

EXISTING CONDITION	DESIRED CONDITION
<p>Fisheries: – The West Peak allotment contains three fish bearing streams, the Cucharas River, White Creek and Chaparral Creek. Chaparral Creek was not sampled due to lack of accessibility. White Creek could not be sampled effectively due to the denseness of woody cover along its banks. Brown trout and rainbow trout were observed, however, just above the White Creek confluence with the Cucharas River. The Cucharas River was sampled in two locations, one in the southern portion of the allotment and one in the northern portion of the allotment. The fishery at the southern survey site consisted of brook and brown trout. The fishery was characterized as a low density (17 kg/ha) fishery and ranked in the lower 3rd percentile of all streams sampled within the planning area. Fish lengths ranged from 55-270 mm and weights ranged from 1-220 g. The stream was well armored with boulders and riparian vegetation consisted primarily of dense willow. The low density fish population at the survey site was likely limited due to high stream gradient and associated high water velocity. Measured water quality parameters (D.O., pH, water temp) were within the appropriate range and macroinvertebrates were abundant. In contrast to the low density fishery in the southern portion of the allotment was a high density fishery in the northern portion of the allotment. At the northern survey location the fishery was composed of primarily brown and rainbow trout. Two white suckers were observed but not collected. Total biomass was estimated at 178 kg/ha ranking in the upper 30th percentile of all streams sampled within the planning area. Fish lengths ranged from 50-330 mm and weights ranged from 1-423 g. The stream was large (apprx. 5 m wide) and appeared to have had some restoration work conducted (e.g.,</p>	<p>Fisheries: Fisheries are at the desired future condition.</p>

<p>added pools). The stream channel was well armored, contained abundant large woody debris and the stream banks were well vegetated with willow and cottonwood. Measured water quality parameters (D.O., pH, water temp) were within the appropriate range and macroinvertebrates were abundant. No negative impacts from livestock grazing were observed at either survey site on the Cucharas River.</p>	
<p>Range Management: Limited range improvements on allotment. No new range improvements being proposed on allotment. (<i>Goemmer West Peak Allotment area grazed</i>) - Ninety percent of suitable grazing land in on private lands. Majority of suitable grazing land on West Peak Allotment is in the Cucharas Pass Unit. Deferred rotation grazing system not working properly on allotment. Cattle are controlled using natural barriers, salting and riding. <i>Cucharas Pass Unit</i> - Cattle spending too much time in White Creek. Heavy elk use (100-150 head of elk) using slopes above White Creek). Cattle do not utilize the Wade Creek Unit because of the limited suitable range present. Light use by cattle in Cordova Pass area. <i>White Creek Unit</i> – Deferred rotation grazing system with Cuchara Valley Ranch private land has been successful.</p>	<p>Range: <i>Cuchara Pass Unit:</i> Develop spring at the bottom of White Creek and pipe water to tanks in uplands out of riparian areas. Fencing out of riparian area and installation of water gap. Establish efficient grazing system in the Goemmer West Peak Allotment area. Continue using deferred grazing system with the permittees adjacent private land in the White Creek Unit.</p>
<p>Recreation: Cordova Pass Road is the only road in the allotment. The Wade, Schafer and West Peak trails are in the allotment as well as the developed Cordova Pass TH. White Creek has a well defined, non-system, user created trail. Hiking, picnicing, dispersed and developed camping, climbing and hunting are all present activities and are centered around the Cordova Pass TH. Part of the allotment is in the Spanish Peaks Wilderness Area. Conflicts between livestock and recreation have not been a problem. Permittee states that trespass issues on</p>	<p>Recreation: Maintain wilderness characteristics within the wilderness area. Maintain road and trail accessibility. Minimize conflicts that may occur around the Cordova Pass TH. Maintain the non-system trail that occurs in the White Creek drainage to facilitate livestock operations and prevent future impacts. Avoid creating avenues for illegal motorized use.</p>

<p>private lands in allotment from recreationists coming off of NFS lands (both motorized and non-motorized trespassing.</p>	
<p>Wildlife: TES habitat exists for: northern leopard frog, northern goshawk, boreal owl, olive-sided flycatcher, flammulated owl, American three-toed woodpecker, Brewer’s sparrow, Mexican spotted owl, American hog-nosed skunk, wolverine, Canada lynx, American martin, fringed myotis, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, and Townsend’s big-eared bat.</p> <p><i>Cucharas Pass Pasture – (Uplands – WPCP-T2)</i> -Subalpine loam site (1,800-2,200 lbs./ac. dry wt.) -Grass dominated site (80% grass, 15% forb, and 50% shrub cover, respectively); main forbs are American vetch, common sandwort, and mariposa lily -Minimum bare ground present in area -Good vigor in grasses, good composition of native species (Thurber’s fescue, Arizona fescue, Perry’s oatgrass, and June grass -Maximum soil retention on forest portion of allotment -No soil movement present on forest portion of allotment -No erosion or pedestalling present on forest portion of allotment -Hi winter elk use on South exposure areas’ hillside – private land On private portion of pasture: -Soil loss evident -Soil movement evident -Erosion and pedestalling present</p> <p><i>Cucharas Pass Pasture – (White Creek; WPCP-P2 & P3)</i> -Stream channel migrating -Raw banks, no continuous woody species community -Limited willow regeneration, need continuous stands of willows</p>	<p>Wildlife: All Areas: supportive of active beaver colony(ies)/densities within the Historical Range of Variability (HRV) in applicable potential habitat types/areas; willow carrs and riparian vegetation in lynx habitat at mid-seral or higher condition; and grasses/forbs species composition, densities are within HRV levels.</p> <p><i>Cucharas Pass Pasture – (Uplands – WPCP-T2)</i> -Current condition maintained on national forest lands -Address soil loss/sediment yield issues on private lands</p> <p><i>Cucharas Pass Pasture – (White Creek; WPCP-P2 & P3)</i> -Improved establishment of willows have led to need for bank stability will improve lynx and other wildlife habitat. -Riparian corridor and belt width have increased will improve lynx and other wildlife habitat. -Aquatic species’ composition have increased will improve lynx and other wildlife habitat. -Spring sources will be protected to improve physical, chemical, and biological integrity.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lateral and vertical instability in channel -Cattle spending too much time in White Creek proper -High mobile area for soils -Area has improved over what it looked like historically -Heavy elk use (100-150 head) on slopes above White Creek <p><i>White Creek Pasture – (Dr. Taylor)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Riparian area was historically a series of beaver dam complexes that blew out in ~1950s (O. Goemmer, pers. comm.) due to extreme weather/flooding events; consequently, aquatic organisms such as frogs, toads, salamanders, macroinvertebrates, fish, and other riparian/wetland dependent wildlife species are not at their potential population/density levels in the area vs. when there was extensive beaver ponds in the area -Substantial amount of remnant beaver dam building activity is still present -There is currently only a few active beaver dams in the drainage; beaver habitat is not at its full potential -Stream channel is cut down (attempting to re-establish grade present prior to last mass episode of beaver dam building) in many areas where beaver dams have blown out, exposing raw banks that have not fully recovered or re-vegetated; somewhat limiting wildlife habitat for some species -Some sedimentation continues to occur as sediment behind breached beaver dams is released (particularly during extreme rain/snowmelt events); potentially limiting aquatic organism habitat -Livestock trailing through area causes trampling along trail and contributes some sediment to channel; potentially limiting aquatic organism habitat -Good diversity/percent cover present of/from vegetation species 	<p><i>White Creek Pasture – (Dr. Taylor)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Area has suitable vegetative diversity/composition/quality/quantity to support beaver (and other aquatic organisms/wildlife) at levels present before beaver dams were mostly blown out -Soil stability and sediment delivery are within HRV levels to provide for optimal aquatic organism habitat effectiveness -Noxious weeds are controlled/eradicated to maximize wildlife habitat capabilities -Aspen densities/distribution/seral stages within HRV to provide optimal lynx/snowshoe hare and other wildlife habitat
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<p>in majority of the area from grasses, forbs, shrubs, willows, aspen, and conifers, which provide substantial wildlife habitat (habitat still not at maximum potential, though) -Area is good black bear and other game species habitat (sighted 3 black bears on one day) -Some areas have noxious weeds present (Canada thistle/hounds tongue?? in northern end of pasture) limiting wildlife habitat effectiveness in those areas</p>	
<p>Vegetation: Historical transects/ photos could not be found to determine trend. Overall majority of allotment vegetation (Forest Service Lands) is in good condition. Transect pairs in the uplands in the Farley overlook and Donald Park areas revealed great biodiversity. <i>Cucharas Pass Units:</i> Uplands -Grass dominated site (80% Grass cover), (15% forb cover) and (5% shrub cover. Main forbs are American vetch, common sandwort, and mariposa lily). Minimal bare ground present in area. Good vigor in grasses, good composition of native species (Thurber’s fescue, Arizona fescue, Parry’s oat grass, and June grass). Resource concerns in the riparian areas on both Forest Service and private lands in White Creek. There is no continuous woody species community present in upper White Creek (lower portion of Cuchara allotment). Limited willow regeneration occurring. A more continuous stand of willows needed. Area has improved on what it looked like historically. <i>White Peak Unit</i> - Plains rough fescue (<i>Festuca hallii</i>) sensitive plant found in Donald Park and North of Cordova Pass. These areas receive light grazing use by cattle. Conifer encroachment is occurring in Donald Park and is having a negative impact on the plains rough fescue plants.</p>	<p>Vegetation: On Allotment maintain good composition and high vigor of native species (Thurber’s fescue, Arizona fescue, Parry’s oat grass, and June grass in uplands). Maintain current plant biodiversity in upland areas. Maintain minimal bare ground cover in upland areas of allotment. <i>Cucharas Pass Unit-</i> Resolve resource concerns in the White Creek riparian area. Establish more willows on White Creek. Increase riparian corridor and belt width. Establish continuous woody species community. Improve cover of aquatic species in White Creek. Maintain good condition of riparian vegetation in the Gathering Pasture sub- unit. <i>White Peak Unit-</i> Maintain and enhance cover of plains rough fescue (<i>Festuca hallii</i>) grass in the Cordova Pass and the Donald Park areas. Prevent conifer encroachment in Donald Park. <i>White Creek Unit</i> – Maintain vegetation in good condition. Maintain diverse age classes of woody vegetation in the White Creek riparian area. Maintain current willow regeneration. Maintain re-growth of willows in point bars. Maintain a variety of willows species. Maintain alder and narrow leaf cottonwood . Continue aggressive treatment of Canada thistle on breeched beavers dams and Hound’s tongue in upland areas. Maintain the variety of native grasses currently present in unit.</p>

<p><i>White Creek Unit</i> – Vast majority of area is in good condition. Riparian area is healthy. A good variety of age classes of woody vegetation present in riparian area. Good willow regeneration is occurring. Good re-growth of willow occurring in point bars. Different species of willows are present in the area. Alders and narrow leaf cottonwoods are present. Canada thistle is coming in on breeched beaver dams. Hound’s tongue is found in upland areas. Good variety of native grasses present in unit.</p>	
<p>Hydrology: The West Peak C&H allotment is comprised of 5 pastures totaling approximately 9,700 acres (15.1 square miles); a 117 acre parcel was added to Donald Park.</p> <p>Nine percent (840 acres) of the allotment is open parks, yet only four percent (430 acres) of the allotment is accessible to livestock. These open parks are the primary areas grazed by livestock. In round figures, 54% of this area is riparian, 34% is grassland, and 12% is shrubland.</p> <p>Appendix A of the hydrology report contains maps which show the open parks area for each pasture. Each map displays the wetter and drier portions of the pasture by climatic zones, improvements, and roads/trails. Known soil disturbances are also indicated on the existing condition maps by the small, red circles. Appendix B of the hydrology report contains a spreadsheet of the field observations made by the hydrologist; descriptions of the soil disturbances can be found there if observed.</p> <p>Of the accessible acreage on the West Peak allotment, 72% occurs in the subalpine, and 28% occurs in the montane climatic</p>	<p>Hydrology: The main objective is to maintain the uplands and the riparian and stream corridors at desired condition. The following bullets summarize some of the related guidance discussed in the Forest Land & Resource Management Plan, the Watershed Conservation Practices (WCPs), and other key, hydrologic concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain all riparian ecosystems in at least an upper mid-seral stage based upon the R2 Riparian Ecosystem Rating System (PSICC LRMP, III-50). Provide healthy, self-perpetuating plant communities, meet water quality standards, provide habitats for viable populations of wildlife and fish, and provide stable stream channels and still water-body shorelines (PSICC LRMP, III-203). • Achieve desired condition of riparian areas by following the standards set forth in the Watershed Conservation Practices (WCP) Handbook, FSH 2509.25. Section 12 deals specifically with Riparian Areas. Management measure (3) of this section states, “In the water influence zone (WIZ) next to perennial and intermittent streams, lakes, and wetlands, allow only those actions that maintain or improve long-term stream health and riparian ecosystem condition.” Adherence to the design criteria

<p>zone.</p> <p>The accessible open park within the subalpine zone is mostly underlain by soil map units 510M and 610G. Parent material of 510M is comprised of residuum and slope wash; this soil unit is drier and supports the subalpine fir and Englemann spruce ecological unit. Parent material of 610G is comprised of glacial till and fluvial valley fill; this soil unit is also drier and it too supports the subalpine fir and Englemann spruce ecological unit.</p> <p>The accessible open park within the montane zone is mostly underlain by soil map units 101F, and 514M. Parent material of the 101F is comprised of alluvium; as expected this soil map unit is wet and it supports riparian communities. Parent material of 514M is comprised of slope wash and residuum; this soil unit is also drier and it supports the Thurber fescue ecological unit.</p> <p>The Cuchara Pass Unit and the White Creek Unit within the White Creek drainage were identified as an area of concern by the IDT. Distribution problems have resulted in overgrazing in these two pastures; much of the allotment is on private land. Thus there is a need to work closely with the permittee to improve the rangeland and riparian condition on their private land. Much of this private land is upgradient of the National Forest System lands, so there is an opportunity and desire to work closely with the permittee to improve their lands. The hydrologist and permittees recently attended a riparian restoration workshop this past summer (2008).</p>	<p>within this standard will help to sustain riparian areas at or move them toward their desired conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide healthy uplands and riparian communities and stable stream systems in order to sustain the flow of high quality water to the forest boundary under current climatic conditions. • To ensure that grazing does not negatively alter the hydrologic processes in the uplands and along the riparian corridors, and to maintain the pattern, profile and dimensions of the stream network. • To protect the hydrologic integrity and functionality of all riparian communities, particularly the subalpine, mesic vegetative community types by reducing livestock use in these areas, and by improving distribution onto and increasing the utilization of the mountain grasslands. • To ensure that current water sources are adequately watering the livestock in a manner that is protecting those sources and the watershed. Where this is not occurring use tools available under current management or adaptive management to provide sufficient water in a manner that protects these resources. Develop springs in a manner that provides for their long-term sustainability.
<p>Soils:</p>	<p>Soils:</p>

<p>Cuchara Pass Unit has 716 acres of capable grazing, 83% of total grazing area; White Peak Unit has 3616 acres of capable grazing, 83% of total grazing area; White Creek Unit has 711 acres of capable grazing, 36% of total grazing area;</p> <p>No capable grazing areas are found on slopes greater than 40% or in areas of highly erodible soils.</p> <p>Total pasture size: Cuchara Pass Unit, 864 acres, White Peak Unit, 4362 acres White Creek Unit, 1993 acres;</p> <p>Cuchara Pass Unit: Historical evidence in some higher elevation areas of mass movement/slumping on steeper sloped, south-facing locations, most of these sites are on private portion of allotment, there is good ground cover with little evidence of current soil loss/sediment yield, minimum bare ground present. The White Creek (riparian) portion of Cuchara Pass Unit displays areas of exposed, non-vegetated stream banks with soil loss, stream bank erosion, and lateral and vertical stream instability.</p> <p>White Peak Unit: Area is grazed minimally by cattle, soils are well-stabilized with good ground cover, steeper slopes in area tend to force cattle downhill to shallower slopes;</p> <p>White Creek Unit: Good vegetation cover, stable soils, minimal grazing areas generally confined to riparian corridor, user-defined trail closely follows White Creek the length of the pasture, there is a possibility that sections of the trail could erode into the creek.</p>	<p>Overall, maintain good vegetative cover to keep soils stable.</p> <p>Cuchara Pass Unit, riparian areas: Improve stream bank vegetative cover, root depth and thickness, and willow regeneration to help decrease areas of bare soil and improve bank stability.</p> <p>White Creek Unit: Stable soils along riparian corridor to decrease possibility of trail slumping into White Creek.</p>
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