

## Livestock Grazing Plan Amendment EIS

# FACT SHEET: Rangeland and Rangeland Management

Rangeland is land on which the native vegetation consists predominantly of grasses, grass-like plants, forbs, or shrubs. Rangeland includes lands revegetated naturally or artificially to provide a non-crop plant cover and may consist of natural grasslands, savannahs, shrublands, moist deserts, tundra, alpine communities, coastal marshes, and wet meadows.

The BLM authorizes and administers livestock grazing on public lands under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield and manages rangelands to adhere to the Fundamentals of Rangeland Health (see right). The following policies and guidelines ensure compliance with the Fundamentals of Rangeland Health:

- BLM Handbook 4180, Rangeland Health Standards
- Utah BLM's Standards for Rangeland Health
- Utah BLM's Guidelines for Grazing Management



### FUNDAMENTALS OF RANGELAND HEALTH

The BLM has identified four fundamentals of rangeland health (codified in 43 Code of Federal Regulations 4180.1) that provide the basis for the development and implementation of the standards for rangeland health and guidelines for livestock grazing management. The fundamentals are as follows:

- a) Watersheds are in, or are making significant progress toward, properly functioning physical condition, including their upland, riparian-wetland, and aquatic components; soil and plant conditions support infiltration, soil moisture storage, and the release of water that are in balance with climate and landform and maintain or improve water quality, water quantity, and timing and duration of flow.
- b) Ecological processes, including the hydrologic cycle, nutrient cycle, and energy flow, are maintained, or there is significant progress toward their attainment, in order to support healthy biotic populations and communities.
- c) Water quality complies with state water quality standards and achieves, or is making significant progress toward achieving, established BLM management objectives, such as meeting wildlife needs.
- d) Habitats are, or are making significant progress toward being, restored or maintained for federal threatened and endangered species, federal proposed or candidate threatened and endangered species, and other special status species.

*The BLM is an agency in the US Department of the Interior that manages approximately a quarter billion acres – more than any other Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. Approximately 27 million acres of BLM administered lands make up the collection of National Conservation Lands, also known as the National Landscape Conservation System. These include BLM National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas, and National Scenic and Historic Trails. The mission of the National Conservation Lands is to conserve, protect, and restore these nationally significant landscapes that are recognized for their outstanding cultural, ecological,*

**NATIONAL  
CONSERVATION  
LANDS**



# Rangeland and Rangeland Health (*continued*)



## RANGELAND HEALTH ASSESSMENTS

Rangeland health is a measure of how well the integrity of the soil and ecological processes of rangeland ecosystems are being sustained. Rangeland health exists when ecological processes are functioning properly to maintain the structure, organization, and biological activity of the system over time.

A three-step process is used to determine whether rangeland health standards are being met on BLM-administered lands:

1. **Assessment:** An assessment is the estimation or judgment of the status of ecosystem structures, functions, or processes within a specified geographic area (preferably a watershed or a group of contiguous watersheds) at a specific time. An assessment is conducted by gathering, synthesizing, and interpreting information from observations or data from inventories and monitoring. An assessment characterizes the status of resource conditions, including soil health, riparian and wetlands, desired wildlife species, and water quality, so that the status can be evaluated relative to land health standards. An assessment sets the stage for an evaluation.
2. **Evaluation:** An evaluation is conducted to arrive at two outcomes. First, an evaluation documents the analysis and interpretation of the findings resulting from the assessment to evaluate the degree of achievement of Utah's Standards for Rangeland Health. Second, an evaluation documents the analysis and interpretation of information—either observations or data from inventories and monitoring—on the causal factors for not achieving a land health standard. An evaluation of the causal factors provides the foundation for a determination.
3. **Determination:** A document recording the authorized officer's finding that existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use on public lands either are or are not significant factors in failing to achieve the standards and conform with the guidelines in a specified geographic area.

Where assessment and evaluation information indicates that standards for rangeland health and guidelines for livestock grazing management are not being met on BLM-administered lands, and a determination has been made that livestock are the main factor, changes/modifications to livestock grazing (e.g., changing season of use, implementing grazing management systems, or reducing livestock numbers) are made through the permit renewal process or another decision process.



For more information, please visit the GSENM Livestock Grazing Plan Amendment Webpage: <http://blm.gov/pgld>

**Please submit your comments by  
January 13, 2013.**

You can email, fax, or mail your comments.

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Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment, including personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.