

Pine Creek Ranch

Annual Report
2002



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PINE CREEK RANCH FY2002 ANNUAL REPORT
October 30, 2002

FOLLOWING:

FY 2002 SCOPE OF WORK FOR PINE CREEK RANCH

- AND -

Being submitted in conjunction with an Annual Report for Wagner Ranch

OBJECTIVE 1. Gather scientific baseline information for monitoring purposes and to assist in the development of management plans for Pine Creek Ranch.

Task 1.1 Obtain color digital orthophotography of the ranch to support vegetation classification and other monitoring and management needs.

The Tribes entered into a subcontract with 3Di, Inc, to obtain color digital orthophotography as part of a project jointly funded by the NPS and BLM. 3Di completed the aerial photography on June 12, 2002. Orthophotography is currently partially completed, and final delivery is expected in November.

Task 1.2 Contract with Oregon Natural Heritage Program to establish field plots and classify and map vegetation on the ranch.

ONHP completed field work between May 27 and June 18, 2002; establishing permanent monitoring transects and GPS points to support vegetation mapping and monitoring. Vegetation mapping will be completed using the digital orthophotos and additional field work in 2003.

Task 1.3 Install a stream gage on Pine Creek in cooperation with USGS.

The streamflow gage and weather monitoring equipment are currently (Oct. 28-29) being installed.

Task 1.4 Conduct biological surveys.

1.11 Conduct big game inventories to calculate age and sex ratios.

Game surveys were conducted on the ground between November 21 and December 13, 2001, and by helicopter on December 30, 2001. A total of 252 deer were classified in the ground survey, and 249 in the aerial survey. Ground ratios were 12 bucks per 100 does and 39 fawns per 100 does; while the aerial ratios were 22 bucks per 100 does and 48 fawns per 100 does. A total of 128 elk were classified in the ground survey, and 333 in the aerial survey, with ground ratios of 13.4 bulls per 100 cows and 29 calves per 100 cows; with aerial ratios of 7 bulls per 100 cows and 37 calves per 100 cows.

Limited numbers of pronghorn antelope were also observed on the property this year. Exotic Audad sheep were also observed on the property in 2002, as well as in adjacent BLM land.

1.12 Conduct fisheries redd counts.

Redd counts were conducted on Pine Creek April 23, 2002; a total of 12 summer steelhead redds were observed.

1.13 Conduct breeding bird point counts at monitoring points.

Point counts were conducted twice at each of 40 riparian monitoring points on Pine Creek, Cove Creek, and Robinson Canyon between May 20 and June 14, 2002.

1.14 Record observations of birds throughout the year.

Weekly records of all species observed have been maintained. A total of 146 species have been observed on the ranch to date.

Task 1.5 Take monitoring photos at riparian and upland monitoring points.

Monitoring photos were taken at riparian monitoring sites on Pine Creek in September, 2002.

OBJECTIVE 2. Complete and implement management plans.

Task 2.1 Complete revisions of draft Watershed and Wildlife Habitat Management Plan, incorporating the recently-acquired Wagner Ranch portion of the property, hold BPA and public review before adopting final plan.

The Draft Pine Creek Ranch Wildlife Habitat and Watershed Management Plan was presented at public meetings in Warm Springs (June 17) and Fossil (June 26). The CBFWA Wildlife Committee approved the plan on June 20, 2002. The plan was submitted to BPA for review in July 2002.

Task 2.2 Implement the Wildlife Habitat Conservation and Management Plan completed with the cooperation of Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife.

This plan is being implemented through ongoing property management.

Task 2.3 Complete and implement a Weed Management Plan, using TNC template, in cooperation with Wheeler County Weed Board and BLM.

No progress has been completed on this task pending BPA review of the draft Wildlife Habitat and Watershed Management Plan.

Task 2.4 Complete a Fire Management Plan and contract with BLM for wildfire control.

A wildfire response meeting was held in April, with Will Bartlett and Geoff Babb from Prineville BLM. Responses to wildfire were agreed upon; however, funding and liability issues have not been resolved. BLM has not provided an answer to the Tribes request to enter into a wildfire control agreement. The Tribes requested a joint meeting with BPA and BLM to resolve this issue, but the meeting could not be scheduled before the 2002 fire season. The Tribes are currently attempting to re-schedule the meeting for early December 2002.

Task 2.5 Revise access regulations developed by the Access Advisory Committee composed of tribal, federal, state, and local representatives to incorporate the Wagner Ranch portion of the property, and continue implementing tribal and public access program.

The tribal and public access program is continuing, using regulations modified in spring 2002.

OBJECTIVE 3. Protect, manage and enhance the assets and resources of Pine Creek Ranch.

Task 3.1 Conduct treatment of noxious weeds using mechanical, chemical, and biological control as appropriate.

The Wheeler County and Jefferson County weed officers, on subcontract to the Confederated Tribes, have conducted herbicidal weed control. The Pine Creek Ranch habitat manager has conducted manual control, and verified overwinter survival and dispersal of biological control agents released for yellow star-thistle control. Control efforts have targeted Scotch thistle, Russian knapweed, yellow star-thistle, and white-top. A nematode has been released as a biological control agent for Russian knapweed.

Task 3.2 Continue plant community restoration work.

The Tribes solicited bids for the Pine Creek CREP riparian buffer woody plant propagation and planting, and entered into a contract agreement with Wildlands, Inc. Seed has been collected for growing woody trees and shrubs. The Tribes are negotiating a contract with L&H Seeds for propagation of basin wildrye seed.

Task 3.3 Continue cooperative project with Wheeler SWCD to replace fish-passage barrier culverts with appropriate structures.

Wheeler SWCD, the Tribes, and USFWS jointly funded removal of one culvert, and the installation of three rock weirs and juniper rootwads to protect the stream grade at the culvert site. Funding is currently being sought to replace the existing culvert at Clarno Rd.

Task 3.4 Monitor for trespass cattle, and work with neighboring landowners to reduce trespass problems.

One instance of trespass by eighteen head of livestock was resolved within two days by the work of the Habitat Manager and the livestock owner; additional instances of trespass by three other neighboring landowners have occurred in Fall 2002.

Task 3.5 Close and rehabilitate ranch roads not needed for management purposes. Conduct preventative maintenance on necessary management roads.

No progress has been conducted on this task. All ranch roads are closed to public vehicle access.

OBJECTIVE 4. Deliverables

Task 4.1 Compile quarterly progress reports and submit to BPA.

Quarterly reports have been submitted.

Task 4.2 Submit Annual Report for FY2002 (Oct. 1, 2001 through Sep. 30, 2002).

This is the annual report for FY 2002.

Task 4.3 Submit draft Watershed and Wildlife Habitat Management Plan to BPA for review, and final plan after BPA and public comments have been received.

The plan has been submitted to BPA, no comments have yet been received from BPA. Only positive comments were received at the public meeting presentations. See above.

Task 4.4 Submit draft plans for BPA review:
Weed Management Plan
Fire Management Plan

These plans will be submitted for BPA review as completed.

Task 4.5 Biological Opinion from NMFS

USFWS provided cost-share funding for the culvert project, and was also responsible for the NEPA and consultation with NMFS. USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife has a programmatic Biological Opinion, no report was generated for the Pine Creek project.

Task 4.6 Cultural Survey if it is warranted by ground disturbance.

Cultural Survey was completed for the culvert project, see above.