



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>



NOV 23 2005

In Reply Refer To:
4130 (NV-012)

Public Comment Period Cottonwood Allotment Re-Evaluation Environmental Assessment

Dear Interested Public:

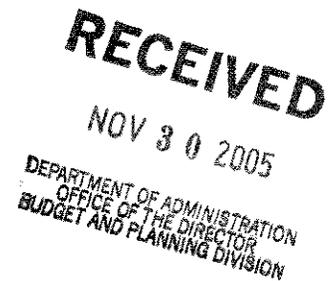
Chapters 1 and 2 and appropriate appendixes of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Cottonwood Allotment Proposed Multiple Use Decision (PMUD) are enclosed. This EA incorporates comments and suggestions collected during the public scoping process that followed the release of the Re-Evaluation Document on 21 July 2003 and an additional scoping letter dated 23 September 2005. The BLM has modified the proposed action and will be analyzing a third alternative in response to comments received during previous scoping letters.

Please review the enclosed documents and return any comments you may have to Shane DeForest, Assistant Field Manager-Renewable Resources, 3900 E. Idaho Street, Elko, NV, 89801, no later than **Friday, 9 December 2005**. Comments may also be faxed to (775) 753-0255 or e-mailed to Shane_DeForest@nv.blm.gov.

Sincerely yours,

Shane DeForest
Assistant Field Manager
Renewable Resources

encl: as stated



cc: Agee Smith
Boies Ranches
Boyd Spratling
Committee for the High Desert
Elko County Commissioners
Karen Klitz
Leta Collard
Marge Kaiser
Natural Resource Conservation Service (Attn: Chuck Peterson)
Nevada Department of Wildlife
Nevada Department of Agriculture (Attn: Gary McCuin)
Nevada Cattlemen's Association
Nevada State Clearinghouse
Preston Wright
Resource Concepts, Inc.
Roland Kroos
UNR Cooperative Extension Service (attn: Kent McAdoo)
US Fish and Wildlife Service
US Forest Service
Western Watersheds Project

**COTTONWOOD ALLOTMENT
PROPOSED MULTIPLE USE DECISION
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
BLM/EK/PL-2005/002**

I. INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE AND NEED

A. Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Elko Field Office proposes to issue a multiple use decision to provide area-specific direction and management actions for the Cottonwood Allotment, in the northeastern portion of Elko County, Nevada (see Map A). In 1996 BLM prepared an environmental assessment (EA) analyzing a proposal from the Cottonwood Ranch to implement the "Holistic Management"(HM) process on the Cottonwood Allotment (BLM/EK/PL-1996/013). The Decision Record (DR) for this EA provided for a 5-year trial period of HM on the Cottonwood Allotment. After 5 years the BLM would do an evaluation to determine if multiple use objectives and the Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health were being met through the HM process. The BLM issued a re-evaluation in 2003 that compared data collected from 1989-1995 with data collected from 1996-2002 to determine if HM should continue or if management should revert to the previous existing Final Multiple Use Decision (FMUD).

This EA has been prepared for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). It incorporates relevant portions of the Holistic Management EA (BLM/EK/PL-1996/013) and Allotment Re-Evaluation (RE), and resulting report by reference. These documents are available for review at the BLM Elko Field Office, 3900 E. Idaho Street, Elko, NV 89801.

B. Need for and Purpose of Action

Action is needed define the terms and conditions under which a livestock grazing permit may be issued that will continue to achieve, or make significant progress toward achieving, the standards for Rangeland Health for the Northeastern Great Basin Area of Nevada and multiple use objectives for the allotment. All proposed management actions, including issuance of a new 10-year grazing permit are derived from the analysis in the RE and subsequent report for the Cottonwood Allotment.

C. Land Use Plan Conformance Statement

The proposed action and alternatives are consistent with the following decisions and objectives of the Wells Resource Management Plan (RMP), as approved July 19, 1985, and its amendment for elk management, approved February 14, 1996.

1. Livestock Grazing (Wells RMP Record of Decision, page 17)
Provide for livestock grazing consistent with other resource uses.
2. Terrestrial Wildlife Habitat (Wells RMP Record of Decision, pages 19-22)
 - a. Conserve and/or enhance wildlife habitat to the maximum extent possible.

- b. Eliminate all of the fencing hazards in crucial big game habitat, most of the fencing hazards in non-crucial big game habitat.
- c. Eliminate all of the high and medium priority terrestrial riparian habitat conflicts in coordination with other resource uses.
- d. Manage public lands on a sustained yield basis to support elk populations at a level consistent with other resource needs, while minimizing impacts to adjacent private and public land resources. Manage elk habitat in the Jarbidge Mountain Management Area consistent with the existing Jarbidge Elko Six-Party Agreement (Elk Amendment, pages 6-7). Elk use will be included within existing allowable use levels for key browse species by mule deer (Elk Amendment, page 8).

3. Riparian/Stream Habitat

Improve high and medium priority riparian/stream habitat to at least good condition.

The proposed action and alternatives would also provide for attainment or significant progress towards attaining the following Standards for Rangeland Health for the Northeastern Great Basin Area of Nevada approved on February 12, 1997.

- 1. Upland Sites: Upland soils exhibit infiltration and permeability rates that are appropriate to soil type, climate and land form.
- 2. Riparian and Wetland Sites: Riparian and wetland areas exhibit a properly functioning condition and achieve state water quality criteria.
- 3. Habitat: Habitats exhibit a healthy, productive, and diverse population of native and/or desirable plant species, appropriate to the site characteristics, to provide suitable feed, water, cover and living space for animal species and maintain ecological processes. Habitat conditions meet the life cycle requirements of threatened and endangered species.
- 4. Cultural Resources: Land use plans will recognize cultural resources within the context of multiple use.

The proposed action and alternatives, as described below, are also consistent with other Federal, State and local laws, regulations and plans to the maximum extent possible. Since 1996, implementation of the HM process has been as an experimental program sponsored by the Board of County Commissioners for Elko County and the Elko County Agricultural Extension Office. The process has included participation by the U.S. Forest Service, to implement its use on public lands in the Cottonwood Creek C&H Allotment and Goat Creek Common Use Allotment. The Forest Service determined that use of the system conforms with the Humboldt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, and is consistent with their approved allotment management plans for the C&H and Goat Creek allotments (EA #BLM/EK/PL-1996/013). The State of Nevada reviewed the RE, and responded that the proposals were consistent with state plans.

II. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

A. Proposed Action

1. **Continue grazing in accordance with the Holistic Management Process**

See Appendix 1 for a description of the Holistic Management Process

2. Establish the livestock grazing carrying capacity by pasture as indicated in table 1. below. Increase total active permitted use from 1,914 to 2,144 AUMs.

Table 1. Recommended Carrying Capacity by Pasture for the Cottonwood Allotment Proposed action and Alternative 1

Pasture	Proposed Carrying Capacity; (AUMs)	1993 FMUD C.C. (AUMs)	AUM Change
Warm Springs	510	510	0
Choke-a-Man	380	380	0
Choke-a-Man Riparian	70	70	0
Goat Creek	268	268	0
Goat Creek Riparian	277	277	0
Cottonwood	303	259	+44
Cottonwood Riparian	186	186	0

*Total active use established by the 1993 FMUD was 2,100 AUMs. The FMUD called for the creation of the Cottonwood and Goat Creek Riparian Pastures, which were to be rested on alternate years starting in the 1996 grazing season. Permitted use was reduced from 2,100 to 1,914 AUMs in 1996 to account for the resting of one of these pastures each year. See Map C for pasture boundaries.

3. Authorize up to 350 AUMs of Temporary, Non-Renewable (TNR) use annually when conditions set forth in 43 CFR 4110.3-1(a) and 43CFR 4130.6-2 are met. Additional use would only be granted after an interdisciplinary review of the application is conducted, field visits are completed to verify the availability of additional forage, and a determination has been made that the additional use would not impact the ability of the area to achieve or make significant progress toward achieving the Standards for Rangeland Health. Public coordination would be conducted as prescribed in the regulations, and appropriate NEPA analysis would be completed. Applications for more than 350 AUMs of use would be considered outside the scope of this analysis and would be analyzed as new actions.
4. Add water storage tanks where appropriate.
5. Protect Chicken Springs and a stretch of Goat Creek below the Forest Service boundary fence by either creating a riparian pasture or with an enclosure fence with pipeline to a trough. See Maps D and G for location of Chicken Springs.

6. Issue a 10-year grazing permit for the Cottonwood Allotment to the Cottonwood Ranch, c/o Agee Smith. The permit would read as follows:

Operator	Pasture	No. Livsk.	Kind	Pd. of Use	% PL	AUMs
Agee Smith		152	Cattle*	3/1 – 2/28	99	1,804
		15	Horse*	3/1 – 2/28	99	187
	FFR	13	Horse*	3/1 – 2/28	100	150

*Kind of livestock can be either cattle or horses.

7. Establish Terms and Conditions for livestock use in the Cottonwood Allotment

See Appendix 2 for Terms and Conditions.

8. Update multiple use objectives:

See Appendix 3 for Multiple Use Objectives.

9. Monitor water quality and discharge at one location each on Cottonwood and South Fork of Salmon Falls Creeks. At least 10 samples should be collected over a 3-year period except for fecal coliform samples, which require 5 samples within one 30-day period. These samples will be measured against all standards established by the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP).

10. Monitor water temperature on Cottonwood Creek with the use of thermographs for a minimum of two years.

11. Conduct treatments to eliminate noxious weed infestations as scheduled in accordance with Elko BLM priorities and procedures.

B. Alternative 1

Under the Alternative to the Proposed Action grazing on the Cottonwood Allotment would revert to that described by the Final Multiple Use Decision (FMUD) for the Cottonwood Allotment issued on 4 October 1993. A copy of the FMUD is in Appendix 4.

C. No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would continue the existing Holistic Management grazing strategy for the Cottonwood Allotment as approved in 1996 indefinitely. A new 10-year grazing permit would be issued with the same grazing use and terms and conditions as are currently in effect. Livestock grazing would continue to occur in accordance with annually developed biological plans, as described for item 1 of the Proposed Action. However carrying capacity of each

pasture would remain at levels determined in the 1993 FMUD (item 2 (Table 1) of the Proposed Action). Permitted use would be returned to 2,100 AUMs.

C. Alternatives Eliminated from Detailed Analysis

Alternative C1 – Remove Livestock from Riparian Areas by 15 July

This alternative was suggested by Western Watersheds Project and Committee for the High Desert. This alternative is essentially the same as alternative 1, which would result in the removal of livestock from most riparian areas by 15 June 2005 as part of a larger grazing strategy for the entire allotment. This alternative will not be considered further.

Alternative C2 – Reduce Livestock Numbers

Under this alternative, livestock numbers would be arbitrarily reduced. Management objectives are being achieved with current livestock numbers, and reducing livestock numbers is not warranted at this time based on monitoring data. Under the proposed action and no action alternative, the HM process provides the flexibility to adjust livestock numbers to meet changing resource conditions. For these reasons, this alternative is dropped from further consideration.

Alternative C3- No Grazing Alternative

Under this alternative, livestock grazing would be eliminated from the Cottonwood allotment. The no grazing alternative was analyzed in the Environmental Impact Statement for the Wells RMP. Although riparian areas and streams would likely be enhanced under a scenario of no livestock use, the BLM is required to authorize only those actions that conform to the RMP as approved in the Wells Record of Decision (ROD). The Wells RMP establishes, among other things, that the Cottonwood Allotment is to provide for livestock grazing use, and that livestock grazing use is to be managed so that resource management objectives will be achieved. The 1985 Wells RMP and Rangeland Program Summary (RPS) established objectives for livestock grazing and provides for the establishment of a rangeland monitoring program to determine if management objectives are being met and to adjust grazing management systems and livestock numbers as required. Elimination of livestock grazing in lieu of making changes to the grazing systems and adjusting livestock numbers through monitoring is an action not in conformance with the RMP and RPS and is not considered by BLM to be a reasonable alternative for analysis in this EA. This alternative is dropped from further consideration.

**Cottonwood Allotment Re-Evaluation
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**Appendix 1
Description of Holistic Management Process**

Holistic management is a process that strives to optimize biodiversity and health of the land in order to achieve ecological, economic and social goals. All future management actions are tested in relationship to their effectiveness in moving the community as a whole toward the holistic goal. The practice of HM is collaborative and requires the participation of affected parties. A team member is any person who wishes to participate in the management of the public lands in the Cottonwood project area. The Holistic Management process was described in detail in EA # BLM/EK/PL-1996/013. The process is repeated below. Some modifications to the original wording in the Grazing Process, Utilization Guidelines and Season of Use, Livestock Type and Numbers sections of the Biological Plan segment have been made.

a. Holistic Goal -- Define a three part holistic goal for the area, which is a broad description of the landscape and how four ecosystem processes (community dynamics of living things, water cycle, mineral and nutrient cycle, and energy flow) must function to sustain indefinitely production and quality of life.

b. Biological Plan - Prior to any grazing year, a biological plan is prepared by the HM team. The plan outlines the annual operation, and is submitted to the BLM for approval in the form of a grazing application. Each plan would be based on monitoring, evaluation, and the previous year's actual use. In developing it, the existing pastures are divided into smaller grazing units based on the herder's ability to control a herd of livestock. The plan defines the grazing process. This includes forage utilization guidelines, period of use and livestock numbers (to calculate AUMs), and maintenance/construction of rangeland improvements.

Grazing Process --

- The annually developed grazing plan would include herding to improve the distribution of livestock throughout the allotment.
- The grazing plan would be designed to rotate livestock through the use areas (see Map B) on the allotment. The plan will minimize grazing of re-growth and will defer grazing on areas used during the critical growing season the previous year.
- At times, livestock may be concentrated through the use of herding and/or supplements such as protein and mineral blocks, hay and water hauling to accomplish specific objectives set by the HM group, such as to press native seed into the soil and/or cover seed during surface disturbance and to reduce excessive shrub canopy cover to promote an increase in grass and forb production and cover. Supplements may also be used to reduce livestock use of bitterbrush, especially during the late summer and fall when grasses are dormant, and to reduce/decrease the adverse effects of grazing poisonous plants.
- Livestock use on saturated stream banks would be limited to specific designated areas, to avoid negative impacts to aquatic habitats.

- Cultural resource inventories would be conducted as necessary prior to approval and implementation of any of the preceding livestock concentration measures.
- Concentrated livestock herding would not occur on sage grouse strutting and nesting sites during strutting and nesting periods.

Utilization Guidelines -- Target utilization levels for plants on the allotment are set as follows:

- Native grass species will be an average of 50% of current year's growth
- Bitterbrush will be 25% of current year's leader growth
- Riparian browse species (aspen and willows) will be 35% of current year's growth.

Should these utilization target levels be exceeded in any area of the allotment, an adjustment will be made in the following years grazing program for that area.

- Agencies would continue to monitor utilization levels at the end of the grazing and/or growing season or within other timing constraints consistent with maintaining specific habitat guidelines for wildlife species such as the Nevada sage grouse management guidelines.
- Through the development of the annual Biological Plan grazing would be managed to achieve herbaceous lateral cover guidelines (average > 18cm height of forbs and grasses) for sage grouse nesting. Monitoring would be conducted on a yearly basis between 4/1 and 7/1 to determine that those objectives are being met. If all the allotment was suitable cover these guidelines would be required to be met on 50% of the suitable nesting habitat. However, as a result of the fire, fewer acres of suitable nesting habitat are available within the allotment therefore at a minimum lateral cover guidelines (average >18 cm height of forbs and grasses) will be retained on 75% of the suitable nesting habitat (unburned portion of the allotment) during the nesting season (4/1 – 7/1). These guidelines would be in place until the burned portion of the allotment acquires a 10% canopy cover of sagebrush at which time a minimum of 50% of the allotment will be managed to achieve the guidelines. If these guidelines are exceeded on a portion of the allotment, those areas will be rested until 7/1 the following year.
- The permittee/rider would do daily monitoring of all vegetative growth within each unit being grazed. This monitoring would indicate when livestock should be moved to the next grazing unit and would minimize the potential for overuse during active growing periods. Generally speaking, livestock are moved between grazing units more rapidly during periods of rapid regrowth and, conversely, more slowly during periods of slower regrowth.

Season of Use, Livestock Type and Numbers -- Livestock numbers and periods of use on public land managed by the BLM will be applied for on an annual basis. Livestock types are cattle and horses.

- It is anticipated that most grazing on public lands (to include lands administered by the BLM and Forest Service) would be scheduled during spring, summer and fall, but winter grazing could be allowed to meet the goals and objectives.
- The number of livestock will be defined through the annual biological planning process.
- Any use in excess of permitted AUMs on lands administered by the BLM would require approval by BLM as a "Temporary Non-Renewable" (TNR) use, and may require additional review for compliance with the NEPA. Grazing use on the lands administered by the US Forest Service is administered by that agency.

- Additional review to comply with the NEPA would also be required if the team proposes that grazing by a different type of livestock (from the permitted use by cattle and horses) is needed to accomplish the goals and objectives.

Construction of Rangeland Improvements -- Additional review to comply with the NEPA would be conducted if it is determined additional improvements are needed to facilitate the control of livestock movement in the allotment. See Map D for the location of all current and proposed range improvements on the allotment.

c. Monitoring -- Holistic management theory takes the attitude that much of what is done to our ecosystem may lead to unanticipated effects. A monitoring plan for each grazing year would be developed by the team prior to initiation of the grazing process.

- Monitoring, including photo points, ecological condition ratings, proper functioning condition assessments for riparian areas, stream survey, wildlife habitat condition, cover, quadrat frequency readings for trend in condition and utilization at established agency key areas would continue. Additional studies may be established as needed.
- The permittee monitors livestock grazing for its effect on the daily growth rate of the plants throughout the growing season to minimize the potential for grazing re-growth and to avoid exceeding target utilization levels.
- Regarding cultural resources, employ historic grazing use-records to determine which areas within the allotment have been subject to the least grazing. A sample of the archaeological sites in these areas would be examined to assess their condition. Should parts of the allotment be determined to contain archaeological resources that could be impacted by an annual grazing application, an archaeological site monitoring program would be established. This would involve monitoring the condition of artifacts and features in one or more artificial or existing archaeological sites in comparison to those in control site(s) over one or more grazing seasons. In accordance with SOPs for cultural resources, measures to mitigate any adverse effects would be determined in consultation with the permittee and the State Historic Preservation Office.
- Nevada Department of Wildlife/BLM will continue to monitor sage grouse population trends in relation to the Cottonwood Allotment by using trend ground counts, lek counts, and sage grouse harvest composition data.

d. Replanning -- If monitoring of the annual plan indicates that HM goals and objectives are not being met or the plan needs to be revised due to other circumstances, then the team would re-plan.

**Cottonwood Allotment Re-Evaluation
Environmental Assessment
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**Appendix 2
Terms and Conditions for Livestock Use**

- a. Grazing use will be in accordance with the Final Multiple Use Decision for the Cottonwood Allotment dated _____.
- b. Livestock numbers identified in the term grazing permit is a function of seasons of use and the total number of animal unit months (AUMs) that may be removed from each pasture. 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. Annual and long-term adjustments in the grazing system may be made depending on progress in meeting resource objectives. Livestock numbers and periods of use will be applied for on an annual basis. On-off dates can vary 5 days before and after the scheduled dates.”
- c. An annual grazing application outlining the annual operation which reflects the terms and conditions in the term grazing permit must be submitted prior to the start of the grazing season. An actual use report will be submitted as indicated below. A billing notice will be prepared after the grazing season based on actual use in accordance with 43 CFR 4130.8-1(e).”
- d. An accurate actual use report will be submitted within 15 days of livestock being removed at the end of the grazing season.
- e. All range improvements will be maintained prior to livestock turn-out.
- f. Supplemental feeding is limited to salt, mineral and/or protein supplements in block, granular or liquid form. Such supplements must be placed at least ¼ mile from live waters (springs, streams, and troughs), wet or dry meadows, and aspen stands.
- g. All riparian exclosures, including spring development exclosures, are closed to livestock use unless specifically authorized in writing by the Assistant Field Manager for Renewable Resources.
- h. Pursuant 43 CFR 10.4(G), the holder of this authorization must notify the authorized officer, by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(C) and (D), you must stop activities in the immediate vicinity of the discovery and protect it from your activities for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.
- i. The terms and conditions of your permit may be modified if additional information indicates that revision is necessary to conform with 43 CFR 4180.

**Cottonwood Allotment Re-Evaluation
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**Appendix 3
Multiple Use Objectives**

Rangeland Program Summary Management Objectives

1. Livestock
 - a. Manage livestock to maintain present ecological status and trend on unburned areas and improve ecological status and trend on burned areas and in those unburned areas where potential to improve exists.
 - b. Provide forage to sustain 2,144 AUMs for livestock grazing.

2. Wildlife
 - a. Improve or maintain seasonal big game habitat in the Cottonwood Allotment to good or excellent condition to provide forage and habitat capable of supporting the following reasonable numbers and forage demands:

Species	Reasonable Numbers	Forage Demand
Mule Deer	315	551 AUMs
Bighorn Sheep	11	11 AUMs
Pronghorn Antelope	8	11 AUMs
*Elk	8	32 AUMs

- *Established by the Elk Amendment to the Wells Resource Management Plan approved February 14, 1995.
- b. Reintroduce bighorn sheep in the Jarbidge Mountains.
 - c. Continue to evaluate existing un-modified fences for modification to allow for safe passage of big game animals.
 - d. Improve riparian/stream habitat to good or better condition on Cottonwood Creek (8.4 miles).

Allotment Specific Objectives

1. Key Areas
 - a. The target utilization levels of key perennial grass species is an average of 50% of current year's growth. The target utilization level for browse shrub species (bitterbrush) is 25% of current year's leader growth by livestock.

b. Maintain or improve the percent frequency of occurrence of the following key species by 2014.

Key Area	Key Species	Long-term (indefinite) Goal
3214-01-02 Warm Springs	Agsp* Ssth**	Maintain or significantly increase both spp.
3214-02-01 Choke-a-Man	Agsp Ssth	Maintain or significantly increase both spp.
3214-03-01 Goat Creek	Agsp Ssth	Maintain or significantly increase both spp.
3214-04-01 Cottonwood	Agsp Ssth	Maintain or significantly increase both spp.

* AGSP= *Agropyron spicatum*, Bluebunch wheatgrass

**STTH= *Stipa thurberiana*, Thurber's needgrass

c. Improve or maintain the following seral stages and the percent composition of key species by year 2014.

Key Area	Key Species	1983 % Comp.	1983 Seral Stage	Indefinite Goal
3214-01-02 Warm Springs	Agsp Ssth	1.8 0.5	26% Mid	Mid Seral**
3214-02-01* Choke-a-Man	Agsp Ssth	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	To be Determined
3214-03-01 Goat Creek	Agsp Ssth	2.4 2.0	52% Late	Late Seral
3214-04-01 Cottonwood	Agsp Ssth	8.6 1.1	57% Late	Late Seral

*Key area 2-1 did not have a frequency study established until 1997, following the inception of HM. Production has not been measured at key area 2-1.

**Unburned sites may be in stable condition, and opportunities to improve to later seral conditions on unburned sites may be limited, depending on the potential of the site.

2. Riparian Objectives: By the next allotment evaluation and consistent with the overall RPS objective for the Cottonwood Allotment and Standards for Rangeland Health:

a. Improve or maintain 8.4 miles of Cottonwood Creek and 1.2 miles of South Fork Salmon Falls Creek riparian/stream habitat on public land to good or excellent condition, and improve or maintain 15.3 miles of Cottonwood Creek and 1.2 miles of South Fork Salmon Falls Creek at Proper Functioning Condition (PFC), as follows:

- 1) North Fork of Cottonwood Creek- 2.0 miles to good or excellent condition; 3.7 miles to PFC .
- 2) Middle Fork of Cottonwood Creek- 1.0 miles to good or excellent condition, 3.4 miles to PFC.
- 3) South Fork of Cottonwood Creek- 5.4 miles to good or excellent condition, 8.2 miles to PFC.
- 4). 1.2 miles of the South Fork of Salmon Falls Creek to good or excellent condition, 1.2 miles to PFC.

b. Improve or maintain all springs (lentic) to good or excellent habitat.

c. Prevent undue degradation of all riparian/stream habitat due to other uses.

d. Target utilization on riparian browse species (willow, aspen) is 35% of current year's growth..

**Cottonwood Allotment Re-Evaluation
Environmental Assessment
BLM/EK/PL-2005/002**

**Appendix 4
Final Multiple Use Decision for the Cottonwood Allotment
4 October 1993**



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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IN REPLY REFER TO:

4120/4400
(NV-015)

OCT 4 1993

CERTIFIED MAIL NO. P 426 497 396
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Cottonwood Ranch
Agee Smith
HC 68 Box 300
Wells, Nevada 89835

FINAL MULTIPLE USE DECISION
FOR THE COTTONWOOD ALLOTMENT

The Record of Decision for the Wells Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the Wells Resource Management Plan (RMP) was issued on July 16, 1985. These documents established the multiple use goals and objectives which guide management of the public lands on the Cottonwood Allotment. The Rangeland Program Summary (RPS) was issued on September 15, 1986, which further identified the allotment specific objectives for the Cottonwood Allotment.

As identified in the Wells RMP/EIS and RPS, monitoring was established on the Cottonwood Allotment to determine if existing multiple uses for the allotment were consistent with attainment of the objectives established by the RMP/EIS. Since 1979, monitoring data has been collected and during the years 1989-90 the data was analyzed, through the allotment evaluation process to determine what changes in existing management are required in order to meet the specific multiple use objectives for this allotment.

The specific objectives for the Cottonwood Allotment are listed below:

1. General Allotment Objectives

The following objectives are from the Wells RMP, RPS and the Cottonwood Allotment Management Plan (AMP).

- a. Manage rangeland habitat to provide forage for 2,100 AUMs for livestock on an annual basis while meeting the physiological requirements of the vegetation and minimizing conflicts between the other multiple use values.
- b. Manage livestock to maintain or improve ecological status and trend.

- c. Coordinate the Cottonwood Allotment Management Plan (AMP) with the Forest Service grazing allotment.
- d. Revise the Cottonwood Allotment Management Plan (AMP) in 1988 to incorporate riparian objectives.

2. Specific Key Area Objectives

The following objectives are from the Cottonwood AMP.

- a. The following proper use levels will not be exceeded in any one year (utilization levels will be read upon removal of the livestock after the scheduled grazing treatment).

<u>Key Area</u>	<u>Key Species</u>	<u>Percent Use</u>
3214-01-01	STCO4 (Needle and Thread grass)	55%
3214-01-02	AGSP (Bluebunch wheatgrass) STTH2 (Thurber's needlegrass)	55% 55%
3214-02-01	AGSP STTH2	55% 55%
<i>Burned</i> 3214-03-01	AGSP STTH2	55% 55%
3214-03-02	FEID (Idaho fescue) AGSP STTH2	55% 55% 55%
3214-04-01	AGSP STTH2	55% 55%
<i>unburned</i> 3214-04-02	AGSP STTH2	55% 55%

- b. Maintain or improve the percent frequency of occurrence on the following key species by 1989.

<u>Key Area</u>	<u>Key Species</u>	<u>1983</u> <u>Frequency</u>	1987 freq.	1996/1997	01
3214-01-02	AGSP STTH2	25% 53%			
<i>Burned</i> 3214-03-01	AGSP STTH2	6.5% 63%			
<i>Burned</i> 3214-04-01	AGSP STTH2	53% 25%			

Analysis regarding significant changes in frequency are based on Duncan's Multiple Range Test and ANOVA (Analysis of Variance).

- c. Improve or maintain the following current seral stage and the current percent composition of key species by year 1989:

<u>Key Area</u>	<u>Key Species</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1983</u>
		<u>Percent</u>	<u>Seral Stage</u>
3214-01-02	AGSP	1.8	26% Mid
	STTH2	0.5	Seral
3214-03-01	AGSP	2.4	52% Late
	STTH2	2.0	Seral
3214-04-01	AGSP	8.6	57% Late
	STTH2	1.1	Seral

3. Riparian Objectives

The following objectives are from the Wells RPS and Cottonwood AMP.

The overall RPS objective is to improve the riparian/stream habitat condition of 8.4 miles of Cottonwood Creek to good or better condition (the specific stream segments to be improved are described in 3.a., 3.b., and 3.c. below).

- a. Improve the riparian/stream habitat of 2.0 miles of the North Fork of Cottonwood Creek by 30% (from 1979 baseline data) by 1994 and maintain good or excellent riparian/stream habitat condition (60% of habitat optimum) by 2003.
- b. Improve the riparian/stream habitat of 1.0 mile of the Middle Fork of Cottonwood Creek by 30% (from 1979 baseline data) by 1994 and maintain good or excellent riparian/stream habitat condition (60% of habitat optimum) by 2003.
- c. Improve the riparian/stream habitat of 5.4 miles of the South Fork of Cottonwood Creek by 30% (from 1979 baseline data) by 1994 and maintain good or excellent riparian/stream habitat condition (60% of habitat optimum) by 2003.
- d. Improve the riparian/stream habitat condition within the riparian exclosures by 20% (from 1984 baseline data) by 1989 as follows:

<u>Stream</u>	<u>1984 Rating</u>	<u>Goal by 1989</u>
N.F. Cottonwood	35.1%	42.1%
S.F. Cottonwood	47.4%	56.9%
M.F. Cottonwood		
Lower Exclosure	42.2%	50.6%
Upper Exclosure	51.3%	61.6%
S.F. Salmon Falls Ck	36.7%	44.0%

- e. Prevent undue degradation of all riparian/stream habitat due to other uses.

4. Wildlife Objectives

The following objectives are from the Wells RPS, Cottonwood AMP, and O'Neil/Salmon Falls Habitat Management Plan (HMP).

- a. Improve or maintain seasonal big game habitat in the Cottonwood Allotment to good or excellent condition to provide forage and habitat capable of supporting the following reasonable numbers and forage demands:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Reasonable Numbers</u>	<u>Forage Demand AUMs</u>
Mule deer	315	551 AUMs
Bighorn sheep	11	11 AUMs
Pronghorn antelope	8	11 AUMs
Elk	8	32 AUMs

Note: Reasonable number and forage demand objectives for antelope and elk are included in the Wells RMP/EIS and O'Neil/Salmon Falls HMP, however, due to an editorial error, they were not carried forward in the Wells RPS.

- b. Reestablish bighorn sheep and elk into the Jarbidge Mountains. The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) is responsible for and coordinates the reintroduction of the animals. Therefore, management actions to reintroduce bighorn sheep and elk are not included in the decision.
- c. Facilitate big game movements by modifying 11.5 miles of existing fences to Bureau standards.

Through the consultation, coordination and cooperation process (CCC), your input as well as input from other affected parties have been considered in the allotment evaluation process.

On June 14, 1993, the Bureau received a protest to the Proposed Multiple Use Decision for the Cottonwood Allotment. As a result of the continued CCC process with the affected party, the following changes have been made to the Proposed Multiple Use Decision for the Cottonwood Allotment :

- The proposed construction of Warm Springs Riparian Exclosure 3 has been relocated from the southeast corner of the Warm Springs Pasture to the northeast corner of the Warm Springs Pasture.
- Livestock numbers have been adjusted from 340 head of cattle to 200 head of cattle to reflect the permittee's current operation.
- The period of use on the upland pastures outlined in the grazing system has been revised to reflect the change in livestock numbers.
- The need to develop additional upland water and/or improve existing projects has been identified. Potential projects that have been discussed include, but are not limited to, the installation of a storage tank on the Cottonwood Pipeline and the Goat Creek Pipeline, locating an additional water source to supplement the Goat Creek Pipeline and extending the Goat Creek Pipeline.
- The sequence of the grazing cycle has been adjusted to coordinate cattle movements with the grazing system on the adjacent Forest Service Cottonwood Allotment.

Therefore, it is my final decision to implement the following management actions, to be effective October 30, 1993:

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT DECISION

***** FROM *****

The current Cottonwood Allotment Management Plan authorizes the use of 2,100 AUMs. The current grazing system will be revised.

CURRENT COTTONWOOD ALLOTMENT GRAZING SYSTEM

Use Period	1988	1989	1990	1991
4/1 to 6/10	Cottonwood	Choke-a-man	Goat Creek	Warm Springs
6/11 to 7/31	Choke-a-man	Goat Creek	Warm Springs	Cottonwood
8/1 to 11/30	Warm Springs	Cottonwood	Choke-a-man	Goat Creek
REST	Goat Creek	Warm Springs	Cottonwood	Choke-a-man

Repeat the grazing cycle beginning with the 1988 grazing sequence.

Stocking Level

<u>Livestock</u>	<u>Season of use</u>
235 Cattle	April 1 to Nov. 1
40 Horses	April 1 to Nov. 30
30 Cattle	Fenced federal range

***** CURRENT TERMS AND CONDITIONS *****

Grazing use will be made in accordance with the Cottonwood Allotment Management Plan which was approved on July 6, 1988.

An actual use report showing use by pasture must be submitted within 15 days from the last day of use.

Supplemental feeding is limited to salt, mineral, and/or protein supplements in block, granular and/or liquid form. Such supplements must be placed at least ¼ mile from live waters (springs and streams).

***** TO *****

The following management actions for the Cottonwood Allotment will be implemented:

- 1) Adjust the active use on the Cottonwood Allotment from 2,100 AUMs to 1,914 active AUMs with 186 AUMs placed in nonuse for the protection and conservation of the resources as a result of the rest treatment in the grazing system.

The adjustments to the active use on the Cottonwood Allotment reflect the minimum number of AUMs scheduled for rest in the grazing system. Additional AUMs will be scheduled for rest depending upon the grazing treatment for any one year. The AUMs which are scheduled for rest and exceed the minimum level of 186 AUMs will be placed in nonuse status for the grazing season.

Implementation of the grazing system is dependent upon the construction of the riparian pasture fences and water developments which are scheduled to be constructed in 1995 under the present planning process of three years.

As a result, an interim grazing system will be necessary until the projects are completed. Therefore, the reduction in active use will be implemented upon completion of the projects needed to implement the Final Grazing System. Until that time, active use for the Cottonwood Allotment will be 2,100 AUMs. The reduction in active use shall be effective on March 1st with implementation currently expected in 1996.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Active Use (AUMs)</u>
1993 - 95	2,100
1996 - ON	1,914

GRAZING USE SUMMARY
COTTONWOOD ALLOTMENT

1993 to 95	Total Preference	2,100 AUMs
	Active Use	2,100 AUMs
1996 FORWARD	Total Preference	2,100 AUMs
	Minimum AUMs to be rested as a result of the rest rotation grazing system (Nonuse)	<u>186 AUMs</u>
	Active Use	1,914 AUMs
	Percent Change	9%

The entire 9% reduction in active use will be effective when the Final Grazing System is implemented.

Rationale

The allowable active use has been adjusted to account for the minimum amount of rest required in the revised grazing system during any one year of scheduled use (Refer to Management Action 2 for the grazing system). The minimum number of AUMs which will be rested in one grazing cycle is 186 AUMs per year.

For consistency and management purposes, the minimum carrying capacity of the rested AUMs (186 AUMs) within the riparian pastures (Cottonwood or Goat Creek) will be placed in nonuse status, for the protection and conservation of the riparian resource.

- 2) Revise the Cottonwood Allotment Management Plan grazing system as outlined below:

The revised grazing system is based on the proposal to construct fences in order to create six riparian pastures/exclosures. The grazing system will be designed based on nonuse of three riparian exclosures (located in Warm Springs pasture), resting one riparian pasture, grazing two riparian pastures, and grazing four upland pastures (refer to the attached allotment map for the location of the proposed riparian pasture fences).

Prior to the completion of the final riparian pasture fences an interim grazing system will be implemented. The interim and final revised grazing systems will replace Section IV A, B, C and D of the Cottonwood Allotment Management Plan which was revised and approved on July 6, 1988.

The following interim and final grazing systems are based on a turnout date of May 1st which is a change from the current turnout date of April 1st.

INTERIM GRAZING SYSTEM
COTTONWOOD ALLOTMENT

The estimated carrying capacities of the pastures are as follows:

<u>Pasture</u>	<u>Estimated Carrying Capacity (AUMs)</u>
Choke-a-man	450
Goat Creek	545
Cottonwood	445
Warm Springs	510
Fenced Federal Range	<u>150</u>
TOTAL	2,100

Fenced Federal Range is licensed at 100%. All other pastures are licensed at 99% Federal Range.

PASTURES AND TREATMENTS

1993 and 1994

LIVESTOCK	Goat Creek *	Cottonwood *	Warm Springs	Choke-a-man	Forest Service
170 cattle	10/1 to 10/31			5/1 to 6/15	6/16 to 9/30
200 cattle		5/1 to 6/15	6/16 to 9/1		
45 horses	11/16 to 12/30			5/1 to 6/20	
15 horses				6/21 to 11/16	

1995

LIVESTOCK	Goat Creek *	Cottonwood *	Warm Springs	Choke-a-man	Forest Service
170 cattle		10/1 to 10/31	5/1 to 6/15		6/16 to 9/30
200 cattle	5/1 to 6/18			6/19 to 8/26	
45 horses		11/16 to 12/30	5/1 to 6/20		
15 horses			6/21 to 11/15		

* Riparian pasture - no flexibility in the dates outlined.

Beginning on 6/16 livestock numbers will be reduced on the Cottonwood Allotment when the permittee places 170 head of pairs on the Forest Service Allotment. The reduction of livestock on public lands will be reflected in the permittee's annual application.

Repeat the 1995 grazing cycle if the projects needed to implement the Final Grazing System have not been completed by the beginning of the 1996 grazing season.

FINAL GRAZING SYSTEM

The final grazing system is based on the proposal to develop additional water sources in the non-riparian pastures and to construct approximately 8 miles of fence in order to create six riparian pastures/exclosures. The grazing system will be designed based on the closure of three riparian exclosures (Warm Springs Exclosures 1, 2, and 3); resting one riparian pasture; grazing two riparian pastures (Goat Creek or Cottonwood Riparian Pasture, and Choke-a-man Riparian Pasture); and grazing four upland pastures (Warm Springs, Choke-a-man, Goat Creek and Cottonwood; refer to the attached allotment map for the location of the pastures).

The estimated carrying capacities of the pastures are as follows:

<u>Pasture</u>	<u>Estimated Carrying Capacity (AUMs)</u>
Choke-a-man	380
Choke-a-man Riparian	70
Goat Creek	268
Goat Creek Riparian	277*
Cottonwood	259
Cottonwood Riparian	186*
Warm Springs	510
Fenced Federal Range	<u>150</u>
TOTAL	2,100

* For consistency and management purposes, the allowable active grazing use of the allotment has been adjusted to account for the minimum carrying capacity (186 AUMs) of the AUMs scheduled for rest within the riparian pastures (Cottonwood Riparian Pasture or Goat Creek Riparian Pasture). The carrying capacities of the Cottonwood and Goat Creek Riparian pastures are 186 AUMs and 277 AUMs respectively. For licensing purposes, the carrying capacity of each pasture will be used.

PASTURES AND TREATMENTS

1996 and 1999 and 2000

LIVESTOCK	Goat Creek	Goat Creek Riparian	Cottonwood	Cottonwood Riparian	Warm Springs	Choke-a-man	Choke-a-man Riparian	Forest Service
170 cattle		REST	10/1 to 10/31	5/13 to 6/15				6/16 to 9/30
200 cattle	9/14 to 10/21				5/1 to 7/17	7/18 to 9/13		
45 horses	5/1 to 6/15		11/1 to 11/30					
15 horses	6/16 to 7/31		8/1 to 10/31				5/1 to 6/15 10/1 to 12/30	

1997 and 1998

LIVESTOCK	Goat Creek	Goat Creek Riparian	Cottonwood	Cottonwood Riparian	Warm Springs	Choke-a-man	Choke-a-man Riparian	Forest Service
170 cattle	10/1 to 10/31	5/1 to 6/15		REST				6/15 to 9/30
200 cattle			9/14 to 10/10		6/28 to 9/13	5/1 to 6/27		
45 horses	11/1 to 11/30		5/5 to 6/15					
15 horses	8/1 to 10/31		6/16 to 7/31				5/1 to 6/15 10/1 to 12/30	

Beginning on 6/16 livestock numbers will be reduced on the Cottonwood Allotment when the permittee places 170 head of pairs on the Forest Service Allotment. The reduction of livestock on public lands will be reflected in the permittee's annual application.

In the year 2001, the grazing system will be repeated beginning with the 1997 grazing sequence.

* * * * * TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF GRAZING PERMIT * * * * *

Grazing use will be in accordance with the Cottonwood AMP, as revised by this decision.

All riparian pastures and exclosures, including spring development exclosures are closed to livestock use unless specifically authorized by the Wells Resource Area Manager in writing.

An actual use report showing use by pasture and class of livestock must be submitted within 15 days from the last day of use.

Supplemental feeding is limited to salt, mineral, and/or protein supplements in block, granular, or liquid form. Such supplements must be placed at least ¼ mile from live water (springs, streams and troughs), wet or dry meadows and aspen stands.

* * * * * FLEXIBILITY * * * * *

Turnout can occur anytime on or after May 1 or as outlined in the grazing system. Deviations in the turnout date and livestock numbers may be allowed on a case by case basis. The request must be applied for in writing, at least five working days prior to the proposed implementation date. The BLM will respond to such an application within five working days of receipt. The closing date of the grazing season will be December 30.

A five day flexibility period from the outlined move dates between pastures will be allowed without prior approval from the District office, except in the Cottonwood Riparian pasture, Goat Creek Riparian pasture and Choke-a-man Riparian pasture, where no deviations in the outlined dates will be allowed.

Deviations from the grazing system will be allowed to meet the needs of the resources and the permittee as long as these deviations are consistent with multiple use objectives. Deviations beyond the limits of the flexibility outlined above, including deviations in the turnout date, livestock numbers and from the grazing system, will require an application, and written authorization from the Wells Resource Area Manager prior to grazing use. The request must be applied for in writing, at least five working days prior to the proposed implementation date. The BLM will respond to such an application within five working days of receipt.

Annual fluctuation in livestock numbers may be allowed. A one to one substitution ratio may be allowed between cattle and horses, except in the Choke-a-man Riparian Pasture. All livestock will follow the outlined grazing system.

Rationale

The current grazing system has not achieved riparian/stream improvement objectives. Creating riparian pastures to allow for rest of valuable riparian/stream habitats will be necessary to achieve the stated RPS and AMP objectives. Rest from livestock grazing will be necessary to reestablish woody riparian vegetation, stabilize streambanks and ensure the objective is met in the shortest time possible.

- 3) Construct approximately 8 miles of riparian pasture fence along Cottonwood Creek (North Fork of Cottonwood Creek and South Fork of Cottonwood Creek), three riparian exclosures in Warm Springs pasture on Cottonwood Creek, and develop additional upland water sources by 1995. Completion of these projects will be contingent on the availability of funding and manpower. Maintenance responsibility of all new riparian pasture fences, riparian exclosures, water crossings and additional upland water sources will be assigned to the permittee. The layout and design of the projects will be completed in careful and considered consultation, cooperation and coordination with the affected permittee.

Rationale

The revised Cottonwood grazing system is based on completion of the riparian pasture fences and upland waters. The purpose of the riparian fences are to control or exclude livestock use along the riparian zone in order to improve riparian/stream habitat conditions and meet multiple use objectives identified for the Cottonwood Allotment. If livestock were not controlled or excluded from the riparian pasture exclosures, recovery of riparian and fishery habitat conditions would not occur and multiple use objectives would not be achieved.

The construction of riparian pasture and exclosure fences would result in a shortage of water in the Cottonwood, Warm Springs, and Goat Creek pastures. Prior to implementation of the Final Grazing System, additional waters will be developed in the Cottonwood, Warm Springs and Goat Creek pastures where necessary and feasible. Projects may include, but are not limited to, the extension of the Cottonwood and Goat Creek Pipelines, installation of storage tanks on the pipelines, and the construction of reservoirs.

Other existing exclosures within the allotment have been maintained by the Bureau since construction in 1984 and have shown the need for what is considered to be normal annual maintenance. Since alternatives other than fencing would be adverse to the permittee, the livestock permittee is considered to be the "benefiting party". In addition, control or exclusion of livestock use from within these protected riparian areas will become a term and condition of the grazing permit.

Having maintenance responsibilities for these exclosures would allow the livestock permittee to comply with these terms and conditions more effectively.

- 4) The following objectives will be added to the allotment specific objectives for the Cottonwood Allotment and will be analyzed in future evaluations:
- a. Improve riparian condition on 1.2 miles of the South Fork of Salmon Falls Creek to good or excellent riparian/stream habitat condition (60% of habitat optimum or better) by 2005.

Rationale

Approximately 1.2 miles of the South Fork of Salmon Falls Creek is located in the Cottonwood Allotment. The Wells RPS did not give this stream a high priority for management ("super stream" status) in this allotment. However, the South Fork of Salmon Falls Creek is given medium priority status for management based on availability of stream survey data and stream/fisheries potential. Analysis of riparian/stream habitat survey data indicates habitat condition has declined from 35.3% to 23.4% of habitat optimum during the 1979 to 1988 evaluation period and is currently rated as poor. Meeting this objective for the South Fork of Salmon Falls Creek will comply with the Wells RMP objective to "improve high and medium priority riparian/stream habitat to at least good condition".

- b. Livestock use levels on Antelope bitterbrush (PUTR2) will not exceed 25% of current year's growth on the key areas where bitterbrush occurs.

<u>Key Area</u>	<u>Key species</u>	<u>Utilization</u>
3214-03-01 B	PUTR2	25%
3214-03-02 B	PUTR2	25%
3214-04-01 B	PUTR2	25%
3214-04-02 W	PUTR2	25%

Rationale

The objective is being revised in order to establish bitterbrush as a key species to measure use on a browse species. The data will be used in conjunction with the frequency and production data to determine if the allotment and key area objectives are being met.

- 5) Delete the objective which states "Revise the AMP in 1988 to incorporate riparian values".

Rationale

This objective has been accomplished.

- 6) Vacate the riparian exclosure agreement dated May 22, 1983. The exclosures covered by the exclosure agreement will remain in place and the Bureau will continue to modify, as needed, in consultation with the permittee, all existing exclosures. Maintenance responsibilities will be assigned to the permittee.

Rationale

The original intent of the exclosure agreement was to establish riparian/stream habitat objectives for Cottonwood Creek and to show the beneficial or adverse impacts of riparian rehabilitation.

Since the initiation of the enclosure agreement, the Wells RMP and Wells RPS have been completed and the Cottonwood AMP has been revised.

The objectives outlined in these documents replace the objectives established in the enclosure agreement.

The purpose of these projects is to exclude livestock use along the riparian zone in order to improve riparian/stream habitat conditions and meet multiple use objectives identified for the Cottonwood Allotment. Riparian enclosures will serve to accelerate the improvement of the riparian conditions.

The existing enclosures have been maintained by the Bureau since construction in 1984 and have shown the need for what is considered to be normal annual maintenance. Since alternatives other than fencing would be adverse to the permittee, the livestock permittee is considered to be the "benefiting party" to ensure these enclosures continue to meet the purpose for which they are intended. In addition, exclusion of livestock use from within these protected riparian areas will become a term and condition of the grazing permit. Having maintenance responsibilities for these enclosures would allow the livestock permittee to comply with these terms and conditions more effectively.

- 7) As Bureau funding becomes available, modify 13.05 miles of fence. (The original objective for the Cottonwood Allotment was to modify 11.5 miles of fence. An inspection of the fences has shown that 13.05 miles actually need to be modified).

Rationale

Progress has been made toward the objective of modifying fences to meet wildlife specifications. The O'Neil/Salmon Falls HMP was approved September 8, 1986, and identified the specific 11.5 miles of fence to be modified in the Cottonwood Allotment. An evaluation of these fences was conducted in 1988 to determine need and priorities for modification. This evaluation revealed those fences identified actually totaled 13.05 miles. At the time of the evaluation, only 3.8 miles of existing fence has either been modified or modifications have been determined not necessary. The Bureau will modify these fences as funding becomes available.

- 8) In coordination with the permittee, review use pattern mapping annually and identify alternatives to improve livestock distribution. These alternatives may include, but are not limited to, water developments and relocating salting areas.

Rationale

The annual review of use pattern maps will assist the permittee and BLM in identifying and solving problem areas and help improve utilization levels.

- 9) Revise the long-term objective date to be 2005. Continue to conduct the necessary monitoring studies and periodically evaluate the effects of livestock grazing to determine if progress is being made in meeting the multiple use objectives. The multiple use objectives, as revised by this decision, are stated below. The Cottonwood Allotment will be reevaluated in accordance with priorities established in the Wells Resource Area Monitoring and Evaluation schedule. If monitoring studies indicate a need to modify livestock use in accordance with capacity, adjustments will be made at that time.

Rationale

Revising the long-term objectives to be 2005 is consistent with the 20 year time frame following approval of the Wells Record of Decision.

Additional data will provide a broader data base to determine if the objectives are being met.

As a result of the Management Actions outlined in this decision, the multiple use objectives listed in Sections III A, B, C1 and C2 of the Cottonwood Allotment Management Plan will be revised as follows:

1. General Allotment Objectives

The following objectives are from the Wells RMP, RPS and the Cottonwood Allotment Management Plan (AMP).

- a. Manage rangeland habitat to provide forage for 2,100 AUMs for livestock on an annual basis while meeting the physiological requirements of the vegetation and minimizing conflicts between the other multiple use values.
- b. Manage livestock to maintain or improve ecological status and trend.
- c. Coordinate the Cottonwood Allotment Management Plan (AMP) with the Forest Service grazing allotment.

2. Specific Key Area Objectives

The following objectives are from the Cottonwood AMP.

- a. The following proper use levels will not be exceeded in any one year (utilization levels will be read upon removal of the livestock after the scheduled grazing treatment).

<u>Key Area</u>	<u>Key Species</u>	<u>% Use</u>
3214-01-01	STCO4 (Needle and Thread grass)	55%
3214-01-02	AGSP (Bluebunch wheatgrass)	55%
	STTH2 (Thurber's needlegrass)	55%
3214-02-01	AGSP	55%
	STTH2	55%
3214-03-01	AGSP	55%
	STTH2	55%
	PUTR2 (Bitterbrush)	25%
3214-03-02	FEID (Idaho fescue)	55%
	AGSP	55%
	STTH2	55%
	PUTR2	25%
3214-04-01	AGSP	55%
	STTH2	55%
	PUTR2	25%
3214-04-02	AGSP	55%
	STTH2	55%
	PUTR2	25%

- b. Maintain or improve the percent frequency of occurrence on the following key species by 2005.

<u>Key Area</u>	<u>Key Species</u>	<u>1983 Frequency</u>	<u>2005 Goal</u>
3214-01-02	AGSP	25%	Significant increase - one or both species
	STTH2	53%	
3214-03-01	AGSP	6.5%	Maintain or increase
	STTH2	63%	
3214-04-01	AGSP	53%	Maintain or increase
	STTH2	25%	

Analysis regarding significant changes in frequency are based on Duncan's Multiple Range Test and ANOVA (Analysis of Variance).

- c. Improve or maintain the following seral stage and the percent composition of key species by year 2005:

<u>Key Area</u>	<u>Key Species</u>	<u>1983 Percent Composition</u>	<u>1983 Seral Stage</u>	<u>2005 Goal</u>
3214-01-02	AGSP	1.8	26% Mid	Late
	STTH2	0.5		Seral
3214-03-01	AGSP	2.4	52% Late	Late
	STTH2	2.0		Seral
3214-04-01	AGSP	8.6	57% Late	Late
	STTH2	1.1		Seral

3. Riparian Objectives

The following objectives are from the Wells RPS and Cottonwood AMP.

The overall RPS objective is to improve the riparian/stream habitat condition of 8.4 miles of Cottonwood Creek to good or better condition (the specific stream segments to be improved are described in 3.a., 3.b., 3.c., and 3.d. below).

- Improve the riparian/stream habitat of 2.0 miles of the North Fork of Cottonwood Creek to good or excellent riparian/stream habitat condition (60% of habitat optimum) by 2005.
- Improve the riparian/stream habitat of 1.0 mile of the Middle Fork of Cottonwood Creek to good or excellent riparian/stream habitat condition (60% of habitat optimum) by 2005.
- Improve the riparian/stream habitat of 5.4 miles of the South Fork of Cottonwood Creek to good or excellent riparian/stream habitat condition (60% of habitat optimum) by 2005.
- Improve the riparian/stream habitat of 1.2 miles of the South Fork of Salmon Falls Creek to good or excellent riparian/stream habitat condition (60% of habitat optimum) by 2005.
- Prevent undue degradation of all riparian/stream habitat due to other uses.

4. Wildlife Objectives

The following objectives are from the Wells RPS, Cottonwood AMP, and O'Neil/Salmon Falls Habitat Management Plan (HMP).

- a. Improve or maintain seasonal big game habitat in the Cottonwood Allotment to good or excellent condition to provide forage and habitat capable of supporting the following reasonable numbers and forage demands:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Reasonable Numbers</u>	<u>Forage Demand AUMs</u>
Mule deer	315	551 AUMs
Bighorn sheep	11	11 AUMs
Pronghorn antelope	8	11 AUMs
Elk	8	32 AUMs

Note: Reasonable number and forage demand objectives for antelope and elk are included in the Wells RMP/EIS and O'Neil/Salmon Falls HMP, however, due to an editorial error, they were not carried forward in the Wells RPS.

- b. Reestablish bighorn sheep and elk into the Jarbidge Mountains. The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) is responsible for and coordinates the reintroduction of the animals.
- c. Facilitate big game movements by modifying 13.05 miles of existing fences to Bureau standards.

Authority for this decision is found in 43 CFR 4100.0-8, 4110.3, 4110.3-3, 4120.3-1(c), 4130.6, 4130.6-1(a), 4130.6-2, 4130.6-3 and 4160.3 and 4160.4.

If you wish to appeal this final decision in accordance with 43 CFR 4160.4, and 4.470 you are allowed 30 days from receipt of this notice within which to file such appeal with the District Manager, Elko District Bureau of Land Management, P.O. Box 831, Elko, Nevada 89803.

An appeal should be made in writing to the Elko District Manager and shall specify the reasons why you think the final decision is in error.

Sincerely yours,


RODNEY HARRIS
District Manager

cc: Cliff Gardner
Horace Smith
Nevada Dept. of Wildlife
Johanna Wald - NRDC
Kenneth Jones
Western Range Service
Bill Gibbs
Demar Dahl
Dave Harlow - USF&WS
Gerald Tews
Nature Conservancy

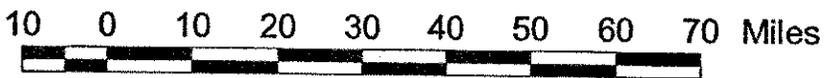
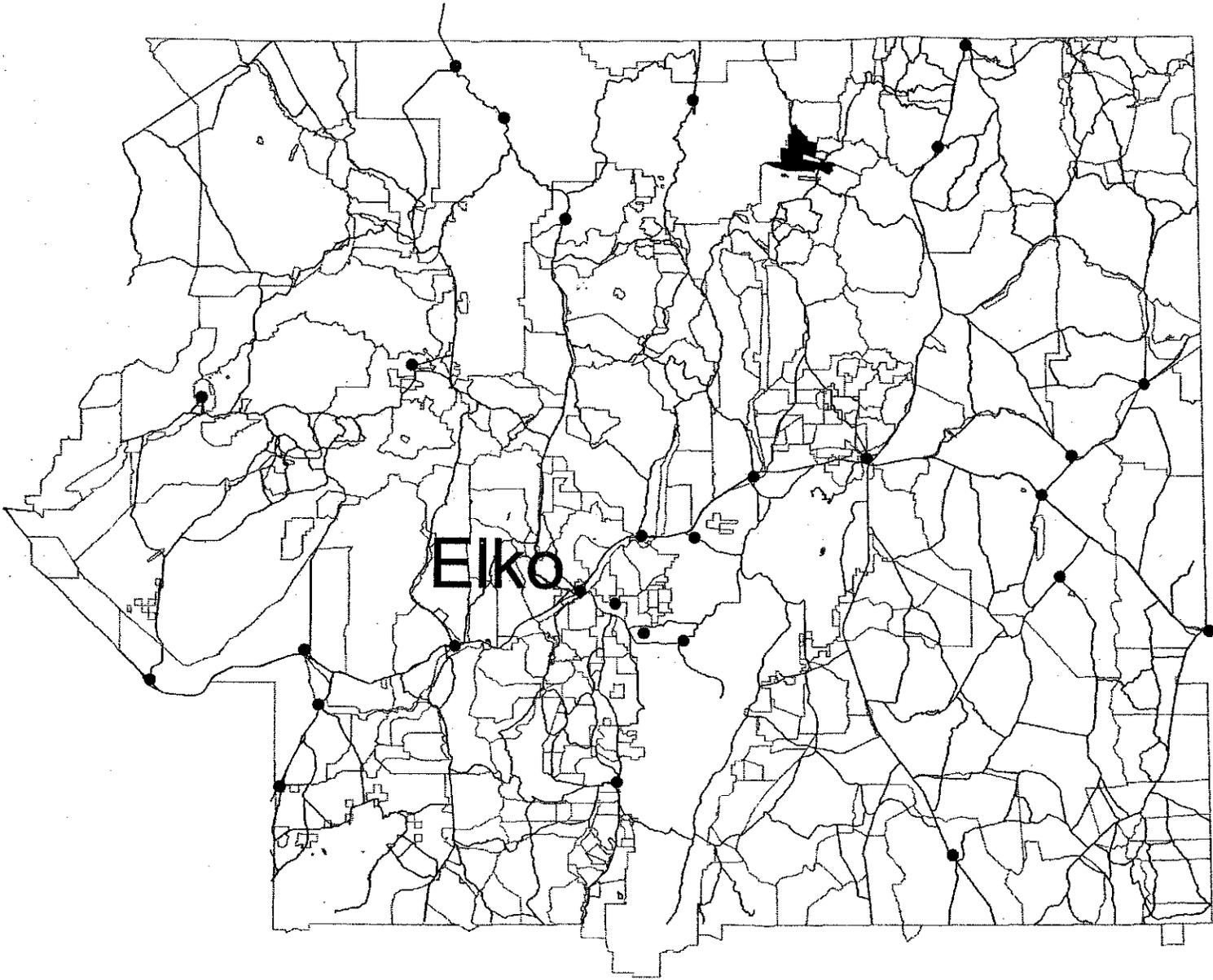
Nancy Whitaker - API
O'Neil Basin Ranch Inc.
Forest Service - Supervisors Office
Jarbidge Ranger District
Nevada Cattleman's Assoc.
Nev. Land Action Assoc.
Rose Strickland
Bert Brackett
Nev. Dept. of Agriculture
Jim Mulcahy
HTT Resources

**Cottonwood Allotment Re-Evaluation
Environmental Assessment
BLM/EK/PL-2005/002**

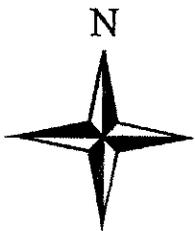
MAPS

COTTONWOOD ALLOTMENT

MAP A



	Cottonwood Allotment
	Elko District Allotments
	Roads

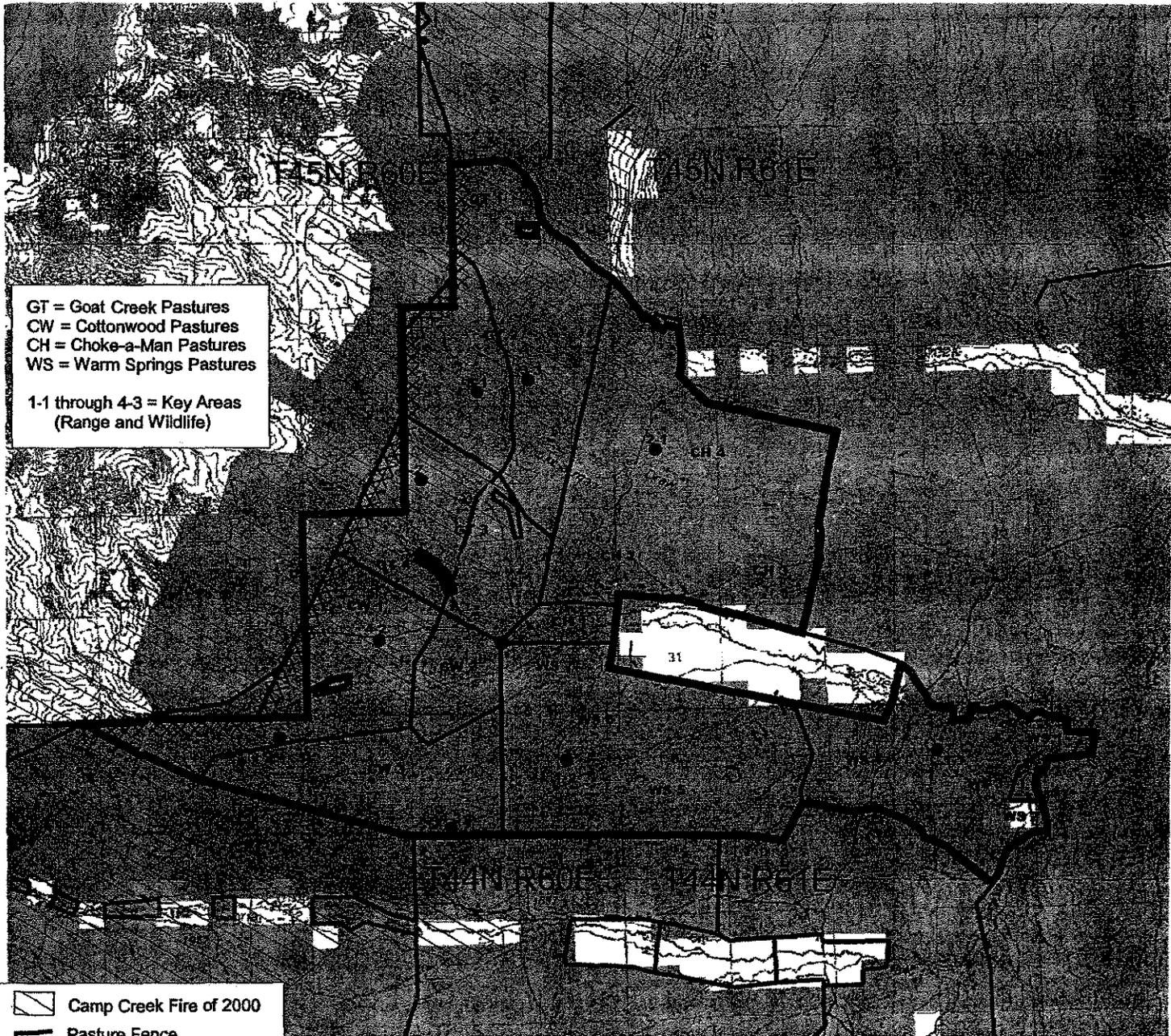


UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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ELKO FIELD OFFICE

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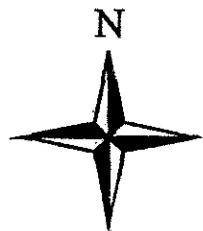
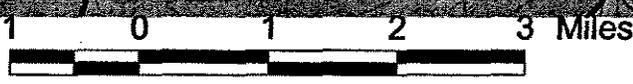
COTTONWOOD ALLOTMENT

MAP B



GT = Goat Creek Pastures
 CW = Cottonwood Pastures
 CH = Choke-a-Man Pastures
 WS = Warm Springs Pastures
 1-1 through 4-3 = Key Areas
 (Range and Wildlife)

 Camp Creek Fire of 2000
 Pasture Fence
 Allotment Boundary
 USFS/BLM Boundary Fence
 (Post Camp Creek Fire
 Reconstructed Fence)
LAND STATUS
 BLM
 Private
 USFS

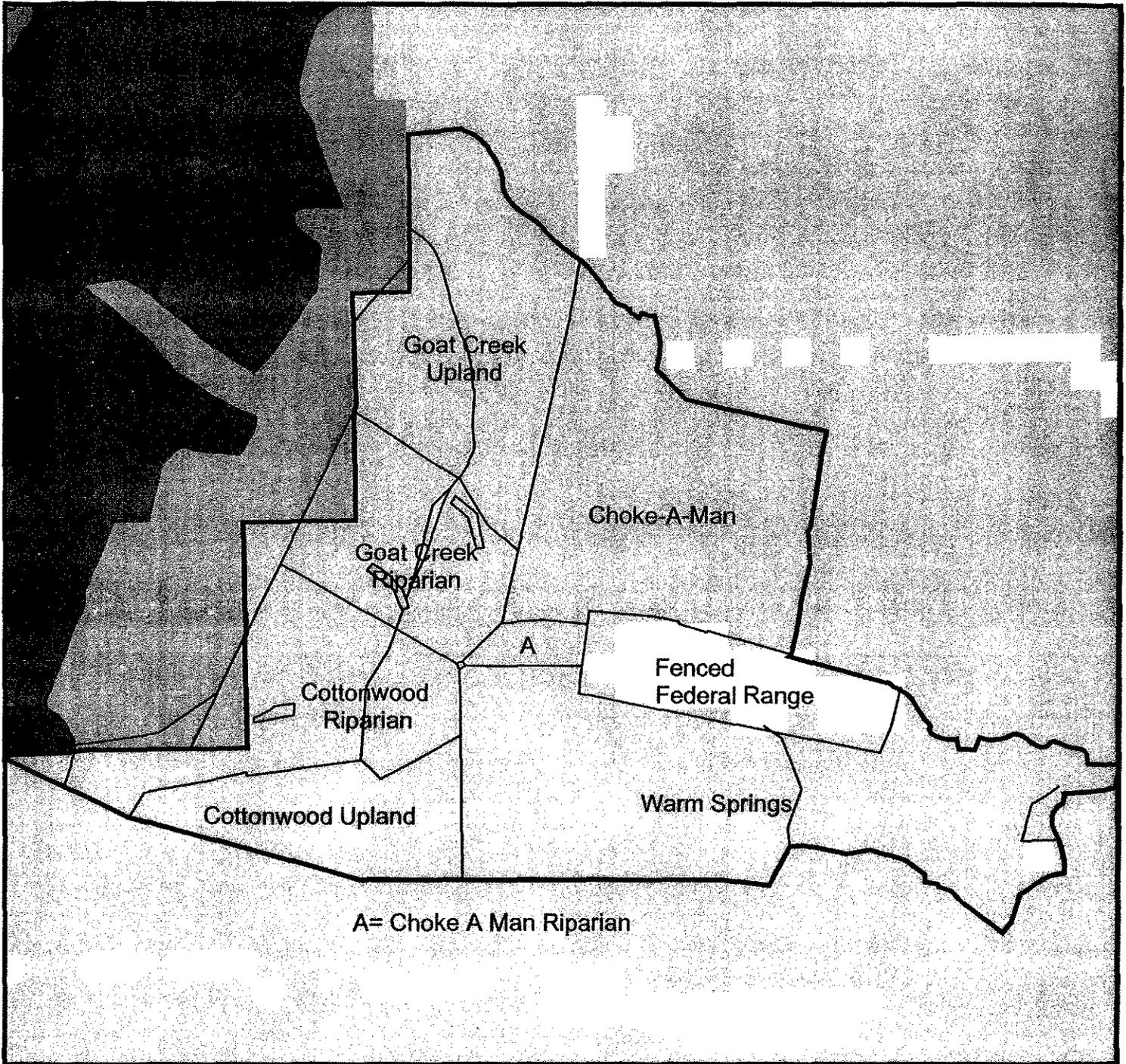


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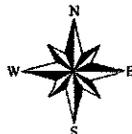
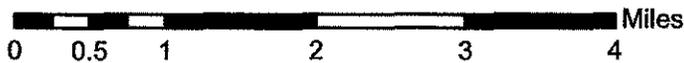
Map C

Cottonwood Allotment Pasture Names



Legend

-  Cottonwood Allotment
-  Fences
-  Public (Administered by BLM)
-  Private
-  U.S. Forest Service
-  USFS Wilderness Area



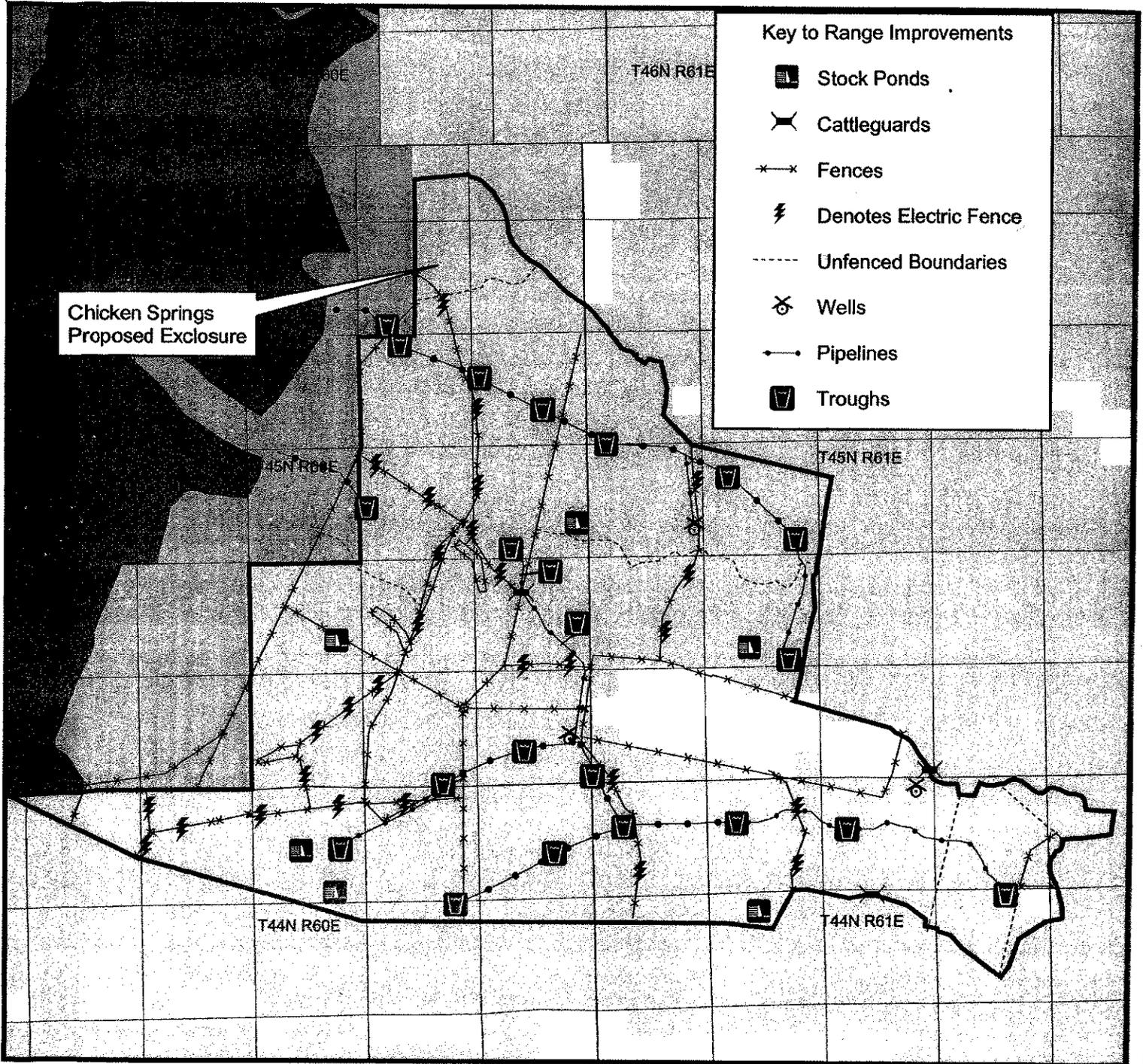
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Map D

Cottonwood Allotment

Existing and Proposed Range Improvements



Chicken Springs
Proposed Exclosure

Key to Range Improvements

- Stock Ponds
- Cattleguards
- Fences
- Denotes Electric Fence
- Unfenced Boundaries
- Wells
- Pipelines
- Troughs

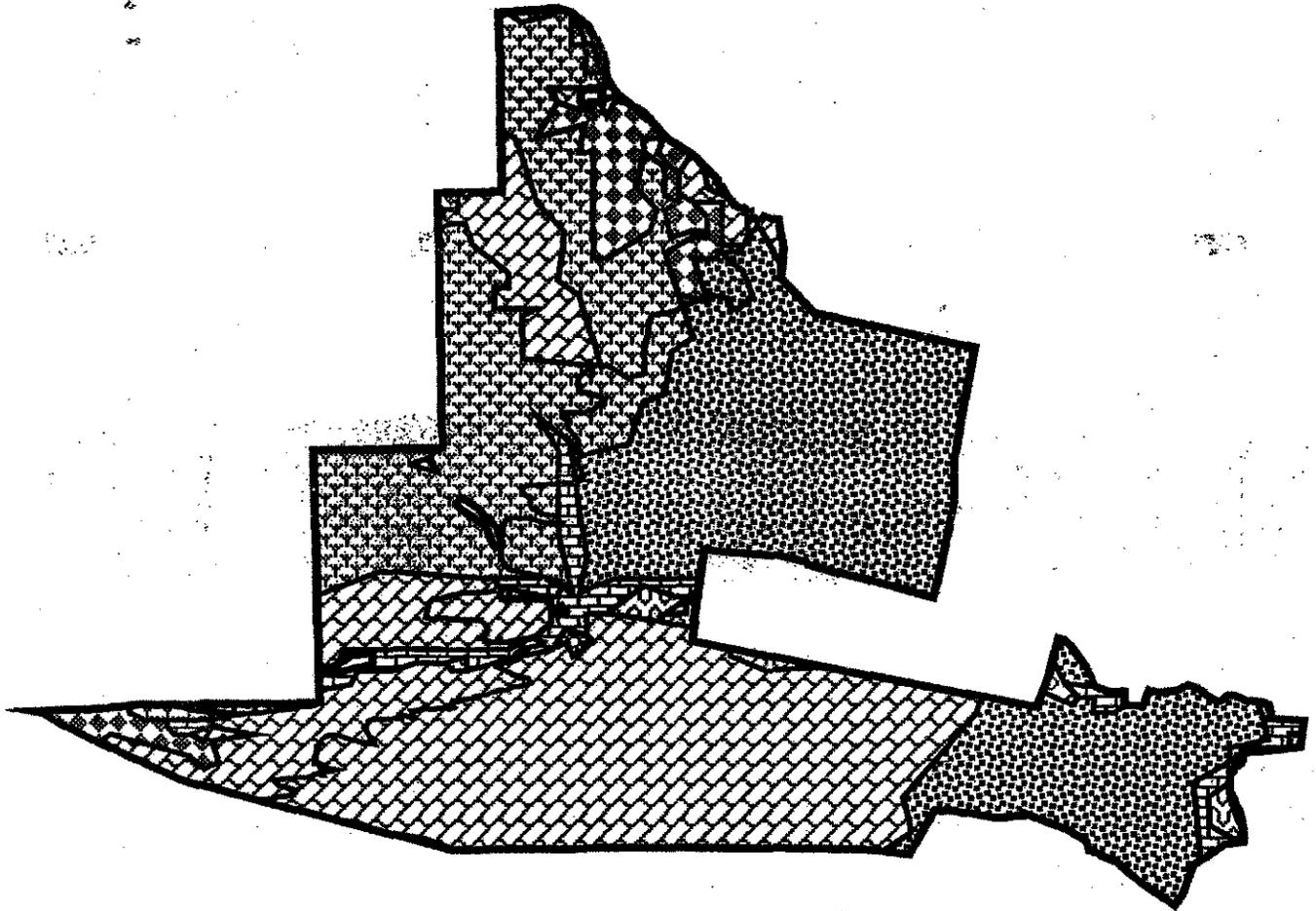
Legend

- Cottonwood Allotment
- Township-Range
- Public (Administered by BLM)
- Private
- U.S. Forest Service
- USFS Wilderness Area
- Section Lines



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COTTONWOOD ALLOTMENT VEGETATION TYPES



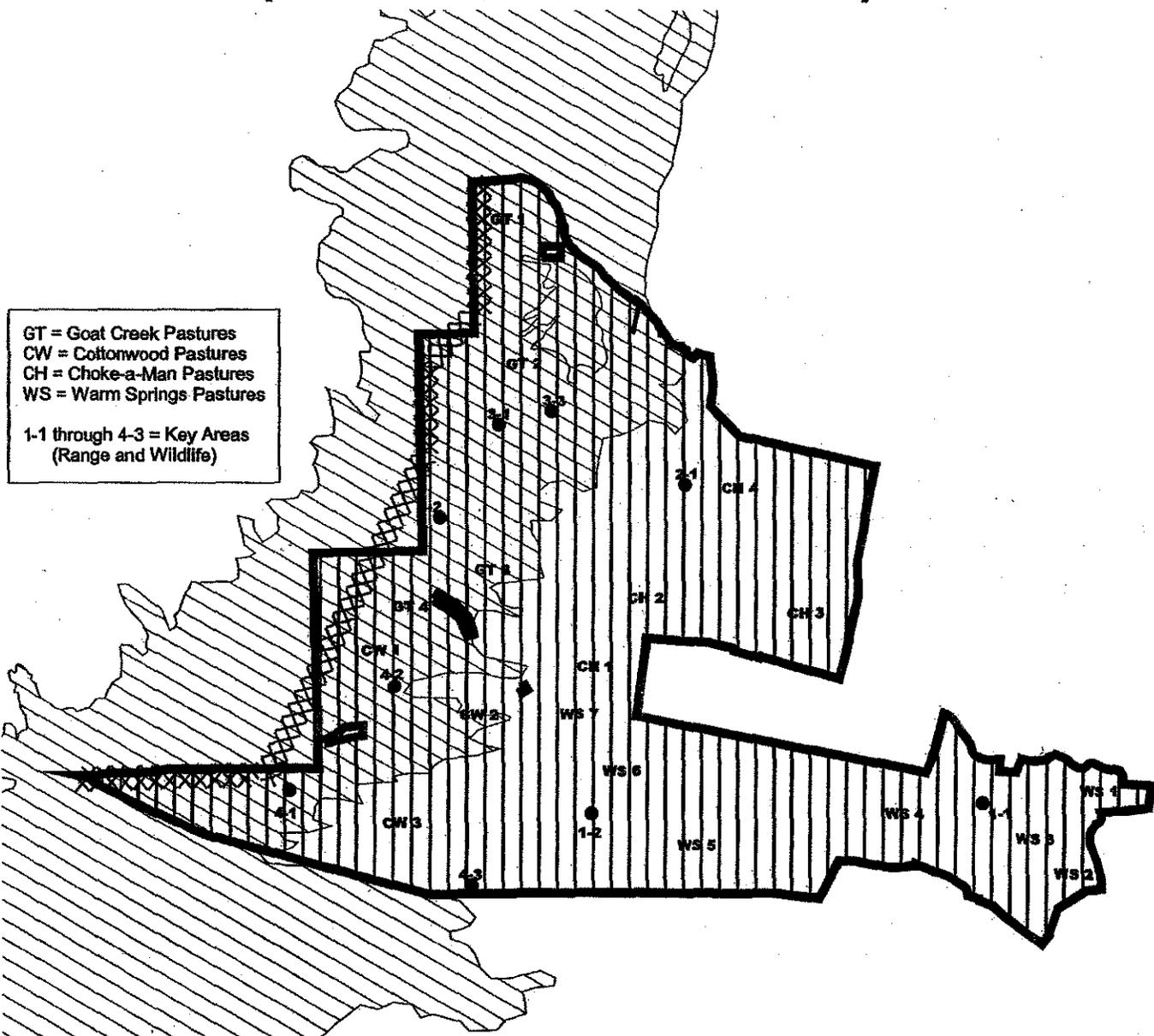
-  Agriculture
-  Basin big sagebrush
-  Black sagebrush
-  Low sagebrush
-  Mountain big sagebrush
-  Mountain shrub
-  Riparian
-  Wyoming & Basin big sagebrush
-  Wyoming big sagebrush
-  Allotment



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COTTONWOOD ALLOTMENT (Wildlife Habitat)



GT = Goat Creek Pastures
 CW = Cottonwood Pastures
 CH = Choke-a-Man Pastures
 WS = Warm Springs Pastures

1-1 through 4-3 = Key Areas
 (Range and Wildlife)

Camp Creek Fire of 2000

Crucial Deer Summer Habitat
 Antelope Summer Habitat
 Sage Grouse Summer Habitat
 Sage Grouse Winter Habitat
 Sage Grouse Nesting Habitat
 Elk Range

Allotment Boundary

USFS/BLM Boundary Fence
 (Post Camp Creek Fire
 Reconstructed Fence)

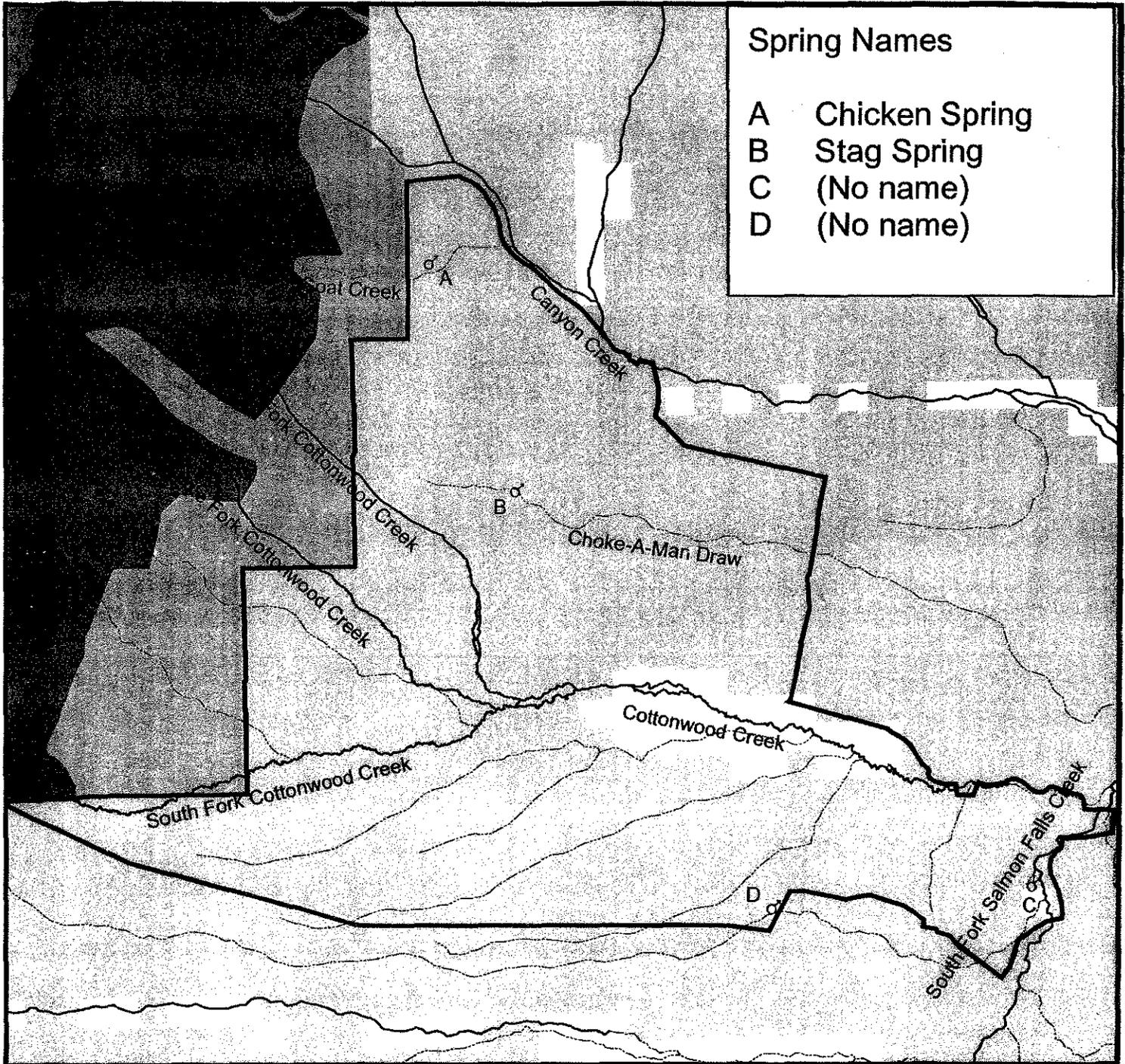


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Map G

Cottonwood Allotment Streams & Springs



Spring Names

- A Chicken Spring
- B Stag Spring
- C (No name)
- D (No name)

Legend

- Cottonwood Allotment
- Public (Administered by BLM)
- Private
- U.S. Forest Service
- USFS Wilderness Area

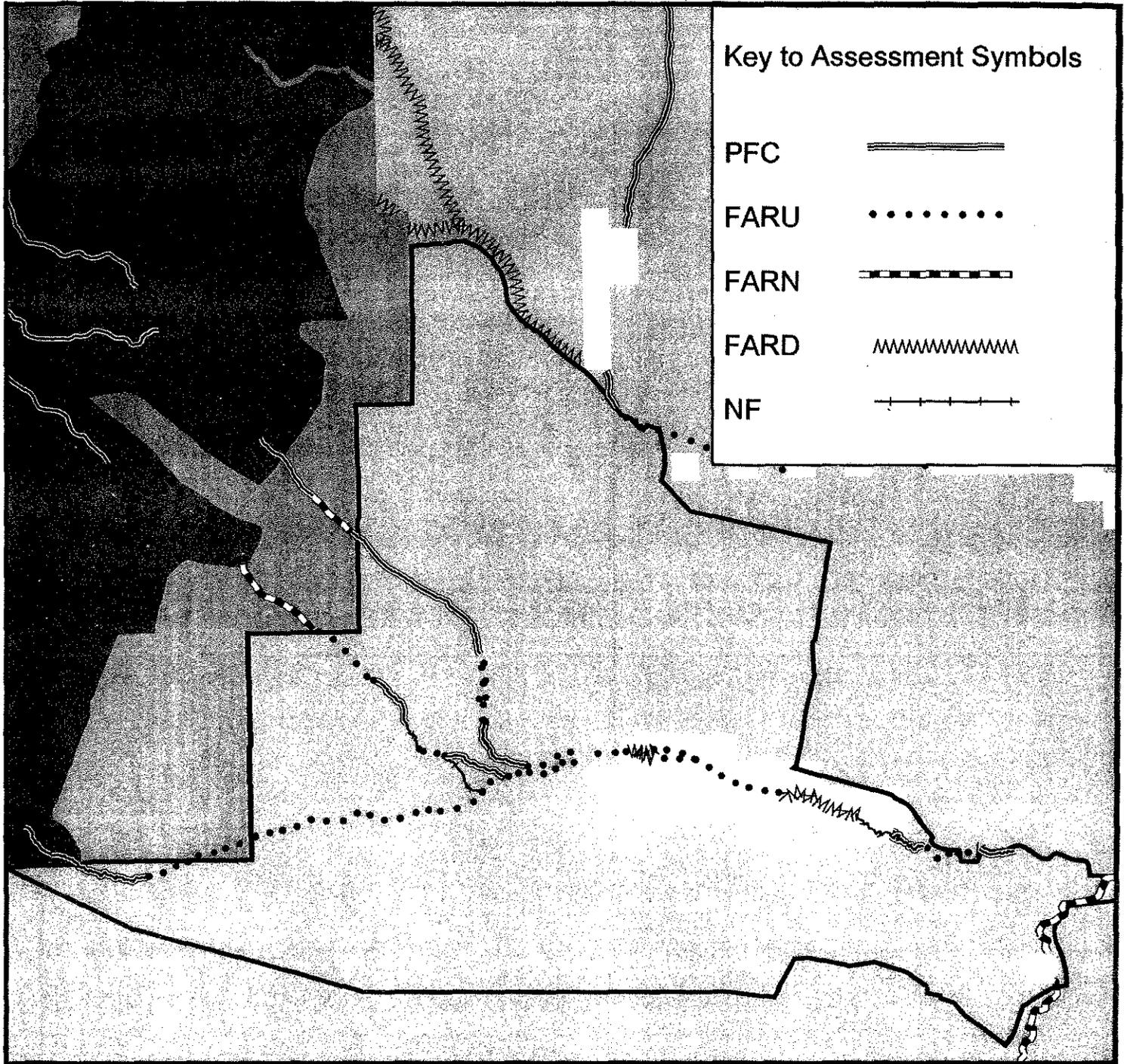
TYPE

- intermittent
- perennial



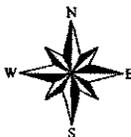
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Map H Cottonwood Allotment Riparian Assessments

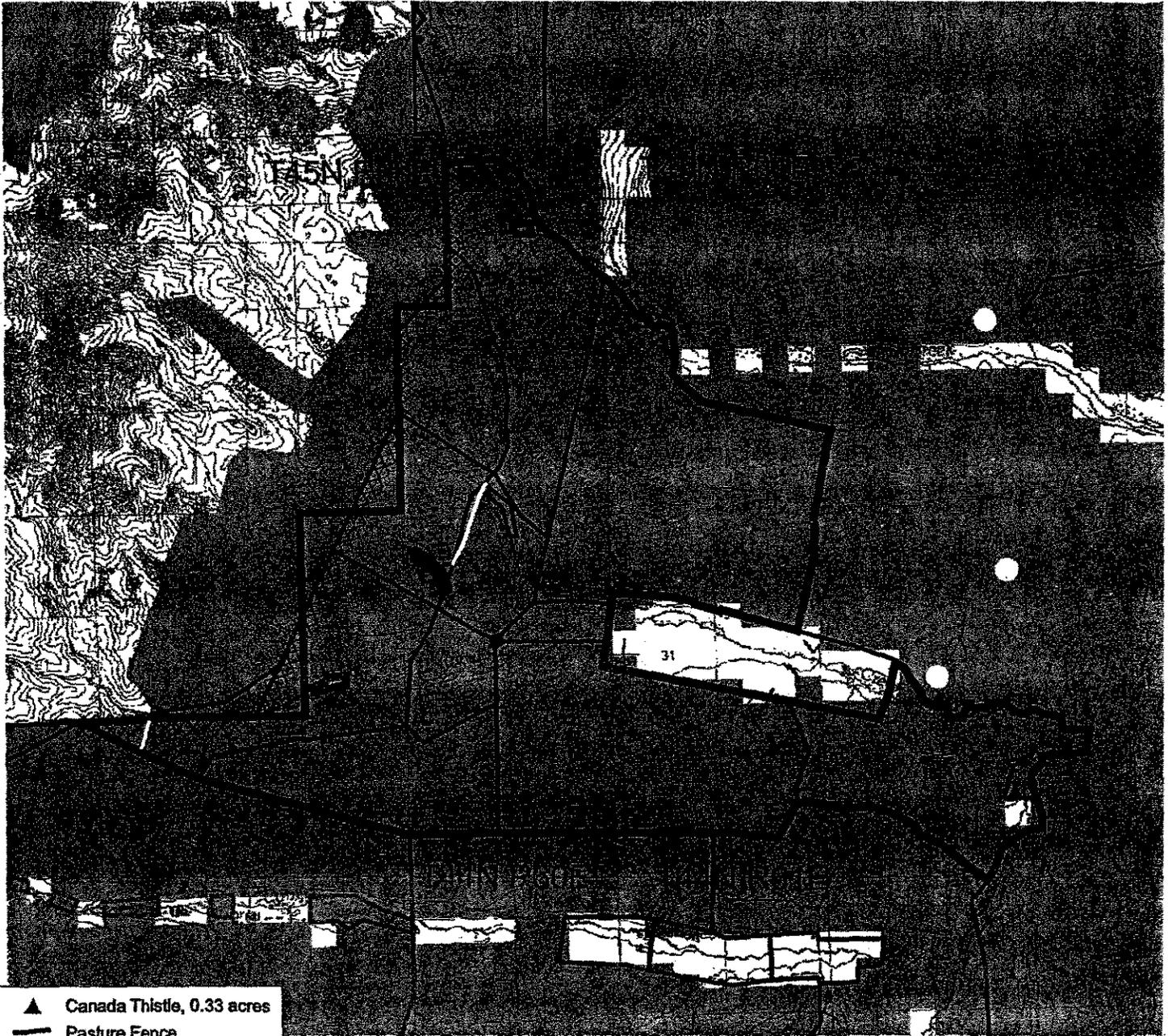


Legend

- Cottonwood Allotment
- Public (Administered by BLM)
- Private
- U.S. Forest Service
- USFS Wilderness Area



COTTONWOOD ALLOTMENT WEEDS



▲ Canada Thistle, 0.33 acres

— Pasture Fence

▭ Allotment Boundary

XXX USFS/BLM Boundary Fence
(Post Camp Creek Fire
Reconstructed Fence)

LAND STATUS

■ BLM

■ Private

■ USFS



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