



United States Department of Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Caliente Field Office
P.O. Box 237 (1400 South Front St.)
Caliente, Nevada 89008-0237

http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/ely_field_office.html



SEP 3 2008

In Reply Refer to:
4160 (NV-045)
Project File
Case File

CERTIFIED MAIL 7008 0150 0000 5678 5253- RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Eldon Crawford
5195 E. Kirkway Drive
Winnemucca, Nevada 89445

PROPOSED DECISION
Grazing Permit Renewal for Eldon Crawford (2705134)
for the Deer Lodge Allotment (21026)

Background Information

On September 2, 2008 the Categorical Exclusion (CX) was signed for Eldon Crawford (Deer Lodge Allotment) term permit renewal (CX-NV-045-08-011). The CX and Standards Determination Document are enclosed. This proposed decision is issued in accordance with 43 CFR 4160.1.

This decision complies with BLM Nevada Instruction Memorandum (IM) No. NV-2008-019 which provides guidance to facilitate the preparation of grazing permit renewal CXs as per the requirement set forth in BLM Washington Office IM WO 2008-019.

The term grazing permit under consideration is for the Deer Lodge Allotment. The permit authorizes cattle use only with a permitted use of 648 Animal Unit Months (AUM). Of these, 167 are active use and 481 are suspended nonuse. The season of use is March 1 to February 28. The allotment is ranked as an "I" (Improve Condition) category in land use documents. The current permit is issued for the period of August 6, 2004 to February 28, 2014. The allotment encompasses 7,300 acres of BLM managed lands.

Fully processing and renewing the term permit for Eldon Crawford for the Deer Lodge Allotment provides for a legitimate multiple use of the public lands. The term permit will include terms and conditions for grazing use that conform to Guidelines and will continue to achieve the Standards for Nevada's Mojave-Southern Great Basin Area. The term permit is issued in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies and in accordance with Title 43 CFR 4130.2(a) which states "Grazing permits or leases shall be issued to qualified

applicants to authorize use on the public lands and other lands under the administration of the Bureau of Land Management that are designated as available for livestock grazing through land use plans". This decision specifically identifies terms and conditions appropriate to continue to achieve management and resource condition objectives.

The standards were assessed for the Deer Lodge Allotment by a BLM interdisciplinary team consisting of rangeland management specialists, wildlife biologist, weeds specialist, and watershed specialist. Documents and publications used in the assessment process include the Soil Survey of Lincoln County Nevada, North Part, Ecological Site Descriptions for Major Land Resource Area 29, Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health (USDI-BLM et al. 2000), Sampling Vegetation Attributes (USDI-BLM et al. 1996) and the National Range and Pasture Handbook (USDA-NRCS 1997). All are available for public review in the Caliente Field Office. The interdisciplinary team used rangeland monitoring data, professional observations, and photographs to assess achievement of the Standards and conformance with the Guidelines.

The assessment of rangeland health for the Deer Lodge Allotment was conducted in the summer, 2008. It was determined that the Standards are being achieved and that grazing management is in complete conformance with the Guidelines. A review and analysis of the monitoring data was conducted. A summary of the findings for the allotment are as follows:

Standard 1. Soils: Standard Achieved. The determination is based on stable soils and healthy vegetative communities with native sod-forming grasses prevalent throughout the allotment. High amounts of gravel on the surface in the black sagebrush ecosystem and gentle terrain add to the soil stability. Vegetative cover was met or exceeded by desirable vegetative species at all of the monitoring sites. Mosses and cryptobiotic crusts were prevalent throughout the allotment.

Standard 2. Ecosystem Components: Standard Achieved. The determination is based on apparent resiliency of the vegetative community. Vegetative conditions are acceptable and desirable with low risk for catastrophic wildfire. The risk of invasive species becoming established on the allotment is low due to healthy vegetative communities. Native herbaceous species occur throughout the allotment indicating a healthy, diverse, and functioning community.

Standard 3. Habitat and Biota: Standard Achieved. The determination is based on vegetative communities dominated by sagebrush with understory herbaceous species present. A diverse perennial and annual forb population was documented as occurring on the allotment. Junipers and pinyons presently occur in densities which benefit many wildlife species. Cheatgrass has not become established on the allotment. The ecosystem is displaying resiliency to invasive species. The risk of catastrophic wildfire is low.

The project proposal was posted on the Ely Field Office web site, on or about February 15, 2008, at http://www.nv.blm.gov/ely/nepa/ea_list.htm. No comments were received to the proposal.

The Standard Determination Document was posted on the Ely external webpage on July 25, 2008 for a fifteen day comment period. A hard copy of the determination was mailed to the permittee and those publics who have specifically requested one and who expressed an interest in range management actions on the Deer Lodge Allotment. Comments were received from the

Sustainable Grazing Coalition, Nevada Department of Wildlife, and Division of Water Resources. They were reviewed and considered in the finalization of the determination document.

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT DECISION

In accordance with 43 CFR 4110.3, 4110.3-2(b) and 4130.3-1 permitted use for Eldon Crawford on the Deer Lodge Allotment will remain unchanged and will appear as follows on the permit:

Table 1. Term Permit for Eldon Crawford (#2705134)

Allotment Name and Number	Livestock Number/Kind	Grazing Period		% Public Land*	Type Use	AUMs**
		Begin	End			
Deer Lodge (21026)	14 Cattle	3/1	2/28	100	Active	168
* % Public Land is the percent of public land for billing purposes.						
** AUMs may differ from Active Use due to a rounding difference with the number of livestock and the period of use.						
Allotment AUMs Summary						
ACTIVE AUMS		SUSPENDED AUMS		PERMITTED AUMS		
168		481		648		

The proposed term permit and allotment information is as follows:

The renewal of the term grazing permit will be for a period of ten years. This decision will be effective upon the decision becoming final or pending final determination on appeal.

Terms and conditions for grazing use which will become pertinent to the Eldon Crawford permit are a quantification of land use plan objectives are proposed as follows:

1. Salt and/or mineral supplements for livestock will be located no closer than $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from water sources. Use of nutritional supplements (not forage) is encouraged to improve the ability of cattle to utilize forage in the winter months and to improve livestock distribution across the allotment.

2. Maximum allowable use levels would be established as follows:

- Perennial grasses: 40% current year's growth.
- Perennial shrubs, half-shrubs and forbs: 40% use on current annual production.

Stipulations Common to All Allotments:

1. 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 will not prevent attainment of the multiple-use objectives for the allotment.

Deviations from specified grazing use dates will be allowed when consistent with multiple-use objectives. Such deviations will require an application and written authorization from the authorized officer prior to grazing use.

2. The authorized officer is requiring that an actual use report (form 4130-5) be submitted within 15 days after completing your annual grazing use.

3. The payment of your grazing fees is due on or before the date specified in the grazing bill. This date is generally the opening date of your allotment. If payment is not received within 15 days of the due date, you will be charged a late fee assessment of \$25 or 10 percent of the grazing bill, whichever is greater, not to exceed \$250. Payment with Visa, Mastercard or American Express is accepted. Failure to make payment within 30 days of the due date may result in trespass action.

4. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(G) the holder of this authorization must notify the authorized officer by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon discovery of human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony (as defined at 43 CFR 10.2). 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.

5. Grazing use will be in accordance with the Mojave Southern Great Basin Standards and Guidelines for grazing administration as developed by the respective resource advisory council and were approved by the Secretary of the Interior on February 12, 1997 with subsequent revisions. Grazing use will also be in accordance with 43 CFR Subpart 4180 – Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration.

6. If future monitoring data indicates that Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration are not being met, the permit will be reissued subject to revised terms and conditions.

7. The permittee is responsible for all maintenance of assigned range improvements including wildlife escape ramps for both permanent and temporary water troughs.

8. The permittee must notify the authorized officer by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon discovery of any hazardous or solid wastes as defined in 40 CFR Part 261.'

Rationale For No Changes in Grazing Use

Monitoring data review and assessment findings indicate that all three Standards are being achieved on the allotment. The data also indicates that grazing is in conformance with all applicable Guidelines. It is anticipated that the Standards for Rangeland Health will continue to be achieved and grazing use levels will remain at or below AULs throughout a majority of the allotment.

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

4100.0-8: “The authorized officer shall manage livestock grazing on public lands under the principle of multiple-use and sustained yield and in accordance with applicable land use plans. Land use plans shall establish allowable resource uses (either singly or in combination), related levels of production or use to be maintained, areas of use, and resource condition goals and objectives to be obtained. The plans also set forth program constraints and general management practices needed to achieve management objectives. Livestock grazing activities and management actions approved by the authorized officer shall be in conformance with the land use plan as defined at CFR 601.0-5(b).”

4110.3: “The authorized officer shall periodically review the permitted use specified in a grazing permit or lease and shall make changes in the permitted use as needed to manage, maintain or improve rangeland productivity, to assist in restoring ecosystems to properly functioning condition, to conform with land use plans or activity plans, or to comply with the provisions of subpart 4180 of this part. These changes must be supported by monitoring, field observations, ecological site inventory or other data acceptable to the authorized officer.”

4110.3-2 (b): “When monitoring or field observations show grazing use or patterns of use are not consistent with the provisions of subpart 4180, or grazing use is otherwise causing an unacceptable level or pattern of utilization, or when use exceeds the livestock carrying capacity as determined through monitoring, ecological site inventory or other acceptable methods, the authorized officer shall reduce permitted grazing use or otherwise modify management practices.”

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.”

4130.3-1 (c) “Permits and leases shall incorporate terms and conditions that ensure conformance with subpart 4180 of this part.”

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....”

4130.3-3: “Following consultation, cooperation, and coordination with the affected lessees or permittees, the State having lands or responsible for managing resources within the area, and the interested public, the authorized officer may modify terms and conditions of the permit or lease when the active use or related management practices are not meeting the land use plan, allotment management plan or other activity plan, or management objectives, or is not in conformance with the provisions of subpart 4180 of this part...”

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.”

4160.1 (b) “Proposed decisions shall state the reasons for the action and shall reference the pertinent terms, conditions and the provisions of applicable regulations. As appropriate, decisions shall state the alleged violations of specific terms and conditions and provisions of these regulations alleged to have been violated, and shall state the amount due under §§ 4130.8 and 4150.3 and the action to be taken under § 4170.1.”

4160.3 (a) “In the absence of a protest, the proposed decision will become the final decision of the authorized officer without further notice unless otherwise provided in the proposed decision.

4160.3 (b) Upon the timely filing of a protest, the authorized officer shall reconsider her/his proposed decision in light of the protestant's statement of reasons for protest and in light of other information pertinent to the case. At the conclusion to her/his review of the protest, the authorized officer shall serve her/his final decision on the protestant or her/his agent, or both, and the interested public.

4160.3 (c) A period of 30 days following receipt of the final decision, or 30 days after the date the proposed decision becomes final as provided in paragraph (a) of this section, is provided for filing an appeal and petition for stay of the decision pending final determination on appeal. A decision will not be effective during the 30-day appeal period, except as provided in paragraph (f) of this section. See Sec. Sec. 4.21 and 4.470 of this title for general provisions of the appeal and stay processes.”

4180.1: “The authorized officer shall take appropriate action under subparts 4110, 4120, 4130, and 4160 of this part as soon as practicable but not later than the start of the next grazing year upon determining that existing grazing management needs to be modified to ensure that the following conditions exist.

- (a) Watersheds are in, or are making significant progress toward, properly functioning physical condition, including their upland, riparian-wetland, and

aquatic components; soil and plant conditions support infiltration, soil moisture storage, and the release of water that are in balance with climate and landform and maintain or improve water quality, water quantity, and timing and duration of flow.

- (b) Ecological processes, including the hydrologic cycle, nutrient cycle, and energy flow, are maintained, or there is significant progress toward their attainment, in order to support healthy biotic populations and communities.
- (c) Water quality complies with State water quality standards and achieves, or is making significant progress toward achieving, established BLM management objectives such as meeting wildlife needs.
- (d) Habitats are, or are making significant progress toward being, restored or maintained for Federal threatened and endangered species, Federal Proposed, Category 1 and 2 Federal candidate and other special status species.”

Protest and Appeal

Protest

In accordance with 43 CFR 4160.2, any applicant, permittee, lessee or other interested public may protest the proposed decision under 4160.1 of this title, in person or in writing to Ron Clementsen, Field Manager for the Caliente Field Office, P.O. Box 237 Caliente, Nevada 89008 within 15 days after receipt of such decision. The protest, if filed, must clearly and concisely state the reason(s) why the protestant thinks the proposed decision is in error.

In accordance with 43 CFR 4160.3 (a), in the absence of a protest, the proposed decision will become the final decision of the authorized officer without further notice unless otherwise provided in the proposed decision.

In accordance with 43 CFR 4160.3 (b), should a timely protest be filed with the authorized officer, the authorized officer will reconsider the proposed decision and shall serve the final decision on the protestant and the interested public.

Appeal

In accordance with 43 CFR 4.470 and 4160.4, any person who wishes to appeal or seek a stay of a BLM grazing decision must follow the requirements set forth in 4.470 through 4.480 of this title. The appeal or petition for stay must be filed with the BLM office that issued the decision within 30 days after its receipt or within 30 days after the proposed decision becomes final as provided in 4160.3 (a).

The appeal and any petition for stay must be filed at the office of the authorized officer Ron Clementsen, Field Manager for the Caliente Field Office, P.O. Box 237 Caliente, Nevada 89008. Within 15 days of filing the appeal and any petition for stay, the appellant also must serve a copy

of the appeal and any petition for stay on any person named in the decision and listed at the end of the decision, and on the Office of the Solicitor, Regional Solicitor, Pacific Southwest Region, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2800 Cottage Way, Room E-1712, Sacramento, California 95825-1890.

Pursuant to 43 CFR 4.471(c), 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.

43 CFR 4.471(d) provides that the appellant requesting a stay bears the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

Any person named in the decision from which an appeal is taken (other than the appellant) who wishes to file a response to the petition for a stay may file with the Hearings Division in Salt Lake City, Utah, a motion to intervene in the appeal, together with the response, within 10 days after receiving the petition. Within 15 days after filing the motion to intervene and response, the person must serve copies on the appellant, the Office of the Solicitor and any other person named in the decision (43 CFR 4.472(b)).

At the conclusion of any document that a party must serve, the party or its representative must sign a written statement certifying that service has been or will be made in accordance with the applicable rules and specifying the date and manner of such service (43 CFR 4.422(c)(2)).

Sincerely,

/s/ Michael J. Herder *for*

Ron Clementsen
Field Manager
Caliente Field Office

Enclosure

cc:

John Mathews
P.O. Box 569
Pioche, NV 89043

7008 0150 0000 5678 5260

Steven Carter
PO Box 27

7008 0150 0000 5678 5277

Lund NV 89317
 Rob Mrowka 7008 0150 0000 5678 5284
 4261 Lily Glen Ct.
 No. Las Vegas NV 89032

Resource Concepts, Inc. 7008 0150 0000 5678 5291
 Attn: John McLain
 340 Minnesota St.
 Carson City NV 89703-4152

Tuffy Ranch Properties 7008 0150 0000 5678 5307
 Attn: Linda Carriger
 PO Box 466
 Panaca NV 89042

Cindy MacDonald 7008 0150 0000 5678 5314
 3605 Silver Sands Court
 No. Las Vegas NV 89032

Sustainable Grazing Coalition 7008 0150 0000 5678 5321
 C/O Richard A. Orr
 PO Box 145
 Caliente NV 89008-0145

Brad Hardenbrook 7008 0150 0000 5678 5338
 NDOW Southern Region
 4747 Vegas Drive
 Las Vegas NV 89108

Mr. Steve Foree 7008 0150 0000 5678 5345
 NDOW
 60 Youth Center Road
 Elko NV 89801

Mike Scott 7008 0150 0000 5678 5352
 NDOW
 PO Box 779
 Pioche NV 89043

Western Watersheds Project 7008 0150 0000 5678 5369
 ATTN: Katie Fite
 PO Box 2863
 Boise ID 83701

Nevada State Clearinghouse (decision emailed)
 Clearinghouse@budget.state.nv.us

Categorical Exclusion Documentation Format for Actions Other than Hazardous Fuels and Fire Rehabilitation Actions

Caliente Field Office

A. Background

BLM Office: Ely District Office Lease/Serial/Case File No.: CX-NV-045-08-011

Proposed Action Title/Type: Eldon Crawford Permit Renewal for the Deer Lodge Allotment

Location of Proposed Action: Deer Lodge Allotment (#21026)

Description of Proposed Action: The BLM would issue and fully process a new term grazing permit for Eldon Crawford, and authorize grazing on the Deer Lodge Allotment. There are no proposed changes to the terms and conditions. The permit will be issued for a period of ten years. The issuance of the term grazing permit will be effective upon the proposed decision becoming final or pending final determination on appeal. The number and kind of livestock, season-of-use and permitted use will remain as follows on the Deer Lodge Allotment:

Allotment Name and Number	Livestock Number & Kind	Period of Use	Percent Public Land	Type Use	AUMS		
					Active	Susp.	Total
Deer Lodge (21026)	14 Cattle	3/1 – 2/28	100%	Active	167	481	648

An assessment of the Standards and Guidelines for Nevada's Mojave-Southern Great Basin Area was conducted for the Deer Lodge Allotment in 2008 during the permit renewal process. During the assessment, an interdisciplinary review and analysis of the monitoring data was conducted. All three of the Standards are being achieved on the allotment. The Standards Determination Document for the Deer Lodge Allotment is attached.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan Name: The proposed action is in conformance with the Ely District Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan dated August 2008 and signed August 20, 2008. The proposed action implements livestock management decision LG-5 (p.87 ROD).

C: Compliance with NEPA

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 6, Appendix 5-5.4 D.(11) D. Rangeland Management 11. Issuance of livestock grazing permits/leases where: a. The new grazing permit/lease is consistent with the use specified on the previous permit/lease, such that (i) the same kind of livestock is grazed (ii) the active use previously authorized is not exceeded,

and (iii) grazing does not occur more than 14 days earlier or later than as specified on the pervious permit/lease, and b. The grazing allotment(s) has been assessed and evaluated and the Responsible Official has documented in a determination that the allotment (s) is (i) meeting land health standards, or (ii) not meeting land health standards due to factors that do not include existing livestock grazing.

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM2 apply.

D: Signature

Authorizing Official: /s/ Michael J. Herder *for* _____ Date: SEP 2 2008
(Signature)

Name: Michael J. Herder

Title: Associate District Manager

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact Chris Mayer, Supervisory Rangeland Management Specialist, Egan Field Office, Ely District, HC33 Box 33500 Ely, Nevada, 89301-9408, 775-289-1800.

Categorical Exclusions: Extraordinary Circumstances

If any of these extraordinary circumstances apply a CX can not be used.

Extraordinary circumstances exist for individual actions within CXs which may:

2.1: Have significant impacts on public health or safety.

Review: The proposed action would not affect public health or safety.

2.2: Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.

Review: NONE

2.3: Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].

Review: There are no unresolved conflicts nor highly controversial environmental affects.

2.4: Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.

Review: No uncertain effects or environmental risks.

2.5: Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.

Review: The action would not set a precedent for future actions.

2.6: Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.

Review: The proposed action does not contribute to significant environmental effects.

2.7: Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.

Review: No properties exist in the allotment.

2.8: Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.

Review: The allotment does not provide habitat for any threatened or endangered species. Refer to the attached writeup by Rick Baxter, Wildlife Biologist.

2.9: Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

Review: None of the listed laws are being violated.

2.10: Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).

Review: No minority populations affected.

2.11: Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).

Review: The proposed action would not impact any of these activities.

2.12: Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).

Review: A Weed Risk Assessment was conducted in conjunction with the permit renewal process for the Deer Lodge Allotment. Although noxious and invasive species are not problematic on the allotment, a moderate risk rating was assigned anyway due to the presence of three species in the vicinity on roads leading to the allotment. On the allotment, only salt cedar has been identified as occurring on the allotment which amounts to a few individual plants in Flatnose Canyon. The assessment incorporates mitigation measures to diminish the threat of invasive and noxious weed introduction and spread as follows:

- Prior to entering public lands, the BLM will provide information regarding noxious weed management and identification to the permit holders affiliated with the project. The importance of preventing the spread of weeds to uninfested areas and importance of controlling existing populations of weeds will be explained.
- The range specialist for the allotment will include weed detection into project compliance inspection activities. If the spread of noxious weeds is noted, appropriated weed control procedures will be determined in consultation with BLM personnel and will be in compliance with the appropriate BLM handbook sections and applicable laws and regulations.
- To eliminate the introduction of noxious weed seeds, roots, or rhizomes all interim and final seed mixes, hay, straw, hay/straw, or other organic products used for feed or bedding will be certified free of plant species listed on the Nevada noxious weed list or specifically identified by the BLM Ely Field Office.

- Grazing will be conducted in compliance with the Ely District BLM noxious weed schedules. The scheduled procedures can significantly and effectively reduce noxious weed spread or introduction into the project area.
- Any newly established populations of noxious/invasive weeds discovered will be communicated to the Ely District Noxious and Invasive Weeds Coordinator for treatment.

**NEPA DOCUMENTATION AND REVIEW
FOR
RANGE PROJECTS**

Project Name: Eldon Crawford permit on the Deer Lodge Allotment

Proposed Action: The proposal is to fully process the grazing term permit and reissue a permit for Eldon Crawford

Resource: Wildlife

Briefly describe conflicts or issues associated with the action.

Big Game:

Elk – The allotment is in yearlong elk habitat.

Deer – The allotment is in yearlong and winter habitat

Special Status Species:

Sage Grouse – there is one inactive lek more than two miles from the allotment. The allotment does not contain nesting, summer or winter habitat.

The allotment contains no known habitat for Threatened, Endangered or other special status plant species.

The allotment may contain a few BLM sensitive species which may include: pinyon jay, gray vireo, and juniper titmouse.

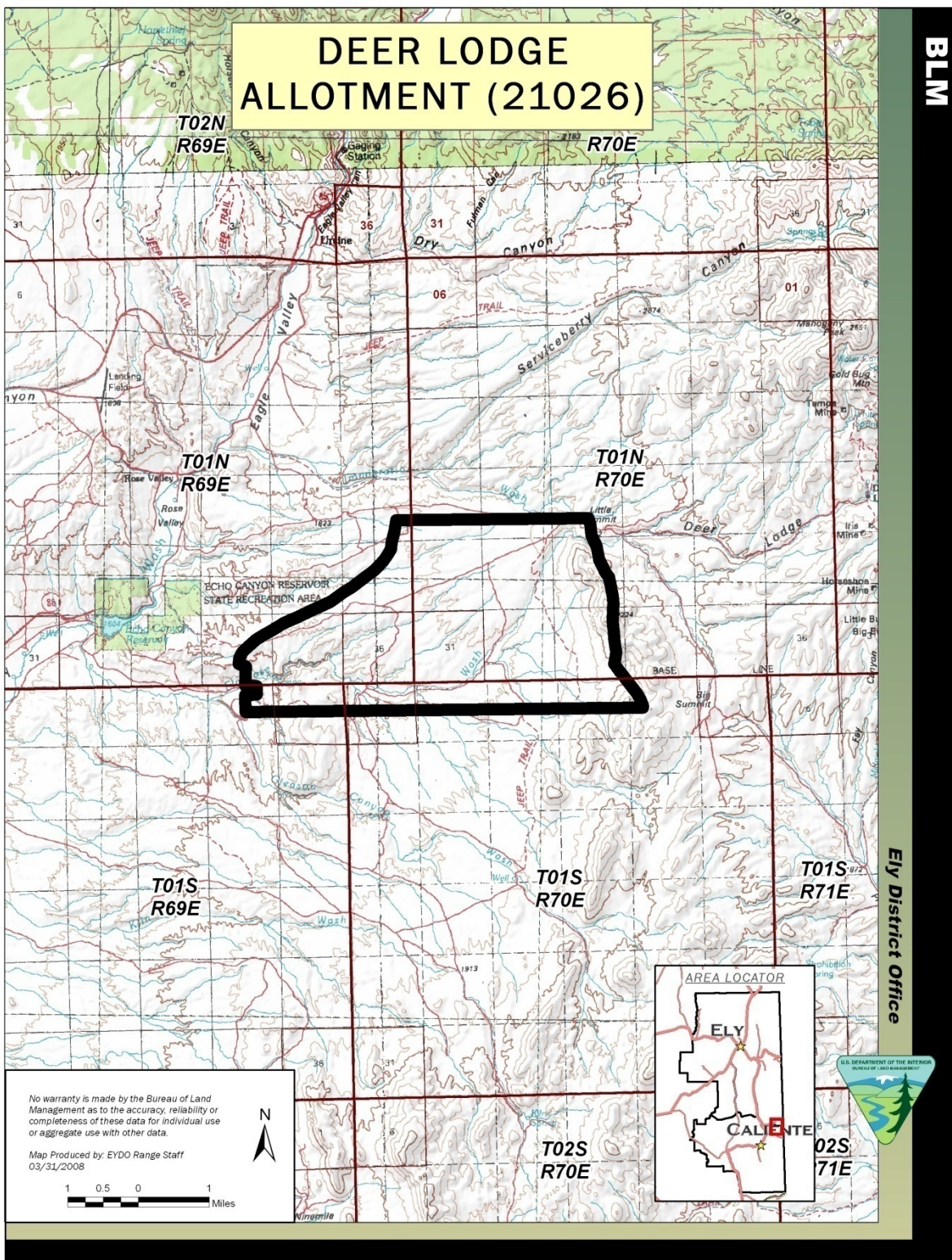
Migratory Birds:

There is habitat for a variety of migratory birds within the allotment. These may include, but are not limited to: Loggerhead Shrike, Sage Sparrow and Sage Thrasher.

Possible Effects:

Grazing may have effects on habitats through alteration of vegetative communities. Grazing at appropriate levels may reduce these possible impacts.

Information on species presence comes from Nevada Natural Heritage Program (NNHP) or Nevada Department of wildlife (NDOW) GIS layers.



**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

STANDARDS DETERMINATION DOCUMENT

Deer Lodge Allotment (#21026)

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Ely District Office
Caliente Field Office
Phone: (775) 726-8100
Fax: (775) 726-8111



STANDARDS DETERMINATION DOCUMENT ***Deer Lodge Allotment (#21026)***

Standards and Guidelines Assessment

The Standards and Guidelines for Nevada's Mojave-Southern Great Basin Area were developed by the Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council (RAC) and approved in 1997. Standards and guidelines are likened to objectives for healthy watersheds, healthy native plant communities, and healthy rangelands. Standards are expressions of physical and biological conditions required for sustaining rangelands for multiple uses. Guidelines point to management actions related to livestock grazing for achieving the standards.

This Standards Determination Document evaluates and assesses livestock grazing management achievement of the Standards and conformance with the Guidelines for the Deer Lodge Allotment in the Ely BLM District. This document does not evaluate or assess achievement of the wild horse and burro or Off Highway Vehicle Standards or conformance to the respective Guidelines.

The standards were assessed for the Deer Lodge Allotment by a BLM interdisciplinary team. Documents and publications used in the assessment process include the Soil Survey of Lincoln County Nevada, Meadow Valley, Ecological Site Descriptions for Major Land Resource Area 29, Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health (USDI-BLM et al. 2000), Sampling Vegetation Attributes (USDI-BLM et al. 1996) and the National Range and Pasture Handbook (USDA-NRCS 1997). A complete list of references is included at the end of this document. All are available for public review in the Caliente BLM Field Station. The interdisciplinary team used rangeland monitoring data, professional observations, and photographs to assess achievement of the Standards and conformance with the Guidelines.

One key area was established for this 7,300 acre allotment in 1983. The Ecological Site Description was identified on the key area locator form as Shallow Loam 8-10" p.z. – 028AY017NV – Wyoming big sagebrush/Indian Ricegrass-Needleandthread. This occurs on the largest soil map unit on the allotment: the Roval Gravelly Loam 2-15% slopes. The map unit vegetation is dominated by Wyoming big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata* var. *wyomingensis*). The most common Ecological Site Description is the Loamy 8-10" p.z. (029XY006NV).

The area where the key area resides was seeded into crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*). The history of the seeding and its origins is not known as the administrative file was not found. Based on the few crested wheat plants and the age of the extensive sagebrush, it is estimated the seeding was established as late as the 1960's. Most of the seedings of this nature were implemented in the late 1950s to the early 1970's. This seeding has reverted to a Wyoming big sagebrush dominated community with a mixed understory of perennial grasses and forbs. Crested wheatgrass is still available but remains in the community in small amounts. The key species at the key area include crested wheatgrass and squirreltail (*Elymus elemoides*). Indian ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*) was also identified at the key area in 2008.

Natural wildfire has been absent from the allotment for several decades. The BLM attempted to use prescribed fire to reduce juniper cover two years ago but the fire failed to carry and relatively little area was burned. Wild horses and mule deer make substantial use on the burn and are the main forage users on the allotment.

According to the BLM geographic information system database, there are no special status species or species of concern in the boundaries of the Deer Lodge Allotment. However, the sage grouse is a Nevada Special Status Species. The allotment is included in the Lincoln Sage Grouse Population Management Unit (PMU) based on habitat availability. No mapped lek sites, summer, winter, nesting, or year long habitat occurs on the allotment in the BLM's data. Because the allotment is in the PMU sage grouse habitat is given consideration in the Habitat and Biota section of this document.

One grazing permit authorizes 167 AUMs of active livestock use on the allotment. The permit was transferred from John Mathews' Flatnose Ranch to Eldon Crawford, the current permittee, in 2003. He has not licensed use on the allotment since obtaining the permit. Prior to the transfer, John Mathews licensed an average of 80% of the allotment AUMs from 1996-2002. Licensed use data is located in Appendix I.

The precipitation data (Appendix I) indicates rain/snow are highly variable in the area. Data collected by the BLM from 1987 to 2007 indicates an average of 10 inches per year. But precipitation varied from three inches to nearly 20 inches during the period.

All monitoring data and reports are available for public inspection at the Caliente Field Station during business hours. A map of the allotment is located in Appendix II of this document.

PART 1. STANDARD CONFORMANCE REVIEW

Standard 1. Soils

“Watershed soils and stream banks should have adequate stability to resist accelerated erosion, maintain soil productivity, and sustain the hydrologic cycle.”

Soil Indicators:

- Ground Cover (vegetation, litter, rock, bare ground).
- Surfaces (e.g., biological crust, pavement).
- Compaction/infiltration.

Riparian Soil Indicators:

- Stream bank stability.

Determination:

X Achieving the Standard

- Not Achieving the Standard, but making significant progress towards achieving
- Not Achieving the Standard, and not making significant progress toward standard

Causal Factors N/A

- Livestock are a contributing factor to not achieving the standard.
- Livestock are not a contributing factor to not achieving the standard
- Failure to meet the standard is related to other issues or conditions

Guidelines Conformance:**X In conformance with the Guidelines**

- Not in conformance with the Guidelines

Conclusion: Standard Achieved

UPLANDS: Vegetative cover was determined by using the line intercept method at the key area and at other areas not deemed key areas but representative of major soil types in the allotment. Cover data is summarized in Appendix I. The table contains key soil type information as well as cover contributions by species.

Key Area 1 occurs in the Roval Soil Mapping Unit. The Ecological Site Description for Key Area 1 is a Loamy 8-10" P.Z. – 029XY006NV – Wyoming big sagebrush/Indian Ricegrass-Needleandthread. The approximate potential ground cover (basal and crown) according to the range site is 15-25%. Cover measured at the key area is 15%. The key area occurs on an old crested wheatgrass seeding. The key area has become revegetated with Wyoming big sagebrush over the last few decades. The sagebrush is starting to show signs of a decadent state. Some plants have dead branches and reduced leaf production. Though the cover is presently at the lower end of the potential for the site, cover is appropriate given the previous treatment which would have sought to reduce the sagebrush cover to maximize herbaceous potential. Crested wheatgrass still provides forage and cover but it is not the dominant species at the site. Cover is also contributed by Douglas' rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus*), mosses, and forbs (various). These deep soils occur on a flat surface and are stable with no evidence of soil loss observed. Figure 1 shows the transect at Key Area 1.

The site is used mostly by wild horses and by mule deer. Livestock have not been grazed on the allotment since 2003. Utilization on crested wheat for 2007 growth was measured at the key area to be 47% (moderate use) by horses. Use on Indian ricegrass was measured at 38% by horses.



Figure 1. Key Area 1 on Deer Lodge Allotment.

Transect DL-1 was read in a loamy bottom about half the distance between two reservoirs. Though not a key area, this site receives grazing use from horses and wildlife and cattle (when they are actually licensed on the allotment). The site occurs on the Decan-Uana Soil Association according to the Meadow Valley Soil Survey. The site occurs in a drainage bottom. The Ecological Site Description used to describe the site is the Upland Wash (029XY009NV). The species noted on site include Wyoming big sagebrush, basin big sagebrush (*A. tridentata tridentata*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), squirreltail, prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia spp.*), rubber rabbitbrush (*C. nauseosus*) (in drainage), mosses and microbiotic crusts on the surface. Cover was measured at 26% at the site. The potential cover for the site is 20-35%. Perennial grasses occur in the interspace. Blue grama is the dominant understory species. Sagebrush vary in size, stature, and age. This allows the open spaces needed to allow an herbaceous understory. Figure 2 shows the area.



Figure 2

The soils were observed throughout the allotment and were found to be sufficiently protected by the vegetation. In the shallower soils where black sagebrush is dominant, gravelly soil surfaces allow for additional protection and stability. Blue grama and small galleta (*Pleuraphis jamesii*) provide cover throughout the allotment.

Transect DL-2 was read on a Shallow Calcareous Loam (029XY006NV) site which is dominated by black sagebrush. The site is also in the Decan-Uana Soil Association. Potential cover for this site is 20-30% for canopy and ground cover. The cover at the site was estimated to be 30.2%. In addition to the 30% vegetative cover, litter added 1.65% soil cover. Most of the cover was contributed by black sagebrush with other contributions from galleta, Douglas' Rabbitbrush, Indian ricegrass, blue grama, several forbs, and mosses. The site is very stable with no signs of erosion being observed during field sampling. The gravelly surface provides additional protection beyond the vegetation of the site. Other species present include Nevada ephedra (*Ephedra nevadensis*), Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja spp.*), squirreltail, needleandthread (*Hesperostipa comata*), a very small amount of cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), and young junipers (*Juniperus osteosperma*). Healthy clumps of moss occur in the area indicating a stable system with low impacts to the soil surface occurring. See Figure 3.



Figure 3. Moss occurring in transect DL-2

Transect DL-3 was read in the Zoate Cobbly Loam Soil Mapping Unit (ZOF). This soil unit occurs in the southwestern portion of the allotment. Rolling hills are dominated by black sagebrush (*A. nova*) and perennial grass/annual forb understory vegetation. The soil surface contains a high gravel component. Larger cobbles are also present on the surface. The Ecological Site Description is the Shallow Calcareous Slope 8-10" p.z. (029XY014NV). Canopy and ground cover was estimated at 31.55%. The potential for the site is 15-25%. In addition to the 30% vegetative cover, litter added 1.65% soil cover.

The soils are very stable in accordance with the description which states, "Rock fragments on the soil surface have a stabilizing effect on surface erosion conditions." This was observed throughout the area in the map unit. Even with the high gravel component, the site is very productive. Forb species were numerous and flowering throughout the area. Galleta, Indian ricegrass, and blue grama represent the grass species in the transect. Species also present but not counted (due to dominant canopy obscuring them) include Douglas' rabbitbrush, Nevada ephedra, *Astragalus spp.*, Star-lily (*Leucocrinum montanum*), wild geranium (*Geranium spp.*), and others observed but not identified. The presence of these forbs is another indicator of stability and low disturbance in the area.

Three reservoirs were built in the wash which leads to Flatnose Canyon. These reservoirs not only provide water in the area to livestock, wild horses, and a large assortment of wildlife, they also serve to reduce flood risks to the private lands south of Echo Canyon Reservoir. The

reservoirs need maintenance to continue functioning in this manner. Flatnose Canyon is a narrow canyon east of these private lands. The walls of this canyon are narrow, steep and extremely high. The silty bottom and enormous boulders indicate the propensity to move high amounts of water at times.

RIPARIAN: Flatnose Spring is the only spring on the allotment. The spring is developed with a vent pipe at the head and a 10-inch PVC pipe which transports water a short distance. It is assumed that another pipe is buried to transfer water to the fields for agriculture use since this spring which has a copious amount of water disappears underground after approximately 300 meters. While there is plenty of water at the source, there is not a riparian community associated with the spring. Mature salt cedar is present at the spring. Rubber rabbitbrush and four-wing saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*) are scattered in the wash. Mounded soil is evidence that the source had been dug up with heavy equipment, though not recently. The Standard refers to streambank stability. There are no streambanks at this source so the Standard is not applicable. Refer to the Guidelines in section 3 of this document for further discussion on the riparian system management.

Based on the data analysis, field observations, photographs, and potential for the ecological sites for vegetative cover, it is determined that the standard for soils is being achieved on the allotment. This determination is based on soils which are stable despite the potential for heavy rainfall events. Blue grama and small galleta play an important role in the ecosystem for soil stabilization. Mosses and cryptobiotic crusts occur throughout the allotment, which are indicators that the soil surface is stable. These crusts easily disappear under heavy constant trampling. No signs of surface soil loss were observed such as rills or sheet erosion. Other than the cuts in two of the reservoirs, there is no evidence that the ecosystem is not functioning accordingly. Healthy sagebrush communities add to stability of the soils. Figure 3 shows one of many photographs taken in March 2008 of the substantial amount of blue grama occupying the interspaces.



Figure 4. Well developed blue grama in the sagebrush community.

At Flatnose Spring, the soils are functioning accordingly to transport the surface water left after piping water from the site. The mature salt cedar trees (*Tamarisk spp.*) effectively reduce the potential of the riparian community by shading, outcompeting native vegetation for nutrients and water, and by exuding allelopathic chemicals which inhibit other plants from being able to co-exist (DiTomaso, 1996).

The riparian area conditions warrant further management such as tamarisk removal. Water is not left at the source as required in Nevada. Follow-up with the state Division of Water Resources is warranted to get the spring development into compliance.

Standard 2. Ecosystem Components

Watersheds should possess the necessary ecological components to achieve State water quality criteria, maintain ecological processes, and sustain appropriate uses.

Riparian and wetlands vegetation should have structural and species diversity characteristic of the stage of stream channel succession in order to provide forage and cover, capture sediment, and capture, retain, and safely release water (watershed function).

Upland Indicators:

- Canopy and ground cover, including litter, live vegetation, biological crust, and rock appropriate to potential of the ecological site.
- Ecological processes are adequate for the vegetative communities.

Riparian Indicators:

- Stream side riparian areas are functioning properly when adequate vegetation, large woody debris, or rock is present to dissipate stream energy associated with high water flows.
- Elements indicating proper functioning condition such as avoiding acceleration erosion, capturing sediment, and providing for groundwater recharge and release are determined by the following measurements as appropriate to the site characteristics:
 - Width/Depth ratio.
 - Channel roughness.
 - Sinuosity of stream channel.
 - Bank stability.
 - Vegetative cover (amount, spacing, life form).
 - Other covers (large woody debris, rock).
 - Natural springs, seeps and marsh areas are functioning properly when adequate vegetation is present to facilitate water retention, filtering, and release as indicated by plan species and cover appropriate to the site characteristics.

Water Quality Indicators:

- Chemical, physical and biological constituents do not exceed the State water quality Standards.

The above indicators shall be applied to the potential of the ecological site.

Determination:

X Achieving the Standard

- Not Achieving the Standard, but making significant progress towards achieving
- Not Achieving the Standard, and not making significant progress toward standard

Causal Factors N/A

- Livestock are a contributing factor to not achieving the standard.
- Livestock are not a contributing factor to not achieving the standard
- Failure to meet the standard is related to other issues or conditions

Guidelines Conformance:

X In conformance with the Guidelines

- Not in conformance with the Guidelines

Conclusion: *Standard Achieved*

UPLANDS: The dominant communities in the allotment are Wyoming sagebrush/Indian ricegrass and the black sagebrush/Indian ricegrass. Most of the allotment rests atop the alluvial

fan which formed under the influence of the watershed of the Mahogany Mountains. Most of the topography on the allotment is flat with increasing up and down slopes on all sides. Deer Lodge Canyon feeds into the eastern portion of the allotment and into Flatnose Wash and Flatnose Canyon to the south and west. The gentle topography of the sagebrush flats aids in the stability of the soils and vegetative community.

Soils are effectively protected by the vegetation, appropriate canopy and ground cover and a vigorous understory comprised of blue grama, small galleta, squirreltail, crested wheatgrass (in the seeding only), poas (*Poa spp.*) (in the burn area), and a healthy diverse forb constituent. These species add to the organic matter in the surface soils and add porosity to the surface. Gravels in the black sagebrush community add further stability. Infiltration is effective and runoff is managed most of the time except when precipitation events exceed the capacity of the surface to receive and store moisture.

Noteworthy in the community is the very low amount of cheatgrass, an invasive, unwanted annual grass. Cheatgrass is known to readily invade many burned or disturbed areas yet is not present in very large amounts in the black line nor the small burned area on the allotment. Cheatgrass was found in the burned areas of the allotment, but was not found in abundance elsewhere, even though precipitation has been normal or above normal for the last couple of years. Cheatgrass is entirely dependent on fall moisture for winter germination to occur. Climatic factors have been appropriate for cheatgrass production but have not resulted in a flush of cheatgrass on the allotment. Refer to the precipitation data in Appendix I. The lack of cheatgrass amidst these conditions indicates resiliency of the vegetative community to this and other aggressive invaders. No noxious weed species were observed anywhere on the allotment during field sampling.

Based on the results of the 2006 prescribed burn, it is reasonable to expect a natural wildfire could have beneficial results in this area. If the burn was not being grazed for most months out of the calendar year by horses, the revegetation efforts of the ecosystem would exceed the present status.

Utah juniper occurs in low densities in the sagebrush community but was observed in increasing numbers, especially younger trees, wherever the rangeland sites met the lower slopes of the woodlands (see figure 5). Juniper is slowly increasing in abundance in the old seeding. Its abundance in the sagebrush community is still acceptable as it provides shade/cover and nesting/perching opportunities for wildlife. Juniper increases in density and cover in the center of the allotment. At the present abundance, the junipers are not decreasing the resilience of the area to catastrophic wildfire. The understory is vigorous and could still result in a healthy post-fire vegetative community.



Figure 5. Transect DL2.

Microbiotic crusts and mosses were observed in desirable amounts throughout the allotment. These living organisms play a key role in the fixation of nitrogen while protecting the soils from erosion particularly where gravels do not occur on the surface.

Flatnose Canyon experiences high flows periodically as shown by the high sand, gravel, and enormous boulders in the canyon bottom (Figure 6). Very little vegetation occurs in the canyon as shown in the figure. Sunlight is minimal in the bottom. As the canyon widens towards the private lands to the west, vegetation such as rabbitbrush, sagebrush, and fourwing saltbush appear and stabilize the sandy bottoms (Figure 7).



Figure 6. Flatnose Canyon.

RIPARIAN: The only spring or riparian source is Flatnose Spring which occurs in the west portion of the canyon very close to private lands. There are no banks as the sandy and gravelly substrate does not allow for bank formation.

The Standard refers to streamside riparian areas. The spring is developed and piped for irrigation under a vested water right according to the Division of Water Resources. No riparian system exists at the site where the spring should be. The only vegetation is a few tamarisk trees. Except for where the existing PVC pipe is broken, there is no surface water present. The Standard calls for large woody debris or rock to dissipate stream energy from high flows. This is the case in the wash. The spring was not rated as “proper functioning condition” due to lack of water at the source and no saturation zone with tamarisk present. However, based on the sizable amount of water leaving via the pipeline, none is expected unless the pipeline is removed.

Based on the analysis of data, recent field observations, and the apparent resiliency of the vegetative community, Standard 2 - Ecosystem Components is determined to be achieved on the allotment. Vegetative conditions are acceptable and desirable. The range represented on the allotment is not at high risk for catastrophic wildfire, nor for invasion of non-native, undesirable weed species. The sagebrush communities appear to be healthy and vigorous with a good diversity of understory perennial grasses and native annual forbs.

Standard 3. Habitat and Biota:

As indicated by:

- Vegetation composition (relative abundance of species);
- Vegetation structure (life forms, cover, height, or age class);
- Vegetation distribution (patchiness, corridors);
- Vegetation productivity; and
- Vegetation nutritional value.

Determination:**X Achieving the Standard**

- Not Achieving the Standard, but making significant progress towards achieving
- Not Achieving the Standard, and not making significant progress toward standard

Causal Factors N/A

- Livestock are a contributing factor to not achieving the standard.
- Livestock are not a contributing factor to not achieving the standard
- Failure to meet the standard is related to other issues or conditions

Guidelines Conformance:**X In conformance with the Guidelines**

- Not in conformance with the Guidelines

Conclusion: Standard Achieved

The indicators for the Standard refer to vegetative composition, structure, distribution, productivity, and nutritional value. Vegetative conditions on the Deer Lodge allotment suitably reflect these attributes. Conditions are suitable based on the present canopy and ground cover in the Wyoming big sagebrush and black sagebrush communities. A diverse herbaceous understory and interspatial vegetative components over a majority of the allotment serves to provide a variable forage base with suitable structure and distribution to support a diverse biota.

Numerous forb species were identified on the allotment including, *Penstemon spp.*, *Geranium spp.*, *Lomatium spp.*, *Castilleja spp.*, *Phlox spp.*, *Cryptantha spp.*, *Eriogonum spp.*, *Calochortus spp.*, *Erigeron spp.*, *Leucocrinum spp.*, and *Astragalus spp.*, to name the notable species. These species were found in abundance in the spring of 2008. Several composite species were also observed but not identified. The abundance of these species not only indicate a vegetative state which is not declining but is still productive and functional, Forbs are important for diversity and provide forage for those wildlife species who depend on them for survival and sustenance.

The allotment provides year round habitat for mule deer. All but the eastern one-fourth of the allotment is crucial mule deer habitat. Evidence of mule deer use and occupation was seen throughout the allotment and in the neighboring areas. Based on their numbers and proximity to Eagle Valley, Spring Valley, and Echo Canyon, this area is very important to the mule deer

population in this portion of the district. The sagebrush areas provide year round forage and cover. Based on fresh fecal deposits, their numbers were high at the time of the field inspections. The nearby tree line provided by junipers provides important escape cover. These areas also provide thermal protection in the summer and winter for these animals and other wildlife species. With plentiful water available at three small reservoirs on the allotment and at the neighboring state parks, the area represented by the allotment provides for quality habitat for mule deer.

Rocky Mountain Elk are transient and drift through the area from the Mount Wilson and White Rock ranges as well as from Utah. The allotment can provide quality forage for elk.

Vegetative cover values are appropriate for the ecological sites or exceed guidelines in the descriptions. In some areas, the understory supports a diverse community of perennial and annual species consistent with the ecological range sites, while in others (i.e. Key Area 1) the herbaceous understory is not at desirable levels.

The sage grouse is not known to occur on the allotment, but the allotment is included in the Lincoln PMU. According to the Lincoln County Sage Grouse Conservation Plan (LCCP-2007), birds are found in “open areas at high elevations”. Higher occurrences of forbs and perennial bunchgrasses would be desirable to support sage grouse on the allotment.

Junipers and pinyons (*Pinus monophylla*) are increasing on the allotment which eventually could degrade the quality of the habitat for sage grouse as site-appropriate vegetation decreases due to competition with juniper and pinyon for sunlight, nutrients, and water. Their eventual dominance on the allotment could impact the sagebrush ecosystem and the species that are dependent on it. With reduced presence of grasses and forbs available to sage grouse or any other wildlife or insect species, the biodiversity could decrease based on available suitable habitat. This risk is still several decades away for most of the allotment but is a consideration at present time.

Generally speaking, the habitats of the species mentioned are appropriate and suitable based on vegetative communities, water quality and quantity, and the diversity of the sagebrush ecosystem. Other features such as escape terrain, thermal cover and perching/nesting habitat from both short and tall statured woody species are all desirable. The allotment offers habitat for small mammals, and assorted numerous songbirds and raptors. Lizards and snakes comprise the reptilian population on the allotment. Burrows of these and other underground dwellers are numerous on the allotment. Many lizards of a variety of species were observed throughout the allotment.

The advent of cheatgrass as a major ecological problem in the western states has prompted BLM to become aware and improve management of it in the sagebrush ecosystem. Very little cheatgrass was observed on the allotment, and in most cases it did not occur in the areas of any of the monitoring transects. Cheatgrass has not become established on the allotment. This is worth mentioning because it provides important evidence to the resiliency of the ecosystems represented on the Deer Lodge Allotment.

Based on the existing conditions as described, the standard for Habitat and Biota is determined to be achieved on the allotment.

PART 2. ARE LIVESTOCK A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO NOT MEETING THE STANDARDS? SUMMARY REVIEW:

Standard #1: Soils

N/A. The standard is achieved.

Standard #2: Ecosystem Components

N/A. The standard is achieved.

Standard #3: Habitat and Biota

N/A. The standard is achieved.

PART 3. GUIDELINE CONFORMANCE REVIEW AND SUMMARY

Conformance to the guidelines pertaining to wild horses and burros are not determined in this document. Wherever the guidelines pertain to management practices those guidelines are assessed.

1. Soils:

1.2 states, “Riparian-wetland management practices should maintain or promote sufficient residual vegetation to maintain, improve, or restore functions such as stream flow energy dissipation, sediment capture, groundwater recharge, and streambank stability.”

Flatnose Spring is dewatered possibly for agricultural purposes. This neither reflects on the management of livestock of the Deer Lodge Allotment, nor on the permittee. By not leaving water at the source, the pipeline for agriculture may not be in compliance with State water law. There is presently not enough water to support any riparian herbaceous vegetation. However, since this practice is not related to management of the livestock on the allotment, it does not apply.

2. Ecosystem Components:

2.6 states, “Subject to all valid existing rights, the design of spring and seep developments shall include provisions to maintain or promote ecological functions and processes.”

Dewatering at Flatnose Spring is not maintaining or promoting ecological functions and processes. This is outside the control of the BLM.

3. Habitat and Biota:

Management of the Deer Lodge Allotment is in conformance with the Guidelines for the Standard.

PART 4. MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TO CONFORM WITH GUIDELINES AND ACHIEVE STANDARDS

Discussion:

Grazing management on the Deer Lodge Allotment already conforms to the Guidelines. All three of the Standards are achieved for the allotment. In order to ensure grazing continues to achieve the Standards, the following terms and conditions are recommended to be added to the grazing permit as best management practices.

Recommendations for Grazing Management:

1. Salt and/or mineral supplements for livestock will be located no closer than ¼ mile from water sources. Use of nutritional supplements (not forage) is encouraged to improve the ability of cattle to utilize forage in the winter months and to improve livestock distribution across the allotment.
2. Maximum allowable use levels would be established as follows:
 - Perennial grasses: 40% current year's growth.
 - Perennial shrubs, half-shrubs and forbs: 40% use on current annual production.

Justification for this use limit is based on the possibility of present or future use by sage grouse, a Nevada BLM Sensitive Species and because of crucial habitat for mule deer. A conservative use limit also helps to provide forage even during periodic drought events for wildlife, livestock and wild horses until conditions improve.

Additional Recommendations:

The above mentioned terms and conditions are recommended to be incorporated into the normal grazing permit. In addition, it is recommended that the reservoirs be maintained and repaired to hold water as designed. This will reduce flooding downstream following severe storm events and improve delivery of water supply to upland wildlife, wild horses, and livestock.

Based on high horse numbers observed on the allotment, it is recommended that wild horse use be monitored yearly to ensure the horse numbers do not exceed the carrying capacity of the Herd Management Area (HMA).

One additional key area should be established outside the old seeded area to monitor a site that hasn't been affected by man-made disturbance (i.e. prescribed fire, seeding, etc).

Interdisciplinary Team Review

/s/ Doris Metcalf *for*
 Kari Harrison, Soil Scientist 8/19/2008
 Date

/s/ Bonnie Million
 Bonnie Million, Weeds Specialist 8/19/2008
 Date

/s/ Lisa Gilbert
 Lisa Gilbert, Cultural Specialist 8/19/2008
 Date

/s/ Kyle Hansen *for*
 Ben Noyes, Wild Horse and Burro Specialist 8/19/2008
 Date

/s/ Rick Baxter
 Rick Baxter, Wildlife Biologist 8/19/2008
 Date

/s/ Melanie Peterson
 Melanie Peterson, Environmental Protection Specialist 8/19/2008
 Date

/s/ Elvis Wall
 Elvis Wall, Tribal Coordinator 8/19/2008
 Date

Prepared by:

/s/ Shirley A. Johnson
 Shirley Johnson, Rangeland Management Specialist 8/19/2008
 Date

Reviewed by:

/s/ Chris Mayer
 Chris Mayer, Lead Rangeland Management Specialist 8/19/2008
 Date

I concur:

/s/ Ron Clementsen
 Ron Clementsen, Field Manager 8/19/2008
 Caliente Field Office Date

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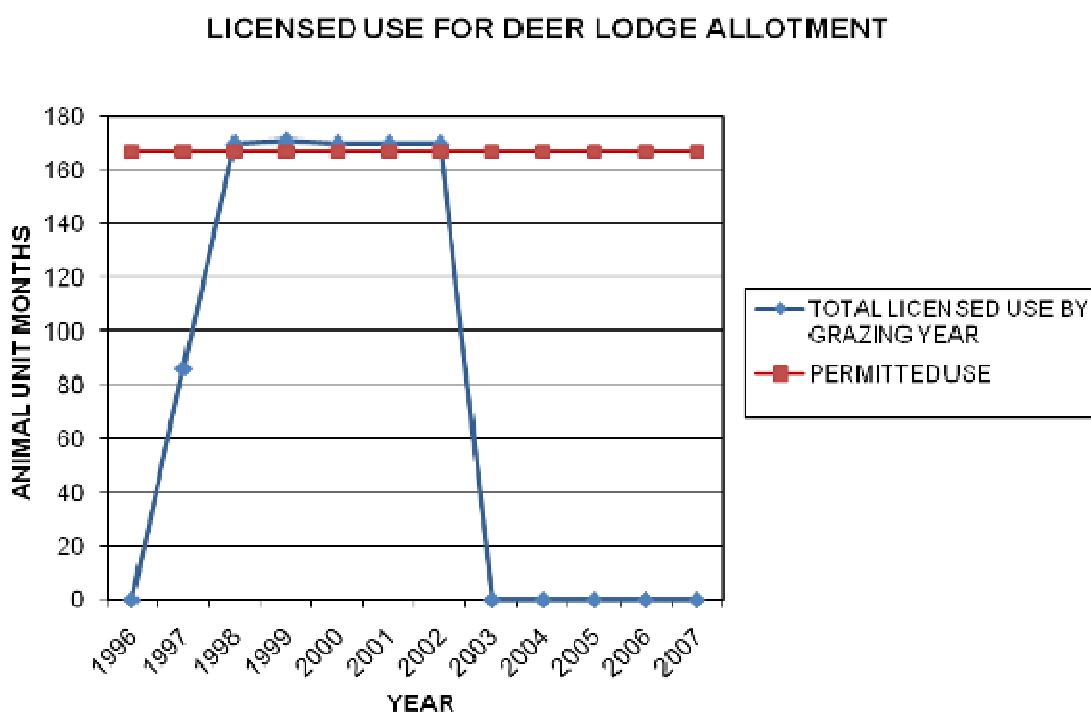
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APPENDIX I

DATA ANALYSIS – DEER LODGE ALLOTMENT

1. Licensed Livestock Use: Livestock have not been licensed on the allotment since 2002. Average use from 1997 to 2003 was 156 AUMs or 94% of permitted use. In the chart below, the blue line (representing the x axis) shows AUMs used whereas the red line (y axis) shows the potential AUMs to be used without exceeding the permit. Reduced use occurred in 1997 due to the drought conditions on the allotment. In 2003 the permit was transferred to the current permittee who has not licensed cattle on the allotment to date.

Table 1.



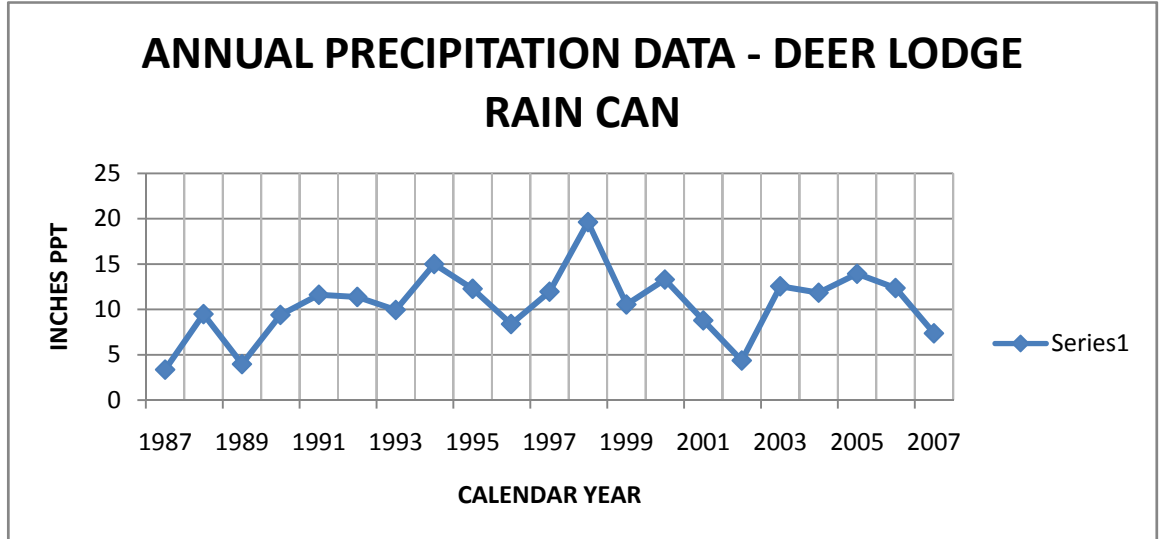
2. Utilization

Utilization was monitored in 1998. Use was light (24%) on crested wheatgrass and light (40%) on Indian ricegrass. Use was monitored again in 2008 to monitor wild horse use (no livestock use has occurred). In 2008, use on crested wheat was measured as moderate (47%) and use on Indian ricegrass was light (38%). Horses and mule deer are the main forage consumers on the allotment but horse use is visible throughout the area. Deer make slight to light use overall of the sagebrush but mainly in the winter months. Wild Horses are year-round residents, leaving only with heavy snows.

3. Precipitation Data

For twenty years local precipitation monitoring has occurred on the Deer Lodge Allotment. The 20-year average based on rain can collection data was 10.5 inches from 1987-2007. The precipitation was highly variable however, with an annual low of 3.3 inches in 1987 and a high of nearly 20 inches in 1998. Three major drought events occurred in 1987, 1989, and 2002.

Table 2.



4. Line Intercept Cover

The method used to estimate cover is called Line Intercept. This method measures the dominant canopy cover and ground cover but does not measure vegetation which occurs underneath a canopy of another plant. Due to this constraint, not all species on site are represented in the table below as many grow in the shade of larger, more dominant species.

Cover data was read in 2008 at the key area (KA1) and in the major soil units on the allotment. KA1 occurs in an old crested wheatgrass seeding. The site is dominated by Wyoming big sagebrush with lesser co-dominant species mainly being Indian ricegrass and crested wheatgrass. The other three transect areas occurred in the remaining major soil mapping units on the allotment. Data is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3.

KEY AREA INFORMATION		SPECIES	COMPOSITION BY SPECIES BASED ON COVER
KEY AREA 1		Wyoming Sagebrush	13.1%
Range site: Loamy 8-10" p.z. (029XY006NV).		Douglas' Rabbitbrush	0.33%
Desirable Cover For Site: 15-25%		Crested Wheatgrass	1.08%
Percent Cover Measured 2008: 14.975%		Moss	0.4%
Elevation: 6157 Ft		Unknown Forb	0.08%
		Litter	Not measured
COMPOSITION BY GROUPS			
SHRUBS	89.6%		
GRASSES	1.08%		
FORBS/MOSS	3.17%		
TRANSECT DL-1		Wyoming Sagebrush	18.45%
Range site: Upland Wash (029XY009NV).		Basin Big Sagebrush	3.6%
Desirable Cover For Site: 20-35%		Blue Grama	4.05%
Percent Cover Measured 2008: 26.3%		Soil Crust	0.2%
Elevation: 6016 Ft		Litter	Not measured
COMPOSITION BY GROUPS			
SHRUBS	83.84%		
GRASSES	15.39%		
FORBS/MOSS	0.76%		
TRANSECT DL-2		Black Sagebrush	27.88%
Range site: Shallow Calcareous Loam 8-12" p.z. (029XY008NV)		Douglas' Rabbitbrush	1.3%
Desirable Cover For Site: 15-25%		Nevada Ephedra	0.5%
Percent Cover Measured 2008: 31.925%		Needlandthread	0.13%
		Indian Ricegrass	0.10%
		Mosses	0.18%
		Litter	1.65%
COMPOSITION BY GROUPS			
SHRUBS	98.12%		
GRASSES	0.783%		
FORBS/MOSS	1.096%		
TRANSECT DL-3		Black Sagebrush	29.33%
Range site: Shallow Calcareous Slope 8-12" p.z. (029XY014NV)		Douglas' Rabbitbrush	0.45%
Desirable Cover For Site:		Galleta	0.58%
Percent Cover Measured 2008: 31.55%		Indian Ricegrass	0.38%
		Cheatgrass	0.10%
		Blue Grama	0.5%
		Unknown Forbs (Assorted)	0.40%
		Lily	0.03%
		Moss	0.05%
		Litter	6.15%

COMPOSITION BY GROUPS			
SHRUBS	94.37%		
GRASSES	4.12%		
FORBS/MOSS	1.5%		

5. Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) – Riparian Assessment

The proper functioning condition assessment was conducted at the spring in Flatnose Canyon. Fully developed with a large PVC pipeline, no water was found at the source. The pipeline washed out and pours water out which surprisingly sinks back into the sandy substrate within 1000 feet of the source. The assessment determined the spring to be non-functional with no apparent trend. Factors affecting the rating are outside the control of the BLM including water rights, historic dredging, pipeline, and horse use. No evidence of livestock use was seen (no cow pies, tracks, trails, etc.). Tamarisk can be removed which would increase water and improve soil chemical properties potentially but would not have an impact on whether or not water is at the source. No riparian vegetation was found.

APPENDIX II ALLOTMENT MAP

