August 25, 2008

Todd Tucci  
Advocates for the West  
PO Box 1612  
Boise, ID  83701

Dear Todd,

On August 22 – 23 of 2008 Katie Fite of Western Watersheds Project and I analyzed 6 different riparian areas within the Pole Creek Allotment. Monitoring locations included Pole Creek, Middle Fork Owyhee, CCC Spring Creek, and Scott Springs Creek which are intended to be included in BLM monitoring. In addition, we also monitored locations along Monada Flat Creek and Peach Creek which are also in the Pole Creek allotment. (See map below for monitoring locations) During our field work, we monitored the stubble height, streambank alteration, streambank cover and stability, and the woody species cover and browse use. The following are the results of our monitoring. In each case, we used the protocol described in Idaho Technical Bulletin 2007-01, *Monitoring Stream Channels and Riparian Vegetation – Multiple Indicators.*
Map of riparian monitoring locations within the Pole Creek Allotment
Stubble Height

Stubble height is the mean height of the samples of the key browse species along the greenline following a period of grazing. We found that in all locations the mean stubble height of key species along the greenline was less than 4 inches. As noted in the graph below, stubble height ranged from 1.9 inches on CCC Springs Creek to 3.2 inches on Middle Fork Owyhee.
Photo of Pole Creek utilization cage with comparison of tall grass within the cage and short stubble along the greenline outside of the cage.

Streambank Alteration

Streambank alteration is a measure of the linear length of a streambank that has been altered as a result of livestock trampling. Alterations are defined as hoofprints that expose ½” or more of bare soil, broken vegetation cover that is ½” deep, or evidence of soil compacted by livestock even if not ½” deep. Streambank alteration ranged from 17% on the Middle Fork Owyhee to 38% on Monada Flat Creek.
Streambank alteration on CCC Spring Creek.
Streambank Cover and Stability

Per ITB 2007-01, streambanks are considered stable if they have no broken, slumping, sheared, or fractured banks. Streambanks are considered covered if perennial herbaceous or woody vegetation covers more than 50% of the ground or if roots, large rocks, or logs cover more than 50% of the bank surface. We measured both the cover and stability of the streambanks with the following results:
Woody Species Cover and Use

Only two of the monitored streams, Middle Fork Owyhee and CCC Spring Creek, contained willows or aspens along the greenline. Each of the other riparian areas had roses growing along the greenline. On the Middle Fork Owyhee, aspens covered 7% of the linear distance and utilization averaged 75%. Along CCC Spring Creek, willows covered 7% of the streambank and utilization averaged 63%.
Willow utilization along CCC Spring Creek.

If you have questions about this report, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Stuart Murray
High Desert Ecology