

2012 Fish Creek, Trail Creek, Hurst Canyon, North Fork and Park Creek S&G End of Season Report

Actual Use Dates:

Allotment	Date on National Forest	Date off National Forest	Number of Ewes	Number of Lambs
Fish Creek	7/8	7/31	929	1128
	8/15	8/19	1083	0
Hurst Canyon	8/20	9/18	1083	0
Trail Creek	9/19	9/20	1083	0
North Fork	8/13	8/14	800	0
	8/15	8/18	1050	0
	8/19	9/7	1200	0
Park Creek	9/8	9/12	1200	0

Forage Harvested:

Allotment	Total HM's Permitted	Total HM's Harvested
Fish Creek	3156	911
Hurst Canyon	4374	1068
Trail Creek	2525	71
North Fork	3252	980
Park Creek	1775	197

No inspection of the Hurst Canyon allotment was conducted in 2012.

Fish Creek and Trail Creek allotments were inspected on: 9/4.

Park Creek and North Fork allotments were inspected on: 7/10, 7/18, 9/4, 9/12, 9/27 & 10/5.

These inspections included livestock placement checks, rangeland inventory and monitoring, forage utilization, improvement inspections and field reviews with permittees.

Information: The precipitation information for this allotment was collected from the Stickney Mill SNOTEL site and showed 95% of average for 2012 Water Year (Oct 1- Sept. 30). Although the water year information does not appear to be terribly low the active growing season (April-September) shows 66% of normal precipitation when compared to the average. This resulted in low forage production across the allotment with plants losing their nutritional value early. The precipitation data is provided below. The totals for 2012 are compared to the average total precipitation for the water year by month for the Stickney Mill SNOTEL site from the NRCS National Water and Climate Center website for 1982-2012.

Month	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Total
2012 Precip. (in inches)	3.6	1.1	0.8	1.3	0.5	5.4	2.6	1.6	0.7	0.6	0.2	0.2	18.60
2012 % of Average	240%	65%	42%	76%	33%	257%	153%	73%	37%	50%	22%	18%	95%
Average Precip. 1982-2012	1.5	1.7	1.9	1.7	1.5	2.1	1.7	2.2	1.9	1.2	0.9	1.1	19.55

A browse standard of 50% is included in your permit and should be watched carefully in the future. While this standard has not been a focal point in the past due to minimal use of woody browse by livestock it is an important consideration especially in hot, dry years. Using this tool to adjust movement dates could avoid overuse or missing end of season standards for herbaceous and woody species in these riparian areas during drought years.

There were fewer reports of cattle finding their way to the private land in Fish Creek than in previous years. Cattle permittees responded to these reports in a timely manner. Please continue to communicate with Leadbelt, Dry Fork and BLM permittees to reduce conflicts along allotment and federal/private boundaries. Since a continuous boundary fence does not exist between cattle and sheep allotments, some conflict along this boundary is anticipated. Completing National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) analysis for construction of a boundary fence between Trail Creek and Leadbelt Allotments is planned in conjunction with NEPA analysis for cattle allotments in the Antelope Creek drainage in the near future. Your collaboration is essential to all phases of this project from mapping the desired location for the fence to designing and constructing the fence. A winter or spring meeting will be necessary to discuss and agree upon the details of this project with all permittees and Forest personnel to ensure the construction of an effective boundary fence that complies with specification for wildlife protection.

John Anchustegui did not run in 2011 or 2012. Please keep in mind that trailing through your allotments is a permitted activity with specific requirements to comply with and other options for moving this band on/off Forest may be considered if conflicts continue. Please report conflicts or concerns in a timely manner so that the Forest can address them with all permittees involved as soon as they occur.

Communication between Lava Lake and the District was good throughout the season. There was a conflict as the sheep were herded through some of the aspen treatment areas in the North Fork. This needs to be avoided until you are notified that aspen recovery is sufficient. A call was made to Pedro Loyola and he met Josh Edwards for a site visit to discuss how to avoid this issue from occurring again. Lava Lake L&L has done a great job of being flexible and responsive in their management to accommodate the rangeland resource.

There was a lone ewe seen around Bartlett Creek in the North Fork on 9/30. Lava Lake was notified and sent personnel up to look for the ewe. The herders had no luck in finding the ewe. She was reported on 11/15 in the Slide Creek area, just off the road so Pedro sent herders up to get her. Lava Lake issued a shoot on sight authority to the Forest Service. On 11/20 the ewe was found dead and had been mostly eaten by coyotes. Bighorn sheep were reported below the allotment around Chicken Creek in the North Fork drainage. With the increasing concern of potential contact between domestic and bighorn sheep it is important that the herd is kept together and **no** strays are left. There was one other instance of a lone ewe around the Sandy Meadows area. That ewe was found promptly and taken off of the Forest. Annually revisiting and using The Strategy for Managing Separation between Bighorn Sheep and Domestic Sheep, gives direction and will ensure that risk of contact is at a minimum. This strategy was developed with Lava Lake L&L, Idaho Fish and Game, and the Salmon-Challis and Sawtooth National Forests.

The Forest Service will continue monitoring and inventory work for the purpose of completing NEPA documentation on your sheep allotments. If you have any questions or comments on the information we are planning to collect to complete this analysis, please contact your range specialist or the district ranger at (208)588-3400.

North Fork S&G 2007 Fladry bedground



September 2007



August 2009



September 2010



July 2011



July 2012



October 2012

North Fork Fladry Upland Study Photos- Inside Bedground



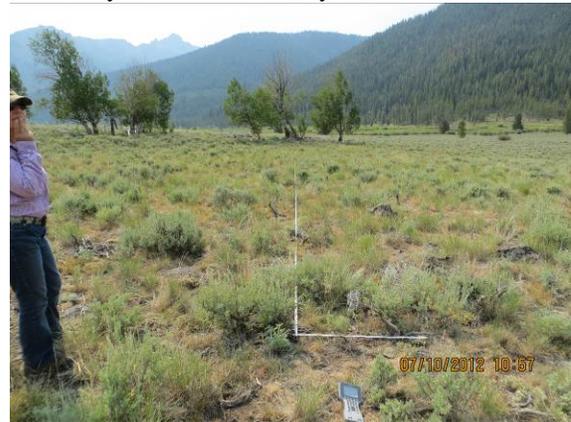
2010_June23_NorthFk_Fladry_inside_T-1_horizon



2012_July10_NorthFk_Fladry_inside_T-1_horizon



2010_June23_NorthFk_Fladry_inside_T-2_horizon



2012_July10_NorthFk_Fladry_inside_T-2_horizon

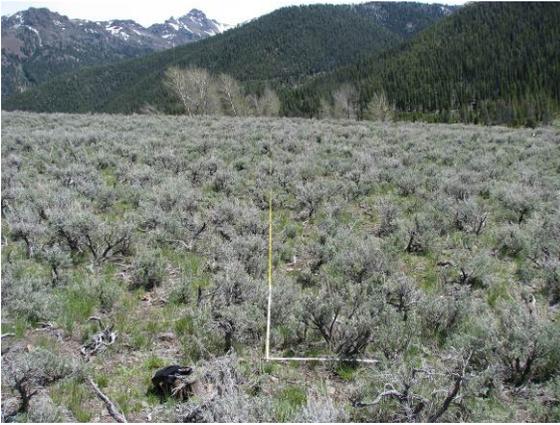


2010_June23_NorthFk_Fladry_inside_T-3_horizon



2012_July10_NorthFk_Fladry_inside_T-3_horizon

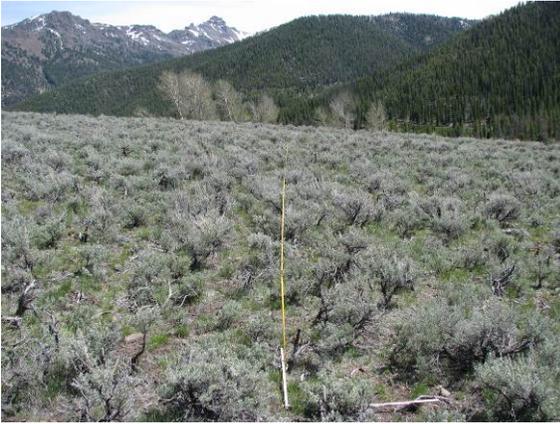
North Fork Fladry Upland Study Photos- Outside Bedground



2010_June23_NorthFk_Fladry_outside_T-1_horizon



2012_July10_NorthFk_Fladry_outside_T-1_horizon



2010_June23_NorthFk_Fladry_outside_T-2_horizon



2012_July10_NorthFk_Fladry_outside_T-2_horizon



2010_June23_NorthFk_Fladry_outside_T-3_horizon



2012_July10_NorthFk_Fladry_outside_T-3_horizon

Data Summary

Inside Fladry Site June 23, 2010

Vegetation	Rock	Bare Ground	Litter	Pavement	Cryptogams	Shrub Canopy
14.00%	10.00%	19.33%	49.67%	7.00%	0.00%	5.00%

Outside and Adjacent to Fladry Site June 23, 2010

Vegetation	Rock	Bare Ground	Litter	Pavement	Cryptogams	Shrub Canopy
11.67%	7.67%	26.67%	49.00%	5.00%	0.00%	24.83%

Location: North Fork Sheep Allotment, GPS Coordinates: UTM NAD83, Zone 11, 4867083N 715902E

Inside Fladry Site July 10, 2012

Vegetation	Rock	Bare Ground	Litter	Pavement	Cryptogams	Shrub Canopy
20.00%	9.00%	11.33%	51.67%	7.67%	0.33%	9.37%

Outside and Adjacent to Fladry Site July 18, 2012

Vegetation	Rock	Bare Ground	Litter	Pavement	Cryptogams	Shrub Canopy
19.33%	14.33%	8.33%	42.00%	15.67%	0.33%	23.31%

In 2007 this site was used as a night time bedding grounds with fladry when wolves were actively pursuing them on the allotment. Fladry is an electric fence with flagging on it to make visible to wolves. This along with a night watch was used as a non-lethal alternative to the wolf activity. 1200 dry ewes were penned in this area for 4 nights in 2007. In 2008 the herder misunderstood instructions and penned 1164 dry ewes for 3 nights on the same site. This site is approximately 1.5 acres and was used for a total of 7 nights as a bedground. The area was avoided from 2008 through the present and yielded desirable results.

Methods: I placed 3, 100' transects within the fladry bedground and measured ground cover at every foot mark of the tape. I repeated this outside of the bedground in a similar vegetative community. See Map 1 below. There were 5 steps between each transect placement and they were arranged in a parallel format. At each transect line intercept for sagebrush canopy cover was measured. That measurement is independent of the ground cover measurements.

Results: June 23, 2010: The area that sheep were bedded in showed 73.67% effective ground cover and shrub canopy was 5%. Outside of the bedground effective ground cover was 68.34% and shrub canopy was 24.85%. With a reduction in shrub canopy, ground cover has recovered at the bedground (5% may not be a statistically valid enough to constitute a change).

July 10, 2012: The area that sheep were bedded in showed 81% effective ground cover and shrub canopy was 9.37%. The 3 transects outside of the bedgrounds were photographed but no data was collected on this day.

July 18, 2012: Outside of the bedground effective ground cover was 76% and shrub canopy was 23.31%.