

Proposed Action: This ranch was recently purchased by the present owners. The public land was historically overgrazed by the previous permittee. The current owner has reduced livestock numbers which is leading the allotment to making significant progress toward meeting the rangeland health standards. The BLM and permittee do not propose any management changes.

The current permitted use would continue; 6 cattle, 61 AUMs, season of use - 3/1-2/28, 100% custodial. Total preference would remain 61 AUMs.

Range Improvements: The allotment contains houndstongue, Canada thistle, and field bindweed. The BLM and permittee have signed and implemented a weed control cooperative agreement. No other range improvements are proposed.

**Identification No. 053
Dickson Coulee, Allotment 02532**

Public Acres	80
AUMs	13
Public Land	100%
Livestock No.	1 cattle
Season of Use	3/1-2/28
Grazing System	None
Type of Use	Custodial

Meeting Upland Standard:

- Yes.

Upland Objectives:

- Maintain vegetation in late seral stage.
- Maintain upland rangeland health.

Meeting Riparian Health Standard:

- N/A

Riparian Objectives:

- No riparian habitat on public land within this allotment.

Meeting Water Quality Standard:

- N/A

Water Quality Objectives:

- N/A

Meeting Biodiversity Standard:

- Yes.

Biodiversity Objectives:

- Maintain biodiversity within the allotment.

Conforms to Livestock Grazing Management Guidelines: Yes.

Proposed Action: The current permitted use would continue; 1 cattle, 13 AUMs, season of use - 3/1-2/28, 100% custodial.

Range Improvements: No range improvements are proposed.

**Identification No. 054
N Bar, Allotment 02821**

Public Acres	2,715
AUMs	586
Public Land	100%
Livestock No.	49 cattle
Season of Use	3/1-2/28
Grazing System	None
Type of Use	Custodial

Meeting Upland Standard:

- No. (crested wheatgrass, north pasture).

Upland Objectives:

- Utilize crested wheatgrass in the north pasture while most palatable early in the grazing season to allow for increase in native vegetation species composition and vigor.
- Improve vegetation to mid or late seral stage in north pasture areas not influenced by an existing prairie dog town.
- Maintain vegetation in late seral stage in the Durfee Hills pasture.

Meeting Riparian Health Standard:

- N/A

Riparian Objectives:

- No riparian habitat on public land within this allotment.

Meeting Water Quality Standard:

- N/A

Water Quality Objectives:

- N/A

Meeting Biodiversity Standard:

- No.

Biodiversity Objectives:

- Improve biodiversity through continued leafy spurge control efforts and optimum utilization of crested wheatgrass in the north pasture.

Conforms to Livestock Grazing Management Guidelines: No.

Guidelines not conformed to: No. 8, 9 (salt/mineral placement, weeds, see Appendix C).

Proposed Action: The north portion of this allotment contains a high percentage of crested wheatgrass. Leafy spurge is also scattered throughout the allotment. The crested wheatgrass is being utilized for early spring grazing. The leafy spurge is actively being controlled by the permittee using a combination of herbicide, biocontrol, and sheep grazing. Current livestock grazing management is not negatively affecting rangeland health. To accurately reflect current livestock grazing management, the BLM proposes a season and numbers authorization.

**Identification No. 055
South Becket, Allotment 02829**

Public Acres	200
AUMs	18
Public Land	100%
Livestock No.	2 cattle
Season of Use	3/1-2/28
Grazing System	None
Type of Use	Custodial

The current permitted use would be modified;

- North Pasture: 23 cattle, 274 AUMs, season of use – 3/1-2/28, 100% custodial.
- Durfee Hills: 900 sheep, 367 AUMs, season of use – 5/15-7/15, 100% free use.
- Durfee Hills: 78 cattle, 313 AUMs, season of use – 6/1-9/30, 100% active.

Total preference would remain 586 AUMs.

The following terms and conditions would be added to the other terms and conditions of the grazing permit:

- The free use grazing authorization is granted under 43CFR 4130.5(b)(3). The free use grazing is authorized for the control of leafy spurge. Sheep use may occur for up to one month for a total of 189 AUMs on BLM lands within the listed season.
- Actual Use (Form 4130-5) will be submitted annually to the Lewistown Field Office within 15 days following grazing use.

Supplemental salt/mineral would be moved a minimum of ¼ mile from any livestock water source on public land within the allotment.

Range Improvements: The allotment contains leafy spurge. The BLM and permittee have signed and implemented a weed control cooperative agreement. No other range improvements are proposed.

Meeting Upland Standard:

- N/A

Upland Objectives:

- N/A

Meeting Riparian Health Standard:

- N/A

Riparian Objectives:

- No riparian habitat on public land within this allotment.

Meeting Water Quality Standard:

- N/A

Water Quality Objectives:

- N/A

Meeting Biodiversity Standard:

- No.

Biodiversity Objectives:

- Improve biodiversity through continued leafy spurge control efforts.

Conforms to Livestock Grazing Management Guidelines: No.

Guidelines not conformed to: No. 9 (weeds, see Appendix C).

Proposed Action: This allotment consists of two adjoining 80 acre parcels and a separate 40 acre parcel of public land. All parcels are dominated by steep slopes and heavy timber and are not suitable for livestock grazing.

The BLM would consider retiring this allotment from grazing when the current Resource Management Plan is updated. Authorized livestock do not have sufficient access to the limited amount of forage resources present on public land. The allotment is dominated by steep topography and dense stands of timber. Any livestock use that may occur on BLM land is incidental and does/would not contribute to the allotment not meeting the standards for rangeland health. During the interim prior to an RMP update, the current permitted use would continue; 2 cattle, 18 AUMs, season of use –

**Table 4.2 Allotments Not Meeting the Upland Health Standard;
Livestock Grazing Is Not a Significant Factor.**

<i>Allotment Name</i>	<i>Allotment Number</i>	<i>Identification Number</i>
Nebel Coulee	09665	003
Harlow Ranch	10038	004
South Forest Grove	12604	005
Single	02618	012
Dinger	02809	017
Pulp 40	02527	030
Pronghorn Ranch	02826	033
Springs Lease	02534	037
Many Springs	02816	038
Lindquist	02643	044
French	12625	045
Piper	02531	046
Rose Canyon	02672	048
Horsethief Ridge	02629	051
Horsethief Coulee	02634	052
N Bar	02821	054
West Fork Beaver Cr.	10062	056
Half Moon	02827	057
Carl's Spring	02657	059
Bald Butte	12806	065
East Fork Beaver Cr.	20001	074
Three Bar	20035	079

4.2.2.1 French, Allotment No. 12625

This allotment is not meeting the upland health standard due to the predominance of crested wheatgrass. The authorized season of use for this allotment is currently 6/1-12/31. These dates do not allow for early spring utilization of the crested wheatgrass. The BLM and permittee propose modifying the season of use to 3/1-2/28 with the following term and condition added to the grazing permit:

- Livestock grazing on the allotment would occur, when possible, 4/1-6/15 and 10/1-12/31 with prior BLM approval.

This change in the season of use would provide for optimum utilization of the crested wheatgrass and distribute grazing use to currently unavailable forage. Desirable, native vegetation would be positively impacted through decreased grazing pressure and increased biomass, root reserves and plant vigor thereby improving upland health and benefiting soils.

4.2.2.2 Rose Canyon, Allotment No. 02672

The permittee proposes construction of two high tensile electric fences within the allotment to provide for optimal crested wheatgrass utilization and distribution of livestock. The proposed projects will be analyzed in a separate NEPA document prepared by the Lewistown Field Office. The authorized season of use for this allotment is currently 6/1-10/15. These dates do not allow for early spring utilization of the crested wheatgrass. The BLM and permittee propose continuing the 3/1-2/28 season of use with the following term and condition added to the grazing permit:

- Livestock grazing on the allotment would occur 5/1-7/1.

This season of use would provide for optimum utilization of the crested wheatgrass and distribute grazing use to currently unavailable forage. Desirable, native vegetation would be positively impacted through

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<i>Allotment Name</i>	<i>Allotment Number</i>	<i>Identification Number</i>
Nebel Coulee	09665	003
Harlow Ranch	10038	004
South Forest Grove	12604	005
Single	02618	012
Dinger	02809	017
Pulp 40	02527	030
Pronghorn Ranch	02826	033
Springs Lease	02534	037
Many Springs	02816	038
Lindquist	02643	044
French	12625	045
Piper	02531	046
Rose Canyon	02672	048
Horsethief Ridge	02629	051
Horsethief Coulee	02634	052
N Bar	02821	054
West Fork Beaver Cr.	10062	056
Half Moon	02827	057
Carl's Spring	02657	059
Bald Butte	12806	065
East Fork Beaver Cr.	20001	074
Three Bar	20035	079

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- Livestock grazing on the allotment would occur, when possible, 4/1-6/15 and 10/1-12/31 with prior BLM approval.

This change in the season of use would provide for optimum utilization of the crested wheatgrass and distribute grazing use to currently unavailable forage. Desirable, native vegetation would be positively impacted through decreased grazing pressure and increased biomass, root reserves and plant vigor thereby improving upland health and benefiting soils.

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- Livestock grazing on the allotment would occur 5/1-7/1.

This season of use would provide for optimum utilization of the crested wheatgrass and distribute grazing use to currently unavailable forage. Desirable, native vegetation would be positively impacted through

decreased grazing pressure and increased biomass, root reserves and plant vigor thereby improving upland health and benefiting soils.

4.2.2.3 N Bar, Allotment No. 02821

The N Bar allotment is located in two geographical areas, split by the Flatwillow Creek valley. The North Pasture and the Durfee Hills Pasture currently have the same authorized season of use – 3/1-2/28. The Durfee Hills pasture is poorly watered and is currently used on a very limited basis for livestock grazing. The BLM and permittee have entered into a cooperative weed control agreement to graze sheep on the Durfee Hills Pasture to control leafy spurge. The BLM proposes to authorize sheep grazing with a free use permit. The current permitted use would be modified:

- Durfee Hills; 900 sheep, 367 AUMs, season of use – 5/15-7/15, 100% free use.

The following terms and conditions would be added:

- The free use grazing authorization is granted under 43CFR 4130.5(b)(3). The free use grazing is authorized for the control of leafy spurge. Sheep use may occur for up to one month on public land within the listed season.
- Actual Use (Form 4130-5) will be submitted annually to the Lewistown Field Office within 15 days following grazing use.

The limited use of sheep would positively impact upland vegetation by controlling leafy spurge with very minimal utilization of desirable native grass species. The band of sheep utilized for this project is accustomed to leafy spurge and prefer it over other

species. Monitoring of this sheep grazing project is being conducted by MSU Extension and the Montana Sheep Institute.

4.2.2.4 Bald Butte, Allotment No. 12806

This allotment is split geographically by the South Fork of Flatwillow Creek. The season of use is currently 6/1-10/15 for both the LU Pasture and the Bald Butte Pasture. The BLM and permittee propose splitting the season of use between the LU pasture and the Bald Butte pasture. The LU pasture is traditionally used early in the season and livestock are then moved to the Bald Butte pasture for late summer/fall grazing. The AUM distribution between the two pastures does not allow for optimum utilization of available forage. The season of use would be modified to facilitate earlier removal of cattle from the LU pasture and more time on the Bald Butte pasture. The proposed changes are:

- L.U. pasture; 6/1-7/15.
- Bald Butte pasture; 7/1-11/15.

This modification would positively impact upland range health through optimum forage utilization, improved livestock distribution and increased soil stability.

Rangeland conditions on the allotments listed in Table 4.3 are not meeting the upland health standard and livestock grazing has been determined to be a significant factor. Trends on these allotments are static or down. Management changes and/or range improvements have been proposed by the BLM and/or the permittees. The proposed changes would lead to significant progress toward meeting the upland health standard. Impacts to rangelands for each allotment are discussed below.

Table 4.3 Allotments Not Meeting the Upland Health Standard

<i>Allotment Name</i>	<i>Allotment Number</i>	<i>Identification Number</i>
Surenough Creek	12607	007
Moulton	02679	010
Grass Range	02626	024
Martin Creek	09859	026
Alkali Creek	02645	043
Wolf Butte	09819	072
Sage Creek	09745	077
Heble	02632	080

Table 4.8 Allotments Impacting Wildlife; Livestock Grazing Is Not a Significant Factor.

<i>Allotment Name</i>	<i>Allotment Number</i>	<i>Identification Number</i>
Luther	20054	002
Nebel Coulee	09665	003
Harlow Ranch	10038	004
South Forest Grove	12604	005
Buck Ridge	02619	006
Twin Sisters	09695	011
Single	02618	012
Athern Creek	02814	015
Dinger	02809	017
Beaver Ball Creek	02810	018
Atherton Creek	02622	020
Blacktail Creek	02811	021
Harlow	19730	027
Beckett	02518	029
Pulp 40	02527	030
Willow Creek	02807	032
Pronghorn Ranch	02826	033
Springs Lease	02534	037
Many Springs	02816	038
Mary's Knoll	09751	039
Alkali Creek	02645	043
Lindquist	02643	044
French	12625	045
Piper	02531	046
Dry Fork Creek	02530	047
Rose Canyon	02672	048
Meadors Bench	02648	049
Horsethief Ridge	02629	051
Horsethief Coulee	02634	052
N Bar	02821	054
South Beckett	02829	055
Half Moon	02827	057
Carl's Spring	02657	059
Muley Coulee	02823	064
Bald Butte	12806	065
Shannon Creek	09813	067
Elk Creek	02830	069
Shadow Mountain	02605	070
No Go	02671	073
East Fork Beaver Cr.	20001	074
Three Bar	20035	079
North McDonald	12612	081

(Note: The allotments listed in bold did not meet the biodiversity standard at least in part due to the presence of noxious weeds.)

4.2.8.3 Beaver Ball Creek, Allotment No. 02810

A developed spring and associated small pit reservoir are located in the southwest portion of the BLM parcel. The permittee would be required to fence the spring source for protection from livestock. The spring enclosure would eventually result in riparian vegetation at the spring source and provide habitat for wildlife. The enclosure fence would be constructed using BLM wildlife friendly specifications.

4.2.8.4 Atherton Creek, Allotment No. 02622

The permittee proposes repair of an existing spring development. The BLM and permittee would update the existing range improvement cooperative agreement which will specify that the spring source be fenced from livestock with fence specifications that call for safe passage for wildlife. The spring enclosure would eventually result in riparian vegetation at the spring source and provide habitat for wildlife.

4.2.8.5 Beckett, Allotment No. 02518

A stockwater tank at a developed spring is in non-functioning condition. The permittee has agreed to replace the tank. Livestock drinking from the tank would discourage trampling around the area of the leaking tank and in the associated riparian habitat below the spring. Riparian habitat below the spring would eventually recover and provide quality habitat for wildlife.

4.2.8.6 Lindquist, Allotment No. 02643

The allotment contains a developed spring with a non-functioning stocktank. The permittee has agreed to repair and maintain the project. The BLM would provide specifications for the spring development and the enclosure fence around the spring source. The spring enclosure would eventually result in riparian vegetation at the spring source and provide habitat for wildlife.

4.2.8.7 French, Allotment No. 12625

The BLM and permittee propose a change in the season of use to allow for earlier utilization of crested wheatgrass augmented by fall grazing of late season growth if available. This change in the season of use would provide for optimum utilization of the crested wheatgrass and distribute grazing use to currently unavailable forage. Desirable, native vegetation would be positively impacted through decreased grazing

pressure. Improved native vegetation would provide increased forage for deer and antelope and nesting cover for ground nesting birds.

The spring development located in the northwest portion of the allotment does not have a functioning overflow system. The BLM proposes that the permittee install an overflow on the tank. Livestock drinking from the tank would discourage trampling around the area of the overflowing tank and in the associated riparian habitat below the spring. Riparian habitat below the spring would eventually recover and provide quality habitat for wildlife.

4.2.8.8 Rose Canyon, Allotment No. 02672

The permittee and BLM propose installation of two high tensile electric fences to optimize utilization of the crested wheatgrass dominated portion of the allotment. One of the fences would also provide improved livestock management opportunities for the moist deciduous draws on the slopes of Atherton Creek canyon.

Two of the pastures would be dominated by native vegetation and two pastures would be dominated by crested wheatgrass. The electric fences would allow the permittee to concentrate livestock on the crested wheatgrass during the spring when the grass is most palatable. The fences would also provide deferment of the native vegetation within the allotment allowing for increased vigor and productive. Deer and elk would graze on the early green up of the crested wheatgrass if it is managed to remove the rank growth from the previous year. The brush patches in Atherton canyon would become healthier and provide improved cover for deer, bears, and many other animals.

4.2.8.9 N Bar, Allotment No. 02821

The Durfee Hills pasture is poorly watered and is currently used on a very limited basis for livestock grazing. The BLM and permittee have entered into a cooperative weed control agreement to graze sheep on the Durfee Hills Pasture to control leafy spurge. The BLM proposes to authorize sheep grazing with a free use permit. The free use grazing is authorized for the control of leafy spurge. Sheep use may occur for up to one month on public land. This portion of the N Bar allotment is an important elk use area. The limited use period and the pattern of sheep to be banded up in a relative small area would minimize disturbance to the elk. The control efforts on leafy spurge would improve the vegetative diversity and provide better elk forage.

Allotment Name	Allotment No.	Identification No.*	Public Acres	AUMs	% Public Land	Livestock No.	Season of Use
Martin Creek	09859	026	80	16	100	1 cattle	3/1-2/28
Harlow	19730	027	200	64	100	21 cattle	6/1-8/31
Green Pole	20049	028	40	5	100	1 cattle	6/1-10/31
Beckett	02518	029	600	132	100	19 cattle	4/15-11/15
Pulp 40	02527	030	40	2	100	1 cattle	3/1-2/28
Cache Creek	09750	031	40	8	100	1 cattle	6/1-10/15
Willow Creek	02807	032	887	144	100	12 cattle	3/1-2/28
Pronghorn Ranch	02826	033	1,135	145	100	13 cattle	3/1-2/28
Flying O	09738	034	120	7	100	1 cattle	3/1-2/28
Willow Creek Headwaters	19737	035	80	16	100	1 cattle	3/1-2/28
Six Diamond	19824	036	40	8	100	1 cattle	4/15-10/31
Springs Lease	02534	037	160	42	100	4 cattle	3/1-2/28
Many Springs	02816	038	160	41	100	4 cattle	3/1-2/28
Mary's Knoll	09751	039	80	8	100	1 cattle	3/1-2/28
Lehfeldt Ind.	02818	040	480	35	100	3 cattle	3/1-2/28
South Fork Ranch	02820	041	360	30	100	4 cattle	3/1-2/28
Potter Creek	02831	042	120	42	100	4 cattle	3/1-2/28
Alkali Creek	02645	043	320	66	100	6 cattle	3/1-2/28
Lindquist	02643	044	269	86	100	7 cattle	3/1-2/28
French	12625	045	160	60	100	9 cattle	6/1-12/31
Piper	02531	046	80	10	100	1 cattle	3/1-2/28
Dry Fork Creek	02530	047	562	123	100	10 cattle	3/1-2/28
Rose Canyon	02672	048	420	119	100	10 cattle	3/1-2/28
Meadors Bench	02648	049	240	41	100	4 cattle	3/1-2/28
Running Wolf Creek	09775	050	263	63	100	14 cattle	6/1-10/15
Horsethief Ridge	02629	051	40	1	100	1 cattle	3/1-2/28
Horsethief Coulee	02634	052	200	61	100	6 cattle	3/1-2/28
Dickson Coulee	02532	053	80	13	100	1 cattle	3/1-2/28
N Bar	02821	054	2,715	586	100	49 cattle	3/1-2/28
South Beckett	02829	055	200	18	100	2 cattle	3/1-2/28

* In order to adhere to the Privacy Act, the names of permittees are not used in this table. Each permittee was informed, by letter, of which number refers to his/her allotment(s).

Allotment Name	Allotment No.	Identification No.*	Standard 1 Uplands (see footnote)	Standard 2 Riparian (see footnote)	Standard 3 Water Quality (see footnote)	Standard 5 Biodiversity (see footnote)	Cause (By Standard)
French	12625	045	not meeting	n/a	n/a	not meeting	1,5 crested wheatgrass
Piper	02531	046	not meeting	n/a	n/a	not meeting	1,5, non-native species, noxious weeds
Dry Fork Creek	02530	047	meeting	n/a	n/a	not meeting	5, noxious weeds
Rose Canyon	02672	048	not meeting	n/a	n/a	not meeting	1,5 crested wheatgrass
Meadors Bench	02648	049	meeting	n/a	n/a	not meeting	5, noxious weeds
Running Wolf Creek	09775	050	meeting	n/a	n/a	meeting	
Horsethief Ridge	02629	051	not meeting	n/a	n/a	not meeting	1,5 (1 significant progress) 5 noxious weeds
Horsethief Coulee	02634	052	not meeting	n/a	n/a	not meeting	1,5 historical livestock use
Dickson Coulee	02532	053	meeting	n/a	n/a	meeting	
N Bar	02821	054	not meeting	n/a	n/a	not meeting	1,5 crested wheatgrass, noxious weeds
South Beckett	02829	055	n/a	n/a	n/a	not meeting	5, noxious weeds
West Fork Beaver Cr.	10062	056	not meeting	n/a	n/a	meeting	1, non-native veg species
Half Moon	02827	057	not meeting	meeting	not meeting	not meeting	2,3 livestock; 1,5 non-native veg & weeds
South Fork Flatwillow	02819	058	n/a	meeting	meeting	meeting	
Carl's Spring	02657	059	not meeting	n/a	n/a	not meeting	1,5 crested wheatgrass, noxious weeds
C & H	20098	060	meeting	meeting	meeting	meeting	
Buffalo	09790	061	meeting	n/a	n/a	meeting	
Pagil Gulch	09795	062	meeting	n/a	n/a	meeting	
Bar Diamond	02825	063	meeting	n/a	n/a	meeting	
Muley Coulee	02823	064	meeting	n/a	n/a	not meeting	5, noxious weeds
Bald Butte	12806	065	not meeting	not meeting	meeting	not meeting	2, livestock; 1,5 non-native veg & weeds
Rouns Place	02520	066	n/a	n/a	n/a	meeting	

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“not meeting” (with shading) indicates livestock caused.

“not meeting” (without shading) indicates not livestock caused.