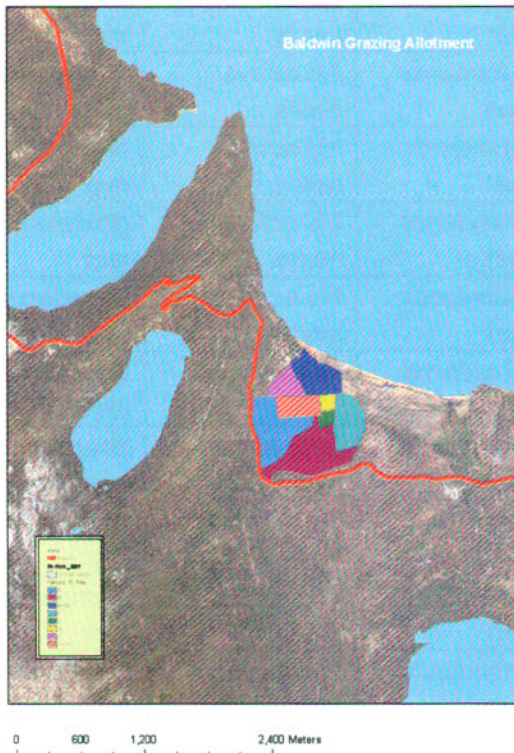




## Baldwin Grazing Allotment Management Project Proposal

The Baldwin Grazing Allotment is located in El Dorado County on the south shore of Lake Tahoe in the Fallen Leaf Management Area. The 200 acre allotment is adjacent to Baldwin Beach (T13N R17E Section 26 and 35) in the Tallac Creek drainage.



### Background:

The U. S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) manages the Baldwin Grazing Allotment in the Tallac Creek watershed. The allotment is approximately 200 acres and the only allotment on the lakeshore of Lake Tahoe. The allotment is divided into seven pastures (A, B, C, D, D1, E, and beach pasture). No grazing has occurred on the beach pasture since 2003. Additionally, pasture D1 was closed in 2004 and pasture E in 2005. Pasture sizes range from 5- 61 acres and include both mesic and xeric ecologic site transitions. The allotment is dissected by Tallac Creek, which provides inflow to Lake Tahoe and supports native and introduced fish species. Wetland and riparian areas provide habitat for wildlife species, such as willow flycatcher and sensitive plant taxa, including *Botricium*

*spp.* and *Epilobium spp.* The beach pasture is also adjacent to a known Tahoe yellow cress population, which is identified in the conservation plan as a medium priority restoration site, and a population recreational beach facility.

The permitted use on this allotment has been out of compliance with Lahontan Regional Water Control Board (LRWCB) fecal coliform standards since 1999. The Forest Service was issued a Notice of Violation in 1999 for “Discharges of wastes in excess of Lahontan Basin Plan water quality objectives for fecal coliform on USFS/LTBMU grazing allotments”.

Additionally, herbaceous utilization standards set by the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (SNFPA) Record of Decision (ROD) have been exceeded annually since 2000 (Table 2). Monitoring results show that desired resource conditions were consistently exceeded even though various management strategies were implemented. Letters documenting monitoring



results were issued to the permittee on March 25, 2003, August 18, 2004, April 4, 2005, and May 21, 2007. Because the term grazing permit expired on December 31, 2006, and no NEPA decision had been made on the allotment, a temporary grazing permit was issued for 2007 and 2008. Permitted use was modified from 45 horses from July 1 until October 15 to 30 horses for 3 days (or until standards were met) on the C Pasture only. All resource standards were met in the 2007 and 2008.

Table 1: Monitoring results from 1999 until 2008.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Streambank Trampling</b>	<b>Herbaceous Utilization</b>	<b>Woody Utilization</b>	<b>Willow Flycatcher</b>	<b>Water Quality</b>
1999	Not measured	Standards not met	Standards met	No active nests	Standards not met
2000	Not measured	Standards not met	Standards met	No active nests	Standards not met
2001	Not measured	Standards not met	Standards met	No active nests	Standards not met
2002	Not measured	Standards not met	Standards met	No active nests	Standards not met
2003	Not measured	Standards not met	Standards met	No active nests	Standards not met
2004	Standards not met	Standards not met	Standards met	Active nest	Standards not met
2005	Standards met	Standards not met	Standards met	Standards met	Standards not met
2006	Standards not met	Standards not met	Standards met	Standards met	Standards not met
2007	Not measured	Standards met	Standards met	Standards met	Standards met
2008	Not measured	Standards met	Standards met	Standards met	Standards met

### **Proposed Action:**

The LTBMU proposes to discontinue authorized livestock grazing on the Baldwin Allotment in order to meet state and federal resource standards and achieve desired conditions. The proposal includes an amendment to the 1988 LTBMU Land and Resource Management Plan to close the Baldwin Grazing Allotment to eliminate grazing in the future. Currently the authority to close a grazing allotment is under the jurisdiction of the Regional Forester (FSM 2204.2). Therefore, prior to this decision a letter will be sent to the Regional Forester requesting the delegation of authority to the LTBMU Forest Supervisor.

**Purpose and Need for the Proposed Project:**

The previous term grazing permit has expired and there is a need to determine whether grazing is an appropriate management tool to meet desired ecological conditions in the allotment.

There is need to meet water quality standards set by LWQCB that state “*fecal coliform concentration during any 30-day period shall not exceed a log mean of 20/100 ml, nor shall more than 10 percent of all samples collected during any 30-day period exceed 40/100 ml.*”

There is a need to ensure management activities on the Baldwin Allotment meet Federal standards designed to protect water quality, riparian and stream habitat, and upland terrestrial habitat. For the Baldwin Allotment, these standards include:

- Herbaceous utilization will not be greater than 40%.
- Willow utilization will not be greater than 20%.
- Streambank utilization will not be greater than 20%.
- In meadows with occupied willow flycatcher sites, only allow late-season grazing (after August 15) in the entire meadow.

There is a need to ensure management activities aid in the maintenance and further improvement of herbaceous vegetation conditions that are indicative of late seral meadow conditions.

There is a need to increase riparian shrub and aspen habitat to provide habitat for riparian dependant species and improve floodplain stability.

There is need to increase bank stability along Tallac Creek by increasing riparian vegetation.

**Desired Conditions:**

Attain water quality conditions that meet goals of the Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act, providing water that is fishable, swimmable, and suitable for drinking after normal treatment.

Attain range conditions that are indicative of improving ecological trends toward a diversity of native vegetative plant associations that are indicative of mid to later seral plant communities and a minimum of 90% ground cover.

Improve habitats to support viable populations of riparian dependant native plant species.  
Prevent new introductions of invasive species.

Improve the species composition and structural habitat diversity for plant and animal communities that rely on riparian areas, wetlands, and meadows ecosystems.

Improve the connections of floodplains, channels, and water tables to distribute flood flows and sustain diverse habitats.

Attain soil conditions that favor infiltration characteristics and support diversity of vegetative cover to absorb and filter precipitation and to sustain favorable conditions of stream flows.

Improve the physical structure and condition of stream banks and shorelines to minimize erosion and sustain aquatic habitat diversity.

The area is compatible with scenic, visual and recreation values and associated uses.