

Carrol Creek Allotment 2023 End of Year Report

NMFS BO No: WCR-2017-7355

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest
Wallowa Valley Ranger District

17 May 2024

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 answers directly to each Term and Condition.

Terms and Conditions

1. 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.

In 2017, 1.4 miles of high tensile fence was constructed to distribute cattle away from Big Sheep Creek in the North and South Riparian pasture of the Carrol Creek Allotment (Map 1). The Permittee, also the private landowner agreed to include the private land along the creek between the two Forest Service corners to make a more contiguous fence to assist in protection of possible redds and improve critical habitat for spawning and rearing steelhead and Chinook salmon.

The Riparian Pasture Boundary Fence that constructed in 2017 was inspected in 2022 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 proposed action consists of the following components: (1) Rotation of livestock grazing across multiple pastures, and associated conservation measures aimed at minimizing the

impacts of livestock grazing on riparian areas: (2) implementation and effectiveness monitoring: and (3) adaptive management procedures to adjust grazing practices, if necessary, to protect ESA-listed fish and their habitat.

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

- A. Submit an annual monitoring report to NMFS by February 1 each year with the following:
- i. Overview of proposed action and actual management (e.g., livestock numbers, on-off dates for each Pasture, etc.)

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: 2022 Grazing Schedule

Pasture	Head	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
West Hillside 02	69	25 --	-- 20							
East Hillside 04	71	25 --	-- 20							
Ham Place 02	72			1 --	--31					
West Hillside	40								1-30	
East Hillside	40								1-30	
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.									

- ii. 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.

No monitoring occurred in 2023.

- iii. Discussion of any unauthorized use and/or any maintenance issues related to fences and water developments.

No monitoring occurred in 2023.

- iv. 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.

No monitoring occurred in 2023.

- v. 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.

- vi. 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.

No additional information.

- vii. Any management recommendations for subsequent years.

No recommendations currently.

Map 1: Location of the North and South Forest Service Riparian fence.

