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Comments: Observations of grazing allotment abuse fall of 2023

Grazing Allotments do not always equate to improved forest health. Improper management of pastures within those allotments leads to depletion of nutritionally rich grasses and increased population of low nutrition vegetation, poisonous plants and bare ground. Lack of resources from ranchers and government entities to rotate grazing animals using range riders at appropriate intervals and maintain fencing causes unhealthy forest and meadow conditions. This abuse eventually leads to nonproductive pastures within allotments. The following photos are an example of areas of overgrazing that also occur in other areas within this allotment.

EAGLE VALLEY ALLOTMENT MAP:Light Yellow area(upper left corner of map) is private land outside the allotment boundary but is routinely used by cattle from the neighboring grazing allotment for water in East Eagle Creek and grass grazing along its banks.. Summit point trail highlighted in red is used by backpackers and pack animals to reach the Eagle Cap Wilderness area. Dark yellow grazing allotment boundary includes the green area which is a portion of Eagle Cap Wilderness Area.. Livestock grazing is prohibited within a designated wilderness area.

Photo #1: September 8,2023,
Summit Point Trail Head trail through Little Eagle Meadows to Cornucopia Peak, Pine Lakes and Crater Lake within the Eagle Cap Wilderness Area of the WALLOWA WHITMAN NATIONAL FOREST. I have hunted deer, hunted elk and backpacked in this area for 70 years. This photograph shows meadow lands overgrazed and populated by a variety of plants (Subalpine daisy, Aster varieties, Sulfur Buckwheat, Lupine-which is toxic to cattle causing crooked calf syndrome and other non palatable plants) and bare ground. I have seen native grasses eliminated for the past 70 years.

Photo #2: September 8, 2023
Another area within this allotment overgrazed and reduced to sulfur buckwheat, lupine and aster plants and bare ground, the background of this photograph is the Eagle Cap Wilderness area boundary. Hiking the trail to the south side of Cornucopia Peak you can see signs of overgrazing by cattle.

Photograph #3: September 8, 2023
Dysfuncional fencing within this allotment pasture. This fence is incapable of keeping cattle within their permitted allotment pasture.

Photo #4: September 8, 2023:
This photograph of Little Eagle Meadows and the Eagle Cap trail shows just a portion of the meadow that is being affected by overgrazing practices. The light collared spot to the right and just above the WILDERNESS sign is a dried up pond forcing cattle to migrate to alternate water sources as far as East Eagle, which is outside

of the Grazing Allotment and on private property.

Climate change with global warming is reducing snow levels in the high mountains and lengthening the time cattle stay in the mountains due to the difficulty of gathering cattle during a snowless fall. These conditions exacerbate conditions for further over grazing within allotments forcing cattle to seek grazing land and water outside the allotment.

It is imperative to change grazing practices within our national forests and prevent further degradation of pastures. Resources from federal, state and private entities must be increased to manage grazing allotments properly.

Respectfully
Dr. Robert Hall DVM