

Trend Study 8A-3-00

Study site name: Bald Range South.

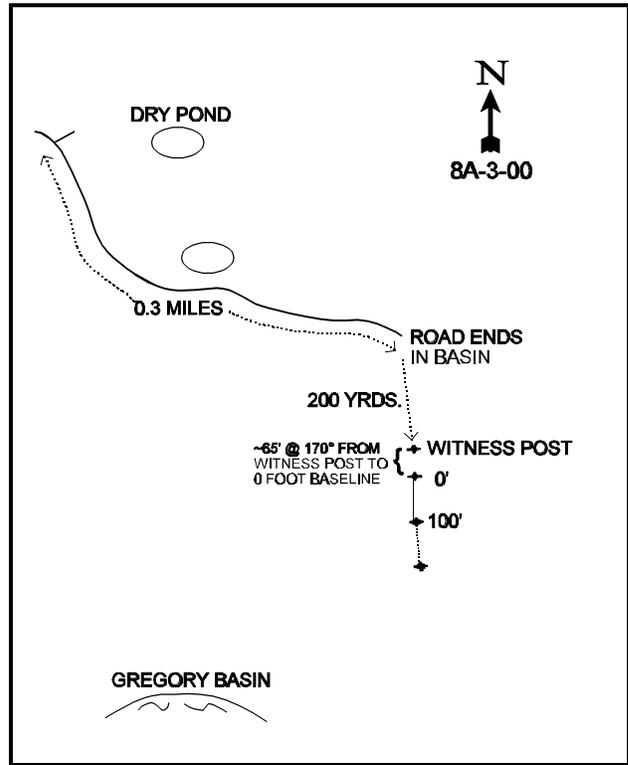
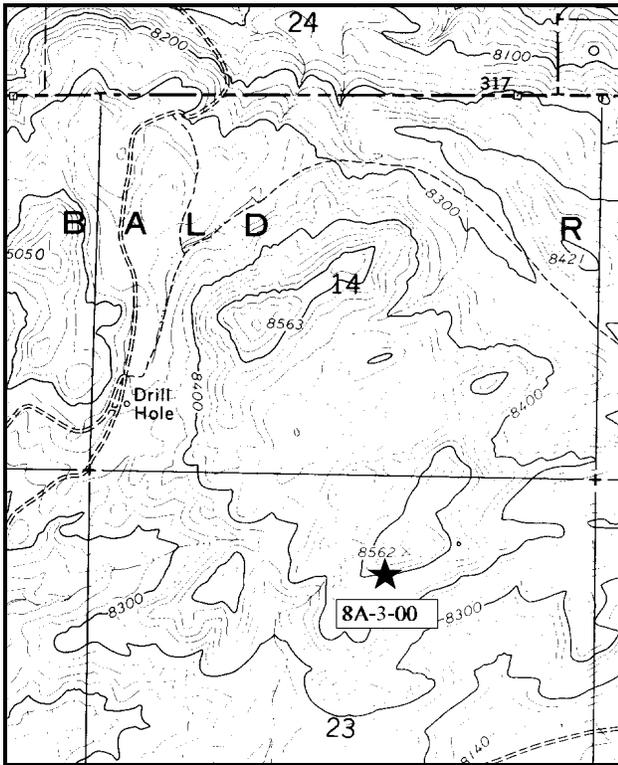
Range type: True Mountain Mahogany.

Compass bearing: frequency baseline 155°M.

First frame placement on frequency belts 5 feet. Frequency belt placement; line 1 (11, 59, & 95ft), line 2 (34, & 71ft).

LOCATION DESCRIPTION

From the Bald Range study 8A-4, proceed southeasterly across the basin, past another dry pond, for about 0.3 miles to where the road ends. From the end of the road, walk about 200 yards up the ridge to the south (it is also possible to drive up) to the top. A witness post is located on the rocky top. The study is on the south-facing slope. Walk 13 paces at 170°M to the 0-foot baseline stake.



Map Name: Hoop Lake

Diagrammatic Sketch

Township 3N, Range 16E, Section 23

UTM 4537129 N, 576277 E

DISCUSSION

Trend Study No. 8A-3

*** This site was not read in 2000, but text has been retained. Consult the 1995 "Utah Big Game Range Trend Studies" report for maps and data tables.

The Bald Range South range study is located on the appropriately named Bald Range consists of low, rolling sagebrush/grass hills with patches of mountain brush mostly on south slopes. It is located less than ½ of a mile south of trend study 8A-4, Bald Range. The open range, owned by the State of Utah, is mostly utilized by cattle and antelope. The mountain mahogany slopes also appear to be important to wintering elk. There was only light cattle use on the study site, which is located on a steep (42%), south-facing slope overlooking Gregory Basin. Elevation on the ridge, one of the highest in the range, is just over 8,500 feet.

The soil surface is extremely rocky. A large number of rocks occur with the soil profile, resulting in variable soil depth. Black sagebrush thrives on the more shallow soils. Vegetative and litter cover are generally good, but rock and smaller pavement fragments cover 36% of the surface. Total protective ground cover is good at 94%, leaving only 6% bare soil. Soil erosion is not currently a problem on this slope, yet soil movement down slope in the form of pedestaling on the uphill side of shrubs is evident due to the steep slope.

True mountain mahogany dominates the slopes and makes up 70% of the total browse cover. Estimated density was 7,066 plants/acre in 1988 and 5,740 in 1995. Sixty-six percent of the population consisted of young plants in 1988, a high proportion similar to many of the mahogany sites in the unit. Mature plants averaged just over two feet in height with 73% of them displaying heavy hedging in 1988. Vigor was good and percent decadency low at 2%. During the 1995 reading, there were an estimated 3,720 mature plants/acre, with 30% being classified as heavily hedged. The number of seedlings and young are lower than in 1988, but adequate to maintain the population. The population change is mostly due to the greatly increased sample size and much better sampling distribution used in 1995 and a die-off of the young age class plants due to drought.

Other valuable browse include serviceberry, black sagebrush, and snowberry. Mature serviceberry average nearly three feet in height. These shrubs are lightly to moderately utilized. Patches of black sagebrush are common and showed more heavy use in 1995. Currently, 30% of the mature and decadent plants display heavy use. Percent decadency has declined from 31% to 14%. Snowberry accounts for 10% of the browse cover on the site. With the new larger sample used in 1995, more snowberry was picked up than during the previous reading. Currently, there is an estimated 700 mostly mature plants/acre, 23% of which are heavily utilized.

Increasesers have tough competition from a well established grass understory. Bluebunch wheatgrass, Carex, and Sandberg bluegrass are common and vigorous. They have been lightly grazed by cattle. Forbs are diverse and moderately abundant, but contain few valuable forage species.

1995 TREND ASSESSMENT

Protective ground cover has increased slightly on the site from 93% to 94%. Litter cover has declined due to drought while rock and pavement cover have remained stable at 36%. Active erosion is not a problem on the site, but some down slope soil movement is evident and unavoidable on the site this steep. Trend for soil is currently stable. Trend for the key browse species, true mountain mahogany, is slightly up even with the decline in population density which is more of a reflection of a much larger sample size. The number of seedlings and young are lower, but still excellent and adequate to maintain the population. Percent decadency is less than 1%, and the proportion of mature shrubs heavily hedged declined from 73% to 30%. Secondary browse species, serviceberry, black sagebrush, and snowberry, all exhibit heavier use, yet show stable population trends. Trends

for perennial grasses and forbs are both down slightly due to reduced sum of nested frequencies. All grasses, except Indian ricegrass and Sandberg bluegrass, declined in quadrat and nested frequency. Forbs are diverse but contain only a few useful species.

TREND ASSESSMENT

soil - stable (3)

browse - slightly up (4)

herbaceous understory - slightly down with continued drought (2)