

**2012 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	108	7/1	9/30	327	108	7/1	9/30	327
126	6/1	9/25	485	150	6/1	7/15	222	150	6/1	7/19	242

Head Months include Forest (48%) and BLM (52%). BLM permit allows for earlier on date. Actual use was 569 head months, 62% of 918 full permitted head months. Rena Ranch used the allotment for 49 days. Dickey Livestock used the allotment 92 days.

**UNIT DATES AND UTILIZATION RESULTS:**

ACTUAL GRAZING SCHEDULE			ALLOWABLE STDS	ACTUAL RESULTS
UNIT NAME	ON DATE	OFF DATE	RIPARIAN/ UPLANDS/BROWSE	RIPARIAN/BROWSE
Double Springs	6/22	7/19(150)	50% Uplands	24% uplands
Poison Springs (BLM)	8/16	9/30(108)	50% (4 in)	No Data
Willow Creek Springs	8/16	9/30(108)	50% (4 in) 50% Browse	4"
Rock Creek (BLM)	6/1	6/21(150)	50% (4 in)	No Data

\*\*Dickey Livestock used Willow Creek (108 head), Poison Springs (108 head) units together. Both units are predominantly BLM lands. Rena Ranch used Double Springs (150 head) (FS) and Rock Creek (150 head) (BLM/FS) units.

**Allotment Inspections:** Visits were made on the following dates: 8/2 and 9/10. Allotment inspections included cattle location checks and utilization monitoring.

**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

**Utilization:** Upland range on both BLM and Forest in all units had a similar pattern of utilization on bluebunch wheatgrass. An estimated 30 percent use occurred within ¼ mile of water, 20% between ¼ and ½ mile, and 8% use greater than ¾ mile from water. Riparian sedge utilization was light and light on grasses across the entire allotment. Upland utilization across the allotment was on average light.

BLM improved the pipeline in the Willow Creek Unit in 2007 and this helped alleviate the use on Willow Creek.

A browse standard of 50% is included in your permit and should be watched carefully in the future. While this standard has not been focused on by range specialists in the past because minimal use of woody browse by livestock was observed, browse on willows, aspen, and riparian shrubs is an important consideration especially in dry years. In general, cattle began to shift to woody browse species as the four inch stubble height on grasses and sedges was met which could be used as an indicator for riders/ permittees to move cattle. 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 years of low precipitation.

**Compliance with Unit schedule and Project Maintenance:** Dickey Livestock used a shorter season of use with permitted head months. Dickey followed the unit schedule according to instructions. Rena Ranch came off of the allotment 4 days later than scheduled.

**Recommendations:**

1. Continue to discourage concentration of cattle near Freighter Springs, and riparian areas with salting and riding.
2. When not moving according to the Annual Operating Instructions, continue to contact the Forest Service with authorization of changes.
3. Prepare for another hot and dry season. The precipitation from this winter will prove insignificant to forage production if we do not get any moisture during the spring and active growing season. In preparing, thoughts of running fewer cattle, less time in each unit and lighter use will reduce the chances of long lasting impacts to the forage species on the allotment.