

THIS SITE WAS DROPPED

Trend Study 14-25-99

Study site name: Davis Pocket .

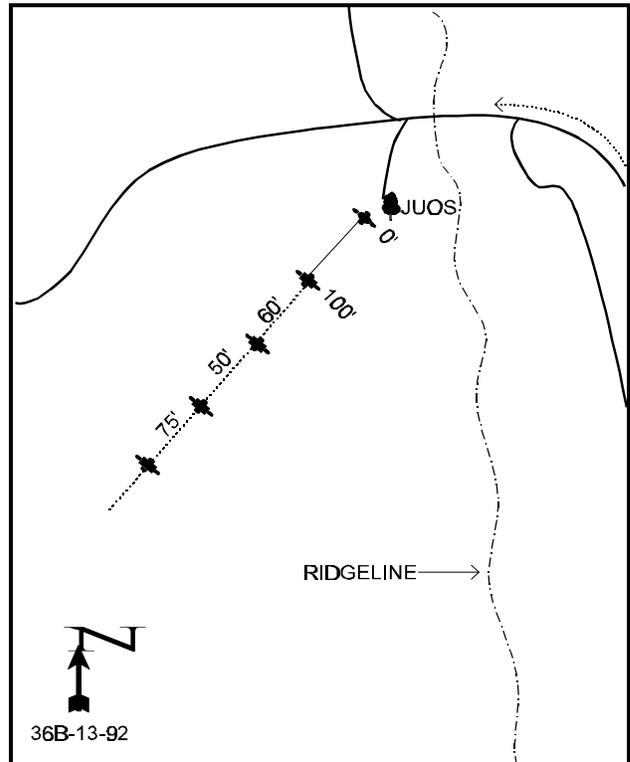
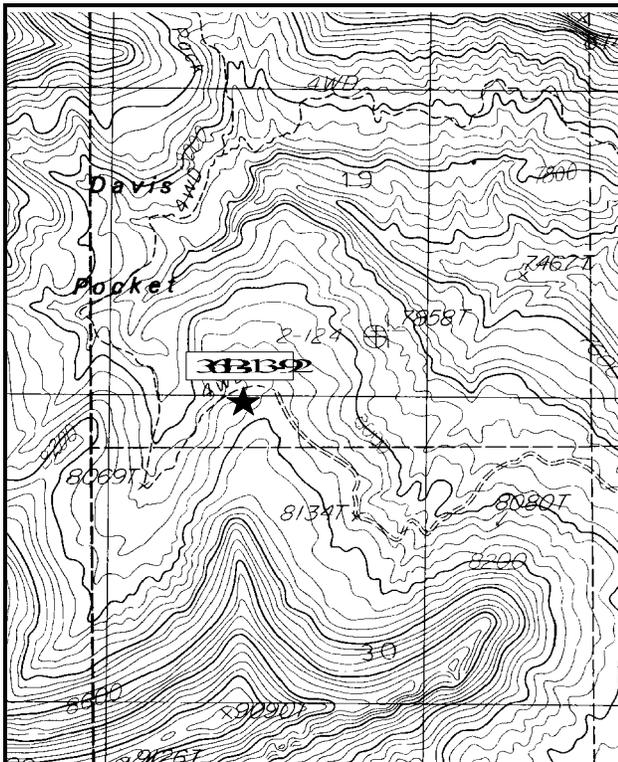
Range type: Mixed Mountain Brush .

Compass bearing: frequency baseline 242 degrees.

Footmark (first frame at) 5 feet, footmarks (frequency belts) line 1 (11 & 71ft), line 2 (59ft), line 3 (34ft), line 4 (95ft).

LOCATION DESCRIPTION

From the Gooseberry Guard Station, travel 4 miles east towards The Causeway to a junction with a sign to "Mormon Pasture". Turn left onto this road and proceed north 1.2 miles. Turn left 100 feet before two cabins near an open pit uranium mine. Go west up this road for 3.1 miles to a fork just beyond a grove of large ponderosa pines. Take the right hand fork and drive .6 mile to the forks at the top of the ridge (4 x 4 may be necessary). Go approximately 200 feet up the southwest fork to the end of the road. The transect starts in the brush at the end of the clearing. The frequency baseline is marked by 2-foot high red steel fence posts. The density plots are marked by 3 1/2 foot tall green fence posts, starting 60 feet off the 100-foot end of the baseline.



Map Name: House Park Butte

Diagrammatic Sketch

Township 33S , Range 20E , Section 18

DISCUSSION

Trend Study No. 14- 25 (36-13)

***This study has been discontinued. Text has been retained for your information, however you must refer to the "1992 Utah Big Game Range Trend Studies" report for maps and data tables.

Davis Pocket is a unique basin on the east side of the 9,200-foot Horse Mountain, which is on the northern end of Elk Ridge. The conifer covered ridges mix into oakbrush dominated slopes in the basin. The study samples thick oak and mixed browse across a low ridge in the center of the basin at an elevation of about 8,100 feet. The site is located on the Manti-LaSal National Forest.

Livestock grazing and mining are activities that are emphasized in the area. As part of the Cottonwood allotment, a rest-rotation system is used for the 3 units. The season of use is June 16 to October 20, where each unit is rested every third year. The stocking rate is 676 head (3,718 AUMs) and an increase was being considered. Heavy uranium mining activities have occurred to the east, but mining activity is very slow at this time. The soil is shallow to moderately deep with loam over sandy loams. The surface is rocky and the loose dry soil is easily disturbed on the steep inclines. Ground cover is variable with percent bare ground at only 12%. Even with this low percentage of bare ground, there are bare spots and eroded cattle trails that are a source of soil loss and gullying. Litter cover is good under much of the vegetation, but it is lost under the brush where the slope is steep and herbaceous cover is lacking.

The Interagency frequency-density study replaces line 1 of the old line intercept study. The baseline uses the same end points as the old line intercept transect, starting near the end of the road at the top of the ridge, then southwest across the oak covered side hill. The study site has a Northwestern aspect on a 30% slope.

Although oak is the dominant species, many other valuable browse species are present in the community, leading to its designation as a mixed mountain brush type. The density of oak is estimated to be 10,712 stems/acre, the majority of which are young. The oak is vigorous and only lightly browsed, although there is some defoliation by insects. The other common browse species are snowberry, serviceberry, mountain big sagebrush, and birchleaf mountain mahogany. Most are vigorous and moderately utilized except for mountain big sagebrush where 46% are decadent. Other valuable species are less abundant, but provide a variety of forage, these include chokecherry and bitterbrush. Most of the shrubs appear to have stable to increasing populations in terms of age class structure. The oak especially shows signs of increasing.

The herbaceous understory is diverse, but limited by the dense shrub overstory and selective grazing pressure. Most grasses show signs of current utilization. The most common grasses or grass-like species are: sedge, needle-and-thread, Kentucky bluegrass, and Letterman needlegrass. Forb quadrat frequency is fairly high with 22 species found on the sampled lines. Utilization of forbs is generally light, although some individuals have been heavily hedged. The grasses and forbs help provide important soil protection.

1986 TREND ASSESSMENT

Currently, the area provides abundant and diverse foraging opportunities for livestock and wildlife. However, a continued increase in oak is undesirable in terms of deer summer range and also range for elk and cattle. The thick oakbrush tends to limit production and availability of grasses and forbs on this site. Future management should be concerned with the increasing browse component. Both the old line intercept and newer Interagency data point to a definite increase in shrub dominance, where the herbaceous component was once very prominent. The increasing shrub cover, although providing a thick vegetative cover, adds little to actual ground cover and has confounding effects on the amount of litter and herbaceous ground cover. The main sources of erosion on the site are rocky, bare spots, and gullying cattle trails.

1992 TREND ASSESSMENT

Soil trend is considered stable, even with the slight increase in percent bare ground and a substantial decrease in percent litter cover. Cover from grasses, forbs, and shrubs is excellent. Of all the more than 12 browse species, only mountain big sagebrush has a high rate of decadence (46%), which is an improvement from what it was in 1986 (66%). The densities for many of the shrubs have changed because of the new larger sampling design giving better estimates, but trend would still be considered stable to slightly improving. With the browse component increasing its dominance, it would be expected that the competitive shading effect would be detrimental to the herbaceous understory. The trend for the herbaceous understory is down, with nested frequency values for both grasses and forbs going down significantly since 1986.

TREND ASSESSMENT

soil - stable

browse - stable to slightly improving

herbaceous understory - down