

Rangelands/Grazing

Rangelands

Most of the public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) east of the Cascade Mountains are rangelands. These arid and semiarid lands stretch from the dry shrub steppe of southeast Washington to the glaciated highlands of the Okanogan country in northern Washington. The diverse climates, terrains, soils, and plants of the region call for an approach to land management that is respectful of the characteristics of individual sites and incorporates those characteristics into management decisions.

In managing rangeland ecosystems, the BLM conducts monitoring and rangeland health assessments to assess watershed function, ecological processes, water quality and habitats for native and threatened and endangered species.

Management of these lands is focused on maintaining healthy landscapes where they currently exist and restoring rangeland health where necessary.

Treatments like prescribed burning, rehabilitation of burned lands, fencing, water developments, weed control and implementing planned grazing systems are aimed at land health restoration and maintenance.

Livestock Grazing

Much of the BLM-administered rangelands are grazed by livestock under a system of leases in which ranchers pay grazing fees for the privilege of use. The Federal grazing fee, which applies to Federal lands in 16 Western states on public lands managed by the BLM and the U.S. Forest Service, is adjusted annually and is calculated by using a formula originally set by Congress in the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978.

In order to qualify for a BLM grazing lease, one must be a U.S. citizen or have a validly licensed business and own or control private property known as base property to which grazing privileges can be attached.

The BLM administers livestock grazing on 372 allotments in 17 counties in eastern Washington. The majority of the allotments are small since the public lands administered by the BLM are scattered across the landscape. Most of the allotments (82 percent) contain less than 1,000 acres. These public lands are usually fenced in with larger tracts of private lands and are an integral part of many ranching operations.

Management of the larger blocks of public lands, many of which are the result of the Spokane Districts consolidation efforts, is more intensive. Management plans are developed for larger allotments to meet multiple resource objectives for watershed function, ecological processes, water quality, habitats for native and threatened and endangered species and cultural and recreational resources.

BLM Grazing Allotments in Washington

County	# of Allotments	Acres	AUMs
ADAMS	3	7906	783
ASOTIN	5	360	80
BENTON	11	8169	578
CHELAN	20	12590	1281
COLUMBIA	1	200	27
DOUGLAS	58	44765	5371
FERRY	23	7118	958
FRANKLIN	12	14363	1672
GRANT	28	40829	4371
KITTITAS	12	10808	1032
KLICKITAT	24	13405	1620
LINCOLN	48	66629	6982
OKANOGAN	99	48046	7288
SPOKANE	2	1505	204
STEVENS	16	5062	687
WHITMAN	6	8217	1313
YAKIMA	17	24555	2890
TOTAL		314526	37137