

Determination Document for Achievement of New Mexico Standards for Public Land Health and Conformance with the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management

Allotment Name / Number: Hurtado Mesa (#00896)

Date: February 10, 2011

Introduction:

The Code of Federal Regulation (43 CFR 4180.2) states that the Bureau of Land Management State Director will determine Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration. In January 2001, the New Mexico BLM completed a Statewide Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement in which three Public Land Health Standards and six Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management were adopted.

Standards for Public Land Health

Upland Sites

***Standard:** Upland ecological sites are in 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 provides protection on a given site to minimize erosion and assist in meeting State and Tribal water quality standards.*

1.	Meeting the Standard.
2.	Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress towards standard.
3. X	Not meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are not significant factors. List important causal agents below.
4.	Not meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are significant factors. List important causal agents below.
5.	Not meeting the Standard, cause is undetermined.
6.	Standard does not apply.

Causal Factors/Rationale:

It was determined that this allotment is not meeting the Upland Standard based on the evidence of soil erosion. Soils are exhibiting pedestaling, terracettes, waterflow patterns and rills that are more common than expected. Also piñon and juniper are expanding in coverage, with plentiful recruitment. The reason for the Standards are not being met was not conclusive. It was determined that fire suppression or the lack of natural disturbance is the most likely factor, although historic grazing may have played a role as well.

Biotic Communities, Including Native, Threatened, Endangered, and Special Status Species

Standard: 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 the site and species.

1.	Meeting the Standard.
2.	Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress towards standard.
3. X	Not meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are not significant factors. List important causal agents below.
4.	Not meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are significant factors. List important causal agents below.
5.	Not meeting the Standard, cause is undetermined.
6.	Standard does not apply.

Causal Factors/Rationale:

It was determined that this allotment is not meeting the Biotic Communities Standard based on the hydrological and nutrient processes are being affected by the increase in erosion. Also, vegetative changes to a more tree dominated site are resulting in higher rates of evapotranspiration. The reason for the Standard is not being met was not conclusive. It was determined that fire suppression or the lack of natural disturbance is the most likely factor, although historic grazing may have played a role as well.

Riparian Sites

Standard: Riparian areas are in a productive, properly functioning, and sustainable condition, within the capability of that site.

1.	Meeting the Standard.
2.	Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress towards standard.
3.	Not meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are not significant factors. List important causal agents below.
4.	Not meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are significant factors. List important causal agents below.
5.	Not meeting the Standard, cause is undetermined.
6. X	Standard does not apply.

Causal Factors/Rationale:

The Riparian Standard does not apply to this allotment. No riparian area or vegetation is located within the allotment boundaries.

Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management

1. Livestock Grazing Management Practices (LGMPs) will promote native plant health, soil stability and micro-organisms, water quality, stream channel morphology and function, and habitat for native wildlife including special status, threatened and endangered species, by providing the following basic requirements of rangeland ecological sites:

(a) Allow for plant recovery and growth time;

(b) Allow residual vegetation on both upland and riparian sites to protect the soils from wind and water erosion, support infiltration, and soil permeability, maintain, improve or restore riparian-wetland functions including energy dissipation, sediment capture, ground water recharge, and stream bank stability, and prevent excessive evaporation;

(c) LCMPs include the use of livestock to:

(1) Integrate organic matter into the soil,

(2) Distribute seeds and establish seedlings,

(3) Prune vegetation to stimulate growth,

(4) Enhance infiltration.

2. Season, duration, frequency and intensity of use should be flexible and consider climate, topography, vegetation, wildlife, kind and class of livestock when developing and implanting livestock grazing management practices.

3. Facilities are located away from riparian-wetland areas wherever they conflict with achieving or maintaining riparian-wetland function.

4. Give priority to rangeland improvements and land treatments that offer the best opportunity for achieving standards.

5. Where LGMPs alone are not likely to achieve the desired plant community (including control of noxious weeds), land management practices including, but not limited to, prescribed fire, biological, mechanical and chemical land management treatments should be utilized.

6. Non-native plant species are used only in those situations in which native species are not readily available in sufficient quantities or are incapable of maintaining or achieving properly functioning conditions and biological health.

1. X	Conforms to Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.
2.	Does not conform to Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.
3.	Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management not applicable

Causal Factors/Rationale:

Current livestock grazing is slight within this allotment and the BLM land is used in a rotational system with three other private land pastures.

Sam DesGeorges – Taos Field Manager

Date

For a list of those involved in the determination, and for further rationale/information for this determination please see the Allotment Assessment and Evaluation Report for this grazing allotment.