



## FACT SHEET

# BLM-MONTANA/DAKOTAS

HI LINE DISTRICT • 1101 15TH ST NORTH • GREAT FALLS, MONTANA 59403 • WWW.BLM.GOV/MT

## HiLine Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP)

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

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### Livestock Grazing

Ranching is an important part of the history, culture, and economy of the planning area. Grazing is allowed on BLM lands under the Taylor Grazing Act and Federal Land Policy & Management Act (FLPMA) for the purpose of fostering economic development for private ranchers and ranching communities by providing ranchers access to additional forage.

Grazing allotments typically contain a combination of federal, state, and private lands and range in size from approximately 8 acres to 154,970 acres, with the average allotment size being approximately 3,150 acres. The HiLine District administers 763 grazing authorizations (permits and leases), permitting approximately 386,600 Animal Unit Months (AUMs) of livestock forage. At present, approximately 28,900 acres of BLM land are closed to grazing.

### Rangeland Health

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

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

All 969 allotments in the planning area have been assessed for rangeland health standards. Nine hundred and seven allotments are meeting rangeland health standards and 62 allotments were found to not be meeting one or more standards. In 27 of the allotments not meeting rangeland

health standards, past or present livestock uses were determined to be contributing factors. It is important to note that only specific areas (e.g., 15% or less of the allotment) within the 27 allotments were failing to meet at least one rangeland health standard, and in all cases corrective actions have been taken.

## **Rangeland Monitoring**

The BLM conducts rangeland monitoring to ensure compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health (or progress toward 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.



Cattle on Havre Field Office's Modic Allotment - Photo by Abby Hall