Public–Private Partnerships are an integral part of successful public land management. The Sulphur Springs allotment, which is administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Rawlins Field Office, Rawlins, Wyoming, USA, contains a largely checkerboard land-ownership pattern that is 56% public. The significance of this allotment is its location at the confluence of the perennial headwaters of Muddy Creek. Other than the southeast corner and western edge, most of the stream miles are on private land. Within the Rawlins Field Office boundary, only 10% of all riparian habitats are located on public land. It is essential that BLM work with partners to manage riparian habitat on a landscape scale. Sulphur Springs allotment is one example of this approach.

The history of the ranch dates back to fur trapper and explorer, Jim Bridger, who was part of an army expedition that explored the Sulphur Springs area in 1850. Sulphur Springs was later developed as a stage stop along the Overland Trail, and, after the completion of the transcontinental railroad, it became a stop along the Rawlins, Wyoming, USA, to Meeker, Colorado, USA, freight line. Shortly thereafter, in the 1880s, stockmen homesteaded and began ranching in the area. The allotment boundary was fenced in the late 1950s to mid-1960s. This boundary included two small utility pastures along with two large pastures (east and west of the canyon with topographic control) grazed with two separate cattle herds from May through September. Figure 1 shows the Sulphur Springs allotment, land ownership, and both historic and current management pastures (red lines).

History of the Sulphur Springs Allotment

The Sulphur Springs allotment was selected as one of the early Allotment Management Plans (AMPs) to be developed in 1967–1968 with an emphasis on upland vegetation. Early steps taken included the establishment of proper livestock stocking rates, development of upland water sources to improve distribution of cattle use, and application of 2,4-D to remove dense stands of mountain big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata* ssp. *vaseyana*). Figure 2 shows three photographs of a 3 × 3 foot plot location taken in 1968, 1988, and 2010. In 1968, the initial monitoring photos were established as part of the AMP with upland-habitat management focus. Management strategy changed in mid-1980s from viewing riparian habitat as sacrifice areas to high-priority management areas. In contrast, from 1968 to 2010, not much has visibly changed in upland vegetation, reinforcing that the emphasis should always have been on riparian habitat management. Pace-frequency transects, established by the BLM in 1979 and reread in 2010, show similar species dominance of bluegrasses (*Poa* spp.), thickspike wheatgrass (*Elymus lanceolatus*), and needle and thread grass (*Hesperostipa comata*). However, species diversity has improved, with increasing perennial plants and decreasing erosion concerns because of more ground cover of litter and live plants. In addition, bare ground across the allotment has been reduced from an average (for 12 sites) of 35% to 11%.

Figure 1. Sulphur Springs allotment, land ownership, and both historic and current management pastures.