APPENDIX B

NEW MEXICO STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR LIVESTOCK GRAZING MANAGEMENT

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The 1986 *White Sands Resource Management Plan* (RMP) and the 1993 *Mimbres RMPs* were amended by the *New Mexico Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management Statewide RMP Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement* (*New Mexico Standards and Guidelines*). As a result of the amendment, the *New Mexico Standards and Guidelines* were incorporated into the *White Sands RMP* and *Mimbres RMPs* and would be carried forward in *TriCounty RMPs/Environmental Impact Statement.*

The standards of land health are expressions of physical and biological condition or degree of function required for healthy, sustainable land, and defines the minimum resource conditions that must be achieved. The three standards that apply to the Planning Area are as follows:

1. Upland Sites Standard

Upland ecological sites are in a productive and sustainable condition within the capability of the site. Upland soils are stabilized and exhibit infiltration and permeability rates that are appropriate for the soil type, climate, and landform. The kind, amount, and/or pattern of vegetation provide protection on a given site to minimize erosion and assist in meeting State and Tribal water quality standards.

Indicators for this standard may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Soils are stabilized by appropriate amounts of standing live vegetation, protective litter, and/or rock cover, consistent with the capability of the ecological site.
- Erosion is indicated by flow patterns characteristic of surface litter soil movement, gullies and rills, and plant pedestalling.
- Satisfactory plant protection is indicated by the amount and distribution of desired species necessary to prevent accelerated erosion.

2. Biotic Communities Standard (including native, threatened, endangered, and special status species)

Ecological processes such as hydrologic cycle, nutrient cycle, and energy flow support productive and diverse native biotic communities, including special status, threatened, and endangered species appropriate to site and species. The goals for desired plant communities maintain and conserve productive and diverse populations of plants and animals, which sustain ecological functions and processes.

Indicators for this standard may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Plant and animal populations are productive, resilient, diverse, and sustainable, commensurate with the capability of the ecological site.
- Landscapes are composed of communities in a variety of successional stages and patterns.
- Diversity and composition of communities are indicated by the kinds and amount of species.

- Endangered and special status species are secure and recovering, with the goal of delisting and ensuring that additional species need not be listed in New Mexico.

3. Riparian Sites Standard

Riparian areas are in a productive, properly functioning, and sustainable condition, within the capability of each site. Adequate vegetation of diverse age and composition is present to withstand high stream flow, capture sediment, provide for groundwater recharge, provide habitat, and assist in meeting State and Tribal water quality standards.

Indicators for this standard may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Stream channel morphology and stability as determined by gradient, width/depth ratio, cannel roughness, and sinuosity.
- Stream bank stability as determined by degree of shearing and sloughing and by vegetative cover on the bank.
- Appropriate riparian vegetation includes a mix of communities of species with a range of age, density, and growth form.

When an evaluation determines that one or more standards are not being met, then the causal factor or factors are determined. As stated in the *Record of Decision for the Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management*:

> When an evaluation concludes that an area does not meet one or more standard(s), the Bureau of Land Management will determine the causal factor(s) in not meeting the standard(s). When current livestock grazing practices or levels of grazing use are determined to be significant factors, the Bureau of Land Management authorized officer shall take appropriate action as soon as practical, but no later than the next grazing year (43 Code of Federal Regulations Section 4180.2 (c)).

Guidelines for livestock grazing were established to be implemented when an area is not meeting the standard or standards and the causal factor is determined to livestock grazing practices or levels of grazing use. Guidelines are tools such as grazing systems, vegetative treatments, or range improvement projects designed to assist in grazing management. Implementation of guidelines is done in consultation, cooperation, and coordination with the grazing permittee/leasee, involved landowners, and interested public.

Guidelines pertain to livestock grazing only if the causal factor is determined to be another activity; there are no established guidelines to be implemented. When other activities appear to be the reason the standard was not met, management actions to address that activity are implemented in a manner consistent with the policy and regulations governing that activity.

The processes for assessing the standards are evaluated at the watershed level and are on an ongoing basis. Assessments are completed by using existing data and *Indicators of Rangeland Health* (TR 1734-6). The assessment characterizes the status of the ecological processes (water cycle, energy flow, and nutrient cycle) by interpreting attributes such as soil/site stability, hydrologic function, and biotic integrity in relation to the ecological site.