

## **Carrol Creek Allotment 2021 End of Year Report**

**NMFS BO No: WCR-2017-7355**

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest  
Wallowa Valley Ranger District

04 March 2022

**Introduction:** The purpose of this report is to satisfy Terms and Conditions set forth in the Biological Opinion from NMFS, WCR-2017-7355. This report responds to each Term and Condition.

### **Terms and Conditions**

- I. The following terms and conditions implement RPM 1 (minimize take from livestock grazing):
  - a. The WWNF and its permittees shall ensure that pastures are monitored mid-season and end-of-season at the frequency described in the Proposed Action. For pastures that overlap with ESA-listed fish and where habitat indicators are not meeting objectives, implement a mid-season move trigger of 15 percent streambank alteration.
    - End of season monitoring was completed on September 1, 2021, after the season of use for the pasture. Ocular observation indicated few grazed plants, a 20 inch stubble height, no fresh cow plops, and 4 hoof prints.
  - b. The WWNF shall ensure that appropriately trained WWNF staff monitor streambank alteration levels, at the DMAs which the WWNF has proposed for each pasture. If the take surrogate of 20 percent streambank alteration is exceeded, the WWNF shall contact the NMFS Snake Basin Office immediately.
    - Bank alteration was ocular estimated at the end of the season. Bank alteration was estimated at less than 5 percent.
  - c. The WWNF shall ensure all enclosures, fences, and water developments that reduce cattle use adjacent to streams are properly maintained and functioning as intended.
    - The Riparian Pasture Boundary was inspected in 2021 by WWNF personal and appears to be in good condition.
  - d. The WWNF shall use the Long-Term and Annual Adaptive Management Strategies described in the Proposed Action to adjust grazing management strategy when needed to maintain desired stream habitat conditions and minimize incidental take.
    - The Riparian pasture is planned for rest or incidental grazing in the early season prior to 10 August. Long term data was collected in 2020 and is planned for collection each 5 years (2025, 2030, 2035, ...). The data collected in 2020 shows the pasture to be meeting objectives and in satisfactory condition.

II. The following terms and conditions implement RPM 2 (monitoring and reporting). The WWNF shall:

Submit an annual monitoring report to NMFS by February 1 each year with the following:

- a. Overview of proposed action and actual management (e.g., livestock numbers, on-off dates for each Pasture, etc.)
  - Table 1 shows the permitted use and Table 2 shows the grazing schedule for 2021.

**Table 1: Permitted Use**

Permittee	Class	Term	Private Land	Season
Big Sheep LLC	cow/calf	58	82	4/25 – 12/15
				Not to exceed 385 HM's

**Table 2: 2021 Grazing Schedule**

Pasture	Head		Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	Term	Private									
West Hillside 02	<u>28</u> 25	<u>41</u> 15	25 --	-- 20						<u>1-30</u>	—
East Hillside 04	<u>30</u> 26	<u>41</u> 16	25 --	-- 20						<u>1-30</u>	—
Ham Place 02	22	50			1 --	--31					
North and South Forest Service Riparian 05 and 06	No planned use adjacent to Big Sheep Creek. Use is permitted and allowed between May 1 and August 10 (see table 3, page 8 of the BO), but not scheduled. If cattle are grazed during the allowable use period; the Terms and Conditions of the NMFS BO, will apply. Monitoring of the pasture will occur within 1 week after the cattle leave. Permittee will complete trigger monitoring, mid-season if grazing in the enclosure occurs.										

- b. Results from all implementation and effectiveness monitoring identified as part of the proposed action, including required move-trigger and end-of-season monitoring (i.e., stubble height, riparian shrub utilization, and streambank alteration), seral condition MIM data, bank stability, water temperature, sediment, and width-to-depth ratio.
  - End of season monitoring was completed on September 1, 2021, after the season of use for the pasture. Ocular observation indicated few grazed plants, a 20 inch stubble height, no fresh cow plops, and 4 hoof prints.
  - Effectiveness data was collected in 2020 and is shown in Table 3. The summary is that the pasture is meeting objectives and is in satisfactory condition.

**Table 3: Summary for MIM for Big Sheep Creek, Carrol Creek Allotment**

Indicator	2020	Objective	Trend	Comments
Streambank Stability (%)	64	≥90	Not Apparent	1 <sup>st</sup> year of data

Streambank Cover (%)	39	≥90	Not Apparent	1 <sup>st</sup> year of data
Greenline Ecological Status Rating	72 (Late)	≥86 (PNC)	Not Apparent	Does not meet objective
Site Wetland Rating	62 (FAC)	≥67 (FAC+)	Not Apparent	Does not meet objective
Winward Greenline Stability Rating	5.75 (Mid)	>6 (Mid)	Not Apparent	Does not meet objective
Hydric Plants (%)	34	≥78	Not Apparent	Does not meet objective
Overall Trend			Not Apparent	1 <sup>st</sup> year of data

- c. Discussion of any unauthorized use and/or any maintenance issues related to fences and water developments.
  - There are no unauthorized use or fence maintenance issues to discuss.
- d. Review of allotment compliance with annual indicators. For any incidences of non-compliance, describe the WWNF response per the Annual Adaptive Management Strategy in the Proposed Action.
  - Monitoring showed that grazing was within the stated use limits and authorized season of use.
- e. Detailed description of any adaptive management responses taken by the WWNF as part of the Long-Term and Annual Adaptive Management Strategies described in the Proposed Action.
  - Continue to trigger monitor and end of season use monitor when the pasture is grazed.
- f. Any relevant information that becomes available regarding Snake River Basin steelhead or Snake River spring/summer Chinook salmon habitat trends and/or spawning locations that would modify the assumptions made in this Opinion or results in effects not considered.
  - There is no new information to report at this time.
- g. Any management recommendations for subsequent years.
  - Continue to rest the pasture or graze incidentally.
  - If grazed more than incidentally then use monitoring by the Permittee and the Forest Service to make management choice.