken by the permittees. If these stipulations are not met, the BLM would implement restrictions on season of use.

### **Rationale**

My decision to issue a 10-year grazing permit Charles H. Marx is based upon:

- The action qualifies as a EA as documented in EA (CA-350-2008-08)
- The action is in compliance with the existing Eagle Lake Field Office RMP, April 2008.
- You currently hold grazing preference for a grazing permit on the West Fort Sage Allotment.

### **Authority**

The authority for this decision is contained in Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 4100, which states in pertinent part:

§4110.2-2(b): "The permitted use specified shall attach to the base property supporting the grazing permit or grazing lease".

§4110.2-3(b): "If base property is sold or leased, the transferee shall within 90 days of the date of sale or lease file with the authorized officer a properly executed transfer application showing the base property and the amount of permitted use being transferred in animal unit months".

§4130.3: "Livestock grazing permits and leases shall contain terms and conditions determined by the authorized officer to be appropriate to achieve the management and resource condition objectives for the public lands and other lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management, and ensure conformance with the provisions of subpart §4180 of this part."

§4130.3-1(a): "The authorized officer shall specify the kind and number of livestock, the period(s) of use, the allotment(s) to be used, and the amount of use, in animal unit months, for every grazing permit or lease. The authorized livestock grazing use shall not exceed the livestock carrying capacity of the allotment."

§4130.3-2: "The authorized officer may specify in grazing permits or leases other terms and conditions which will assist in achieving management objectives provide for proper range management or assist in the orderly administration of the public rangelands."

§4160.1 (a) "Proposed decisions shall be served on any affected applicant, permittee or lessee, and any agent and lien holder of record, who is affected by the proposed actions, terms or conditions, or modifications relating to applications, permits and agreements (including range improvement permits) or leases, by certified mail or personal delivery. Copies of proposed decisions shall also be sent to the interested public."

### **Rights of Protest and/or Appeal**

You may protest this proposed grazing decision within 15 days of receipt. The BLM will not consider any protests filed after 15 days of receipt. Your protest may be in person or in writing and filed with the Eagle Lake Field Office, 2950 Riverside Drive, Susanville, CA 96130. Your protest should specify clearly and concisely why you think this proposed decision is in error.

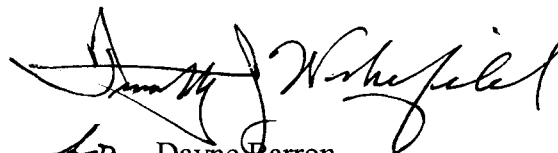
In the absence of a protest within the time allowed, the above proposed decision shall constitute my final decision without further notice. If you, or other individuals, believe you are adversely affected by this final decision, you may file an appeal of this grazing decision for the purpose of a hearing before an administrative law judge in accordance with 43 CFR Part 4.21, 4.470, and subpart 4160.4. You may also petition for a stay of the decision in accordance with 43 CFR Part 4.21, pending final determination on appeal. The appeal and petition for stay must be filed within 30 days following receipt of the final decision.

The appeal shall state the reasons, clearly and concisely, why you think the final decision is in error. All reasons for error not stated in the appeal shall be considered as waived and may not be presented at the hearing. Any failure to meet this thirty (30) day appeal deadline will bar you from challenging this decision. If you wish to petition for stay you must include the stay petition with your appeal to the above BLM office. You have the burden of proof to demonstrate why a stay should be granted.

**Standards for Obtaining a Stay:** In accordance with 43 CFR 4.21(b) (1), a petition for stay, if filed, 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.

Sincerely,

  
for Dayne Barron  
Eagle Lake Field Manager

Cc: See attached list.

Attachment: Appendix A Standard Terms and Conditions

## Appendix A

### Standard Terms and Conditions

1. Grazing permit or lease terms and conditions and the fees charged for grazing use are established in accordance with the provisions of the grazing regulations now or hereafter approved by the Secretary of the Interior.
2. They are subject to cancellation, in whole or in part, at any time because of:
  - a. Noncompliance by the permittee/lessee with rules and regulations.
  - b. Loss of control by the permittee/lessee of all or a part of the property upon which it is based
  - c. A transfer of grazing preference by the permittee/lessee to another party.
  - d. a decrease in the lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management within the allotment(s) described.
  - e. Repeated willful unauthorized grazing use.
3. They are subject to the terms and conditions of allotment management plans if such plans have been prepared. Allotment management plans **MUST** be incorporated in permits or leases when completed.
4. Those holding permits or leases **MUST** own or control and be responsible for the management of livestock authorized to graze.
5. The authorized officer may require counting and/or additional or special marking or tagging of the livestock authorized to graze.
6. The permittee's/lessee's grazing case file is available for public inspection as required by the Freedom of Information Act.
7. Grazing permits or leases are subject to the nondiscrimination clauses set forth in Executive Order 11246 of September 24, 1964, as amended. A copy of this order may be obtained from the authorized officer.
8. Livestock grazing use that is different from that authorized by a permit or lease **MUST** be applied for prior to the grazing period and **MUST** be filed with and approved by the authorized officer before grazing use can be made.
9. Billing notices are issued which specify fees due. Billing notices, when paid, become a part of the grazing permit or lease. Grazing use cannot be authorized during any period of delinquency in the payment of amounts due, including settlement for unauthorized use.
10. Grazing fee payments are due on the date specified on the billing notice and **MUST** be paid in full within 15 days of the due date, except as otherwise provided in the grazing permit or lease. If payment is not made within that time frame, a late fee (the greater of \$25 or 10 percent of the amount owed but not more than \$250) will be assessed.
11. No Member of, or Delegate to, Congress or Resident Commissioner, after his/her election of appointment, or either before or after he/she has qualified, and during his/her continuance in office, and no officer, agent, or employee of the Department of the Interior, other than members of Advisory committees appointed in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.1) and Sections 309 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) shall be admitted to any share or part in a permit or lease, or derive any benefit to arise there from; and the provision of Section 3741 Revised Statute (41 U.S.C. 22), 18 U.S.C. Sections 431-433, and 43 CFR Part 7, enter into and form a part of a grazing permit or lease, so far as the same may be applicable.

**CC:**

Certified No. 7007 2560 0001 9164 3966  
Nick Alosi  
288 Bartmess Blvd  
Sparks, NV 89436

Certified No. 7007 2560 0001 9164 3959  
Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses  
C/O Catherine Barcomb  
885 Eastlake Boulevard  
Carson City, Nevada 89704

Certified No. 7007 2560 0001 9164 3942  
Nevada Cattlemen's Association  
C/O Meghan Wereley  
P.O. Box 310  
Elko, Nevada 89803-0310

Certified No. 7007 2560 0001 9164 3935  
Donald J Armentrout, CWB  
P.O. Box 1764  
Susanville, CA 96130-1764

Certified No. 7007 2560 0001 9164 3928  
Western Watersheds Project  
C/O Dr. Michael J. Connor  
P.O. Box 2364  
Reseda, CA 91337-2364

Certified No. 7007 2560 0001 9164 3911  
David Lile  
Lassen County Farm Advisor  
707 Nevada St  
Susanville, CA 96130

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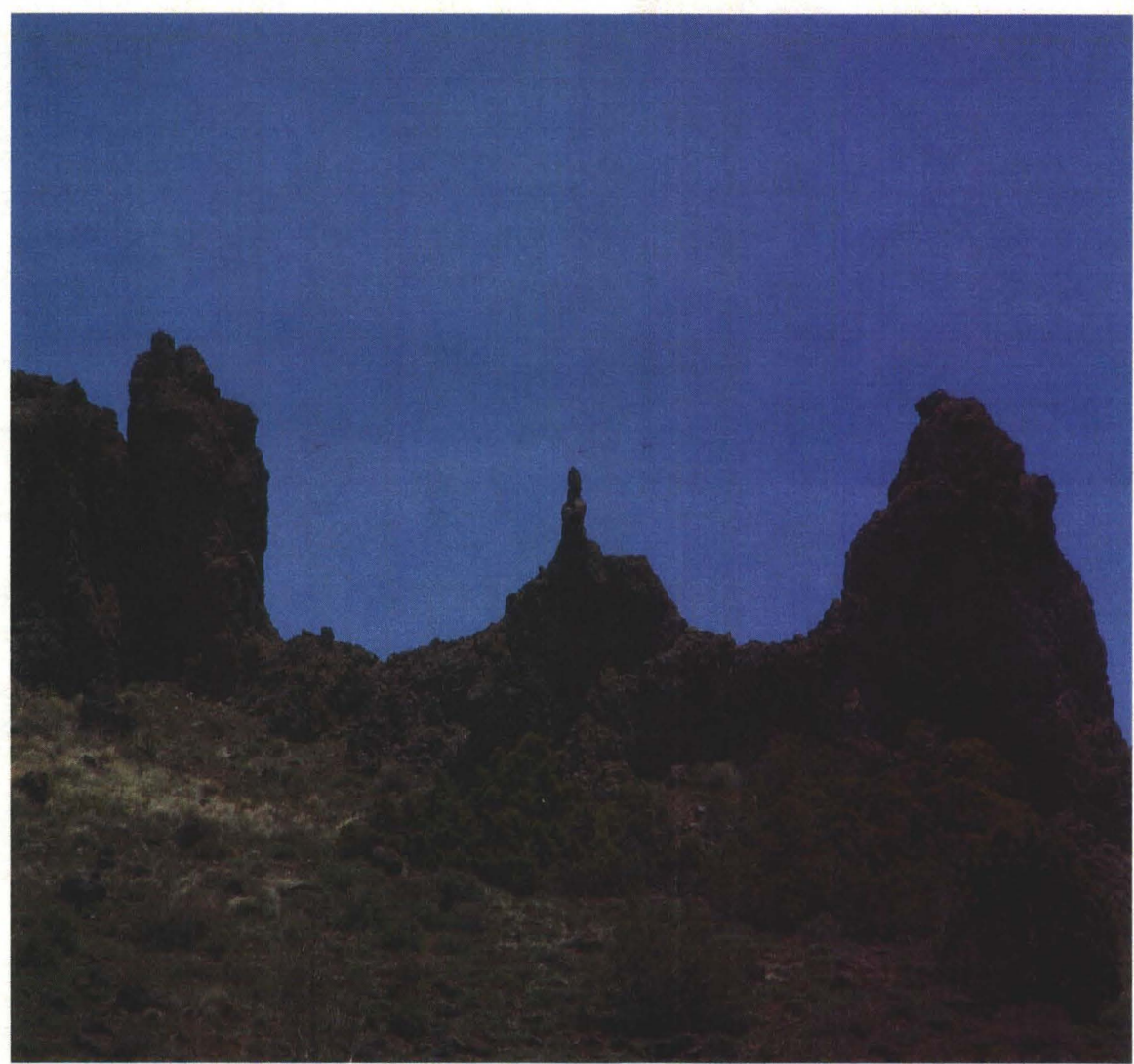


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12/15/2008

BUREAU OF  
LAND  
MANAGEMENT

DETERMINATION OF RANGELAND HEALTH FOR  
THE **WEST FORT SAGE** GRAZING ALLOTMENT



Rangeland Health Evaluation and Determination | Patrick Farris

## Determination and Evaluation of Rangeland Health for the West Fort Sage Allotment (00511)

### Allotment Information

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Eagle Lake Field Office manages approximately 9,000 acres of public land within the West Fort Sage Allotment, located about 2.5 miles east of Doyle, CA on the western slopes of the Fort Sage Mountains (see Figure 1).

Livestock grazing is authorized on the West Fort Sage Allotment under Section 3 of the Taylor Grazing Act, and therefore is authorized under a grazing permit and not a lease. There are currently two grazing permits attached to the allotment grazed under the following mandatory terms and conditions:

**Table 1.** Current Mandatory Terms and Conditions on the West Fort Sage Allotment

Allotment		Livestock		Grazing Period		% P.L. Use	Type Use	AUMs		
No.	Name	No.	Class	Begin	End			Active	Suspended	Total
00511	Barnum	51	Cattle	04/01	08/31	100	Active	257	0	257
00511	Marx	54	Cattle	04/16	08/31	100	Active	245	0	245

The West Fort Sage Allotment is surrounded by Eagle Lake Field Office managed lands to the north and west, Carson City BLM lands to the east, private and state lands to the west, and the town of Doyle also to the west (see Figure 2). The West Fort Sage Allotment, along with North and South Fort Sage Allotments, run north to south along the western slopes of the Fort Sage Mountains within the Honey Lake-Beckwourth Planning Unit. The Fort Sage Mountains consist of very steep and rugged terrain with elevations up to 8,000 ft. In the higher elevations steep slopes and rock canyons “naturally” keep cattle fenced off from one allotment to the next, therefore allotment boundaries are mostly separated by topography. The main fence line lies on the western slopes of all three allotments to keep livestock, wild horses, and OHV use off of private lands.

### Current Grazing Management

The West Fort Sage Allotment consists of three pastures; the Seeded, Remainder, and Summit Pastures. The Seeded and Remainder pastures are separated by a drift fence near Indian Springs, while the Remainder and Summit pastures are separated by topography (see Figure 2). The construction of two fences that were designed for other purposes (such as fire rehabilitation and off-highway vehicle (OHV) management) have helped to alleviate cattle management issues between private land owners and BLM within the allotment. The fences were completed in 2007 and were built along a portion of the west and southern boundaries of the allotment.

The two fences (see Figure 2) were built as part of the Fort Sage OHV Area Trespass Abatement Project (EA# CA-350-2003-15) and the Fort Sage Fire Emergency Stabilization Plan (EA# CA-350-2006-43). The purpose of the fence built in 2003 was to keep OHV users off of private lands. The fence was built along the western border of the West Fort Sage Allotment, which also serves as the boundary fence between West and South Fort Sage Allotments. The 2006 fence

was built due to a wildfire earlier that year, and was built along the southwest boundary of the allotment (see Figure 2). This fence kept OHV users and cattle off of the burned area. The eastern portion of the allotment could still have been grazed, but the new rehab fence cut off the only water source for the allotment (Steffan Springs) causing the permittees to take non-use during the 2002, 2003, 2007, and 2008 grazing seasons.

### *Pastures*

The allotment has seen minimal use by cattle over the last 10 years due to wildfires and grazing authorization transfers (Table 2). The Fish Fire in 2001 burned nearly the entire allotment. Turnout was not allowed on the Remainder and Summit Pastures for two years, but cattle were allowed to graze the Seeded Pasture during the early spring months.

**Table 2.** History of Actual Livestock Grazing Use

Year	Total AUMs	AUMs Used	Season Of Use	Comments
1998	502	177	4/01 – 08/31	All three pastures used
1999	502	237	4/01 – 08/31	Seeded and Summit
2000	502	233	4/01 – 08/31	Seeded and Summit
2001	502	202	4/01 – 08/31	Seeded and Summit
2002	502	55	4/01 – 08/31	Seeded Pasture -Spring Use- due to Fish Fire
2003	502	92	4/01 – 08/31	Seeded Pasture -Spring Use- due to Fish Fire
2004	502	234	4/01 – 08/31	Seeded and Summit
2005	502	0	4/01 – 08/31	Non-use
2006	502	69	4/01 – 08/31	Summit used only, dry year
2007	502	250	4/01 – 08/31	All three pastures used
2008	502	478	4/01 – 08/31	All three pastures used

The Seeded Pasture is mainly used for early spring turnout when water is available. In the past cattle have watered at Indian Springs and drifted between Seeded and Remainder pastures. During dry years, permittees have delayed turnout to rest the Seeded Pasture due to lack of water within the pasture.

The Remainder Pasture is used for early-late spring and early summer turnout. The turn-out date depends on the type of winter and spring precipitation. This pasture holds water longer than the Seeded Pasture. Cattle can water at Indian Springs, as well as in drainages from spring runoff down from the Summit pasture. This pasture may be used before the Seeded Pasture due to water availability.

The Summit Pasture is not separated by any type of fencing from either direction. It is entirely separated topographically from all origins making access very difficult. There is only one off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail, which is accessible by horseback or by OHVs. Permittees use this pasture last in their grazing rotation. The Summit Pasture is laid out very well with four separate watering locations, allowing cattle to scatter throughout the pasture without having to congregate around one water source.

*Note:* The Seeded pasture has seen the most use over the past 10 years. Numbers and season of use were not exceeded in that time. Additionally, cattle grazing in that area during the early

spring months may have kept cheatgrass from dominating the pasture (post-wildfire) and therefore allowing the perennial native grasses to reestablish themselves.

### ***Range Maintenance Projects Implemented/Completed 2009***

The BLM has three spring maintenance projects and one reservoir clean out scheduled for the summer of 2009 (see Figure 3) within the West Fort Sage Allotment (all four projects are within the Summit Pasture). Three springs (Jesus Spring, Pickins Spring CA, and Pickins Spring NV) will be cleaned up by removing old troughs and pipe and replacing these with new troughs and pipe. The spring source in each spring/riparian area will be fenced off from livestock and wild horses. Pickins Reservoir will be cleaned out in late August, or whenever it dries up, at the depth it was when first constructed.

These water projects will improve the overall diversity of the allotment, allowing cattle to spread out throughout the allotment while providing wild horses and wildlife a cleaner source of water, and allow riparian areas in the pasture to recover. All projects described above were damaged by the Fish Fire in 2001. All the enclosure fences were burned down, piping from troughs melted, one riparian area was burned. The next few seasons brought sediment into the reservoir (see pre-work photos in Appendix B. *Evaluation and Determination of Rangeland Health for the West Fort Sage Allotment*). Note: These areas, despite being burned over, have recovered fairly well.

The Seeded Pasture has recovered very well from wildfires and seeding projects conducted by BLM post wildfire. Permittees have grazed the Seeded and Remainder pastures in conjunction with each other over the last 20 years or so. This system works, but the BLM may plan a future project to reconstruct the Doyle Well, located in south western portion of the allotment. The project was cleared for reconstruction by BLM resource staff and specialist in early February 2009 as a future project. If this rejuvenation of the Doyle Well proves to be non-feasible then discussions of temporary water haul sites may be an option. These sites have also been cleared by the BLM as an option for temporary future use by permittees (see Figure 8 for locations). Note: these sites were cleared in the spring of 2009 for this permit renewal. BLM specialist reviewed each site and determined there would not be any impact within the proposed sites).

Indian Spring has also had some issues and concerns with cultural resources. Indian Spring is the primary water source for the Remainder and Seeded Pasture. Permittees have grazed these pastures in conjunction with each other. This has worked out well at times when water is plentiful.

After a recent cultural survey of the spring by a BLM archeologist, cultural resources were found near the spring (see Figure 4). The range staff was then asked for some solutions on how to fence off the archaeological site while allowing cattle and wild horses to get water. Several options were proposed and a temporary solution for the 2009 grazing season was implemented. The major concentration area of the archaeological site was completely fenced to protect it from livestock and OHV use. After the grazing season and OHV use begins to decline, fencing will be extended to an existing trail and the site will be protected from livestock, wild horses, and OHV use.



## Upland Vegetation

The West Fort Sage Allotment encompasses a mixture of native perennial grasses, forbs, shrubs, scattered juniper, and some invasive annual grasses. Perennial grasses dominate the upper elevations along the ridgelines and in canyons, with sagebrush-annual grass dominance in the lowlands. A secondary aspect is antelope bitterbrush mixed with sagebrush, grasses, and juniper, which primarily occurs in upper elevations (i.e. near Jesus Spring and Dry Lake Spring). Pockets of mountain mahogany occur in the higher elevations of the Fort Sage Mountains, above 6,000 feet. The diversity of grasses within this allotment varies from pasture to pasture, as elevation rise from 4,400 to nearly 8,000 ft. This creates a wide variety of vegetation types seen throughout the allotment as it changes from the valley floors to mountain peaks.

There are four major soil types within the allotment. The entire Summit Pasture consists of a warm stony loam soil (*Sumine-Softscrabble-Hutchley* #370). The Remainder Pasture and in upper elevations of the Seeded Pasture consists of a mixture between granitic upland soil and shallow granitic upland soil types (*Glenbrook-Graufels-Rock outcrop* #229 and 230). The other main soil type is also a shallow granitic soil (*Galeppi-Glenbrook complex* #217). Vegetation characteristics within these soils match that of the soil type throughout the allotment, including some very healthy stands of antelope bitterbrush, Wyoming big sagebrush, bluebunch wheatgrass, needle grasses, and various other types of forbs and perennial grasses (Ref. Soil Survey of Susanville Area Parts of Lassen and Plumas Counties, CA). The soil descriptions match that of the allotment upland health assessments completed in 2002.

Wildfires have played a significant role in modifying the vegetation communities within the allotment in the past 10 years. The Fish Fire of 2001 burned within the upper elevations, transforming a once sagebrush dominated area to a perennial grass dominated area. Overall, the entire allotment has burned at least twice in the last 25 years, except for approximately 1,600 acres southwest of Indian Springs along the west fence line. There are no records of this area ever have being burned. This may be due to the fact that there are several homes along close to that area.

## Invasive/Noxious/T&E Plant Species

Cheatgrass is the dominant invasive grass species on the allotment. This annual grass has invaded all areas in the lower elevations where wildfires have occurred. Although cheatgrass is present, it does not dominate the overall allotment. It remains scattered and sparse throughout the upper elevations, and scattered within sagebrush areas on the valley floors.

There are two noxious weed sites along the allotment boundary between the West and South Fort Sage Allotments. The infestation is also close to a privately owned spring (Willow Springs). Each site contains only one plant of perennial pepperweed and scotch thistle, respectively. These sites are being treated and monitored on a yearly basis in order to protect the area from larger infestation.

## T&E Plant Species

There are no known federally listed threatened or endangered plant species within the West Fort Sage Grazing Allotment. BLM Botanist Carolyn Gibbs surveyed areas of this allotment on 5/15/08. No threatened or endangered or BLM Special Status Plants were found. The California

Native Plant Society (CNPS) cites a record of Schoolcraft's wild buckwheat (*Eriogonum microthecum* var. *schoolcraftii*); CNPS list 1B.2, within the Fort Sage Mountains, T 26 N, R 17 E and Sec. 34 NE ¼. This species is found on sandy gravelly soils and is located on the west slope of side hills. However, it is not found within the West Fort Sage Grazing Allotment, although its habitat type is present. As per conversation with Carolyn Gibbs (BLM Botanist) on 06/18/08 at 8:05 AM, Gary Schoolcraft verified that this species, if present, is not affected by grazing.

### **Riparian and Wetland Sites**

There are four developed springs, one reservoir, and one water well within the allotment (see Figure 2, and 3-Project Map). Indian Springs is the dominant water source within the Seeded and Remainder Pastures. It supplies water for both areas during the spring and early summer months. Indian Spring flows very slowly with surface water only visible during very wet conditions. It provides water for livestock during the spring months and wildlife throughout the year.

The spring source (which fills to troughs for livestock and wildlife) is approximately four to five underground. A spring box was placed in the hole and then piped off to the troughs. The spring shows surface water in early spring months and will dry soon after that. The troughs and enclosure fence are located in the only flat area of the small ravine. The troughs are fenced into the enclosure with two gates on the north and south end allowing cattle access during the grazing season.

Winter runoff from the Summit Pasture provides the Remainder Pasture with water throughout the year. There are approximately three drainages that flow through the pasture. Although, there are not any designated springs within the pasture, these sites often run fluently during wet seasons. The drainages are spread out from one another allowing cattle to scatter and not congregate on one water source.

The Summit Pasture consists of three springs and one reservoir (Jesus Spring, Pickins Spring CA, Pickins Spring NV, and Pickins Reservoir). Jesus Spring is a perennial spring providing water all year. Both CA and NV Pickins Springs will also provide water throughout the year depending on climatic conditions, and Pickins Reservoir will usually dry up by July or August. Additionally, Dry Lake Spring may also get use from the livestock from the allotment. The spring is located within the North Fort Sage Allotment, but there is not a fenceline separating the two allotments. Cattle may wonder up there from time to time, but the area is mostly used by wild horses.

## Wildlife

There are no federally-listed threatened or endangered wildlife species known to occur within the allotment. There is potentially suitable habitat within the field office area for the Carson wandering skipper (*Pseudocopaeodes eunus obscurus*), a federally endangered species of butterfly; however, none is located within the West Fort Sage Allotment. If this species were found within the allotment, consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would occur, and modifications to the grazing permit might be necessary.

BLM sensitive species that have the potential to occur within the allotment include the greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*), pygmy rabbit (*Brachylagus idahoensis*), bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), Northern sagebrush lizard (*Sceloporus graciosus graciosus*), fringed myotis (*Myotis thysanodes*), long-eared myotis (*Myotis evotis*), pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), Townsend's western big-eared bat (*Plecotus townsendii*), Western small-footed myotis (*Myotis ciliolabrum*), and Yuma myotis (*Myotis yumanensis*). BLM Policy (USDI 2001) under Manual 6840 directs that BLM Sensitive Species shall be managed as if they are Candidate species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA). The BLM is to work toward recovery of these species and take no action that will cause them to become listed. Additionally, recent court decisions have caused the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to reconsider the listing status of the greater sage-grouse and the pygmy rabbit under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The West Fort Sage Allotment is outside of the Buffalo-Skedaddle Sage-Grouse Population Management Unit, and sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) are not known to utilize this area. Currently, the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) is conducting a telemetry study of local sage-grouse and their movements. The BLM will coordinate with CDFG to obtain current telemetry information regarding sage-grouse and their potential use of habitat within this allotment.

The pygmy rabbit (*Brachylagus idahoensis*), a BLM Sensitive species, is currently designated as a species that may warrant listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). An inventory for pygmy rabbits was conducted on the Eagle Lake Field Office from May through September of 2004; three locations within the West Fort Sage allotment were surveyed during this effort (Séquin 2004). Areas in the ELFO supporting appropriate habitat were identified with Geographic Information System (GIS) soil and vegetation layers. Soil data was originally downloaded from the NRCS SSURGO website for CA608 and NV771 soil units. Vegetation data was obtained from Tetrattech vegetation data refined to 20 acre minimum polygons. Vegetation and soil information were combined in Arcview and overlaid on maps of the Field office. Areas having a combination of big sagebrush and friable soils were identified (Séquin 2004). Survey sites were selected for one of three reasons: they were either historic locations, locations within areas of that showed up on the GIS layers, or they were sites that looked like appropriate habitat and were located while traveling around the area (Séquin 2004).

The three surveys conducted within the allotment (or anywhere on ELFO) failed to find any evidence of current or old pygmy rabbit activity. The last specimens of pygmy rabbits collected on lands managed by the BLM ELFO were from the Madeline Plains in the 1930s. Since then there have been no confirmed pygmy rabbit sightings in the area (Séquin 2004). Lassen County,

CA is on the edge of the historic distribution of the pygmy rabbit; currently, the closest known active pygmy rabbit populations to the ELFO area are located in Nevada just west of the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge (Séquin 2004, pers. obs.).

Occasional incidental sightings of bald eagles may occur in the allotment area. The allotment does not contain any large bodies of water, with which bald eagles are usually associated; no bald eagle nests, roosting sites or winter habitat are known to occur within the allotment.

Burrowing owls and northern sagebrush lizards may occur within the allotment, although formal surveys have not been conducted. BLM sensitive bats (and other bat species) have potential habitat within cliff crevices, cave-like openings, trees and buildings (including abandoned buildings). No formal surveys for bats have been conducted in the allotment. Specific documented locations for these species do not exist within the allotment.

Mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) is the primary game species that occurs within the allotment area. Mule deer populations are managed under California Department of Fish and Game's (CDFG) Management Plans. The West Fort Sage Allotment borders the Doyle State Wildlife Area on the north side, and a portion of the west side, and provides priority winter and early spring habitat for the Doyle deer herd. Habitat conditions in the area have been on a decline due to the loss of bitterbrush forage from wildfires on CDFG- managed lands. This has also been an issue on BLM lands where wildfires have occurred on the allotment. As discussed above, wildfires have occurred over nearly 85% of the allotment in the last 30 years, burning vital winter shrubs for deer and other wildlife. The BLM has taken some rehabilitation action such as seeding three sites with perennial native grasses and shrubs.

Pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*) populations are also managed under California Department of Fish and Game's (CDFG) Management Plans. Pronghorn occupy low structured sagebrush habitats, agricultural fields on private lands, and some natural meadow areas. Pronghorn prefer open rangeland that supports a variety of vegetative types, primarily grasses, forbs, and shrubs. Pronghorn utilize some of the western areas of the allotment in the lower elevation sites for late winter and spring habitat. Small numbers of pronghorn relative to southeastern Oregon occur throughout the Eagle Lake Field Office area.

Rocky Mountain elk (*Cervus elaphus nelsoni*) occur only very sporadically (incidental sightings) in the ELFO area. There are presently no known established populations in the area however, projects to improve habitat for elk such as aspen stand improvements, have and are presently being undertaken by the field office.

### **Wildfire**

There have been four wildfires (see Figure 5) within the last 30 years consuming nearly 85% of the allotment. There was the Fort Fire in 1983, which was followed by the two Turtle Fires in 1984. These fires consumed nearly 3,200 acres in the northwest portion of the allotment. The three fires burned within the same area leaving only sand behind. In 2001 the Fish Fire consumed approximately 4,000 acres, burning the entire Summit Pasture and over 50% of the Remainder Pasture. The latest fire to affect the allotment was in 2006, but it only burned a small portion in the southeast corner of the Summit Pasture.

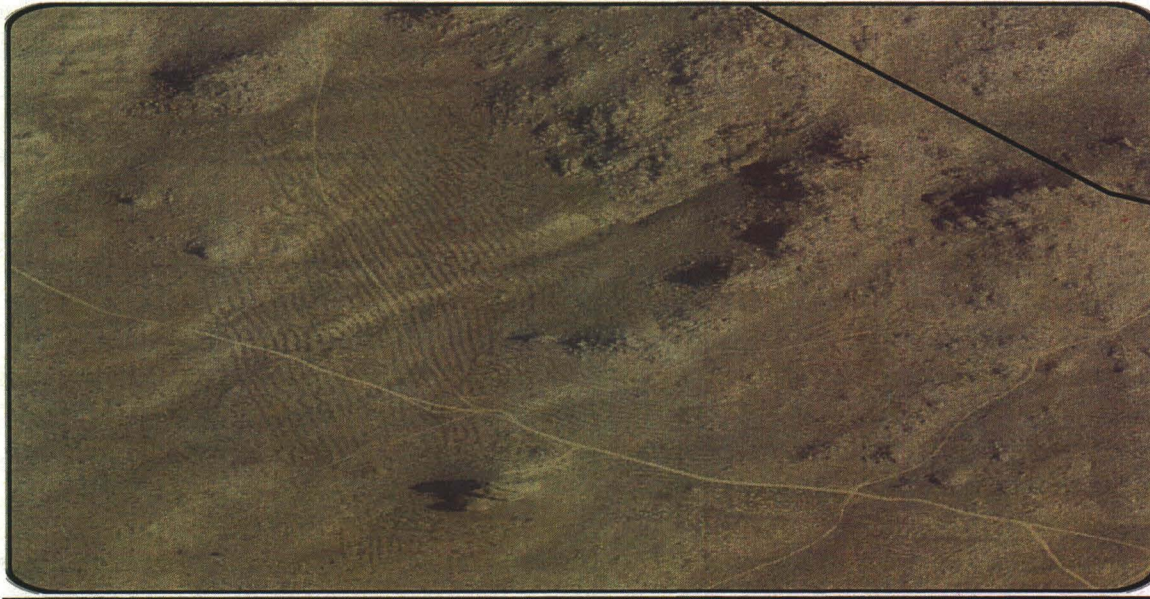


Rehabilitation efforts took place after each wildfire, using various types of methods to keep the land healthy. The overall allotment has responded fairly well to post fire rehabilitation efforts from the BLM, along with natural recovery in the upper elevations.

### **BLM Seeding Projects**

There were three seeding projects established after wildfires in the 1980's, three for the Fish Fire and one for the Honey 1 Fire (within the North Fort Sage Allotment). Some sites responded well to the seedings, and other areas did not. The Mottsville and Widowmaker seedings that were done post-Fish Fire were successful, with good growth of antelope bitterbrush and Great Basin wildrye. Antelope bitterbrush can be seen very well within satellite map images (Photo 1). The latest seeding project took place in 2007 after the Honey 1 Fire; it was seeded with Great Basin wildrye and Indian ricegrass. The results of this seeding are yet to be determined. The BLM also aerial seeded the Summit Pasture near Jesus springs with antelope bitterbrush and big sagebrush. The perennial grass community has recovered very well with grasses such as bluebunch wheatgrass, Great Basin wildrye and needleandthread grass.

**Photo 1. Example of an Antelope Bitterbrush Seeding**



### **Wild Horses and Burros**

Approximately 7,000 acres of the allotment fall within the Fort Sage Wild Horse and Burro Herd Management Area (HMA) #CA-241, which consists of 15,759 total acres (see Figure 6). The HMA is also an inter-district management herd between the Carson City, Nevada BLM Field Office and Eagle Lake Field Office. The Appropriate Management Level (AML) ranges from 55 to 65 horses and 0 burros. Human activity, including OHV use, traffic on County Road 327, and scattered homesteads may keep horses up on the mountains and off of the valley floors. Wild horses spend most of their time on the Nevada side of the HMA. A horse census of the Fort Sage HMA was completed on September 25, 2008 which observed a total of 19 horses; 14



of which were located within the Fort Sage HMA and five were found on east slopes of the Fort Sage Mountains in Nevada.

Over the years, records show that most horse observations have come from the West Fort Sage Allotment. Most horse counts occur on the low lands near Indian Springs and up on the Nevada/California State line within the Summit Pasture. Horse use on watering holes has been very evident within Pickins Spring NV, as it lies along a primary route of the horses. These horses also use Dry Lake Springs throughout the year as it also lies off of their main trail through the mountains.

### **Cultural Resources**

The West Fort Sage Grazing Allotment was inventoried in accordance with the procedures outlined in the *2007 Supplemental Procedures for Livestock Grazing Permit/Lease Renewals: A Cultural Resources Amendment to the State Protocol Agreement between California Bureau of Land Management and the California State Historic Preservation Officer*. Water sources, gathering areas, mineral and salt areas were identified, and areas with a high potential for archaeological sites were surveyed to a Class III standard.

There are six previously identified cultural resource sites located within the West Fort Sage Grazing Allotment. Five of the sites are identified as lithic scatters with no previous or current impacts by grazing. The site is described as a lithic scatter with associated ground stone and a milling station has been impacted by grazing. A plan has been developed, in consultation with the Susanville Indian Rancheria, to eliminate livestock grazing from the main area of concentration for the site. Initial implementation has begun and will continue. The site will be monitored for treatment effectiveness. No new sites were located as a result of the Class III inventory of the area.

**Table 3. Cultural Resource Sites**

<b>Site Number</b>	<b>Site Type</b>	<b>National Register Eligibility</b>	<b>Grazing Impacts</b>
25.17.03.00	Lithic Scatter	Unevaluated	No
25.17.03.01	Lithic Scatter with bedrock milling station and groundstone	Yes	Yes
25.17.10.00	Lithic Scatter	Unevaluated	No
25.17.15.00	Lithic Scatter	Unevaluated	No
26.17.20.01	Lithic Scatter	Unevaluated	No
26.17.33.01	Lithic Scatter	No	No

### **Recreation**

The current Eagle Lake Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision, April 2008 includes the West Fort Sage Allotment into the Fort Sage Special Recreation Management Area (Sec. 2.9.6.3). The most prevalent activities in this area include recreational motorcycle and ATV riding, horseback riding, and hiking. More distant visitors typically drive from two to eight hours (one-way), camp at the Fort Sage OHV area, and spend at least two days and nights driving, riding, or hiking. There are four recreational management zones for public use: Fort

Sage Trailhead, Fort Sage Road and Trail Systems (on public land), Fort Sage Mountains, and the Widowmaker Trailhead.

All four recreation zones are attached to the allotment. The main attraction for OHV permitted events is the Widowmaker Trailhead, located on the north facing slopes of the allotment. The Widowmaker Trailhead is the designated staging area for motorcycle events and receives low casual use. The Lassen Motor Cycle Club has recently submitted applications to hold a weekend motorcycle race event every other year at the Fort Sage SRMA or Dry Valley SRMA. The proper clearances are completed by the BLM staff before each race is permitted. The race may, in some years, coincide with cattle grazing, but there have not been any conflicts between the two. The BLM staff and Lassen Motorcycle Club members have in the past, and will continue to resolve any conflicts with grazing prior to permitting the event.

## Determination of Land Health for the West Fort Sage Allotment

### Upland Health Assessments, Monitoring Data, and Allotment Information

Land health field assessments were conducted in the Eagle Lake Field Office from 1999 to 2004. The evaluation included upland health field assessments, riparian functional assessments, existing allotment information and professional judgment were used to make the standards determination for the allotments. The following summary identifies whether the allotment(s) are meeting, not meeting, and/or making progress toward meeting land health standards.

There were six site specific health assessments (UH# 15-17 and 122, 123 and 206) were completed in June 2002. Information from the assessments, as well as other collected data, is contained and summarized within the Eagle Lake RMP, Sec. 3.12.2, *Susan River/Honey Lake Valley Watershed Evaluation*. The following summary identifies whether the allotment is meeting, not meeting, and/or making progress toward meeting land health standards (see Figure 7).

Due to the fencing projects, described in the *Grazing Management section* of this document, UH #206 is now located inside the new fenced boundary, but outside the allotment boundary. This site may be placed into the West Fort Sage Allotment in the future, along with a new range line agreement if necessary. UH #206 is located northwest of Steffan Springs. This area is typically very dry with well drained soils. Although the site was lacking a few perennial grasses it rated out as "meeting" the biodiversity standard.

Upland Health Sites 15 and 16 are located within the Seeded Pasture of the allotment. UH #15 is located off of Fort Sage Road on lowlands of the allotment and UH #16 is located northeast of there. UH #16 is a site that the BLM seeded with antelope bitterbrush and crested wheatgrass in the 1980's for fire rehabilitation. Both of these sites rated as meeting all of the standards for rangeland health.

Sites # 17 and 122 are both located within the Remainder Pasture and both sites rated as meeting the standards along with sites 123 and 124. Site #124 is located within the North Fort Sage Allotment, although it appears to be in the West Fort Sage Allotment. (This site is described in the North Fort Sage Allotment permit renewal). All upland health sites lie within fire scars, except UH #17, therefore all sites have been affected by either past or recent wild fire activity. Although wildfire can be detrimental to upland health at times, it can also be beneficial. The Fish Fire of 2001 helped slow and possibly eliminate the threat of juniper encroachment into the allotment from upper elevations. Additionally, cheatgrass which is known for invading areas post wildfire, but has not significantly affected the allotment. Although present in areas, cheatgrass does not dominate any one area within the allotment

### ***Summit Pasture Notes from 2004***

Upland Health Assessments have not been completed within the Summit Pasture of allotment. This may have been due to the Fish Fire, preventing the Interdisciplinary Team (ID) not being able to access the pasture. This pasture has only one main trail and often washes out in heavy rainstorms. In 2004 a BLM ID Team did make it to the top on ATVs to discuss the authorization



of cattle grazing post wild fire within the Summit Pasture. The ID team looked at all the watering locations, reviewed soil descriptions, vegetation classifications, grazing management, and future monitoring methods. Photos were also taken representing vegetation and perennial grass establishment post wild fire. All the work necessary to complete an Upland Health Assessment was documented, but the official forms were never compiled for unknown reasons, although it is stated that the primary reason for the trip was to discuss and evaluate land health for cattle turnout in 2004 and not to complete or establish UHA sites. It was decided that the pasture had recovered and that "grazing may benefit the recovery of shrub species back into the burned area." And therefore grazing was allowed for the 2004 grazing season. (Upland Health Sites will need to be established in the near future with the Summit Pasture).

**Photo 2. Summit Pasture Post-wildfire 2004, Looking West**



**Photo 3. Summit Pasture 2007, Looking East up the Mountain**





## SUMMARY OF GRAZING DETERMINATION

The evaluations of the 2002 assessments indicate that overall land health is meeting the standards and guidelines within the West Fort Sage Allotment. There were indications of juniper encroachment onto the lowlands, but wildfires of 2001 and 2006 have eliminated or pushed back the time frame. As discussed earlier, cheatgrass, although present throughout the allotment, has not invaded areas post-wildfires. Current native plant production and vigor are healthy, with new seedlings decreasing the amount of bare soil in the inner spaces, especially in the upper elevations. It is often expected that cheatgrass will invade and take over a site after a wildfire (Eagle Lake RMP, April 2008, Sec. 3.18.2.3 *Annual Grassland Communities*). Additionally, these areas have experienced less than half the allocated AUMs for the allotment.

The Record of Decision (ROD) for the Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines for California and Northwestern Nevada Final EIS (2000) adopted five Standards for Public Land Health. These are: (1) Upland Soils, (2) Streams (3) Water Quality, (4) Riparian and Wetland Sites and (5) Biodiversity.

**(1) Upland Soils:**  Meeting Standard, \_\_\_ Not Meeting, \_\_\_ or Not Meeting but Making Progress toward Meeting Standards.

**Upland Soils Standard:** Upland soils exhibit infiltration and permeability rates that are appropriate to soil type, climate and landform, and exhibit functional biological, chemical and physical characteristics.

Annual precipitation is able to enter the soil surface and move through the soil profile at a rate appropriate to soil type, climate, and landform; the soil is adequately protected against human-caused wind or water erosion; and the soil fertility is maintained at, or improved to, the appropriate level.

### Influencing Causal Factors on the Standards

The soil in the allotment meets the criteria for the soil standard based on the perennial vegetation that dominates the area. There was reference in the assessment that several perennial grasses are not as common as expected, but still occur in the form of different species of perennial grasses. Cheatgrass is evident in some areas, but does not dominate the site. The presence of cheatgrass influences native perennial production and diversity, but at this density does not prevent progress from being made.

Descriptors such as; None to Slight, Slight to Moderate, Moderate, Moderate to Extreme, and Extreme describe a range of departure from what is expected at this site or area. The descriptors give the reader a gauge of how the indicators of land health compare to the natural plant community expected for the site as identified from the site assessments.

**(2) Streams:** N/A

**(3) Water Quality:** N/A

**(4) Riparian and Wetland Sites:**  Meeting Standard,  Not Meeting,  or Not but Making Progress toward Meeting Standards.

The West Fort Sage Allotment contains four springs, several seeps, and one reservoir. The spring sources typically hold water through July and at time into August. Jesus Spring is only exception as it runs nearly year round, with a few exceptions during very dry conditions. Pickins Spring CA and NV will go dry by the end of summer months and the reservoir dries up by July during most years. Riparian Functional Assessments were completed in June 2009 within the spring sites with the following conclusions.

Pickins Spring CA rated at FAR (Functioning at Risk) with an Upward Trend. The concerns are due to a lack of riparian vegetation within the site. The site appears to be smaller than its potential. There was once a trough piped out of the spring area keeping livestock and wild horses out of the riparian site. Currently, there are willows with little riparian vegetation if any. The spring has been impacted by wildfire, livestock, and wild horse use.

**Photo 4. Pickins Spring CA**





**Photo 5. Pickins Spring CA in June 2009 with New Fence and Water Trough**



*(The spring source is to the left of the burned juniper trees. This photo mainly represents the new fence for spring protection with water trough piped away from the spring source).*

Pickins Spring NV rated FAR (Functional At Risk) with an upward trend. This spring lies directly next to a prominent wild horse trail. Wild horses use this spring very heavily all year long. Hoof action from wild horses and cattle are present. The riparian area is small with potential to be increased. There is one willow present along with some scattered upland vegetation. Due to the fact that the spring is located in a rock outcrop with shell rock scattered down the slope, it is difficult to determine what the spring may have looked like in the past.

**Photo 6. Pickins Spring NV Experiences Year Round Wild Horse Use and 2-3 Month Cattle Use**



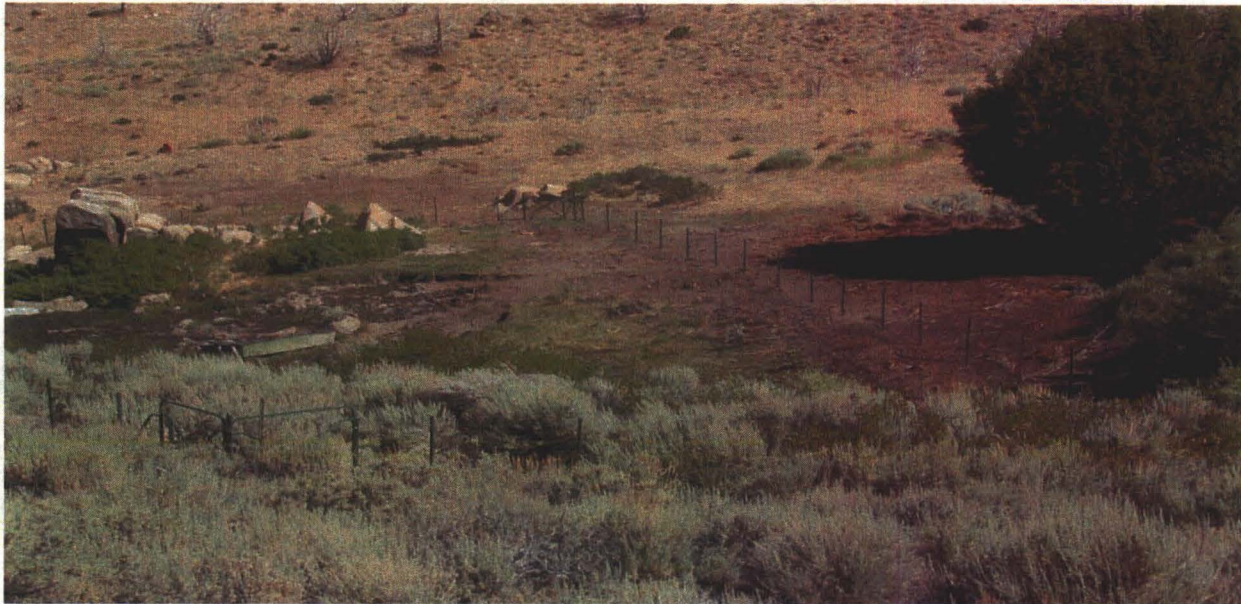


**Photo 7. Pickins Spring NV Looking Down From Spring To Water Trough**

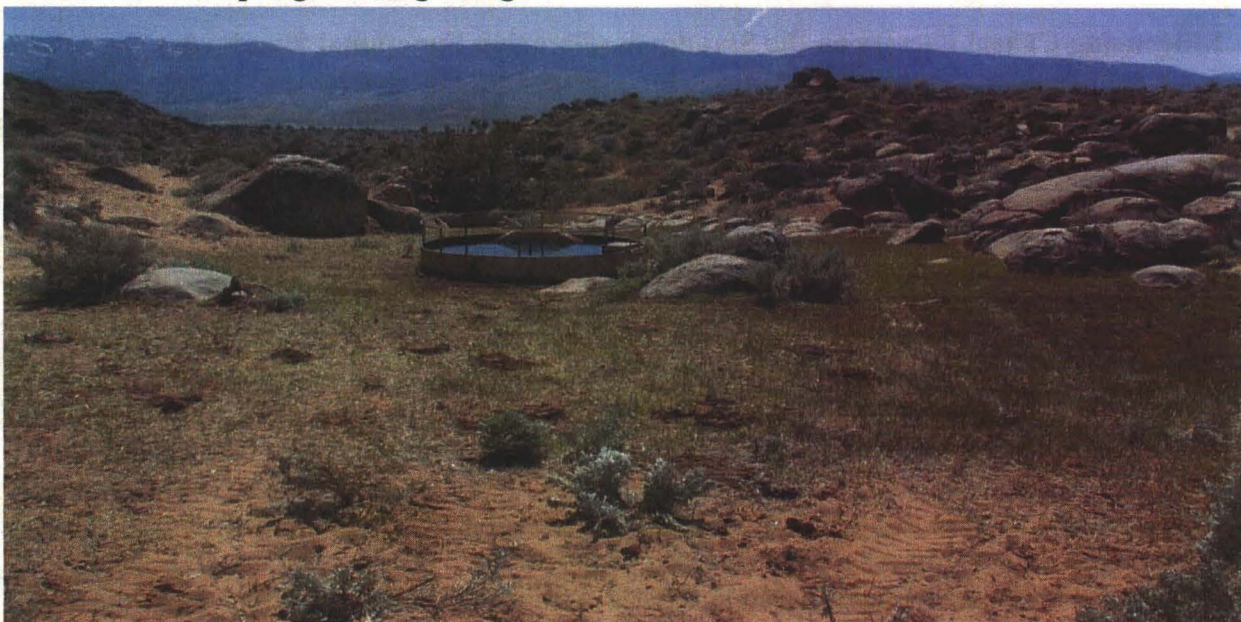
Jesus spring rated FAR (Functional At Risk) with an upward trend. The site has been heavily grazed the past 10 years due to lack of maintenance, available access, wildfire, and other unknown reasons. The site is dominated by upland vegetation of grasses and forbs. There are two Juniper trees, which managed to not burn in 2001, near the spring source along with a strong stand of willows. The willows have increased since the 2001 wildfire. Photos from the 1990's only show a small pocket willows. There is no surface water visible within the willow patch. The spring has also seen some flow pattern change due to livestock and wild horse use, this should all recover with the extension of the existing enclosure fence.

**Photo 8. Jesus Spring Before 2009 Improvement Project**



**Photo 9. Jesus Spring With New Fence Enclosure, Two New Troughs, And New Spring Box**

Indian Springs was not assessed for Riparian Functional Assessment due to the lack of surface water within the site. The spring box is located nearly five feet below the ground surface and is piped out to two troughs within an enclosure, which acts as a catchment allowing cattle to get water from one pasture and not the other. Water only runs through the drainage during heavy thunderstorms or in wet winters as snow melts.

**Photo 10. Indian Springs showing Trough**



Pickins Reservoir was not assessed for a health as it is not a natural reservoir. It is a man-made reservoir constructed in the mid 1900's to capture water for livestock use. The reservoir is not very large, but provides water through the summer months during heavy precipitation years. After the 2001 Fish Fire soil sediment from spring runoff has filled a section of the reservoir. This sediment will be removed to allow for more water to be held for a longer period of time throughout the summer. The reservoir will be dug the depth it was when constructed in the 1960's.

**Photo 11. Pickins Reservoir after a Wet Year**



### **Influencing Causal Factors on the Standards (Riparian Functional Standards)**

All three springs which were assessed have been impacted by wildfire, wild horse, and livestock use. Wild horses use these springs 12 months out of the year and cattle use them from July through August. Due to lack of fencing, burned water troughs and piping, these areas have not been protected from wild horse or livestock use. Therefore, riparian areas have not received a full year of rest from animal use. The vegetation and soils within each site have been negatively affected and are at risk of becoming very poor springs.

Current rangeland improvement to existing spring developments have eliminated the negative impact from livestock and wild horses within the springs. All the old troughs were replaced with new troughs, some troughs were piped further away from the spring source to lower potential impact to riparian area, and new fences have replaced the old ones. All three enclosure fences were doubled in size in an attempt to increase the riparian areas. These improvements will allow the springs to make progress towards meeting the Riparian/Wetland Standard. The vegetation associated with these sites is expected to recover from past grazing impacts, and become more productive and vigorous.



**(5) Biodiversity:** X Meeting Standard, \_\_\_ Not Meeting, \_\_\_ or Not Meeting but Making Progress toward Meeting Standards.

Biodiversity Standard:

Overall, the land making up the allotment is meeting the Biodiversity Standard; cheatgrass has moved in some areas after the 2001 and 2006 wildfires, while juniper encroachment has been set back due to those same fires. Viable, healthy, productive and diverse populations of native and desired plant and animal species are maintained. Native and other desirable plant and animal populations are diverse, vigorous, and able to reproduce, and support nutrient cycles and energy flows.

**Influencing Causal Factors on the Standards (meeting the biodiversity standard)**

Based upon land health assessments and knowledge of the allotments, the area is meeting the biodiversity standard as shown by condition and diversity of native perennial vegetation expected for the area. The arrival of cheatgrass post fire is what is expected for the site in the lower elevation areas. These areas were also seeded with Crested Wheatgrass on the 1980's post wildfire, with a fairly high success rate. The upper elevations have responded very well to the wildfires with the majority of the allotment dominated by perennial grasses, such as bluebunch wheatgrass, Thurber's needlegrass and Great Basin wildrye.

Current grazing management has shown improvement throughout the allotment. A two-year rest period after a wildfire has allowed vegetation to grow vigorously and soils to stabilize. Additionally, the allotment has not seen full cattle numbers in over 10 years due to the reasons discussed earlier. If grazing numbers reach full authorized use, it is hopeful that the allotment will improve even more with improvements to the springs and water sources.

**Additional Information:** There were 41 soil sites assessed in the Susan River/Honey Lake Watershed in the early 2000's, finding only four sites which deviated more than moderately from expectations. These were on the sandy soil sites in the Fort Sage Mountains (Eagle Lake RMP Sec. 3.12.2, pg. 3-69). The Fort Sage area has experienced several wildfires in the past two decades, with marginal success recovery. Livestock are very limited throughout the Fort Sage grazing allotments and were not a contributing factor to this condition. Most of the 'Functioning at Risk' sites are also on sandy soils. Once disturbed, these droughty soils can take a comparatively long time to recover.

Special soil stabilization efforts have been made by the BLM on sandy soils within the Fort Sage Mountains, and across the valley near the town of Wendel. These efforts have shown little success.

The West Fort Sage Allotment has been heavily affected by wildfires the past 30 years. Despite these biannual wildfires, the allotment has responded well, especially in upper elevations. The lower elevations have not responded as well, but due to the aid of some seeding projects in the 1980's post wildfire, the allotment remains healthy and vigorous.

**Grazing Determination:**

- 1) Is it more likely than not that existing grazing management practices or levels of use are significant factors in failing to achieve Standards or conformance within the Guidelines?  
 Yes  No

*Four out of the five upland health assessments rated biotic integrity as "moderate" departure from rangeland health. UH# 16 rated as "none to slight", but this site is located within a seeded area done by the BLM post wildfire from 1980's. Reason for the other upland health sites is due to history of wildfire activity and not cattle use.*

*Although the riparian and spring areas are healthy and contain riparian vegetation, if something is not done to protect them they may not be healthy in the future, creating the need for BLM completely restore the old spring projects.*

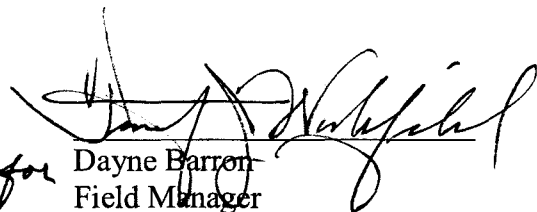
- 2) Is it more likely than not that existing grazing management needs to be modified to ensure the fundamentals of land health are met, or making significant progress toward being met?  
 Yes  No

*Existing grazing management will not be modified at this time. The BLM did mention that season of use for both permits would be changed as to have both permits turnout dates the same, but application to do so was not submitted; therefore BLM will leave turnout dates as they are written within each permit.*

**Statement of Conformance or Non-Conformance with Grazing Guidelines:**

Yes, the allotment is generally within the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing as identified in the Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health in NE California and NW Nevada (Approved July 2000).

No, the allotment is generally not within the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing as identified in the Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health in NE California and NW Nevada (Approved July 2000). If the guidelines and the standard which they are meant to apply are not meeting or if progress is not being made identify the casual factor and identify any management changes necessary to make progress.

*acty for*  
  
Dayne Barron  
Field Manager

8/20/09  
Date

**NEW RAVENDALE ALLOMENT**

✓ 1/2/08 Ravendale Wild Horse Gather Plan, DR, EA

✓ 9/17/07 Proposed Gather Plan/Letter/Map

✓ 10/3/00 Removal of Horses from Private Land EA