

Rangelands

Introduction

Livestock grazing has long been a historic use of the Forest and was being used to meet the needs of the area's inhabitants prior to the creation of the KNF and IPNF. For example, settlers utilized horses to work their farms and as a means of transportation, while cattle provided them with beef, milk, and butter. Some families also raised sheep, hogs, and goats in small numbers. A few farmers specialized in livestock production, especially on the Tobacco Plains. (Miss et al, 1994)

Limited grazing lands and insufficient hay supplies needed for wintering large numbers of animals, however, hindered livestock production on NFS lands. Settlers living near NFS boundaries could obtain a free use permit to graze up to ten domestic animals on government land during the specified season. In addition, ranchers could graze larger numbers of animals on NFS lands, providing they purchased a permit, confined their animals to the allotted area, and salted them according to established guidelines.

Analysis Area

The analysis area for range is the NFS lands of the KNF and IPNF, particularly the range allotments. For the purposes of this document, each Forest's conditions and trends are evaluated separately.

Conditions and Trends

This document describes the conditions and trends for range and the process for determining lands generally suitable for range.

Grazing Use

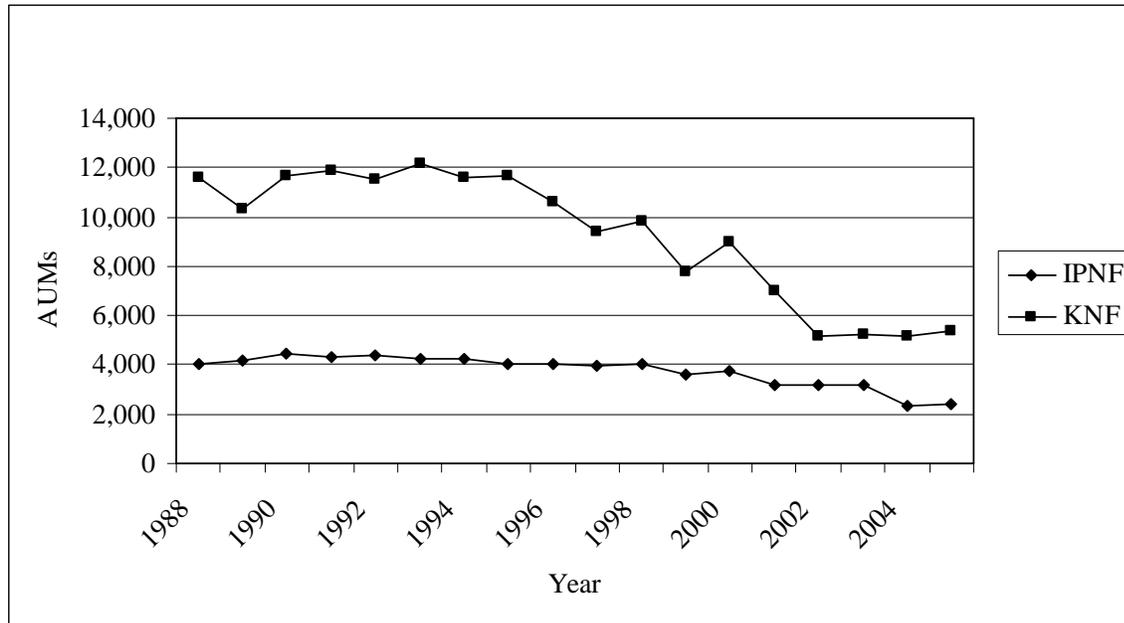
IPNF

In 1979, there were 73 allotments on the IPNF. The majority of utilized forage utilized was produced on 7,500 acres of meadow and permanent grasslands. Allotment boundaries included about 100,000 acres of timber land. A few allotments were comprised of only secondary timbered range (transitory). Most of the allotments included private, industry, and NFS lands. The 1987 IPNF Forest Plan projected permitted livestock use to be 6,700 Animal Unit Months (AUMs).

Permitted use for cattle grazing on the IPNF has been declining with an average of 3,373 AUMs for the ten-year period 1996 through 2005 (refer to Figure R-1 *Grazing Use by Forest, 1988-2005*, below). This decline in permitted use can be attributed to the following: the regrowth of trees on transitory range, changing patterns of private land use, and scattered small IPNF allotments that prevent continued economical use due to prohibitive trucking and herding costs. Figure R-1, below, displays the authorized (actual use) AUMs from the Forest since the 1987 IPNF Forest Plan went into effect.

There have been many changes to allotments over the past several decades. Since 1979, nine allotments were added, three allotments were closed (one as a result of a land exchange), eight allotments were converted to special uses, and two allotments were consolidated into one, for a

total of 70 allotments on the Forest. Furthermore, as a result of reduced grazing levels, many of the allotments that were active in 1979 have become inactive. Of the 70 allotments, 17 are currently active, with use at 2,425 AUMs in 2005. The remaining 53 allotments are either vacant or inactive.



2005 Source: Idaho Panhandle National Forest billing records; Kootenai National Forest Monitoring and Evaluation Reports, 1987 – 2001, and Grazing Reports 2002-2004.

Figure R-1 Grazing Use by Forest 1988-2005

KNF

Livestock grazing on the Kootenai National Forest is limited by the following: the nature of available range (transitory forage), the lack of over-wintering facilities, the remoteness of the available range, and the expense of providing adequate water and range developments. The 1987 KNF Forest Plan projected permitted livestock use at 12,600 (AUMs) per year on 45 allotments. Since most of the range program on the Kootenai is dependent on transitory range (land which produces forage or has inherent forage producing capabilities and can become available on a temporary basis as a result of partial or complete removal of the overstory vegetation through fire, logging, or other events) this number could vary over the years. As the type of timber removal changed from clear cutting/seed tree to shelterwood/improvement cuts, the amount of available forage dropped. This combined with other factors (e.g., reduction in the number of full time ranchers, property subdivision, and market prices) reduced the number of AUMs to approximately 5,354 in 2005. Figure R-1 *Grazing Use by Forest, 1988-2005*, displays the authorized (actual use) AUMs from the Forest since the 1987 KNF Forest Plan went into effect. The average permitted use for the past 10 years (1996 through 2005) was at 7,460 AUMs.

As a result of reduced grazing levels, many allotments have become inactive or vacant. Since the 1987 Forest Plan, one allotment (Swamp Creek) was closed as the result of a land exchange. The Roberts allotment was combined with the Loon allotment to create the Loon-Roberts allotment, reducing the number of allotments to 43. Of the 43 remaining allotments on the Forest, 29 are vacant and one is inactive. The 2001 Monitoring and Evaluation Report identifies and

recommends termination of the vacant allotments: Edna Creek, Mud Griffith Creeks, Upper Grave Creek, Seventeen Mile, South Fork, Upper Ford, Yaak River, Bobtail, Elliot-Cowell, Five Mile, Granite-Cherry, Jumbo-Bayhorse, Libby Creek, McMillan, Quartz, Prospect, Schrieber, Sheldon Mountain, Surprise, Swede Mountain, West Fisher, Marten Creek, and Tuscor Creek. Since this report, six more allotments have become vacant and are eligible for closing: Barren, Big Beaver, Canyon Creek, Cripple Horse, Lake Creek, and Warland Creek. The Pinkham Ridge allotment has been inactive; however, it is not being considered for closure. The monitoring report identified that no change to the Plan was needed for the active allotments.

Rangeland Suitability

A rangeland suitability analysis was completed for the Proposed Land Management Plans. The suitability determination provides basic information regarding the potential of the land to produce forage in a sustainable manner for livestock and wildlife without damage to the soil and water resources.

The suitability analysis began with a review of the capability of the land to produce forage. Capability was primarily based on soil types capable of producing forage. The analysis then determined the suitability for grazing based on lands capable of producing forage and management decisions. Areas not suitable for grazing were identified based on other resource concerns (e.g., riparian areas), density of forested lands precluding forage production, accessibility to forage (e.g., fenced areas), and desired conditions identified in the Proposed Land Management Plans. Private land within allotments was also considered “unsuitable,” since these lands are outside the jurisdiction of the Forest Service. Appendix J contains detailed information on the process and data used in determining rangeland suitability.

The rangeland suitability analysis identified 364,200 acres capable of grazing on the IPNF and 921,700 acres capable of grazing on the KNF. Of those lands, 20,600 acres on the IPNF and 147,900 acres on the KNF are suitable for livestock grazing. This represents a very small percentage of the IPNF and only seven percent of the KNF. See Appendix J for a description of the suitability analysis process and a suitability map for the Forest.

Acres of suitability for rangeland by allotment are displayed in Tables R-1 and R-2, below. The first column gives the allotment name and number. Columns two through five reflect the results of the suitability analysis. All acres were generated by a Geographical Information System (GIS) and may not exactly match actual allotment acres. Column six shows the current status of the allotment. Even though some allotments contain very small amounts of suitable acres, grazing may still be occurring based on site-specific conditions not covered in this strategic analysis of suitability. Therefore, changes to suitability may occur at the project-scale, using site-specific data. The allotments included in the suitability analysis are displayed with the suitability maps in Appendix J.

Table R-1 IPNF Allotments – Suitability Determination and Status

Allotment Name and Number	Acres (total)	Suitable Acres	Unsuit. Acres	Percent Suitable	Status/Recommendation
Ferguson Meadow (102)	155	0	155	0	Vacant/Recommend Close
Rose Lake Creek (301)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
North Rose Lake (302)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Blue Creek (303)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Hayden Creek (304)	15,390	1,046	14,344	7	Active
Iron Mokins N.Fk. (305)	49,341	1,535	47,805	3	Active
Stella Creek (307)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Carlin-Thompson (309)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Searchlight/Alder Marie (311)	15,124	2,693	12,430	18	Active
Powderhorn Ridge (315)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Beaver (319)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Lancaster (321)	115	23	92	20	Active
Tyson Creek (412)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Charlie Creek (2) (413)	14,989	787	14,203	5	Active
Bussell Creek (420)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Keeler Creek (420)	10,204	1,179	9,025	12	Vacant/Recommend Close
Catspur (421)	5,213	298	4,915	6	Active
Clarkia Peak (422)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Emerald Creek (423)	26,349	2,448	23,901	9	Active
Carpenter Creek (424)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Merry Creek Coop. (2) (425)	41,662	721	40,941	2	Active
Schuyler (601)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Grouse Creek (602)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Twin Creek (604)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Cocolalla Lake (608)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Granite-Kelso (609)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Gold Mountain (610)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Granite Creek (611)	1,446	0	1,446	0	Active
Grouse Bench (612)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Boulder Creek (700)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Cow Creek (2) (701)	8,379	2,025	6,354	24	Active
Grass Creek (702)	5,948	917	5,031	15	Active
Ball Creek (706)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Highland Flats	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Spread Creek	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Hughes Meadow (800)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Boswell (801)	4,458	1,098	3,360	25	Active
Lamb Creek (802)	6,722	2,482	4,240	37	Active
Four Corners (804)	2,176	393	1,783	18	Active
Cottonwood Creek (805)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Kavanaugh Creek (806)	964	61	903	6	Active

Allotment Name and Number	Acres (total)	Suitable Acres	Unsuit. Acres	Percent Suitable	Status/Recommendation
Moores Creek (807)	3,163	819	2,344	26	Active
Pine Creek (808)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Lower Squaw Valley (810)	6,671	1,681	4,989	25	Vacant/Recommend Retain as Vacant
Upper Squaw Valley (811)	1,669	258	1,411	15	Active
Upper West Branch (812)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Flat Creek (813)	559	97	462	17	Vacant/Recommend Close
Falls Creek (district 06)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Falls Creek (district 08)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Iron Creek (combined with Mokins N. Fk.)	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Cedar-Box Canyon-Beauty	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Sky Hill	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Sheep Creek	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Hoodoo No. 1	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Hoodoo No. 2	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Hoodoo No. 3	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Hoodoo No. 4	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Hoodoo No. 5	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Hoodoo No. 6	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Hoodoo No. 7	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Bond Lake	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Sand Creek	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Butler Mountain	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Antelope Mountain	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Cocolalla	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Grouse Mountain	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Round Prairie	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Bane Creek	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Murray Cottonwood	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close
Quartz Creek	Not included in the suitability analysis				Vacant/Recommend Close

Table R-2 KNF Allotments – Suitability Determination and Status

Allotment Name and Number	Acres (total)	Suitable Acres	Unsuitable Acres	Percent Suitable	Status
Barren (601)	4,001	466	3,535	12	Vacant/Recommend Close
Big Beaver (707)	613	42	571	7	Vacant/Recommend Close
Bobtail (501)	4,903	2,089	2,814	43	Vacant in 1987; identified for closure in 2001 Monitoring Report/Recommend Close
Canyon Creek (612)	11,871	3,043	8,828	26	Vacant/Recommend Close
Cripple Horse (613)	18,295	6,957	11,338	38	Vacant/Recommend Close
Dead Horse (710)	810	390	420	48	Active
Edna Creek (301)	4,554	951	3,603	21	Vacant; identified for closure in 2001 Monitoring Report/Recommend Close
Elliot-Cowell (502)	9,453	2,299	7,154	24	Vacant; identified for closure in 2001 Monitoring Report/Recommend Close
Fairview (602)	64,492	10,470	54,022	16	Active
Five Mile (607)	10,600	1,438	9,162	14	Vacant/Recommend Retain
Granite-Cherry (503)	8,350	3,304	5,046	40	Vacant in 1987; identified for closure in 2001 Monitoring Report/Recommend Close
Grave Creek (303)	5,422	2,378	3,044	44	Active
Green Mountain (709)	868	69	799	8	Active
Jumbo Bayhorse (603)	5,987	382	5,605	6	Vacant; identified for closure in 2001 Monitoring Report/Recommend Close
Lake Creek (304)	6,816	2,434	4,382	36	Vacant/Recommend Close
Libby Creek (505)	5,786	1,903	3,883	33	Vacant; identified for closure in 2001 Monitoring Report/Recommend Close
Loon-Roberts (313)	7,861	1,842	6,019	23	Active
Marten Creek (706)	952	18	934	2	Vacant; identified for closure in 2001 Monitoring Report/Recommend Close
McMillan (506)	33,349	7,425	25,924	22	Vacant; identified for closure in 2001 Monitoring Report/Recommend Close
Mud Griffith (306)	6,218	884	5,334	14	Vacant; identified for closure in 2001 Monitoring Report/Recommend Close
Pinkham Creek (107)	53,261	16,698	36,563	31	Active
Pinkham Ridge (307)	18,205	6,776	11,429	37	In-active/Recommend Retain
Prospect (605)	6,722	806	5,966	12	Vacant; identified for closure in 2001 Monitoring Report/Recommend Close
Quartz Creek (507)	6,796	924	5,872	14	Vacant; identified for closure in 2001 Monitoring Report/Recommend Close
Rondo-Mud (102)	11,648	3,172	8,476	27	Active
Scalp Mountain (103)	25,413	8,548	16,865	34	Active
Schrieber (511)	2,238	721	1,517	32	Vacant; identified for closure in 2001 Monitoring Report/Recommend Close
Seventeen Mile (201)	225	5	220	2	Vacant; identified for closure in 2001 Monitoring Report/Recommend Close

Allotment Name and Number	Acres (total)	Suitable Acres	Unsuitable Acres	Percent Suitable	Status
Sheldon Mountain (508)	7,948	3,495	4,453	44	Vacant; identified for closure in 2001 Monitoring Report/Recommend Close
South Fork (202)	1,020	68	952	7	Vacant in 1987; identified for closure in 2001 Monitoring Report/Recommend Close
Sunday Creek (309)	26,588	12,177	14,411	46	Active
Surprise (609)	4,447	1,628	2,819	37	Vacant; identified for closure in 2001 Monitoring Report/Recommend Close
Swamp Fortine (310)	61,414	20,045	41,369	33	Active
Swede Mountain (510)	19,671	2,733	16,938	14	Vacant; identified for closure in 2001 Monitoring Report/Recommend Close
Tobacco Siding (302)	211	65	146	31	Active
Trego (311)	8,688	4,336	4,352	50	Active
Tuscor Creek (708)	411	12	399	3	Vacant; identified for closure in 2001 Monitoring Report/Recommend Close
Upper Ford (203)	4,000	778	3,222	19	Vacant; identified for closure in 2001 Monitoring Report/Recommend Close
Upper Grave (312)	31,509	0	31,509	0	Vacant in 1987; identified for closure in 2001 Monitoring Report/Recommend Close
Warland Creek (611)	8,822	2,458	6,364	28	Inactive/Recommend Retain
West Fisher (512)	1,923	738	1,185	38	Vacant; identified for closure in 2001 Monitoring Report/Recommend Close
West Kootenai (106)	32,311	13,184	19,127	41	Active
Yaak River (204)	730	0	730	0	Vacant; identified for closure in 2001 Monitoring Report/Recommend Close

References Cited

Miss, Christian with contributions by Sharon Boswell, Lorelea Hudson, and Nancy Renk. 1994. *Volume 1: Historic Overview of the Kootenai National Forest*, pages 137-140. Northwest Archaeological Associates, Inc., Seattle, Washington.