

**2008 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	300	6/1	6/27	266	300	6/6	6/27	266
126	6/1	9/25	485	75	6/15	9/25	252	65	6/15	9/25	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	20%
Poison Springs	6/6	**	50% (4 in)	No Data
Willow Creek/Springs	**	6/27	50% (4 in)	8"
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 7/2, 8/14, 10/7. 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 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 these 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. 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.

**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. End of the season, riparian vegetation was 8" in the Willow Creek unit.

BLM improved the pipeline in the Willow Creek Unit in 2007 and this helped 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 Freighters Springs and riparian areas with salting and riding.
3. Coordinate with Forest Service when there is a need to adjust movement of livestock from what's written in the Annual Operating Instructions.