

Annual
Grazing Report
Umatilla National Forest
1910.

The grazing conditions on the Umatilla Forest for the past three years have been very bad owing to the light rainfall and almost total absence of snow in the mountains. The average annual precipitation is from ten to fifteen inches, but during the last three seasons it has fallen below the average, the last seasons rain and snowfall being only about five inches.

From March 20 to September 5 practically no rain fell, the only exception being small local showers lasting from 15 to 20 minutes. As early as June 1 the water began to dry up and springs, creeks and water holes that were never known to go dry before dried up until the question of water for stock became quite serious. Individual allotments in District 3 had to be broken up in order to let sheep belonging to two, and in some instances three owners water at the same place.

The extreme dry weather had a marked effect on the forage crop causing it to dry up and blow away. Nearly all the forage matured from 30 to 40 days earlier than usual consequently the crop was not as good as the average. The feed was about as good as common at the opening of the cattle grazing season on April 1 and all classes of cattle did well up to July 15 when the feed began to fail and water got short.

Dry stuff just about held its own while cows with calves began to fail and continued to do so until the rains in early September started the bunch grass. From that time until the end of the season, October 15, they picked up and came out to the winter ranges in fair condition but not in good condition to stand the winter, as the fat was soft having been put on by green feed instead of mature feed.

The shortage in water caused the range near the water holes that did not dry up to be eaten off very short and it was thought that these areas had suffered from over grazing but the rains soon started the grass and weeds and no apparent damage has been done as far as I can see.

Reports from all parts of the Forest at this time are very flattering from the feed standpoint and unless the winter proves to be very severe the spring feed will be excellent with the start it now has. The great need now is a heavy snow to cover the young growth before heavy freezing weather.

The sheep ranges were not in good condition at the opening of the summer grazing season on June 15. The feed was dry and water scarce, especially on the lower ranges, where the sheep go in first. The dry bunch grass ranges only lasted from 15 to 20 days when water became so scarce that it was necessary to go to the higher summer ranges, and here conditions were found to be very little better. The water situation was very bad and could be helped very little by ditching and troughing springs. This relieved the situation to some extent but still we had to water several bands at one place all through the summer and the situation was not bettered until the fall rains freshened up the lower ranges and the sheep were brought back to the bunch grass and finished the season in good shape. Some of the allotments have been grazed very closely but no material damage has been done by overgrazing. Sheep on an average were in very good condition at the opening of the season and nearly all came off the Forest range in good living condition, the exception being old ewes with lambs. These were in poor condition and it would have required extra good range to have them any better, as old ewes that have raised lambs are very hard to keep in good condition except on soft green feed.

All classes of lambs show up better than last year. The sheep market has been very dull all the year; the best fine wool lambs on sale going at \$2.00 and \$2.25 while coarse wool lambs bring about 50 cents more. Only a few have been sold and those came from near Heppner and Condon. None of the lambs in the interior are contracted and there are no buyers in the market at present.

Cattle have moved at good prices all the year. Two year old steers selling at \$34.00 and dry fat cows from \$28.00 to \$35.00 according to size and condition. Very few three year old steers are to be had at any price and cattlemen are holding their yearlings for next year instead of selling to speculators as has been the custom for a long time past. All classes of stock have been well salted and cared for, consequently were easily gathered at the close of the season with little expense to their owners.

RANGE DIVISIONS.

No changes are desired in the grazing districts for the next year, as the divisions now used seem perfectly satisfactory to the permittees both sheep and cattlemen.

No areas are recommended for closing against grazing for the protection of watersheds or lands to be reforested. A drift fence approximately 7 miles in length should be constructed to prevent cattle drifting from the Whitman Forest on to the sheep ranges within the Umatilla Forest in townships 11 and 12, Range 32 East and described as follows:

Beginning at the Northeast corner of Section 36 in Township 11 South, Range 32 East, thence South and West along the Forest boundary to the Southeast corner of Section 10, Township 12 South, Range 32 East.

These cattle give us considerable bother, as they come in in droves of 200 or 300 when the sheep eat off the range adjacent to the South boundary of the Whitman Forest. The principal reason for this is that the left fork of Bear Creek and Grubb Creek head on the summit of the watershed and the natural passes lead down to Camp Creek. The cattle naturally work back along these streams and then drop over to Camp Creek which they follow down and then scatter out along its tributaries and do great damage to the sheep ranges and destroy camps and improved springs of the sheep men on the Nipple Butte sheep range.

The principal complaint from this district this year was on account of these cattle and also those from the East Beech Creek portion of the Mt. Vernon cattle range. Another fence, approximately nine miles long, should be built from the head of East Beech Creek almost due West to the Northwest corner of section 7 in Township 12 South, Range 31 East to prevent the cattle using this range from drifting North to the sheep ranges near Magoone Lake, Hyiu Ranger Station and the Keeney Meadows. With these fences on the Southern division and a drift fence on the Hardman range in the Northern division, very little would occur on account of cattle drifting on to sheep ranges. Only one other fence would be required to keep the cattle entirely off the sheep ranges except in the vicinity of Black Butte, Southern division, where the conditions are such that a drift fence could not be made to do any good.

The necessity for developing springs is not very apparent on the cattle ranges as there is generally plenty of water and the cattlemen, so far, have put in all the work necessary along this line and are planning to complete the work where it is needed in the future.

The distribution of stock upon the various ranges is about as near equal as can be made under present conditions therefore no recommendations for redistribution will be made at this time.

PROTECTION.

The loss of stock by poisonous plants was very small only two cases were reported to me this summer, those were due to Wild Parsnip (Hemlock). The loss of a few sheep by Timber Wolves was reported from District 3, but no wolves have been killed and only two or three have been seen. Coyotes have been quite active all through the summer and fall and 90% of all sheep lost on the Forest ranges during the summer season are due to these pests. A hunter has been employed for six months with fair success, but the Coyote is very numerous and very little individual effort is made to kill or otherwise destroy them, except by a few stockmen who work around their home places and a few hunters who hunt them principally for their fur during the fall and winter.

Although the last three seasons have been uncommonly dry the forage crop this spring showed a marked improvement in quantity, especially bunch grass which has improved a little each year since the Forest was put under administration.

PERMIT ALLOTMENTS.

All applications for permits to graze cattle were approved for the same number as last year except those for 60 head or less which were allowed an increase equal to the natural increase of their herds. In most cases this increase was less than 20% and not over that in any case.

Applications for sheep grazing were reduced according to the following sliding scale:

All bands less than 600 were allowed to increase to 600.

Bands over 600 and less than 1100 were allowed an increase of 20% providing none went above 1100.

Bands from 1100 to 2000 were reduced 20% on the Northern division and 30% on the southern division providing none went below 1100.

Bands from 2000 to 3000 were reduced 30% on the Northern and 40% on the Southern division providing none went below 1680.

Bands from 3000 up were reduced 40% on the Northern and 50% on the Southern division providing none fell below 2240.

Individual allotments were made on the basis of four acres to one sheep. In order to protect the range it will be necessary to enforce Regulation 60 more thoroughly than has been done in the past as much feed is destroyed by trailing sheep back to one camp for so long at one time.

This regulation has not been enforced to any great extent as the question of water supply has made it necessary to camp at one place for several weeks and drive the sheep back each night.

No change in the protective limits for sheep or cattle are recommended for next year. The maximum limits of 4000 sheep and 400 cattle are recommended for next year.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

Applications were approved for 8650 cattle and horses and 68639 sheep. Of this number 749 cattle were sold before the fees were paid leaving a total of 7901 cattle and horses for which permits were issued. Fully 10% of this number was sold before the close of the season.

In addition to the 68,639 sheep for which permits were issued an additional 13,202 sheep were grazed under Regulation 65 permits in lieu of private lands to the amount of 52,209.92 acres making a total of 81,841 sheep grazed inside the Forest during the season.

The average number of cattle and horses grazed under each permit was 66 and for sheep 1125. The actual number really allowed was less than 1100 but owing to the poor market conditions there were several bands that had a small surplus that the owners could not get rid of and in order to allow them to run a few young sheep with which to replace old ones several permits for a few sheep over the number allowed them with the distinct understanding that this privilege would not be allowed them another year.

I would respectfully recommend that the following number of stock be allowed to graze upon the Umatilla Forest for the season of 1911:

Cattle and Horses,	10,000.
Sheep, (Summer)	67,500.
Sheep, (Winter)	3,000.

I think the fees and seasons for sheep as allowed for this year should be allowed for next season as the market conditions do not warrant any raise in grazing fees and the range conditions are such that no reduction of the grazing season can well be made.

The seasons for cattle and horses should remain the same as for this year but I believe an advance in the grazing fees of 5 cents per head should be made.

The following recommendations are made in regard to the distribution of the stock among the different ranges, the fees to be charged and the seasons allowed:

CATTLE AND HORSES.

Range	Dates	Fees: C.	H.	Number of stock.
Five Mile,	May 15 to Oct. 15	25	35	2000.
Hardman,	May 15 to Oct. 15	25	35	750.
Lone Rock,	May 15 to Oct. 15	25	35	1100.
Black Mountain	May 15 to Oct. 15	25	35	150.
Tamarack	April 1 to Oct. 15	30	40	2000.
Long Creek,	April 15 to Oct. 15	30	40	2900.
Mt. Vernon,	April 15 to Oct. 15	.30	.40	800.
At large,		.30	.40	300.
Year long permit		.45	.55	

SHEEP.

Wall Creek,	June 15 to Sept. 30,	.06	8784.
Potamus,	June 15 to Sept. 30,	.06	28864.
Nipple Butte,	June 15 to Sept. 30,	.06	18230.
Black Butte,	June 15 to Sept. 30,	.06	6614.
Special allotments	June 15 to Sept. 30,	.06	2900.
Winter Grazing			2108.
	Total allotment		67500.

Special seasons and fees:

March 15 to May 30 and Oct. 1 to Dec. 15	.07	.07.
Three months beginning not later than July 1 nor earlier than Nov. 1		.06.
Yearlong permit from April 1 to March 31, 1912.		.15.
Additional for lambing,		.02.
Any of the above seasons may be extended at the rate of 1½ cents per head per month, except the yearlong season.		

My reason for recommending an increase in the grazing fees for cattle and horses is that this class of stock have not been paying fees in proportion to those charged for sheep although the season allowed are almost twice as long. Taking the present rate and figuring on a basis of 4 sheep to 1 cow and cattle at the rate of 25 cents the proportion gives cattle at .00034 per day and sheep at .00056 at the rate of 6 cents per head for the season of 107 days while cattle have an average season of 183 days. Raising the fee for cattle 5 cents per head will give a rate of .00041 which is still considerable below the rate for sheep but taking into consideration the higher profit derived from the sheep it makes the rates more equal and as the profits from cattle have been increasing for the last two years I think this raise will not work any injustice on the cattlemen.

The allotment for grazing last was 75,000 sheep and 11,500 cattle and horses, while for this next year the numbers are considerably less. This does not mean that the stock allowed next year will be subject to reduction but is simply a readjustment on account of the elimination of 69,518 acres of Forest land and the stock which grazed thereon. Should next season prove to be as dry as the last three seasons have been a further reduction will be necessary in order to prevent the destruction of the forage in some parts of the Forest.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Thomas E. Chidsey
Forest Supervisor.