

**2007 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	307	6/1	7/8	296	307	6/6	6/27	222
126	6/1	9/25	485	140	7/1	8/31	285	65	6/15	9/24	218

Head Months include Forest (48%) and BLM (52%). BLM permit allows for earlier on date.

UNIT DATES AND UTILIZATION RESULTS:

ACTUAL GRAZING SCHEDULE			ALLOWABLE STDS	ACTUAL RESULTS
UNIT NAME	ON DATE	OFF DATE	RIPARIAN	RIPARIAN
Double Springs	6/15	8/19	50% (4 in) 55% Uplands	35%
Poison Springs	6/6	**	50% (4 in)	No Data
Willow Creek/Springs	**	6/27	50% (4 in)	5"
Rock Creek	8/19	9/24	50% (4 in)	No Data

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

Allotment Inspections: Visits were made on the following dates 4/30, 6/14, 6/19, 6/25, 9/27. Allotment inspections included project maintenance checks, cattle location checks and utilization monitoring.

Information: Two creeks were inventoried in 2003 to determine ecological status. Willow Creek below Freighter Springs, east of the earthquake interpretive area was determined to be in early ecological status. The creek has been historically disturbed by mechanical treatments, according to permittees. The site lacks a willow age class diversity and abundance, and has a weak expression of hydric sedges. Hydric sedges and willows are attempting to reoccupy the riparian zone. The Freighter Springs enclosure contains the potential vegetation. A tributary east of the Willow Creek inventory site was

determined to be in a potential natural community status. The tributary has a heavier willow component compared to Willow Creek.

The precipitation information for the District is included in the table below. While this information is collected at the office in Mackay and is not specific to your allotment areas, it does give a good idea of the available moisture on the District. The totals for 2007 are compared to the average total precipitation by month for Mackay from the Desert Research Institute website for 1931-2005. The low precipitation levels and early warm temperatures caused vegetation to mature at a faster rate this year, two to three weeks ahead of normal in many areas. This caused upland vegetation to dry out at a faster rate and made these grasses less desirable to your livestock.

Month	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Total
Precip (in.)	0.03	0.48	0.59	0.48	0.36	1.07	0.17	0.46	0.88	1.19	5.71
Ave Precip. 1931-2005	0.78	0.60	0.61	0.68	1.09	1.34	0.93	0.80	0.67	0.57	8.07

The warmer, drier conditions caused cattle to utilize woody browse species heavier than in normal precipitation years. This use was seen across the district as a whole. 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 in the future. 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.

Utilization: Upland range on both BLM and Forest in all units had a similar pattern of utilization on bluebunch wheatgrass. An estimated 45 to 50 percent use occurred within ¼ mile of water, 35% between ¼ and ½ mile, and 15% use greater than ¾ mile from water. End of the season, riparian vegetation was 5” in the Willow Creek unit.

BLM improved the pipeline in the Willow Creek Unit in 2007 and this should help the distribution in the future, and help alleviate the use on Willow Creek.

Compliance with Unit schedule and Project Maintenance: Permittees used a shorter season of use with less head months. The unit schedule was followed according to instructions, with exception to Rena running less numbers/ head months and longer time.

Actual use was 440 head months, 48% of 918 full permitted head months. Rena Ranch used the allotment for 62 days. Dickey Livestock used the allotment 22 days.

Recommendations:

1. Prevent drift from Double Springs Unit into the Willow Creek Unit, by extending fence or intensive maintenance and/or riding.
2. Discourage concentration of cattle near Freighter Springs, and riparian areas with salting and riding.
3. Continue with conservative grazing periods and cattle numbers to compensate for drought and limited water.
4. When not moving according to the Annual Operating Instructions, continue to contact the Forest Service with authorization of changes.