# 2019 Grouse & Grazing Project Vegetation Monitoring and Grazing Report

# **Pahsimeroi Valley Study Site**



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# INTRODUCTION

Livestock grazing is a common land use within sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) habitat, and livestock grazing has been implicated as one of numerous factors potentially contributing to sage-grouse population declines (Beck and Michell 2000, Schroeder et al. 2004). However, there are also numerous mechanisms by which livestock grazing might benefit sage-grouse (Beck and Michell 2000, Crawford et al. 2004). Livestock grazing on public lands is often restricted so as to limit negative effects on populations of plants and animals (including sage-grouse), but we lack experimental studies that have explicitly examined the effects of livestock grazing on sage-grouse. The objective of the Grouse & Grazing Project is to document the relationship between cattle grazing and sage-grouse demographic traits, nest-site selection, and habitat features. We focus on grazing regimes that include spring cattle grazing because spring is thought to be the time when livestock grazing is most likely to adversely affect sage-grouse (Neel 1980, Pedersen et al. 2003, Boyd et al. 2014).

Starting in 2018, we split our annual reports for this project into two separate reports: one that summarizes field methods, sage-grouse demographic traits, and other data streams and another that summarizes the habitat measurements and grazing metrics that we collect at each study site. Our goal in the vegetation monitoring and grazing reports (one for each study site) is to: 1) document the plant community at each site, 2) quantify the % biomass removed or utilization of forage species by cattle at each site, and 3) provide detailed data to assist BLM managers and permittees with management of their grazing and adherence to the Grouse & Grazing study design.

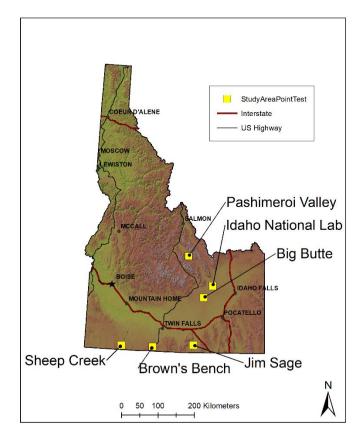


Figure 1. Six study sites in southern Idaho where field work has been conducted for the Grouse & Grazing Project in 2019.

### **STUDY AREA**

#### Pahsimeroi Valley

Pahsimeroi Valley is the newest study site for the Grouse and Grazing Project; we began work there beginning in 2017. The site is located 45 km southeast of Challis, ID at the upper end of the Pahsimeroi River Valley. The study site sits between the Lemhi Range to the northeast and the Lost River Range to the southwest. This site has relatively flat topography in most locations, but includes some sloping foothills and higher-elevation hilltops. The Pahsimeroi River bisects the study area and several small creeks and irrigation ditches traverse the experimental treatment pastures. Soils in this area consist of moderately deep soils (>150 cm deep) that are composed of gravely loam and cobble with 1-40% slopes. The dominant plant community is low sagebrush (*Artemisia arbuscula*) with Wyoming big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata wyomingensis*) and three-tip sagebrush (*Artemisia tripartata*) on the deeper toe slopes and hilltops. The dominant perennial grasses include Sandberg bluegrass (*Poa secunda*), bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*), Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*), and Thurber's needlegrass (*Achnatherum thurberianum*). Historical land use in the area was mining and livestock grazing (both cattle and sheep). There are some areas of center pivot irrigation just north of the experimental treatment pastures. Alfalfa, hay, and wheat are the primary agricultural crops.

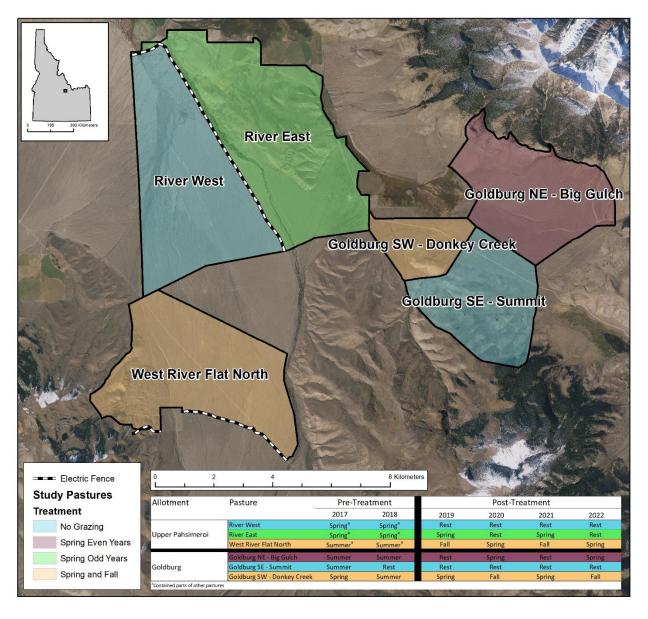


Figure 2. Map of experimental treatment pastures and timeline of treatments at the Pahsimeroi Valley study site, Idaho 2017-2022.

Elevation at the site ranged from 1,796-2,454 m (mean 1,999 m; USGS National Elevation Dataset). Precipitation comes primarily in the form of snow between November and March with 30-year normal averaging 220 mm. Monthly average temperature includes a low of -8.2° C (Dec) to a high of 18.6° C (Jul) based on the most recent 30-year normal (1980-2010). Landownership is a combination of Bureau of Land Management (BLM), State Trust, and private within the Upper Pahsimeroi and Goldburg allotments. In the Upper Pahsimeroi allotment, grazing is allowed to occur May 15 – September 30. In the Goldburg allotment, grazing is allowed to occur June 1 – August 15. Prior to the study, pastures were rested at least once every 3<sup>rd</sup> spring to allow forage species to be undisturbed during the growing season. The permittee in the Upper Pahsimeroi Allotment runs approximately 500 cattle each year while the permittee in the Goldburg allotment runs 200-250 cattle each year.

Table 1. Summary of the vegetation data collected for the Grouse & Grazing Project at 6 study sites in southern Idaho, 2014-2019.

Data Stream	Time of Collection	Sample Locations	<b>Years Collected</b>	Purpose
Early Season Vegetation		Nests from previous year and		Quantify vegetation characteristics
Monitoring	March - April	paired random plots	2017 – 2019	when hen is selecting nest site
				Quantify vegetation characteristics
Nesting Season Vegetation		Nests from current year &		of current year nest sites and
Monitoring	April - July	random plots <sup>1</sup>	2014 – 2019	experimental treatment pastures
Brood Vegetation		Locations where a hen with a		Quantify vegetation at brood
Monitoring	May - July	brood was confirmed	2016 – 2019	locations
Post-Growing Season				Quantify height, obstruction, and
Vegetation Monitoring	July - August	Random plots	2015 – 2019	utilization of grass
Utilization/Pattern Use		Systematic transects throughout		Quantify utilization and grass
Monitoring	July - August	experimental treatment pastures	2015 – 2019	height
Utilization/Biomass	April (cages	Random plots in spring grazed		
Removal (grazing exclosure	placed), August	(current year) experimental	2016, 2018-	Quantify utilization and biomass
cages)	(clipped)	treatment pastures	2019	removal
				Create a DNA reference database
		Companies and all broaders and ward are		and a library of voucher specimens
Diant Callantinus	Annil America	Experimental treatment pastures	2017 2010	to confirm plant ID and use as a
Plant Collections	April - August	and surrounding areas	2017 – 2019	training guide

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>From 2014-2017, we also measured nesting season vegetation at paired non-nest plots associated with each nest plot (100-200m away from each nest plot).

#### FIELD METHODS

We have written detailed field sampling protocols for all aspects of the Grouse & Grazing Project, including vegetation sampling protocols (*Sections 8-9 of* Conway et al. 2019). We are collecting the following vegetation data to help quantify sage-grouse habitat selection and cattle grazing intensity on the experimental treatment pastures associated with the Grouse & Grazing Project (Table 1):

- Early-season Vegetation Surveys
  - Nest plots from prior years
  - Paired random plots
- Nesting-season Vegetation Surveys
  - Nest plots from current year
  - o Paired dependent non-nest plots
  - Random plots
- Brood Vegetation Surveys
  - o Plots at sites used by hens with broods <42 days of age
- Post-growing Season Vegetation Surveys
  - o Random plots
- Utilization Transects
  - Landscape appearance estimates along transects
  - o Grass height and percent removal estimates along transects
- Grazing Exclosures
  - Clipping above-ground biomass within grazing exclosure cages
  - o Clipping above-ground biomass in paired grazed plots adjacent to cages
- Plant Collection Surveys

For sake of organization, we describe the nesting-season vegetation surveys first because they are the most detailed and subsequently we describe the other types of vegetation surveys since many of them are a reduced version of nesting-season vegetation surveys.

#### **Nesting-Season Vegetation Surveys**

We measured nesting-season vegetation (at estimated hatch date for sage-grouse nests) at three types of plots: nest plots, paired non-nest plots (hereafter referred to as non-nest plots; 100-200 m from each nest), and random plots. Nest plots were centered on sage-grouse nests. Each paired non-nest plot was associated with a specific nest plot (100-200m away in a random direction and centered on a sagebrush shrub that was large enough to contain a sage-grouse nest). Each nest plot had only one paired non-nest plot associated with it. Random plots were at randomly generated locations and were also centered on sagebrush shrubs. All random plots were within the experimental treatment pastures. We randomly generated 40 locations within each experimental treatment pasture that were no closer than 100 m from one another to create random locations to use for random plots.

#### Plot Placement in the Field

Each year, we strived to conduct vegetation sampling at a minimum of 20 random plots in each pasture (except at Pahsimeroi Valley in 2017-2019 because we monitored 7 pastures and did not have the personnel to complete 20 per pasture; we completed 10-15 per pasture instead). Starting in 2017, we only measured paired non-nest plots when time allowed (we placed priority on nest plots and random plots). We completed 50 paired non-nest plots in 2017, 0 in 2018, and 3 in 2019.

Nest plots were centered on the nest. Non-nest and random plots were centered on a focal shrub that was suitable for a sage-grouse nest (based on prior years' nest plot data) because 99% of nests from prior years were at the base of a shrub. At each plot, we spread two 30-m tapes that intersected at the 15-m mark over the focal shrub in each cardinal direction (Fig. 3).

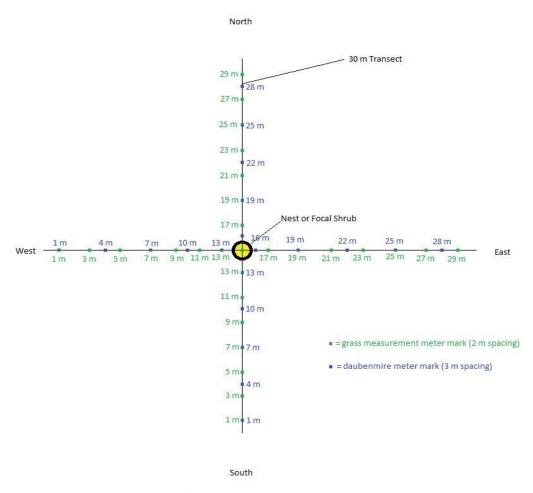


Figure 3. Visual depiction of the placement of two 30-m tapes stretched to conduct vegetation sampling at nest plots, random plots, and paired non-nest plots for the Grouse & Grazing Project in southern Idaho, 2014-2019.

Each plot (nest, non-nest, and random plots) consisted of 6 types of data collection: a set of 5 photographs to estimate percent nest concealment, measurements of the nest or focal shrub (or the patch of shrubs), two line-intercept transects to estimate percent shrub cover, estimates of perennial grass height (we do not measure heights for cheatgrass, *Bromus tectorum*, or other annuals) and grazing intensity (by species) along the line transects, Daubenmire plots to estimate percent ground cover, and a count of herbivore fecal droppings along the line transects. Detailed descriptions of each of these 6 components are in our vegetation sampling protocols (Conway et al. 2019).

### Landscape Appearance

We used the landscape appearance method (Coulloudon et al. 1999) to estimate utilization in experimental pastures (and potential experimental pastures at sites where the experimental pastures had not been selected yet). We used ArcGIS to randomly place a grid of north-south transects in experimental pastures and potential experimental pastures. If the pasture was grazed by livestock during spring/summer, we placed transects 300 m apart and sampled at 200-m intervals along each transect. If the pasture was not grazed by livestock during spring/summer that year, we instead placed transects 500 m apart and sampled at 200-m intervals (because we were expecting minimal utilization in pastures that did not have cows in them). At 200-m intervals along each transect, the observer stopped walking and estimated utilization according to the utilization classes in Coulloudon et al. (1999; Table 2) within a 15-m radius half-circle in front of them. The observer also estimated the percent cover of cheatgrass and the most dominant overstory shrub and perennial grass within the same 15-m radius half-circle in front of them at each sample point along the transect (i.e., every 200 m).

Table 2. Utilization classes that we used to estimate percent utilization along landscape appearance transects (based on Coulloudon et al. 1999).

Utilization	
Class	Description
0-5%	The rangeland shows no evidence of grazing or negligible use.
6-20%	The rangeland has the appearance of very light grazing. The herbaceous forage plants may be topped or slightly used. Current seed stalks and young plants are little disturbed.
21-40%	The rangeland may be topped, skimmed, or grazed in patches. The low value herbaceous plants are ungrazed and 60 to 80 percent of the number of current seedstalks of herbaceous plants remain intact. Most young plants are undamaged.
41-60%	The rangeland appears entirely covered <sup>a</sup> as uniformly as natural features and facilities will allow. Fifteen to 25 percent of the number of current seed stalks of herbaceous species remain intact. No more than 10 percent of the number of low-value herbaceous forage plants are utilized. (Moderate use does not imply proper use.)
61-80%	The rangeland has the appearance of complete search <sup>b</sup> . Herbaceous species are almost completely utilized, with less than 10 percent of the current seed stalks remaining. Shoots of rhizomatous grasses are missing. More than 10 percent of the number of low-value herbaceous forage plants have been utilized.
81-94%	The rangeland has a mown appearance and there are indications of repeated coverage. There is no evidence of reproduction or current seed stalks of herbaceous species. Herbaceous forage species are completely utilized. The remaining stubble of preferred grasses is grazed to the soil surface.
95-100%	The rangeland appears to have been completely utilized. More than 50 percent of the low-value herbaceous plants have been utilized.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>a</sup> "covered" means that foraging ungulates have passed through the area.

#### **Cattle Use Metrics**

Each year, we record the number and timing of cattle that graze each experimental treatment pasture and adjacent pastures. We communicated with range management specialists and permittees at each study site to document the number and dates for which cattle were turned out and removed from each pasture. We collected this data for every year of the study at a given field site and ≥3 years prior to when we began field work.

b "complete search" means that foraging cattle have spent considerable time foraging in the area and were not just passing through.

#### SUMMARIZATION METHODS

#### **Pasture Boundaries**

The boundary of the pastures in the pre-treatment years was often not the same as the boundary of the pastures after the treatments were implemented. This was typically due to the installation of electric fences to cut existing pastures into two halves so that we could concentrate grazing pressure and allow ranchers more flexibility to meet the needs of the study while also achieving the goals of their operation (i.e., so that they only had to adhere to the study design within one half of a pasture). We used the boundary of the post-treatment pastures for all comparisons, even those that included years prior to the treatments.

#### **Pasture Level**

For comparison of grass metrics between pastures, we first calculated a mean for each sampling plot because plots were our primary sampling unit. We then used this plot mean to calculate a mean among all plots for an entire pasture. We compared mean droop height of grasses among pastures and years at each study site. For the current year (2019), we also compared grass droop heights within a pasture based on 4 categories: 1) all perennial species combined, 2) all perennial species excluding Sandberg bluegrass (*Poa secunda*), 3) all perennial grasses that were not under a shrub (out in the open), and 4) all perennial grasses that were under a shrub. For the latter two categories (under and not under a shrub), we used all perennial grass plants measured regardless of species (i.e., we included Sandberg bluegrass).

# **Grass Height Measurements**

We measure the height of each perennial grass plant in an individual transect in 3 separate ways:

- Droop height The tallest part of an individual perennial grass (including the flowering stalk)
- Leaf height The tallest part of the grass plant excluding the flowering stalk (i.e., just the leaves)
- Effective height A visual obstruction measurement created by placing a meter stick behind the grass plant and recording the lowest interval bar that was ≤50% obscured by the grass (Musil 2011, *detailed methods can be found in* Conway et al. 2019).

We used each of these 3 metrics to compare grazed and un-grazed pastures in 2019. We used the individual grass as the sample unit, not the plot, for this comparison.

#### **Shrub Cover**

We compared shrub cover from the line-intercept transects among pastures and years. We estimated shrub cover by taking the length of the transects that were intercepted by shrubs and dividing it by the entire length of the 2 transects (60 m).

#### Utilization

We estimated utilization using three different methods for this report: 1) Average of ocular estimates of biomass removed for individual grass plants on random vegetation plots, 2) proportion of grazed grass plants (i.e., proportion of grass plants with >0 biomass removed), and 3) utilization estimates via the landscape appearance method (Coulloudon et al. 1999). We compared estimates of biomass removed (via ocular estimation) and proportion of grazed plants at the pasture level for the current year (2019). These estimates were generated at the plot level from the post-growing season vegetation surveys. Those plot-level means were used to calculate pasture-level means. This was done to avoid pseudoreplication since the plot is our sampling unit.

For utilization via landscape appearance transects, we obtained pasture-level estimates by taking the mean of all points sampled within that pasture. We used the mid-point of the ranges outlined in Table 2 to represent each of the 6 categories (i.e., the "slight" category was the mid-point between 6 and 20, or 13).

We created maps of pattern use by herbivores in each pasture based on our visual estimates of utilization from the landscape appearance transects. We used the Inverse Distance Weighted (IDW) tool in ArcGIS (version 10.4) to interpolate utilization in areas between sampling points. IDW interpolation is based on the assumption that points closer together are more alike than those further apart. An advantage of using IDW interpolation is that it is an exact interpolator (i.e., the interpolated value at each point where a measurement was taken will line up directly with what was actually measured at that point). We used the 12 nearest neighbors to interpolate each pixel of the resulting raster surface. The resulting maps were then classified into the 6 utilization categories to help visualize the spatial variation in utilization (see categories in Table 2).

#### **Stocking Rate**

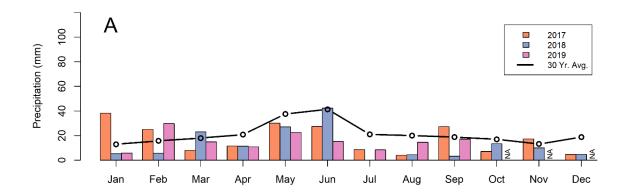
We calculated stocking rates in head-months (HMs) for all years after our treatments began at each study site. We calculated HMs using the following formula:  $\frac{n_c \times (t_2 - t_1)}{(\frac{365}{12})}$ 

Where  $n_c$  is the total number of cow-calf pairs turned out in that pasture,  $t_1$  is the initial turn-out date, and  $t_2$  is the date they were removed from the pasture. If there were different stocking rates across a given season (e.g., 100 cows were added for the first 10 days and then 100 cows were added on the  $11^{th}$  day), we calculated head-monhts for each separate stocking rate and summed them together to report the stocking rate for the entire season.

# **RESULTS**

### Weather

Going into the 2018 growing season, overwinter precipitation at the Pahsimeroi valley study site was below average (76.4 mm from Nov-Apr compared to the 30-year normal of 99.6 mm; Fig. 4A). Average maximum daily temperatures over the course of the 2019 growing season were within a degree or two of average (Fig. 4B). In general, 2019 was a drier year with roughly equivalent temperatures to what has been observed over the last 30 years at Pahsimeroi.



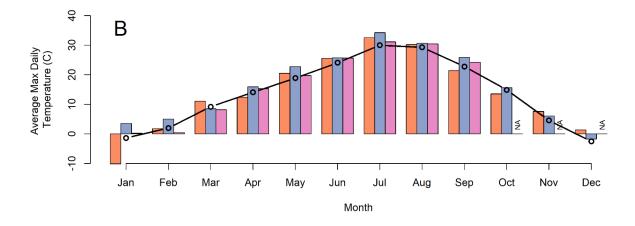


Figure 4. Monthly precipitation totals (A) and average max daily temperature by month (B) with 30-year average (dark line) at Pahsimeroi Valley, Idaho 2017-2019.

# **Descriptive Vegetation Characteristics**

Pasture-level Comparison

Mean grass height at Pahsimeroi Valley varied among years but in general has decreased since we began our initial field work there in 2016 (Fig. 5). Annual decrease in grass heights likely reflecting decreasing overwinter precipitation amounts before the corresponding growing season. In the months leading up to the growing season of 2017, 2018, and 2019, precipitation was 122, 67, and 76 mm respectively. Grass heights generally showed little change from nesting season surveys to post-growing season surveys. The only exception was in 2017 when grass height increased 4-9 cm in most pastures, likely caused by increased overwinter and growing season precipitation (Fig. 5 and Fig. 4A). A thesis by Janessa Julson (2017) documented the extent of variation in grass height among our study sites.

The mean grass height after excluding Sandberg bluegrass (yellow bars) and height of grasses under a shrub were taller than the other 2 grass height categories (all grasses combined and those not under a shrub) in most pastures (Fig. 6). Grasses in pastures within the Upper Pahsimeroi allotment were more stunted in height (compared to our other study sites) and therefore mean grass height did not change appreciably when Sandberg bluegrass was excluded (yellow bars). Interestingly, we saw a uniform decrease in grass height between nesting and post-growing season surveys in all pastures in 2019 regardless of whether the pasture was grazed of rested (Fig. 6).

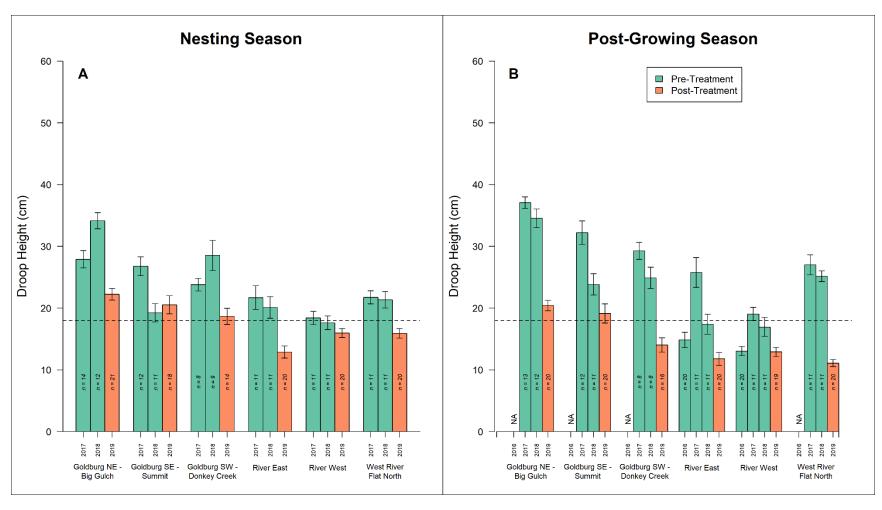


Figure 5. Mean droop height during the nesting season (A; Apr-Jun) and the post-growing season (B; Jul-Aug) for all perennial grass species combined in pre-treatment (green) and post-treatment (orange) years at Pahsimeroi Valley, Idaho 2016-2019. Error bars indicate standard errors and means are based on random plots (excludes nest and non-nest plots). NA indicates a pasture that was not measured in that year. The dashed line represents 18 cm (7 in.), the height mentioned as a management target in the sage-grouse habitat guidelines (Connelly et al. 2000).

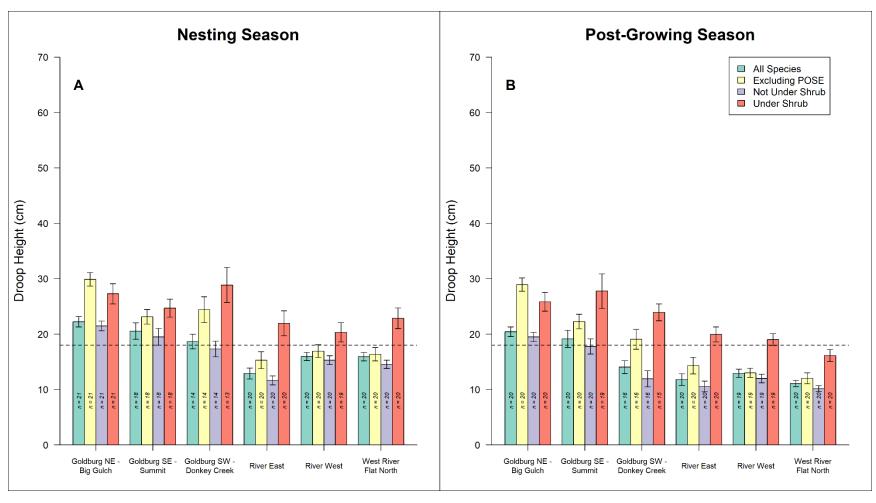


Figure 6. Mean droop height for 4 different subsets of grasses: all perennial grass species within a plot, all perennial grass species excluding Sandberg bluegrass (Poa secunda), all perennial grass plants that were under a shrub, and all perennial grass plants that were not under a shrub in both nesting season (A) and post-growing season (B) plots at Pahsimeroi Valley, Idaho 2019. Error bars represent  $\pm 1$  standard error. Sample sizes (n) indicate the number of plots (not the number of grass plants) used to create the mean and standard error. The dashed line represents 18 cm (7 in.), a height mentioned as a management target in the sage-grouse habitat guidelines (Connelly et al. 2000).

# Grass Height Measurement Comparison

Sandberg bluegrass, bluebunch wheatgrass, squirreltail (*Elymus elymoides*), needlegrasses (*Achnatherum spp.* and *Hesperostipa spp.*), and Idaho fescue were the most abundant grasses in our post-growing season surveys at Pahsimeroi Valley in 2019. Grass height differed among species and those differences were apparent for all three height metrics (Fig. 7). Mean droop height in grazed pastures was shorter than that in ungrazed pastures for all species except squirreltail which was the same between grazed and ungrazed pastures. Leaf height and effective heights were comparable between grazed and ungrazed pastures for most species.

# Comparison of Grass Height Measurements at Pahsimeroi Valley

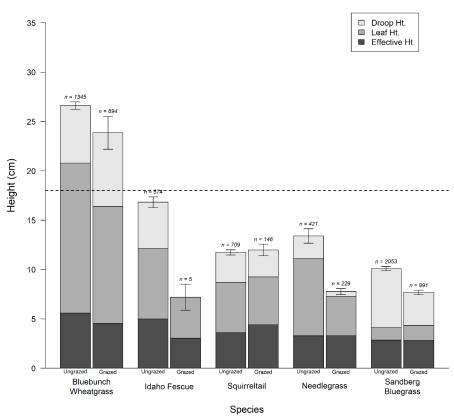


Figure 7. Mean height of the 5 most common species of perennial grasses based on 3 height metrics on post-growing season (Jul-Aug) random plots at Pahsimeroi Valley, Idaho in 2019. Heights compared were droop height (using highest part of plant) = "Droop Ht.", droop height excluding the flowering stalk = "Leaf Ht", and effective height (modified visual obstruction for an individual plant) = "Effective Ht". Heights were compared seperately for plants in ungrazed and grazed pastures based on whether they were grazed in 2019 prior to post-nesting season surveys (denoted directly below each bar). Sample sizes are just below the top of each bar. Error bars denote ±1 standard error of the droop height only. The dashed line represents 18 cm (7 in.), the grass height mentioned as a management target in the sage-grouse habitat guidelines (Connelly et al. 2000).

#### Shrub Cover

Shrub cover was fairly consistent from 2017-2019 within all 6 pastures (Fig. 8). We observed slight increases in sagebrush cover at Goldburg SE, Goldburg SW, and River East across the 3 years. Sagebursh species, including low sagebrush, three-tip sagebrush, and Wyoming big sagebrush make up the majority of shrubs within our pastures at Pahsimeroi Valley. On all of our treatment pastures, we expect to see only small changes in shrub cover between years; changes caused by annual variation in precipition.

#### Shrub Cover 2017 - 2019

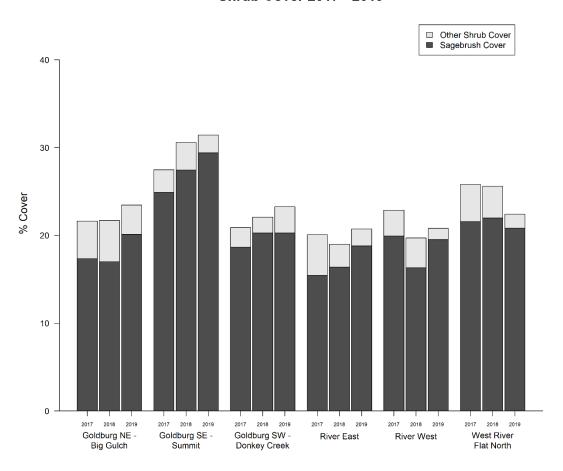


Figure 8. Shrub cover (split into sagebrush and other shrub cover) in each of 6 experimental treatment pastures at Pahsimeroi Valley, Idaho 2017-2019.

# **Stocking Rates and Grazing Pressure**

We began treatments at Pahsimeroi Valley in 2019. In pre-treatment years, stocking levels in head-months were similar, ranging from 62-782 (Fig. 9). Pastures in the Upper Pahsimeroi allotment (River and West River Flat) received more grazing pressure than those in the Goldburg allotment. Cattle herd size (~205 cows in Goldburg and ~550 cows in the Upper Pahsimeroi) and pasture size (5,422-6,728 ha in Upper Pahsimeroi and 549-1,614 ha in Goldburg) are different between these two allotments.

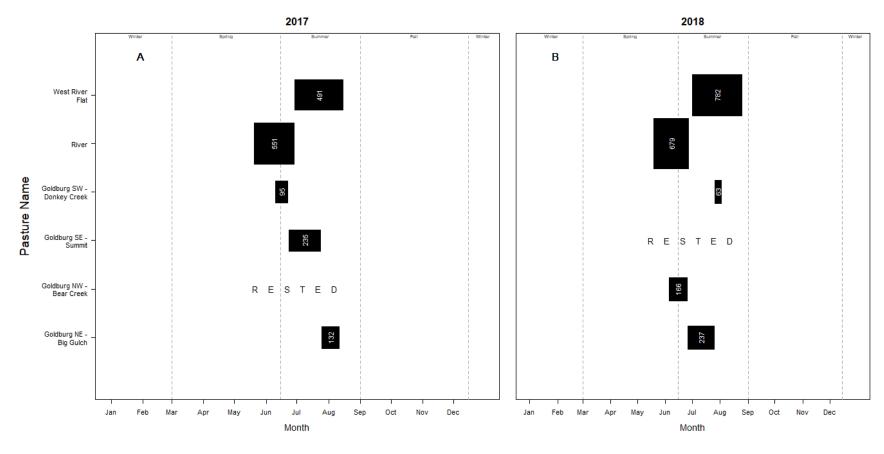


Figure 9. Timing and duration of cattle stocking at Pahsimeroi Valley during the pre-treatment period of the study 2017-2018 (data for 2019 has not been reported yet). Width of black bars indicate the average number of cattle per day in that pasture. White numbers inside black bars represent the total head-months during that period.

In 2018, stocking levels in experimental treatment pastures were comparable to surrounding pastures (those not part of the study; Fig. 10). We are still waiting on data from some surrounding pastures, but only Goldburg SE was not grazed in 2018. In 2019, treatments officially began and Goldburg SE, Goldburg NE, and River West were all rested.

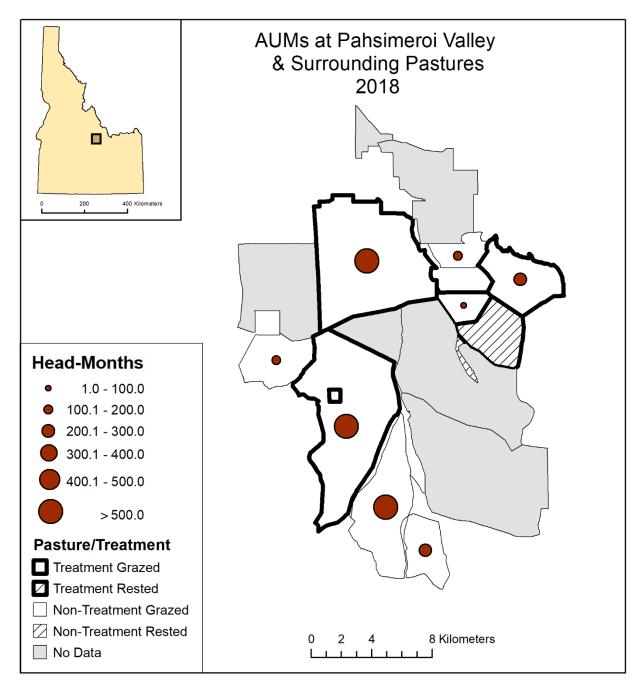


Figure 10. Stocking levels in head-months in treatment and adjacent pastures at Pahsimeroi Valley, Idaho in 2018.

#### Estimates of Utilization

Utilization estimates were low (<8%) in the spring grazed pastures (River East and Goldburg SW) based on visual estimates of individual plants (Fig. 11A). Proportions of grazed plants were noticably greater than zero in all pastures and the differences between grazed and ungrazed pastures were more obvious with this metric (Fig. 11B). Pastures at the Pahsimeroi Valley study site are much closer to summer ranges of big game animals than any of the other 4 study sites, which might explain the higher proportion of grazed plants in pastures that were not spring or summer grazed by cattle.

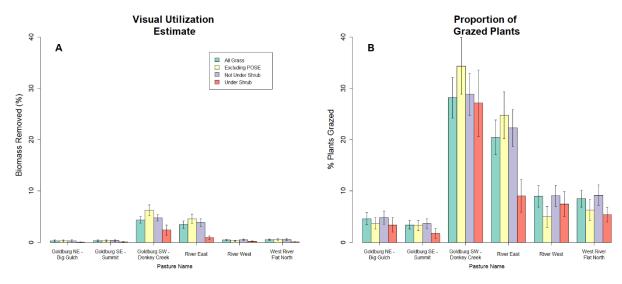


Figure 11. Grazing intensity based on visual estimates of percent biomass removed on individual grass plants and the proportion of grass plants grazed at random plots in 2019 at Pahsimeroi Valley, Idaho. Estimates were taken from the post-growing season surveys conducted in July – August 2019. In 2019, only River East and Goldburg SW were grazed prior to our post-growing season surveys.

Utilization estimates based on the landscape appearance method varied among years (Fig. 12). Estimates from this method were slightly higher than those from visual estimates of individual plants (Fig. 11A). This difference between the two methods is consistent with what we have observed at our other study sites. Differences in soil and grass phenology at this study site make visual estimates of utilization challenging. Estimates in 2016 may reflect annual variation in training of observers as opposed to increased utilization by cattle in that season. Variability among observers and observer bias is one component of Alex Laurence-Traynor's M.S. thesis (Laurence-Traynor 2019). We increased coordination and training of field crews with range specialists who are familiar with the area starting in 2017.

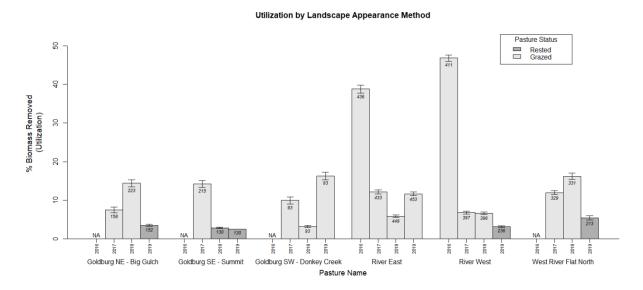


Figure 12. Utilization estimates based on the landscape appearance method for pre- and post-treatment periods at Pahsimeroi Valley, Idaho 2015-2019. Error bars represent  $\pm 1$  standard error. NA indicates that pasture was not measured in that particular year.

One of the advantages of using the landscape appearance method is that we can map spatial patterns of cattle use throughout each pasture. Not surprisingly, we found that cattle do not uniformly graze any of our treatment pastures (Fig. 13). This is likely due to spatial variation in availability of water, topography, and grass. The rancher who runs cows in the Upper Pahsimeroi allotment uses riders to help distribute cattle more evenly across these large pastures and those efforts seem to be apparent (2017-2019 Fig. 13C-E upper left pastures). Patterns of use appear to be different in that pasture each year and are less concentrated around the Pahsimeroi River (which runs diagonally NW to SE through the center of that pastures) than we would expect. In general use at this study site rarely exceeded the light use category in most years.

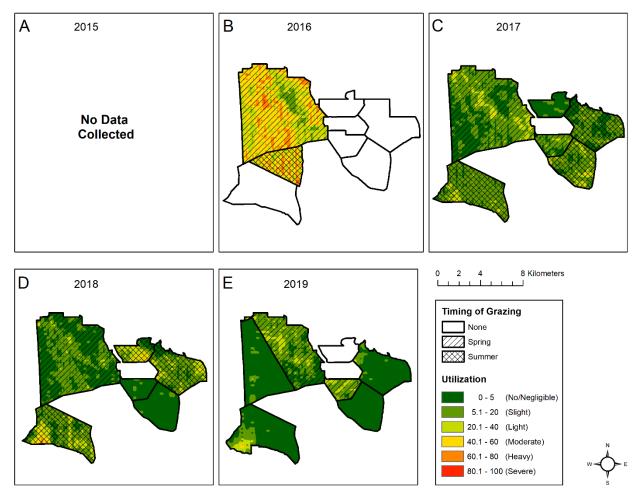


Figure 13. Pattern use mapping based on landscape appearance transects at Pahsimeroi Valley, Idaho 2016-2019.

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