

ALPINE LAKES RANCH— NRCS RANGE SURVEY

Field Inventory on 12/4/2024

NRCS staff: Shaan Bliss

Point of contact: Laurie White



2024 GRAZING SUMMARY

- 2024 –
 - 350 yearlings from May 27th to September 21st (4 months grazed)
 - 50 to 5 Cow/Calf Pairs from May to Sept (5 month grazed)
 - Total forage demand – 1,199 AUM's
- Estimated forage available – 2,218 AUM's (0.25% Harvest Efficiency) based off 2022 inventories
- Grazing impacts are mostly occurring higher in Ponderosa Hills and Coyote Park this year
- Overall stocking rate and grazing season is within reason for a normal year and utilization levels appear below what NRCS would recommend
- Consider new water developments to provide better control of grazing distribution and provide adequate rest periods for each Grazing Unit
- Consider adding weed control measures for the Alpine Meadows road corridors and meadows
 - Contact Ethan Proud the County Weed Specialist - (970) 264-6773) to get recommendations to control Canada Thistle, Musk Thistle, Flix weed and other noxious weeds



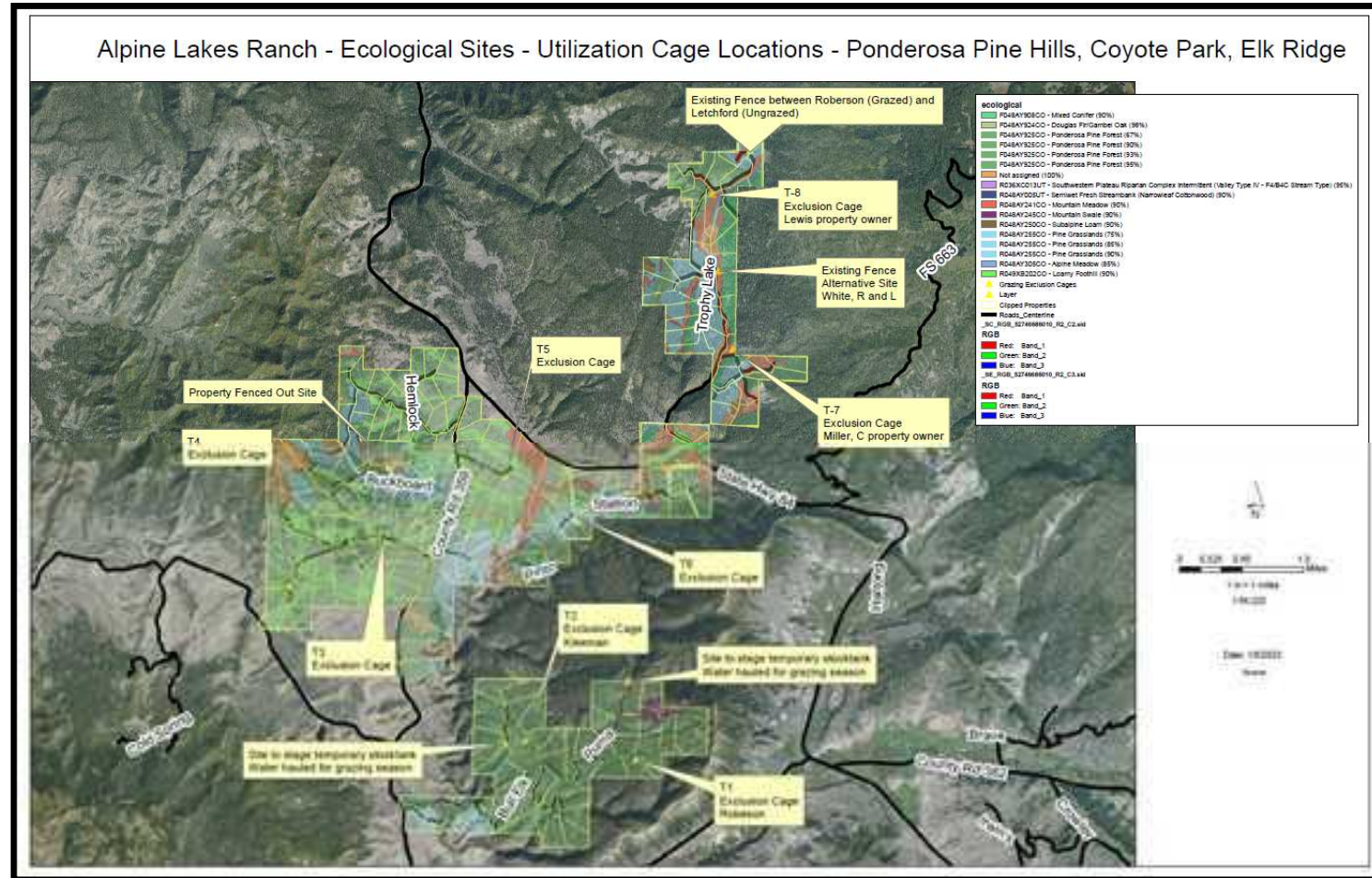
2024 FIELD INVENTORY SUMMARY

- Overall, the utilization cages appear to indicate that under 50% use is occurring in most areas across the ranch
- Coyote Park and Alpine Meadows appear to be the harder hit pastures.
- Inventory site T5 is not an excellent site location as it is arid and ungrazed production is similar to caged ungrazed site. Maybe consider estimating every other year to improve condition.
- The Elk Ridge area could be stocked heavier and longer as impacts are minimal if feasible with limited fencing
- Weedy areas were noticed heavily around T7 in the Alpine Meadows areas. Contact the county weed specialist to get recommend control of Canada and Musk Thistle, Flix weed,



INVENTORY LOCATIONS

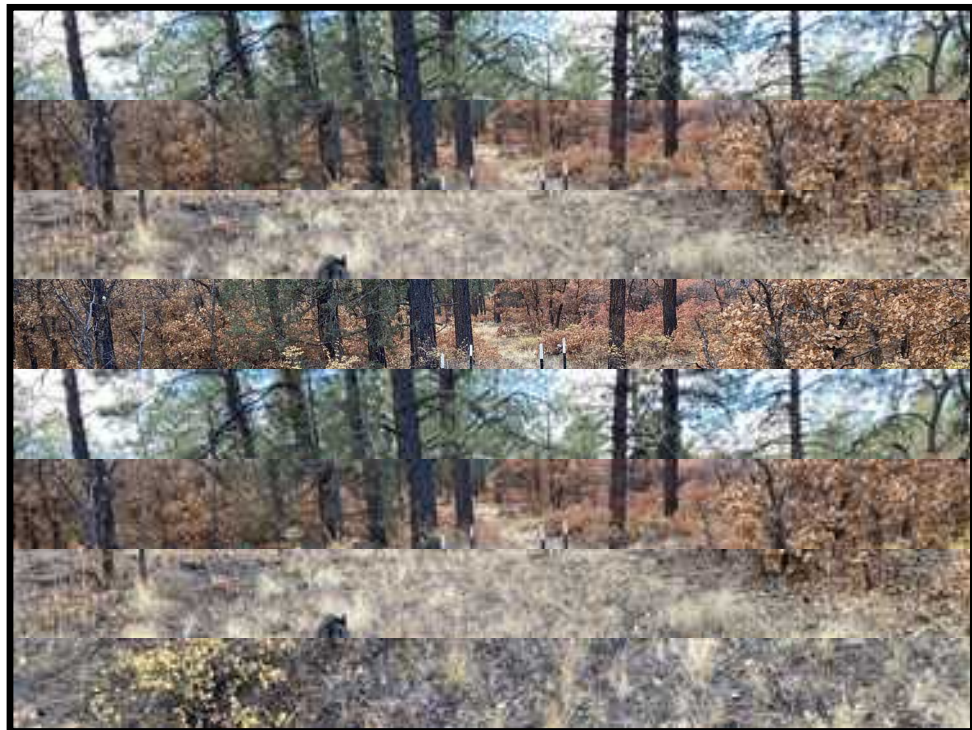
- This is a quick overview of the sample location inventoried
 - 8 exclusion cages
 - Labeled T1 through T8
- A larger pdf map will be attached in email



UTILIZATION CAGES

- T-1 in Elk Ridge

- 10/29/23– 24% Grazed
- 550 lbs/ac Total Season Production



- T-1 in Elk Ridge

- 12/4/24– 37.5% Grazed
- 480 lbs/ac Total Season Production



UTILIZATION CAGES

- T-2 in Elk Ridge

- 10/29/23– 71% Grazed
- 1,390 lbs/ac Total Season Production



- T-2 in Elk Ridge

- 12/4/24– 34.8% Grazed
- 890 lbs/ac Total Season Production



UTILIZATION CAGES

- T-3 in Ponderosa Hills

- 10/29/23– 55% Grazed
- 1,770 lbs/ac Total Season Production



- T-3 in Ponderosa Hills

- 12/4/24– 49.6% Grazed
- 1,230 lbs/ac Total Season Production



UTILIZATION CAGES

- T-4 in Ponderosa Hills

- 10/20/22– 27% Grazed
- 1,910 lbs/ac Total Season Production



- T-4 in Ponderosa Hills

- 12/4/24– 72% Grazed
- 3,030 lbs/ac Total Season Production



UTILIZATION CAGES

- T-5 in Coyote Park

- 10/29/23– 0% Grazed
- 270 lbs/ac Total Season Production



- T-5 in Coyote Park

- 12/4/24– 0% Grazed
- 200 lbs/ac Total Season Production



UTILIZATION CAGES

- T-6 in Coyote Park

- 10/29/23– 50% Grazed
- 3,390 lbs/ac Total Season Production



- T-6 in Coyote Park

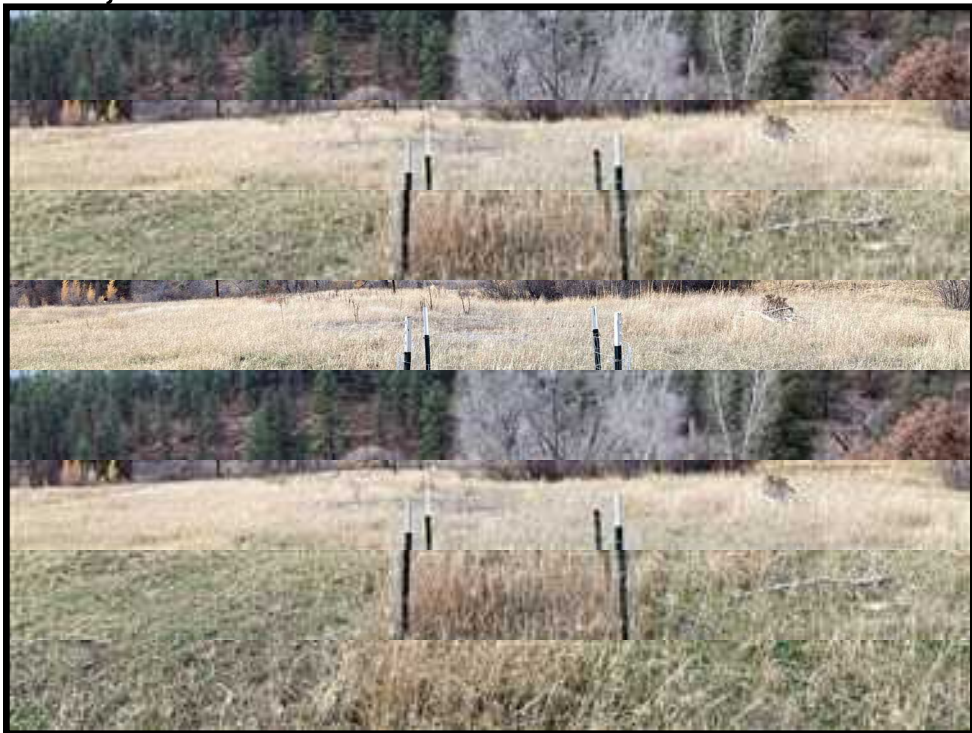
- 12/4/24– 18.7% Grazed
- 1,710 lbs/ac Total Season Production



UTILIZATION CAGES

■ T-7 in Alpine Meadows

- 10/29/23– 70% Grazed
- 1,610 lbs/ac Total Season Production



■ T-7 in Alpine Meadows

- 12/4/24– 36.3% Grazed
- 1,100 lbs/ac Total Season Production



UTILIZATION CAGES

■ T-8 in Alpine Meadows

- 10/29/23– 28% Grazed
- 1,740 lbs/ac Total Season Production



■ T-8 in Alpine Meadows

- 12/4/24– 0% Grazed
- 260 lbs/ac Total Season Production



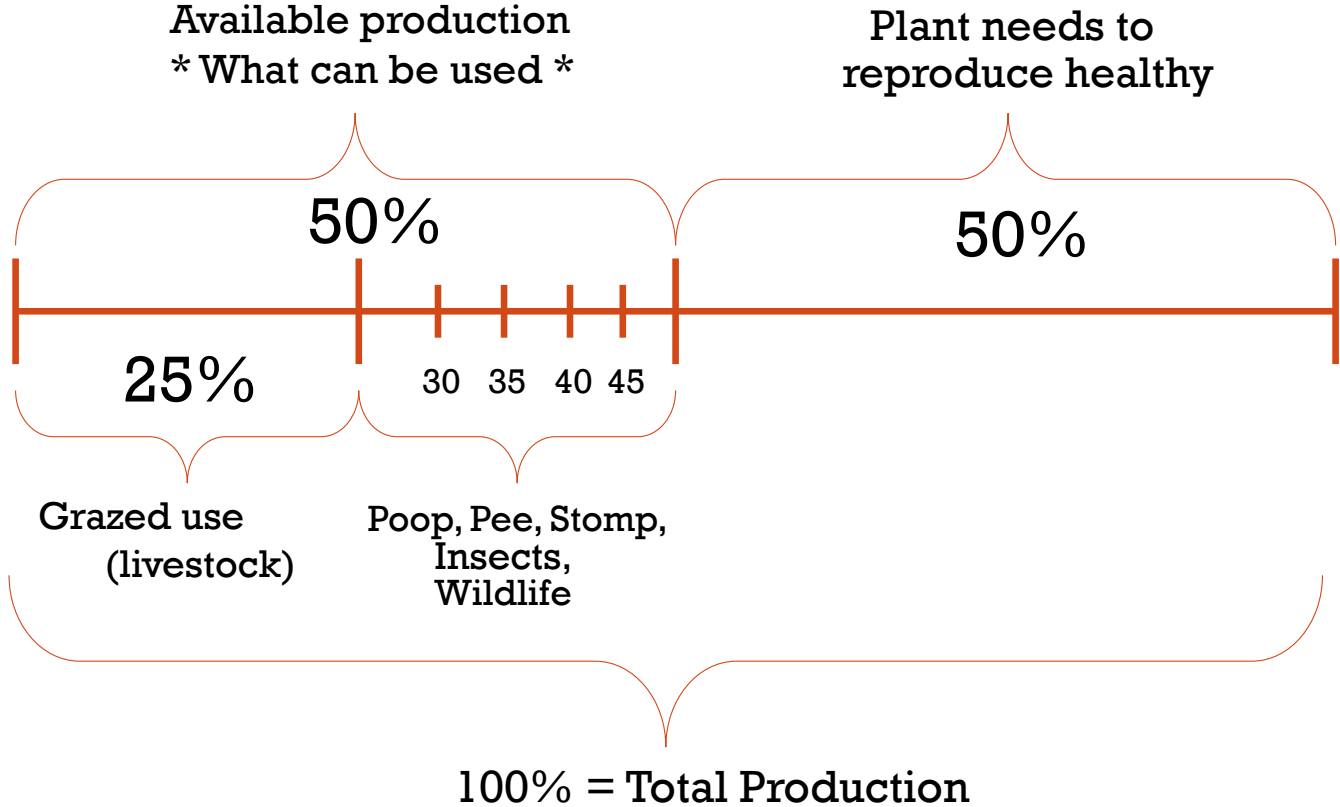
GRAZING UTILIZATION SUMMARY WITH PRODUCTION FOR 2024

		ALR Grazing Unit	2023 % Grazed Utilized	Total Production lbs/ac	2024 % Grazed Utilized	Total Production lbs/ac	Change in % Grazed 2023-2024	Climate Deviation from Normal	
Transect	1	Elk Ridge	24%	550	38%	480	14%	2023	5-10% below avg
	2	Elk Ridge	72%	1,390	35%	890	-37%	2024	0-5% below avg
	3	Ponderosa Hill	55%	1,770	50%	1,230	-5%		
	4	Ponderosa Hill	63%	2,400	72%	3,030	9%		
	5	Coyote Park	0%	190	0%	200	0%		
	6	Coyote Park	50%	3,390	19%	1,710	-31%		
	7	Alpine Meadows	70%	1,610	36%	1,100	-34%		
	8	Alpine Meadows	28%	1740	0%	260	-28%		

- Overall grazing utilization is below 50% on average and that is the maximum level that NRCS would recommend
- Grazing over 50% of available forage leads to declines in overall grass growth, potential increased erosion, increased weed populations, and lower plant diversity and cover
- Keep in mind grass growth in 2024 based on precipitation records from Oct 2024 to September 2024 was about 0-5% below average in our area



NRCS 50-50% RULE OF THUMB FOR NON-IRRIGATED RANGELAND

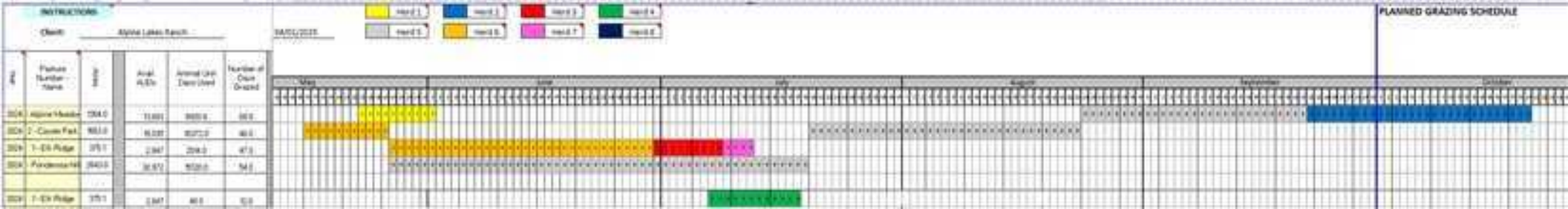


ALTERNATIVES TO IMPROVE MANAGEMENT

- Place Salt/Mineral blocks in key locations to encourage animals to graze away from common loafing areas
- Consider reducing the season of use in the Ponderosa Hills and Coyote Park and longer season in other pastures
 - Graze in Alpine Meadow or Elk Ridge for longer period to alleviate impacts on Coyote Park
- Consider stocking heavier and/or longer in the Elk Ridge area as conditions show the area was very lightly grazed



AUM'S SUPPLY/DEMAND SUMMARY BY PASTURE



Estimated Total AUM's of Forage Available – 2024

- 2,218 AUM's with 0.25 utilization or leaving over 75% of available grass for plant health and seasonal losses

Estimated Total AUM's Demand

- 10-50 Cow/calf Pair - May to October
- 350 Yearlings - May 27th to September 21th (4 months grazed)
- AUM's Total 1,199

Estimated Season of use

- May to October (1 to 5 months grazed)

Estimated Season of use

Feed/Forage Balance

- 1,019 in Surplus

ALR Grazing Unit	Acres	Available AUM's @ 0.25 HE	Available AUD's @ 0.25 HE	AUD's Used 2023	AUD's Used 2024	AUD's Used Change 2023-2024	Number of Days Grazed 2023	Number of Days Grazed 2024	2023% grazed based off Utilization cages	2024% grazed based off Utilization cages
Elk Ridge	1,925	486	2,847	1,443	2,062	30	34-35 days	59 days	24-72%	35-38%
Ponderosa Hill	2,642	1,032	30,972	15,640	15,120	-3	56 days	54 days	55-63%	50-72%
Coyote Park	1,563	634	19,035	10,315	10,372	1	29 – 31 days	46 days	0-50%	0-19%
Alpine Meadows	1,304	456	1,304	6,720	8,921	25	11 – 30 days	68 days	28-70%	0-36%

CONTINUE TO HAVE SEASONAL MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF YOUR GRAZING PLAN

- 2024 stocking rate appears to be within reason, but utilization cages show higher use in Ponderosa Hill and Coyote Park than we would recommend. Keep in mind the precipitation losses resulted in a 0-5% lower than expected production.
- NRCS will continue to work with you to monitoring utilization cages
- Additional areas could be used for monitoring on properties that are currently fenced out to help with averaging site conditions (S. Coe and Letchford)
- Ideally monitoring will occur at least once a year and clipping will take place in the fall when the growing season is near completion
- Please feel free to contact me with any questions
 - Shaan Bliss – office 970-731-3615 or work cell 970-398-1683, shaan.bliss@usda.gov

