

**LITTLE LOST RIVER SUB-BASIN
SAWMILL CANYON WATERSHED
2008 END OF SEASON REPORT
MILL CREEK ALLOTMENT – LOST RIVER RANGER DISTRICT, SALMON-
CHALLIS NF**

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.
554	7/1	9/30	1676	554	7/1	9/30	1676	553	7/1	9/26	1600

UNIT DATES AND UTILIZATION RESULTS:

ACTUAL GRAZING SCHEDULE			ALLOWABLE STDS	ACTUAL RESULTS
UNIT NAME	ON DATE	OFF DATE	RIPARIAN	RIPARIAN
Squaw Creek	7/1	7/22	50% (4 in.)	4 in
Cub Canyon	7/23	8/5	50% (4 in.)	No data
Horse Lake	8/6	8/14	50% (4 in.) & 35% (6 in)	4/6 in ¹
Smithie Fork	8/15	9/1	50% (4 in)	6 in
Timber Creek	9/2	9/18	50% (4 in.)	4 in
Mill Creek	9/19	9/26	50% (4 in.)	5 in

¹ In this unit, there are two key areas; spring above trail, end of season standard 4 inches; and below camp ground on main road, end of season standard 6 inches.

Allotment Inspections: Allotment inspections were conducted on the following dates: 6/27, 7/21, 8/14, 9/8, 9/12, 10/2, 10/7, 10/8. Allotment inspections included cattle location checks, contact with rider and permittees, and utilization monitoring.

Information: The precipitation for the District was below normal for 2008. The late winter and cooler night time temperatures in addition to below normal precipitation levels caused vegetation to mature later and shorter this year, two to three weeks behind normal in many areas. Low moisture caused upland vegetation to dry out fast and made those

grasses less desirable for livestock. These conditions continue to limit livestock water on the allotment.

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. Generally speaking, 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: Standards were met in every unit. Utilization was more evenly distributed for the third consecutive year. Riparian utilization was moderate on sedges and light on grasses. Continue to move cattle away from high concentrated use areas adjacent to roads and streams.

Compliance with Unit Schedule and Project Maintenance: The unit schedule was followed according to the instructions. Actual use was full permitted head months, and full permitted cattle. Cattle distribution and control has improved immensely since 2006, however there were small bunches of cattle observed outside of unit schedules throughout the 2008 grazing season.

The FS Administrative pasture continues to be a challenge. It is the Forest's responsibility to maintain the FS Administrative pasture fence at the beginning of the season, and the permittee's responsibility to keep it maintained throughout the grazing season. Cattle were not observed in the administrative pasture during 2008 grazing season.

Summary: Standards were met in every unit. Riding and back riding continues to be the key factor in following the grazing management plan and meeting end of season stubble height standards. Gathering this allotment can be a challenge with the timbered country.

Recommendations or Reminders:

1. Cattle movements between units need to be completed in a specified period. This means permittees need to provide additional riders on move dates and assist with back riding.
2. Riders need to move cattle that are congregating in riparian areas, boundary fence corners and other problem areas into uplands for more uniform utilization of entire range.
3. Back ride to ensure cattle aren't drifting into previously used units. When leaving the Allotment, start earlier than off date and stagger to ensure complete removal of livestock in a timely manner.
4. Look at extending fence between Horse Lake Unit and Sawmill Creek Unit. Look at water developments in Cub Canyon and Squaw Creek Units.