

**2003 END OF SEASON REPORT
WILLOW CREEK C&H ALLOTMENT**

TERM GRAZING PERMIT				AUTHORIZED USE				ACTUAL USE			
NO.	ON DATE	OFF DATE	H.M.	NO.	ON DATE	OFF DATE	H.M.	NO.	ON DATE	OFF DATE	H.M.
108	6/1	9/30	433	350	6/1	6/30	345	346	5/30	7/7	444
126	6/1	9/25	485	146	6/1	7/31	293	146	6/13	8/3	250

Head Months include Forest (48%) and BLM (52%). BLM permit allows for earlier on date.

UNIT DATES AND UTILIZATION RESULTS:

ACTUAL GRAZING SCHEDULE			ALLOWABLE STDS	ACTUAL RESULTS
UNIT NAME	ON DATE	OFF DATE	RIPARIAN	RIPARIAN
Willow Creek/Springs	5/30	6/21	50% (4 in)	6", 5"
Poison Springs	6/23	7/7	50% (4 in)	No Data
Double Springs	6/13	7/23	50% (4 in)	Uplands
Rock Creek	7/23	8/3	50% (4 in)	Uplands

Dickey Livestock used Willow Springs, Poison Springs units. Both units are predominantly BLM lands. Rena Ranch used Double Springs (FS) and Rock Creek (BLM/FS) units.

Allotment Inspections: Visits were made on the following dates, 7/9, 7/15, 8/28, 10/15. Allotment inspections included project maintenance checks, cattle location checks and utilization monitoring. On 7/15, 12 head of Rena Ranch cattle were observed in the Rock Creek unit and were confirmed to have been left behind since turnout.

Information: The district experienced another below average precipitation year for the fourth year in a row. Drought effects were discussed at the spring meeting with the permittees. All parties agreed that forage and water supplies for cattle would be limited. Upland vegetation production was observed to be extremely low below the Forest boundary. Water at developed springs was observed to be below normal during July and August.

Two creeks were inventoried to determine ecological status. Willow Creek below Freighter Springs, east of the earthquake interpretive area was determined to be in early ecological status. The creek has been historically disturbed by mechanical treatments, according to permittees. The site lacks a willow age class diversity and abundance, and has a weak expression of hydric sedges. Hydric sedges and willows are attempting to reoccupy the riparian zone. The Freighter Springs enclosure contains the potential vegetation. A tributary east of the Willow Creek inventory site was determined to be in a potential natural community status. The tributary has a heavier willow component compared to Willow Creek.

Utilization: By August 28, upland range on both BLM and Forest in all units had a similar pattern of utilization on bluebunch wheatgrass. Fifty percent use occurred within ¼ mile of water, 35% between ¼ and ½ mile, and 25% use greater than ¾ mile from water. The Willow creek unit above the forest boundary was used lighter (25%), Rock creek adjacent to the forest boundary, west of Mt. Borah was used lighter (15-25%), however, ungrazed plants without seed heads 7 inches tall were common. The Double Springs unit was the most productive. Several years of rest has contributed to its condition. By the same date, riparian vegetation was fully recovered from cattle grazing in the Willow Creek unit.

Compliance with Unit schedule and Project Maintenance: Permittees agreed to shorter season of use with additional cattle numbers. The unit schedule was followed according to instructions. A trough in the Rock Creek unit will need replacement next season. The central troughs in the Double Springs unit will need minor maintenance. One trough was damaged and removed.

Actual use was 694 head months, 76% of 918 full permitted head months. Rena Ranch used the allotment for 52 days (44%). Dickey Livestock used the allotment 38 days (31%). The allotment was used 65 days or 53% of full permitted days.

Recommendations:

Drought effects are expected to limit effective utilization of upland forage during the coming season. As a consequence, the upland limitations are expected to cause riparian areas to receive increased grazing pressure.

The 2004 grazing plan will include conservative grazing periods and/or cattle numbers.

