

## Standards of Public Land Health

### Evaluation of 63083 MILAGRO SPRING Allotment

[ 12/16/2009 ]

The ROSWELL Field Office conducted rangeland health assessments at 1 study site within 63083 MILAGRO SPRING. The assessments looked at the Soil/Site Stability, Hydrologic Function and Biotic Integrity indicators within the vicinity of each study site. Existing monitoring data was incorporated into and in support of the field assessment. The summary of each assessment is attached and shown in the following table.

Study Area or Assessment Area	UPLAND			BIOTIC			RIPARIAN		
	Meets	Monitor an Indicator	Does Not Meet	Meets	Monitor an Indicator	Does Not Meet	Meets	Monitor an Indicator	Does Not Meet
63083-IDSU-A127 (*)	X			X			N/A		

The (\*) indicates that the assessment had one or more indicator(s) rated moderate/extreme or extreme. These indicators are:

- Invasive Plants

These indicators by themselves are not enough to rate the site as not meeting a standard but may warrant future monitoring.

Twenty-two (22) indicators for Rangeland Health were evaluated for public land on the Milagro Spring allotment, 63083. Ten of these assessed soil site stability, 11 hydrologic functions and 13 assessed biotic integrity. These qualitative assessments in conjunction with quantitative information gathered from previous data collected at the trend study plot location within the allotment was utilized to make rangeland health determinations. Quantitative evaluations are performed by the Roswell Field Office interdisciplinary teams, which include some or all of the following: ground and vegetative cover and composition, production, frequency and ecological condition. The collections which were initiated in the late 1970's/early 1980's, are scheduled and conducted approximately every 5 years. This allotment is in the "C" (Custodial) category.

This allotment contains 80 acres of public land. The study is located on a Gyp Upland SD-3 ecological site. One of the indicators, Invasive Plants, was rated at a "Moderate to Extreme" degree of departure from the ecological site description. This was due to the invasion and heavy presence of creosote, with mesquite common in draw bottoms. Four other indicators were rated as "Moderate" departure from the ecological site description, also due to the influence of creosote and mesquite. All of the other indicators fell either in the "None to Slight" or "Slight to Moderate" category. There are no riparian areas on the public land in this allotment.

**Recommendations:** With the majority of the indicators falling in the “None to Slight” or “Slight to Moderate” category, this allotment is rated as “Meeting” the standard for Rangeland Health. Continue the rangeland monitoring studies to insure proper stocking rates are maintained and that the perennial grass cover and good plant composition in keeping with the ecological site description remains. Due to the heavy presence of creosote and mesquite, evaluate the area for the potential for brush control. As there is only a small amount of public land on this allotment, work with other agencies such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service to complete a land treatment if warranted.

## RFOs Upland and Biotic Standard Assessment Summary Worksheet

### SITE 63083-IDSU-A127

Legal Land Desc	SESE 30 0090S 0090E Meridian 23	Acreage	80
Ecosite	042CY006NM GYP UPLAND SD-3	Photo Taken	Y
Watershed	13050003060 COTTONWOOD		
Observers	ARNOLD & TRAUTNER	Observation Date	12/16/2009
County Soil Survey	NM632 LINCOLN	Soil Var/Taxad	
Soil Map Unit	034	Soil Taxon Name	MALARGO
Texture Class	NM632 L	Soil Phase	MALARGO- BLUEPOINT
Texture Modifier	NM632 LOAM,LOAMY FINE SA		
Observed Avg Annual Precipitation		Observed Avg Growing Season Precipitation	
NOAA Annual Precipitation		NOAA Growing Season Precipitation	
NOAA Avg Annual Precipitation		NOAA Avg Growing Season Precipitation	
Disturbances and Animal Use:	Very light Animal use, close to the houses and apple orchard.		

### Part 2. Attributes and Indicators

Attribute	Indicators	Departure from Ecological Site Description/Ecological Reference Areas				
		Extreme	Moderate to Extreme	Moderate	Slight to Moderate	None to Slight
S H	Rills				X	
Comments:						
S H	Water Flow Patterns			X		
Comments:	Spring and other runoff present from slopes of hills					
S H	Pedestals and/or Terracettes				X	
Comments:	Some pedestalling.					

S H	Bare Ground					X
Comments:	very rocky					
S H	Gullies			X		
Comments:	some gullies forming					
S	Wind-scoured, Blowouts, and/or Deposition Areas					X
Comments:						
H	Litter Movement					X
Comments:	litter is staying where it fell					
S H B	Soil Surface Resistance to Erosion				X	
Comments:	2 for interspaces, higher under canopy					
S H B	Soil Surface Loss or Degradation				X	
Comments:	Gravel is holding soil in place where there is no vegetation.					
H	Plant Community Composition and Distribution Relative to Infiltration and Runoff				X	
Comments:	Fewer grasses than desired.					
S H B	Compaction Layer					X
Comments:	very little compaction.					
B	Functional/Structural Groups			X		
Comments:	40% shrubs.					
B	Plant Mortality/Decadence					X
Comments:						
H B	Litter Amount			X		
Comments:	approximately 20%					
B	Annual Production					
Comments:						
B	Invasive Plants		X			
Comments:	Creosote common, mesquite is scattered in bottoms.					
B	Reproductive Capability of Perennial Plants				X	
Comments:	Creosote may be causing problems.					
S	Physical/Chemical/Biological Crusts				X	
Comments:						

B	Wildlife Habitat				X	
Comments:	Good draws, good cover with forbs available.					
B	Wildlife Populations				X	
Comments:	None seen, but wildlife signs were noted.					
B	Special Status Species Habitat					X
Comments:						
B	Special Status Species Populations					X
Comments:						

### Part 3. Summary

A. Indicator Summary - Each of the indicators are associated with one or more of the attributes below. An indicator is placed in a category (columns) above and summed for each of the Standard Attributes.

Standard Attribute		Extreme	Moderate to Extreme	Moderate	Slight to Moderate	None to Slight
S	Soil	0	0	2	5	3
H	Hydrologic	0	0	3	5	3
B	Biotic	0	1	2	5	4

B. Attribute Summary. In this table, the Extreme and Extreme to Moderate columns in the table above are merged for the *Does not Meet* column, Moderate becomes *May Need More Info*, and Slight to Moderate and None to Slight merge to form the *Meets* columns. Values from the table are summarized below. Space is provided for rationale of the determination. This space should most certainly be used when the determination by the ID team conflicts with the summarized values. Provide the sources of information that lead to the determination. X out the appropriate box for each attribute to denote final agreed upon determination by the ID team.

Attribute	Rationale	Does Not Meet	May Need More Info	Meets
Soil		0	2	8
Hydrologic		0	3	8
Biotic		1	2	9

Site Notes: Creosote, yucca, juniper, snakeweed, burrograss, cacti species, muhlys, tobosa, fourwing and mesquite in the bottoms, annual forbs and acacia

# **Determination of Public Land (Rangeland) Health for 63083 MILAGRO SPRING**

The Record of Decision (ROD) for the New Mexico Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing management (dated January 2001) adopted three Standards for Public Land Health. These are (1) Upland Sites Standard, (2) Biotic Communities, Including Native, Threatened, Endangered, and Special Status Species Standard and (3) Riparian Sites Standard.

The ROD also established a process for the BLM Field Offices for implementation. Through a public participation process, the Roswell Field Office developed and adopted indicators to use in conjunction with existing monitoring data to assess these standards.

Field assessment worksheets and other available data that evaluate the local indicators were completed for this allotment. Based on these assessments, it is my determination that public land with the Milagro Spring allotment, 63083, meets the (1) Upland Sites Standard and (2) Biotic communities, including Native, Threatened, Endangered and Special Status Species Standard. There are no public lands Riparian areas on this allotment therefore this standard was not addressed.

/s/ J. Howard Parman  
Acting Assistant Field Manager

03/08/2010  
Date