

# Standards of Public Land Health

## Evaluation of 65548 UPPER CAPROCK 15 Allotment

### [ 09/30/2010 ]

The Roswell Field Office conducted rangeland health assessments at 1 study site within 65548 UPPER CAPROCK 15. The assessments looked at the Soil/Site Stability, Hydrologic Function and Biotic Integrity indicators within the vicinity of each study site. Existing monitoring data was incorporated into and in support of the field assessment. The summary of each assessment is attached and shown in the following table.

Study Area or Assessment Area	UPLAND			BIOTIC			RIPARIAN		
	Meets	Monitor an Indicator	Does Not Meet	Meets	Monitor an Indicator	Does Not Meet	Meets	Monitor an Indicator	Does Not Meet
65548-WS133-C066	X			X			N/A		

Twenty-two (22) indicators for Rangeland Health were evaluated for public land on the Upper Caprock 15 allotment, #65548. Ten of these assessed soil site stability, 11 hydrologic functions and 13 assessed biotic integrity. These qualitative assessments in conjunction with quantitative information gathered from previous data collected at the trend study plot location within the allotment was utilized to make rangeland health determinations. Quantitative evaluations are performed by the Roswell Field Office interdisciplinary teams, which include some or all of the following; ground and vegetative cover and composition, production, frequency and ecological condition. The collections which were initiated in the late 1970's/early 1980's, are scheduled and conducted approximately every 5 to 10 years. This allotment is in the "C" (Custodial) category.

This allotment contains 320 acres of public land. The study is located on a Loamy HP-3 ecological site. A majority of the indicators were rated as either "None to Slight" or "Slight to Moderate" degree of departure from the ecological site description. Two were rated as "Moderate" – Litter and Invasive Plants, both due to cholla, snakeweed and mesquite. The team noted that the plants appeared to be evenly distributed over the allotment, were older plants and did not note of new or young plants. The interdisciplinary team estimated the mesquite invasion on the public land production on this location to be at the level that would benefit from a vegetation manipulation project especially when combined with treatment of the adjacent private and state lands. This would require the coordination with the private land owner and the NM State Land office. Treatment of the public land alone would not be economically feasible.

There are no riparian areas on the public land within this allotment.

**Recommendations:** With the majority of the indicators falling in the None to Slight category, this allotment is rated as "Meeting" the standards for Rangeland Health. Continue the rangeland monitoring studies to insure proper stocking rates are maintained and that the perennial grass cover and good plant composition remains. Again, implementation of a vegetation treatment, done in conjunction with the private lands, the NM State land office and the NRCS may serve to be beneficial.

## RFOs Upland and Biotic Standard Assessment Summary Worksheet

### SITE 65548-WS133-C066

Legal Land Desc	SWSW 9 0150S 0310E Meridian 23	Acreage	320
Ecosite	077CY053NM LOAMY HP-3	Photo Taken	Y
Watershed	12080003010 MONUMENT		
Observers	TRAUTNER & BAGGAO	Observation Date	09/30/2010
County Soil Survey	NM666 CHAVES SOUTH	Soil Var/Taxad	
Soil Map Unit	Kt	Soil Taxon Name	KIMBROUGH
Texture Class	NM666 L	Soil Phase	KIMBROUGH- STEGALL-SLAUGHT
Texture Modifier	NM666 GRAVELLY FINE SAND		
Observed Avg Annual Precipitation		Observed Avg Growing Season Precipitation	
NOAA Annual Precipitation		NOAA Growing Season Precipitation	
NOAA Avg Annual Precipitation		NOAA Avg Growing Season Precipitation	
Disturbances and Animal Use:	Oil & gas development near this location, light use by livestock.		

### Part 2. Attributes and Indicators

Attribute	Indicators	Departure from Ecological Site Description/Ecological Reference Areas				
		Extreme	Moderate to Extreme	Moderate	Slight to Moderate	None to Slight
S H	Rills					X
Comments:						
S H	Water Flow Patterns					X
Comments:						
S H	Pedestals and/or Terracettes					X
Comments:						
S H	Bare Ground					X
Comments:						
S H	Gullies					X

Comments:						
S	Wind-scoured, Blowouts, and/or Deposition Areas					X
Comments:						
H	Litter Movement					X
Comments:						
S H B	Soil Surface Resistance to Erosion					X
Comments:						
S H B	Soil Surface Loss or Degradation					X
Comments:						
H	Plant Community Composition and Distribution Relative to Infiltration and Runoff				X	
Comments:	Minor changes in composition					
S H B	Compaction Layer					X
Comments:						
B	Functional/Structural Groups				X	
Comments:	Slightly reduced					
B	Plant Mortality/Decadence					X
Comments:						
H B	Litter Amount			X		
Comments:	Ecological site description - 30%, this location is at the bottom end of that					
B	Annual Production				X	
Comments:						
B	Invasive Plants			X		
Comments:	Invasive plants are scattered through out this area - cholla, snakeweed and mesquite.					
B	Reproductive Capability of Perennial Plants					X
Comments:						
S	Physical/Chemical/Biological Crusts					X
Comments:	Physical crusts present					
B	Wildlife Habitat				X	
Comments:						
B	Wildlife Populations				X	
Comments:						
B	Special Status Species Habitat					

Comments:	Not applicable					
B	Special Status Species Populations					
Comments:	Not applicable					

### Part 3. Summary

A. Indicator Summary - Each of the indicators are associated with one or more of the attributes below. An indicator is placed in a category (columns) above and summed for each of the Standard Attributes.

Standard Attribute		Extreme	Moderate to Extreme	Moderate	Slight to Moderate	None to Slight
S	Soil	0	0	0	0	10
H	Hydrologic	0	0	1	1	9
B	Biotic	0	0	2	4	5

B. Attribute Summary. In this table, the Extreme and Extreme to Moderate columns in the table above are merged for the *Does not Meet* column, Moderate becomes *May Need More Info*, and Slight to Moderate and None to Slight merge to form the *Meets* columns. Values from the table are summarized below. Space is provided for rationale of the determination. This space should most certainly be used when the determination by the ID team conflicts with the summarized values. Provide the sources of information that lead to the determination. X out the appropriate box for each attribute to denote final agreed upon determination by the ID team.

Attribute	Rationale	Does Not Meet	May Need More Info	Meets
Soil		0	0	10
Hydrologic		0	1	10
Biotic		0	2	9

Site Notes: Vegetation species at this location: side oats grama, blue grama, three-awn, hairy grama, little bluestem, yucca, prickly pear cactus - all key species are present. Also present are cholla, snakeweed and mesquite - these plants appear to be well established and are older plants.

No recommendations as to the management, there is very little BLM or public land within the allotment (320 acres). Review this area periodically to map and considered if mandated for a vegetation treatment if warranted.

# **Determination of Public Land (Rangeland) Health for 65548 UPPER CAPROCK 15**

The Record of Decision (ROD) for the New Mexico Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (dated January 2001) adopted three Standards for Public Land Health. These are (1) Upland Sites Standard, (2) Biotic Communities, including native, Threatened, Endangered and Special Status Species Standard and (3) Riparian Sites Standard.

The ROD also established a process for the BLM Field Offices for implementation. Through a public participation process, the Roswell Field Office developed and adopted indicators to use in conjunction with existing monitoring data to assess these standards.

Field assessment worksheets and other available data that evaluate the local indicators were completed for this allotment. Based on these assessments, it is my determination that public land within the Upper Caprock 15, Allotment #65548, meets the (1) Upland Sites Standard and (2) Biotic Communities, including native, Threatened, Endangered and Special Status Species Standard. There are no public land Riparian areas on this allotment, therefore this standard was not addressed.

/s/ J. Howard Parman  
Assistant Field Manager

03/11/2011  
Date