

USING AIM DATA TO INFORM A GRAZING PERMIT RENEWAL

Curtis Spring Allotment



Background

The Elko, NV field office used AIM data to inform evaluation of land health standard attainment, as progress towards the renewal of a grazing permit on the Curtis Spring allotment.

Management objectives

Objectives are tied to Nevada standards for rangeland health:

Standard 1, Upland sites: Upland soils exhibit infiltration and permeability rates that are

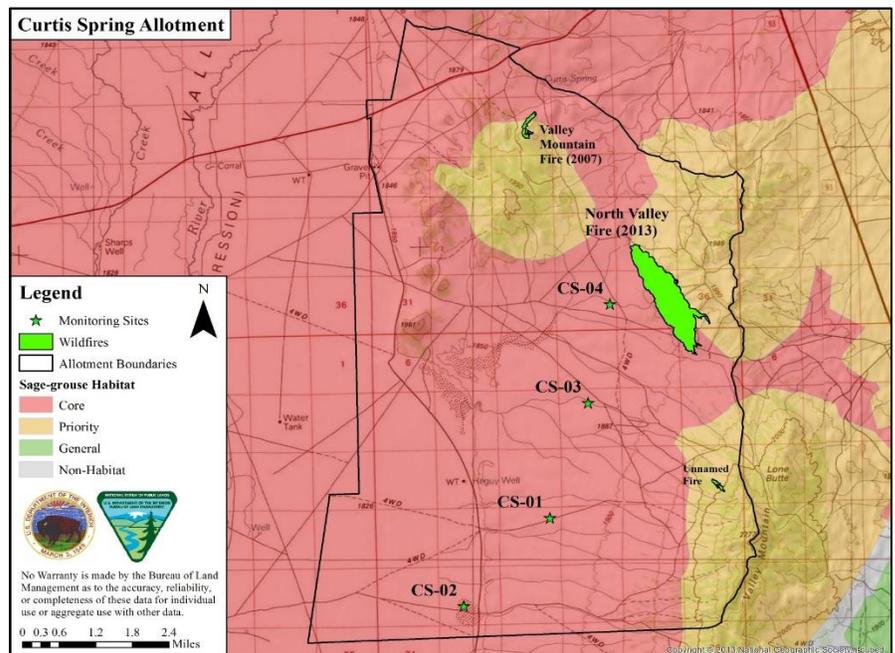
appropriate to soil type, climate and landform.

Standard 3, Habitat: Habitats exhibit a healthy, productive, and diverse population of native and/or desirable plant species, appropriate to the site characteristics, to provide suitable feed, water, cover and living space for animal species and maintain ecological processes. Habitat conditions meet life cycle requirements of threatened and endangered species.

Implementation

Collected AIM terrestrial data as part of a multiscale monitoring effort.

- Two AIM sites (CS-03 and CS-04) were available in the allotment as a part of a broader monitoring effort.
- Two key area sites (CS-01 and CS-02) were established in 1991.
- Additional information available included allotment history, livestock actual use, photographs and utilization.



Both AIM plot and key area data were compared against benchmarks from Ecological Site Descriptions to assess standard attainment across a range of indicators (Figure 1).

Category		CS-03	CS-04
Foliar Cover	Black sagebrush	14.0	18.0
	Wyoming big sage	8.0	14.0
	Yellow rabbitbrush	2.0	--
	Winterfat	0.7	--
	Sandburg bluegrass	--	0.7
Total		24.7	32.7
ESD Estimated		10-20	15-20

Figure 1. *Example of data used for permit renewal. Foliar cover (%) at AIM plots CS-03 and CS-04. The "ESD Estimated" category shows the range in live cover values estimated in the Ecological Site Description (ESD), which served as a benchmark. Data were collected in June 2013.*

Take Home Message

- **AIM data can be an important part of the information used to determine attainment of land health standards.** In fact, the Elko District is putting AIM at the forefront of Land Health Assessments.
- The field office depends on AIM data to make reasoned, defensible decisions relative to livestock permit renewals and is planning to use it as a primary data source for determining land health for future permit renewals.
- In most cases, AIM will be combined with other available data, such as use data.

Figure 2. *Assessment, Inventory, and Monitoring (AIM) site CS-04, transects A) 1, B) 2, and C) 3. Photos were taken on 11 June 2013.*

Results and Management Implications

- Based on AIM and other data, sites were meeting upland standards.
- The habitat standard was not being met due to an overall lack of grasses and forbs.
- The field office determined that livestock was a contributing factor to non-attainment of standards due to exceedance of utilization objectives.

