



# ***Appendix M*** ***Proposed Standards for*** ***Rangeland Health*** ***and Proposed Guidelines*** ***for Livestock Grazing*** ***Management***

*This Appendix contains  
the following items:*

- *Proposed Standards for  
Rangeland Health -  
Idaho*
- *Proposed Guidelines for  
Livestock Grazing  
Management - Idaho*

The following standards for rangeland health and guidelines for livestock grazing management would apply in Idaho. They have been developed by the Bureau of Land Management Idaho State Director in consultation with the three affected resource advisory councils, pursuant to 43 CFR 4180 (Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration).

These standards for rangeland health have been listed in this EIS as part of the desired range of future conditions for Alternatives 3 through 7. (Please refer to the section titled Features Common to Alternatives 3 to 7, in Chapter 3.) The guidelines included in this appendix, developed in consultation with the resource advisory councils, were developed in coordination with rangeland management specialists on the interdisciplinary team that wrote this EIS.

# ***Proposed Standards For Rangeland Health ~ Idaho***

## ***Introduction***

The standards for rangeland health, as applied in the State of Idaho, are to be used as BLM's management goals for the betterment of the environment, protection of cultural resources, and sustained productivity of the range. They were developed with the specific intent of allowing for the multiple use of the public lands. Application of the standards should involve collaboration between the authorized officer, interested publics, and resource users.

Rangelands should be in a properly functioning condition or making significant progress toward meeting the standards for rangeland health. Monitoring of all uses is necessary and is the primary tool for determining rangeland condition and trend. It will be performed on representative sites.

Appropriate to soil type, climate, and landform, indicators are typical physical and biological factors and processes that can be measured or observed. They are used in combination to provide information necessary to determine the health and condition of rangelands. No single indicator provides sufficient information to determine rangeland health. Only those indicators appropriate to a particular site are to be used. The indicators listed below each standard are not intended to be all inclusive.

The issue of scale must be kept in mind in evaluating the indicators listed after each standard. It is recognized that individual isolated sites within a landscape may not be meeting the standards; however, broader areas must be in proper functioning condition. Furthermore, rangeland fragmentation which reduces the effective size of large areas must also be evaluated for its consequences.

## ***Standard 1 (Watersheds)***

Watersheds provide for natural infiltration, retention, and release of water appropriate to soil type, vegetation, climate, and landform. Indicators may include but are not limited to the following:

- (1) The amount and distribution of ground cover, including litter, for identified ecological site(s) or soil-plant associations is appropriate for site stability.

- (2) Evidence of accelerated erosion (in the form of rills and/or gullies, erosional pedestals, flow patterns, physical soil crusts/surface sealing, and compaction layers below the soil surface) is minimal for soil type and landform.

## ***Standard 2 (Riparian Areas and Wetlands)***

Riparian-wetland areas are in properly functioning condition appropriate to soil type, climate, geology, and landform. Indicators may include but are not limited to the following:

- (1) The riparian/wetland vegetation is controlling erosion, stabilizing streambanks, shading water areas to reduce water temperature, stabilizing shorelines, filtering sediment, aiding in floodplain development, dissipating energy, delaying flood water, and increasing recharge of groundwater appropriate to site potential.
- (2) Riparian/wetland vegetation with deep strong binding roots is sufficient to stabilize streambanks and shorelines. Invader and shallow rooted species are a minor component of the floodplain.
- (3) Age class and structural diversity of riparian/wetland vegetation are appropriate for the site.

## ***Standard 3 (Stream Channel/Floodplain)***

Stream channels and floodplains are properly functioning relative to the geomorphology (such as gradient, size, shape, roughness, confinement, and sinuosity) and climate. Indicators may include but are not limited to the following:

- (1) Stream channels and floodplains dissipate energy of high water flows and transport sediment. Soils support appropriate riparian-wetland species, allowing water movement, sediment filtration, and water storage. Stream channels are not entrenching.
- (2) Stream width/depth ratio, gradient, sinuosity, and pool, riffle and run frequency are appropriate for the valley bottom type, geology, hydrology and soils.
- (3) Streams have access to their floodplains, and sediment deposition is evident.
- (4) There is little evidence of excessive soil compaction due to human activities.
- (5) Streambanks are within an appropriate range of stability according to site potential.

## ***Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities)***

Healthy, productive, and diverse populations of native plants are maintained or promoted as appropriate to soil type, climate, and landform. Indicators may include but are not limited to the following:

- (1) Native plant communities (flora and microbiotic crusts) are maintained or improved to ensure the proper functioning of ecological processes and continued productivity and diversity of native plant species. Where native communities exist, the conversion to exotic communities after disturbance will be minimized.
- (2) The number of native species is maintained.
- (3) Plant vigor (production, seed and seedstalk production, cover, and the like) is adequate to enable reproduction and recruitment of plants when favorable climatic events occur.
- (4) Noxious weeds are not increasing.

- (5) Adequate organic matter (litter and standing dead plant material) is present for site protection and for decomposition to replenish soil nutrients relative to site potential.

## ***Standard 5 (Seedings)***

Rangelands seeded with mixtures including predominately non-native plants are functioning to maintain lifeform diversity, production, nutrient cycling, energy flow, and the hydrologic cycle. Indicators may include but are not limited to the following:

- (1) In established seedings, the number of perennial species is not diminished over time.
- (2) Plant production, seed production, and cover are adequate to enable recruitment when favorable climatic events occur.
- (3) Noxious weeds are not increasing.
- (4) Adequate organic matter (litter and standing dead plant material) is present for site protection and for decomposition to replenish soil nutrients relative to site potential.

## ***Standard 6 (Undesirable Exotic Plant Communities)***

Until feasible, cost-effective rehabilitation treatments are developed, communities of undesirable exotic plants will meet minimum requirements of soil stability and maintenance of existing native and seeded plants. Indicators may include but are not limited to the following:

- (1) Noxious weeds are not increasing.
- (2) The number of perennial species is not diminished over time.
- (3) Plant vigor (production, seed and seedstalk production, cover, and the like) of remnant native or seeded (introduced) plants is maintained to enable reproduction and recruitment when favorable climatic or other environmental events occur.
- (4) Adequate organic matter (litter and standing dead plant material) is present for site protection and for decomposition to replenish soil nutrients relative to site potential.

## ***Standard 7 (Water Quality)***

Surface and ground water on public lands fully support, or are making significant progress toward fully supporting, designated beneficial uses described in the Idaho Water Quality Standards (IDAPA 16.01.02)

## ***Standard 8 (Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals)***

Habitats are suitable to maintain viable populations of threatened and endangered, sensitive, and other special status species.

# ***Proposed Guidelines For Livestock Grazing Management ~ Idaho***

## ***Introduction***

Guidelines direct the selection of Grazing Management Practices (GMPs) to ensure progress toward or attainment and maintenance of the standards. Grazing Management Practices are livestock management techniques. They include the manipulation of season, duration (time), and intensity of use, as well as numbers, distribution, and kind of livestock. Livestock management facilities are structures such as fences, corrals, and water developments (such as ponds, springs, pipelines, troughs) used to facilitate the application of GMPs. Livestock grazing management practices and guidelines will be consistent with the Idaho Agricultural Pollution Abatement Plan.

Grazing Management Practices and facilities are implemented locally on a pasture, allotment, or watershed basis. Grazing Management Practices will be developed through consultation, coordination, and cooperation with the BLM, permittee, other agencies, tribes, and interested publics.

These guidelines were prepared under the assumption that regulations and policies regarding grazing on public lands will be implemented and will be adhered to by the grazing permittees and agency personnel. If the regulations and policies are not followed, these guidelines will not be effective in achieving the desired rangeland health.

Anything not covered in these guidelines will be addressed by existing laws, regulations, and policies.

## ***Guidelines***

1. The BLM will identify and document within the local watershed all impacts that affect the ability to meet the standards. If a standard is not being met due to livestock grazing, then allotment management will be adjusted unless it can be demonstrated that significant progress toward the standard is being achieved. This applies to all subsequent guidelines.
2. The use of GMPs will maintain or promote significant progress toward adequate amounts of ground cover (determined on an ecological site basis) to support infiltration, maintain soil moisture storage, and stabilize soils.
3. Livestock management facilities will be located away from riparian areas wherever they conflict with achieving or maintaining riparian-wetland function.
4. GMPs maintain or promote soil conditions that support water infiltration, plant vigor, permeability rates, and minimize soil compaction appropriate to site potential.
5. Grazing Management Practices provide periodic rest during critical growth stages to allow sufficient regrowth to achieve and maintain healthy, properly functioning conditions, including good plant vigor and adequate vegetative cover, appropriate to site potential.
6. Grazing Management Practices maintain or promote sufficient residual vegetation to improve, restore, or maintain healthy riparian-wetland functions and structure for energy dissipation, sediment capture, ground water recharge, streambank stability, and wildlife habitat appropriate to site potential.
7. The development of springs, seeps, or other projects affecting water and associated resources shall be designed to protect the ecological functions, wildlife habitat, and significant cultural and historical/archaeological/paleontological values associated with the water source.

8. Grazing Management Practices maintain, promote, or progress toward appropriate stream channel and streambank morphology and functions. Adverse impacts due to livestock grazing will be addressed.
9. Grazing Management Practices maintain or promote the interaction of the hydrologic cycle, nutrient cycle, and energy flow that will support the appropriate types and amounts of soil organisms, plants, and animals appropriate to soil type, climate, and landform.
10. Apply GMPs to maintain adequate plant vigor for seed production, seed dispersal, and seedling survival of desired species relative to soil type, climate, and landform.
11. Maintain or improve water quality to meet Idaho Water Quality Standards.
12. Use GMPs developed in recovery plans, conservation agreements, and Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultations to maintain or improve habitat for federally listed threatened, endangered, and sensitive plants and animals.
13. Grazing Management Practices maintain or promote the physical and biological conditions necessary to sustain native plant populations and wildlife habitats in native plant communities.
14. On areas seeded predominantly with non-native plants, GMPs maintain or promote the physical and biological conditions to achieve healthy rangelands.
15. Native species are emphasized for rehabilitating disturbed rangelands. Evaluate whether native plants are adapted, available, and able to compete with weeds or seeded exotics.
16. Use non-native plant species for rehabilitation only in those situations where:
  - a. Native species are not readily available in sufficient quantities;
  - b. Native plant species cannot maintain or achieve the standards; or
  - c. Where non-native plant species provide for management and protection of native range lands.

Include a diversity of appropriate grasses, forbs, and shrubs in rehabilitation efforts.
17. On burned areas, allow natural regeneration when it is determined that populations of native perennial shrubs, grasses, and forbs are sufficient to revegetate the site. Rest burned or rehabilitated areas to allow recovery or establishment of perennial plant species.
18. Carefully consider the effects of new management facilities (for example, water developments, fences) on healthy and properly functioning rangelands prior to implementation.
19. Use GMPs, where feasible, for wildfire control and to reduce the spread of target undesirable plants (for example, cheatgrass, medusahead wildrye, and noxious weeds) while enhancing vigor and abundance of desirable native or seeded species.
20. Encourage permittees to participate in watershed advisory groups as they are formed throughout the state.
21. Employ GMPs that promote natural forest regeneration and protect reforestation projects until The Idaho Forest Practices Act (IDAPA 20.02.01.050) requirements for timber stand replacement are met.
22. Design management fences to minimize adverse impacts, such as habitat fragmentation, to maintain habitat integrity and connectivity for native plants and animals.
23. Non-native animal habitat may be considered when consistent with rangeland health.

