Pine Creek/Sulfurbeds Allotment
WILDCAT CREEK #1 (WC1)
Riparian Browse Assessment

(1) May 9, 2008
(2) October 19, 2009

Wildcat Creek #1 is located in a confined narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*)/Gambel oak/bigleaf maple reach with steep (35 degree) slopes. The transect crosses Wildcat Creek at a bend at 69' (Fig. 1) and the average riparian width is only 10'.

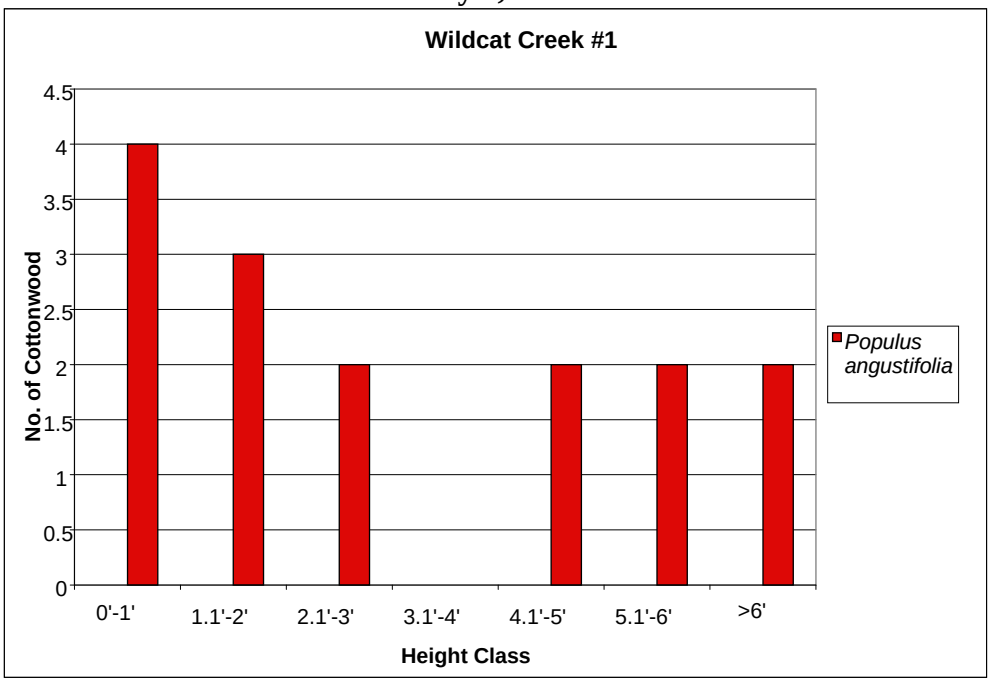
(1: 05/09/08) Most (83%) of the tallest leaders of the 13 cottonwoods <6' were browsed by May 9. One cottonwood >6' has a 1" DBH and is growing out of the base of a 7" diameter cottonwood stump (Fig. 2); the other cottonwood >6' is a double-trunk tree of 13" and 14.5" DBH.

(2: 10/19/09) Wildcat Pasture was to have been rested in 2009, but some recent cattle sign was present in the vicinity of Wildcat 1 (Fig. 3) Because cottonwood are scattered within the Gambel oak/bigleaf maple forest, we counted two cottonwoods that were 4' (rather than the usual limit of 3') from the transect. The furthest young cottonwood were 28' from the creek. The transect encountered no cottonwoods between 4' and 6', and 55% of the leaders are browsed or dead (39% browsed); 50% subleaders browsed or dead. The repeated browsing shows in the large number of subleaders within 6 vertical inches of the leader (e.g., 9 subleaders on cottonwood 3.1'-4')

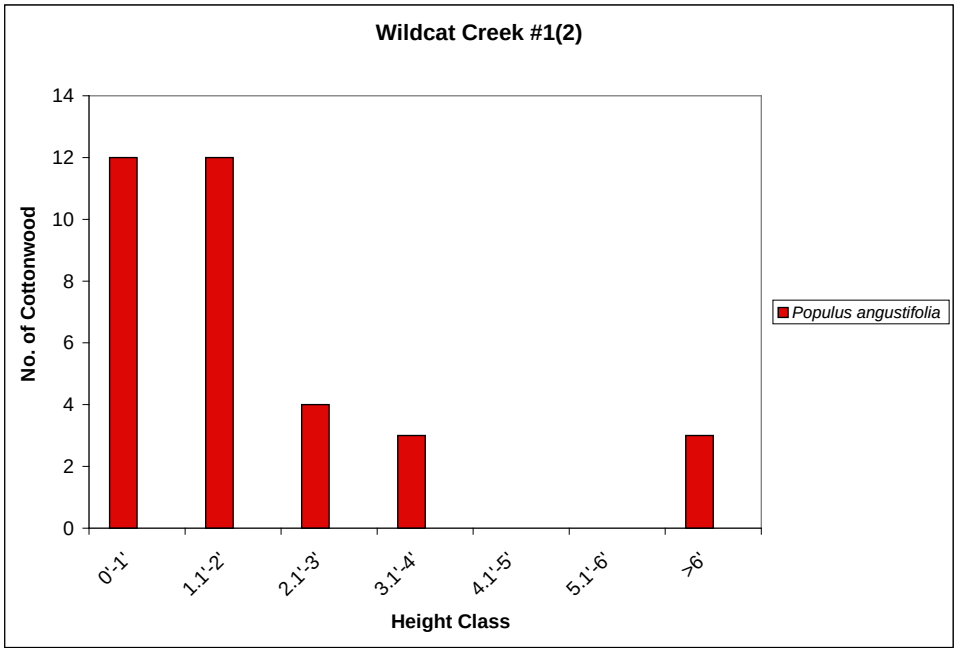
WILDCAT CREEK #1 (WC1)	**May 9, 2008**: Hoskisson/O'Brien **Oct 19, 2009**: Hoskisson/O'Brien/Albano/Watters
Fishlake NF/Beaver RD	**Allotment:** Pine Creek/Sulphurbeds **Pasture:** Wildcat
Stake: 12N 0362474 N 4256486 E NAD CONUS 27 Downstream, west end	**Elevation:** 7,027'
Aspect: NE and SW	**Animal sign: 2009:** Some fresh cow patties
Ave. Width Riparian Area: 10'	
Dominant vegetation: Narrowleaf cottonwood, Rocky Mtn juniper, Gambel's oak, bigtooth maple, wooly mullein, *Ranunculus* sp., *Hydrophyllum capitatum*. Almost no grass, some Kentucky bluegrass and fowl mannagrass	
Other notes: This transect is in Reach #A24-2 in the 2003 Level II Riparian Inventory (Petty 2003); Petty rated the forage trend as "down". The draft Beaver R.Watershed Management Plan (Beaver County 1999) notes: "Flow from Indian Creek and Wildcat Creek average 6.5 cfs."	

Height Distribution

May 9, 2008



October 19, 2009



Browse

May 9, 2008

2 *Populus angustifolia* >6': Ave. DBH 9.6"

Wildcat Creek #1 **Percent Browsed or Dead Leaders** 13 *Populus angustifolia* <6'	
	Populus angustifolia
% tall leaders browsed	16.7
% tall leaders browsed or dead	83.3
% subleaders browsed	31.3
% subleaders browsed or dead	47.9

October 19, 2009

3 *Populus angustifolia* >6': Ave. DBH 9.0"

Wildcat Creek #1(2) 31 *Populus angustifolia* <6'	
	Populus angustifolia
% tall leaders browsed	38.7
% tall leaders browsed or dead	54.8
% subleaders browsed	48.2
% subleaders browsed or dead	50.0

Number of leaders by height class

October 19, 2009

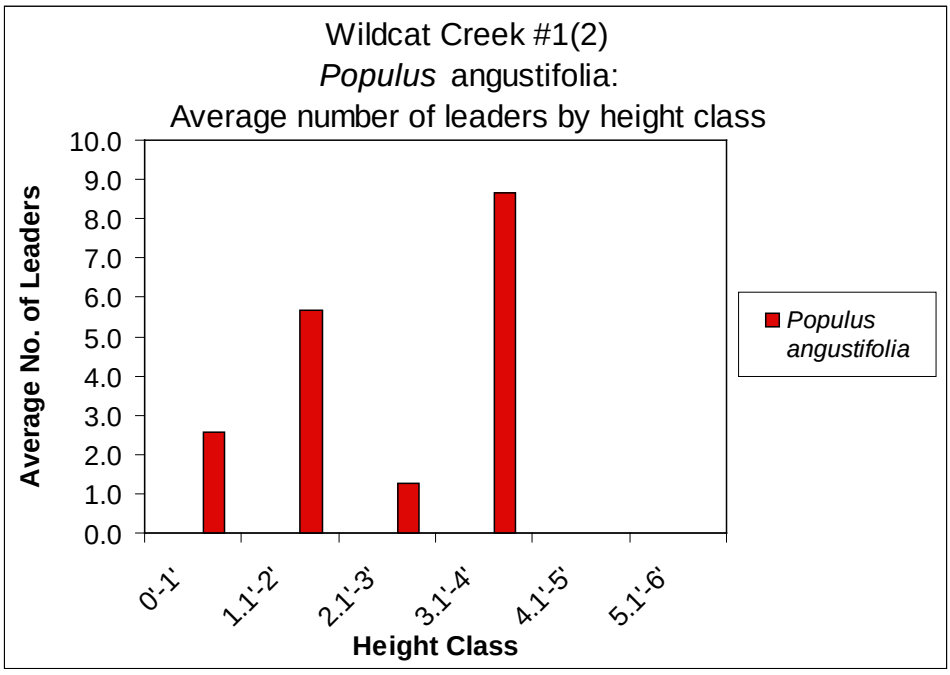


Fig. 1 Transect crossing Wildcat Creek at 69’ of the 100’ transect

Fig. 2 (05/09/08) Cottonwood sprout (1" DBH) growing out of cottonwood stump (7" diameter).

Fig. 3 (10/19/09) Recent cow patty in vicinity of Wildcat 1 transect.

References

Beaver County. 1999 [Brcrmp7 5/12/98, 7/20/99 gj]. Draft *Beaver River Watershed Coordinated Resource Management Plan*.

Petty, Jeff. 2003. Little North Creek Area Level II Riparian Inventory. Shell Valley Consulting: Shell, WY.

Riparian Grass/Grasslike Utilization
(1) October 19, 2009

(Oct. 19, 2009) Grass cover is sparse with only Kentucky bluegrass encountered on 0.8% of points. Litter accounted for 75% of ground cover. This is probably related to the date and recent dropping of leaves. The area could support more graminoids. Note the bare soil in Fig. 1. Sign of cattle showed that cattle had been in the area and may have removed grasses during this rest year (Fig. 3 above).

October 19, 2009												
	Kentucky Bluegrass (*Poa pratensis)*				**Other Grasses**				**Sedges and/or Rushes**			
Graminoids	Ave. ht(in) Access-ible	% pts	Ave. ht(in) Not Access-ible	% pts	Ave. ht(in) Access-ible	% pts	Ave. ht(in) Not Access-ible	% pts	Ave. ht(in) Access-ible	% pts	Ave. ht(in) Not Access-ible	% pts
	3.0	0.8	-		-		-		-		-	
Other	**Forb**	1	**Bare**	5	**Rock**	17	**Litter**	75	**Lichen, moss, biological crust**			1

Methodology note

In 2009, plants or ground cover were recorded on five point-intercept transects (the same transects used as belt transects for browse/height of cottonwood/aspen/willow). The five point-intercept transects at each site were extended only as far back from the bank as the last cottonwood or willow encountered within the 6' belt (i.e., 3' to each side of the point-intercept transect).

When the blade length of a grass or grasslike plant is >4X as long as the droop height, the actual blade length is recorded and reported e.g., Kentucky bluegrass with a droop height of 3" and a blade length of 17" would be noted. None such occurred in this transect in 2009.

Kentucky bluegrass is recorded separately from other grasses because a Fishlake NF utilization standard of 1.5" rather than 4" for hydric grass/grasslike species is applied to that grass[1].

[1] The four inch stubble height for hydric (i.e., adapted to a wet, but not flooded habitat) plants is part of the allowable forage utilization criteria that were revised through a Fishlake National Forest Plan amendment in 2002. These revised forage utilization criteria prescribe allowable use levels for both upland and riparian sites. As the Fishlake NF explains this: "The description for riparian areas is a uniform 4" stubble height. Reaching the 4" stubble height triggers the time to move livestock, either between units or off the allotment. These criteria allow no manipulation to plan use of expected regrowth—once the 4" stubble height is reached, livestock are moved, without the opportunity for twice-over use. Livestock are moved to the next pasture or removed from the allotment when any utilization threshold (upland forage utilization, stream bank

alteration, riparian forage utilization, riparian vegetation stubble height, or riparian woody browse utilization) is reached. Meeting or exceeding one of these threshold levels initiates a move of livestock." (USFS 2006)

Fishlake National Forest riparian utilization standards include (USFS 2006):

Riparian hydric species:

4" triggers the time to move livestock between units or off the allotment

Riparian Emphasis Management Areas

6" triggers the time to move livestock between units or off the allotment

Non-hydric Sod-Forming Grass Species in Riparian Areas

1 ½ " Primarily Kentucky bluegrass--Triggers the time to move livestock between units or off the allotment