



**Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument  
 Resource Management Plan Revision**

**FACT SHEET: Livestock Grazing and Rangeland Health**

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**Livestock Grazing**

The Billings Field Office is responsible for administering livestock on BLM-administered surface across the planning area. These BLM-administered lands are usually intermingled with private and state lands, which are grazed as one unit. Grazing allotments range in size from 21 acres to 34,174 acres with the average allotment size being approximately 3,675 acres.

The Billings Field Office administers 370 grazing allotments on approximately 387,057 acres of BLM administered surface and 62,619 animal unit months (AUMs) with 7,746 AUMs in suspension. There are 310 grazing authorizations for these allotments. Three hundred of the authorizations are for cattle grazing, seven authorizations are for horse/burro grazing, and three authorizations are for sheep grazing. Total permitted numbers change frequently due to conversions of the class of livestock and changes in allotment or livestock management.

This table summarizes the acres available, permitted, and closed to livestock grazing

<b>Livestock Grazing</b>				
	<b>Alternative A (No Action)</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D (Preferred)</b>
<b>Total acres available to livestock grazing</b>	434,154 acres			
<b>Isolated parcels not included within grazing allotments</b>	9,522 acres			
<b>Total acres permitted for livestock grazing</b>	387,057 acres	386,092 acres	386,822 acres	387,057 acres
<b>Total acres closed to permitted livestock use for the life of the plan</b>	37,408 acres	38,373 acres	28,622 acres	28,387 acres
<b>Total acres available for prescriptive use of livestock grazing</b>	0	0	9,021 acres	

## **Rangeland Health**

In 1997, the Montana/Dakotas BLM State Director approved the *Montana/Dakotas Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management* (Standards). BLM lands in the Billings Field Office must conform to the Miles City Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management. (Note: The BiFO was included in the Miles City District when the standards and guidelines were developed in 1997.) The Miles City Standards for Rangeland Health are described below:

- Standard 1: Uplands are in Proper Functioning Condition (PFC)
- Standard 2: Riparian areas and wetlands are in PFC
- Standard 3: Water Quality meets Montana State standards
- Standard 4: Air quality meets Montana State standards
- Standard 5: Habitats are provided for healthy, productive, and diverse native plant and animal populations and communities. Habitats are improved or maintained for special status species (federally threatened, endangered, candidate, or Montana species of special concern as defined in BLM Manual 6840, Special Status Species Management).

If Standards for Rangeland Health are not met and livestock grazing is determined to be the causal factor, regulation directs the authorized officer to implement actions (e.g., permit modifications, range improvements) prior to the next grazing season that will move the allotment towards meeting the Standards for Rangeland Health (43 CFR 4180). Permit modifications include changing season of use, changing type of livestock, and addressing carrying capacity.

## **Rangeland Conditions in the Billings Field Office**

- 83% of the allotments assessed (309,658 acres) meet the Standards for Rangeland Health
- 9.1% of the allotments assessed (41,153 acres) are making significant progress toward meeting the Standards for Rangeland Health
- 11 allotments (3,835 acres) are not meeting Standards for Rangeland Health or are not making significant progress towards meeting these Standards (with livestock having been determined as the causal factor for 9 of the allotments).
  - 8 allotments (3,675 acres)– changes have been implemented
  - 2 allotments (80 acres) – not meeting Standards due to causes other than livestock grazing
  - 1 allotment (80 acres) – not meeting Standards and no changes have been made (expired grazing permit)
- 16 allotments (6,835 acres) - no assessment has yet been completed

## **Rangeland Monitoring**

The BLM, Billings Field Office conducts rangeland monitoring to ensure compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health (or progress toward meeting these standards) or allotment management plan objectives. If monitoring indicates that progress is occurring, or standards and objectives are being met, current livestock management continues. However, if monitoring data demonstrate that livestock use on an allotment no longer meets rangeland health standards, management adjustments are required to be made prior to the start of the next grazing season. Adjustments are made by agreement or decision through consultation, cooperation, and coordination with permittees and the interested public in accordance with legislation, regulation, and policy.