

APPENDIX A
IDAHO STANDARDS FOR
RANGELAND HEALTH AND GUIDELINES
FOR LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

IDAHO STANDARDS FOR RANGELAND HEALTH AND GUIDELINES FOR LIVESTOCK GRAZING MANAGEMENT

The Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health are used as BLM's rangeland management goals. Rangelands should meet the Standards for Rangeland Health or be making significant progress toward meeting the standards to provide for proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow. Appropriate to soil type, climate, and landform, indicators are a list of typical physical and biological factors and processes that can be measured or observed (e.g., photographic monitoring). They can be used in combination to provide information necessary to determine the health and condition of the rangelands. The eight Standards for Rangeland Health, and their indicators, are listed below.

Standard 1 – Watersheds

Watersheds provide for the proper infiltration, retention, and release of water appropriate to soil type, vegetation, climate, and landform to provide for proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow. 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 are 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 to provide for proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow. 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 is appropriate for the site.
4. Noxious weeds are not increasing.

Standard 3 – Stream Channel/Floodplain

Stream channels and floodplains are properly functioning relative to the geomorphology (e.g., gradient, size, shape, roughness, confinement, and sinuosity) and climate to provide for proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow. 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 on the floodplain due to human activities.
5. Streambanks are within an appropriate range of stability according to site potential.
6. Noxious weeds are not increasing.

Standard 4 – Native Plant Communities

Healthy, productive, and diverse native animal habitat and populations of native plants are maintained or promoted as appropriate to soil type, climate, and landform to provide for proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow. 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.
2. The diversity of native species is maintained.
3. Plant vigor (total plant production, seed and seedstalk production, cover, etc.) is adequate to enable reproduction and recruitment of plants when favorable climatic events occur.
4. Noxious weeds are not increasing.
5. Adequate litter and standing dead plant material are 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 life form diversity, production, native animal habitat, nutrient cycling, energy flow, and the hydrologic cycle. Indicators may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. In established seedings, the diversity of perennial species is not diminishing 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 litter and standing dead plant material are present for site protection and for decomposition to replenish soil nutrients relative to site potential.

Standard 6 – Exotic Plant Communities, other than Seedings

Exotic plant communities, other than seedings, will meet minimum requirements of soil stability and maintenance of existing native and seeded plants. These communities will be rehabilitated to perennial communities when feasible cost effective methods are developed. Indicators may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Noxious weeds are not increasing.
2. The number of perennial species is not diminishing over time.
3. Plant vigor (production, seed and seedstalk production, cover, etc.) of remnant native or seeded (introduced) plants is maintained to enable reproduction and recruitment when

Standard 7 – Water Quality

Surface and ground water on public lands comply with the Idaho Water Quality Standards. Indicators may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Physical, chemical, and biologic parameters described in the Idaho Water Quality Standards.

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. Indicators may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Parameters described in the Idaho Water Quality Standards.
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.
4. 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.
5. The diversity of native species is maintained.
6. The amount and distribution of ground cover, including litter, for identified ecological site(s) or soil-plant associations are appropriate for site stability.
7. Noxious weeds are not increasing.

Standards and guidelines for rangeland health assessments (S&Gs) are considered a valuable indicator of overall rangeland health, which affects aquatic environments. Currently S&G assessments have been completed on 152 allotments, or 44% of the FRFO planning area. Of the completed allotments, nearly half (46%) are meeting or making significant progress towards meeting all of the BLM standards for rangeland health, whereas the remaining allotments (54%) are not meeting standards. Livestock have been identified as a significant factor in 68 of the 82 allotments not meeting rangeland health standards.

According to monitoring conducted since the previous management plans, the majority of rangelands within the FRFO planning area (56%) are in a static ecological trend. Further, there is nearly the same amount of rangeland in an upward trend (18%) compared to a downward trend (14%). The remaining 12% has an undetermined trend.