

CHAPTER 8 – LIVESTOCK - GRAZING

8.1 INTRODUCTION AND RESOURCE OVERVIEW

8.1.1 Introduction

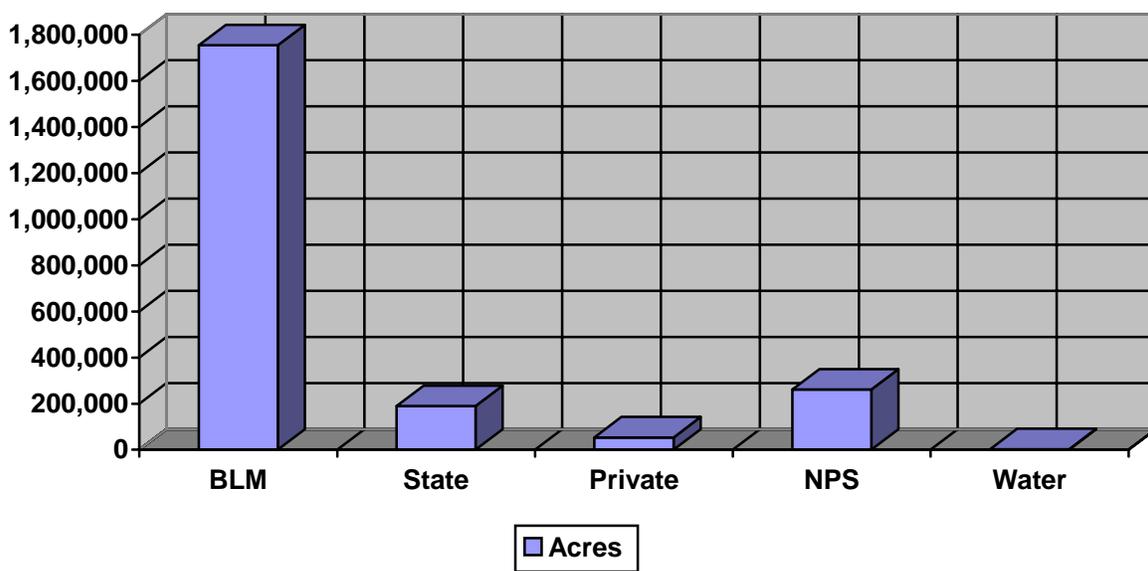
The Secretary of the Interior, through the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), manages approximately 264 million acres of public rangelands throughout the western United States. The Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, and the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 guide the BLM's management of livestock grazing on public lands.

The objectives for grazing administration regulations are to “promote healthy sustainable rangeland ecosystems; to accelerate restoration and improvement of public rangelands to properly functioning condition; to efficiently and effectively administer domestic livestock grazing; and to provide for the sustainability of the western livestock industry and communities that are dependent upon productive, healthy public rangelands”(43 CFR 4100.0-2).

Livestock grazing allotments occur on approximately 99 percent of all BLM lands located within the Monticello Field Office (FO) planning area boundary. An estimated 17,300 acres outside of grazing allotments are allocated to wildlife use and another 288 acres are administrative horse pasture. Within boundary allotments, 137,440 acres (6.1 percent) are excluded from livestock grazing for resource protection.

Of the lands within grazing allotments, 1,761,351 acres (78 percent) are BLM lands; 190,366 acres (8 percent) are State of Utah lands; 53,704 acres (2 percent) are private; 261,574 acres (12 percent) are National Park Service lands; and 2,701 acres (>1 percent) are water. The acres within each entity are shown on the chart below.

Acres Within Grazing Allotments



8.1.2 Resource Overview

The following sections provide a summary of the number of permitted allotments, amount of riparian area, allotment management categories, ecological status, and status of rangeland health for the allotments. Each of these items is listed by allotment in Appendix 8-A.

8.1.2.1 Allotment Status

A total of 74 allotments exist within the boundaries of the Monticello FO planning area. However, one of these allotments (Rogers) is currently not permitted for use by domestic livestock. The Squaw Canyon allotment, most of which is within the boundaries of the Monticello FO planning area, is administered by the Durango FO.

In addition, the Monticello FO administers two allotments (Monucolo and Willow Creek), both of which are located outside the Monticello FO planning area boundary. These two allotments are managed in accordance with direction given in the San Juan and San Miguel Resource Management Plan (Durango FO).

8.1.2.2 Riparian Areas

Riparian areas, consisting of 28,994 acres, occur within 49 of the allotments. The amount of riparian area occurring within these allotments ranges from 0.1 to 10.3 percent. Riparian areas comprise 1.3 percent of the total allotment acreage. Further information regarding riparian areas may be found in Chapter 12–Riparian and Wetland Resources.

8.1.2.3 Allotment Management Category

Each permitted allotment has been evaluated and designated into one of three categories: maintain (M), improve (I), or custodial (C). Allotments in the *M Category* are in generally good condition and have no serious resource conflicts under present management. These may have some potential for a positive return on investments. *I Category* allotments may have serious resource conflicts, or their resource production is below its potential under present management. These allotments have potential to improve, or have conflicts, that can be resolved through changes in grazing management or investments in range improvement projects. Allotments in the *C Category* have low productivity potential, limited resource conflicts, and no opportunity for a positive return on public investments. A more detailed list of criteria used for categorizing each allotment may be found in Appendix 8-B.

The number of allotments in each category are shown in Table 8.1 below.

Table 8.1 Allotments in the Monticello Field Office by Management Category

“M” Category (Maintain)	“I” Category (Improve)	“C” Category (Custodial)
9 Allotments (12%)	29 Allotments (39%)	36 Allotments (49%)

8.1.2.4 Ecological Status

The ecological status of each allotment was estimated in the 1980s. Four classes are used to express the degree to which the present kinds, proportions, and amounts of plants in a biotic community reflect the potential natural community (PNC). These classes are as follows:

- Potential Natural Community (PNC): 76-100 percent similar
- Late Seral: 51-75 percent similar
- Mid Seral: 26-50 percent similar
- Early Seral: 0- 25 percent similar

The percentage of acres within the allotments in each ecological class are shown in Table 8.2 below.

Table 8.2 Allotments within the Monticello FO Planning Area Boundaries by Ecological Class

PNC	Late Seral	Mid Seral	Early Seral	Other (Rock Outcrop/Badlands/Seedings)
3.6%	13.0%	53.4%	17.1%	12.8%

BLM Manual H-1601-1 (Land Use Planning Handbook, 2000) states that vegetation management decisions, including grazing, must be based on “desired future condition” (DFC). The DFC are those conditions on a landscape scale that are meeting management objectives, incorporating ecological, social, and economic considerations; and does not necessarily assume vegetation should, or will, reach the PNC. It is usually expressed as ecological or management status of vegetation (species composition, habitat diversity, age and size classes of species) and desired soil qualities (conditions of soil cover, erosion, compaction, loss of soil productivity).

It is necessary to identify site-specific vegetation management practices, such as allotment grazing systems and levels of permitted use, that are necessary to achieve the desired future condition. As more data becomes available, the Monticello FO will be evolving towards the incorporation of DFC, along with the revised Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Ecological Site Descriptions, into grazing management practices.

8.1.2.5 Meeting Rangeland Health Standards

Utah’s Standards for Rangeland Health (1997) were developed to assess and protect ecological communities and their associated values. Standards are descriptions of the desired condition of the biological and physical components and characteristics of rangelands that are applied to management of all public land resources and uses. Guidelines are management approaches, methods, and practices that are intended to achieve established standards.

Following, is a listing of Utah’s Standards for Rangeland Health. Please refer to Appendix 8-C for the complete list of Utah’s Standards and Guidelines.

- Standard 1.** Upland soils exhibit permeability and infiltration rates that sustain or improve site productivity, considering the soil type, climate, and landform.
- Standard 2.** Riparian and wetland areas are in properly functioning condition. Stream channel morphology and functions are appropriate to soil type, climate, and landform.

Standard 3. Desired species, including native, threatened, endangered, and special-status species, are maintained at a level appropriate for the site and species involved.

Standard 4. BLM will apply and comply with water quality standards established by the State of Utah (R.317-2) and the Federal Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water Acts. Activities on BLM Lands will support the designated beneficial uses described in the Utah Water Quality Standards (R.317-2) for surface and groundwater.

Of the 74 allotments within the Monticello FO planning area boundaries, 17 are meeting standards; 5 are not meeting standards, but action has been taken; 4 are not meeting standards, but the reasons for not meeting are not livestock related; and 48 allotments are yet to be assessed.

8.2 SPECIFIC MANDATES AND AUTHORITY

The laws, mandates, policies, and regulations that guide the BLM's authority for grazing by domestic livestock include:

- Taylor Grazing Act of June 28, 1934, as amended (42 U.S.C. 315, 315a through 315r). Provides direction to protect rangelands by preventing overgrazing and soil deterioration while providing for managed use and improvement, and to stabilize the livestock industry dependent upon public lands.
- Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.). Recognizes livestock grazing as one of the "principal or major uses" of the public lands. It directs that the public lands be managed on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield in a manner that will provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals while protecting the quality of other values (i.e. scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archeological).
- Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 (43 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.). Provides policy to manage, maintain, and improve the condition of public rangelands to increase productivity in accordance with management objectives and the land use planning process.
- 43 CFR 4100, Grazing Administration, Exclusive of Alaska. Provide uniform guidance for administration of grazing on the public lands.
- Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration (43 CFR 4180 et seq.). Define the minimum resource conditions that must be achieved and maintained and the acceptable management practices to be applied to achieve those conditions.

8.3 CURRENT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Of the 73 allotments currently permitted within the Monticello FO boundaries, cattle graze 60 allotments and cattle and horses graze 13 allotments. A total of 78,796 animal unit months (AUMs) are currently authorized (active). Of these, 77,365 AUMs (98 percent) are used by cattle and 1,431(2 percent) are used by horses. An additional 7,299 AUMs are allowed through exchange of use (other ownership).

The grazing management systems currently in use on the permitted allotments are as follows:

- Season-long – 35
- Deferred – 11
- Deferred rotation – 27

The lengths of season under season-long grazing systems vary from 1 to 12 months. The majority of grazing systems include both “dormant season” and “growing season” use. However, 12 allotments are grazed only during the growing season and 9 allotments only during the dormant season.

Two of the permitted allotments have allotment management plans (AMPs). The remaining 71 allotments are managed without the benefit of a formal documented program for management. However, many of the latter are managed under systems or prescriptions developed each year prior to livestock turnout. AMPs for many of these allotments may be developed in the future.

Appendix 8-A lists, by allotment, the following:

1. Class of livestock being grazed
2. Number of AUMs that are authorized (active)
3. Number of AUMs under suspension
4. Number of AUMs under “exchange of use” (other ownership).
5. Season of use for grazing by domestic livestock
6. Livestock grazing system being used

8.4 RESOURCE DEMAND AND ANALYSIS FORECAST

The resource demand is considered to be the amount of grazing by both domestic livestock and wildlife. However, the resource demand discussed here will be limited to grazing by domestic livestock. Resource demands by wildlife are discussed in Chapter 17–Wildlife.

The resource demand by domestic livestock is considered to be the total of current authorized (active) use (78,818 AUMs) and suspended use (17,173 AUMs). This amounts to a total resource demand by domestic livestock of 95,991 AUMs.

It is anticipated that the resource demand will not be met for many allotments during this planning period. The reason is that meeting the resource demand (current active use plus suspended use) would require extensive investments of resource dollars plus implementation of numerous intensive management systems.

The only changes in total authorized (active) use since the 1985 Management Situation Analysis have been minor, and due to changes in land ownership, or as a result of rangeland monitoring which indicated the need for adjustment. Trends in authorized use prior to that time are not known.

8.5 CONSISTENCY WITH NON-BUREAU PLANS

The San Juan County Master Plan does not specifically address grazing by domestic livestock on public lands. However, statements made within the plan that indirectly address grazing by domestic livestock on BLM lands are as follows:

1. The County feels that public land and resource allocation decisions should be supported by accurate and adequate data. This data should include impacts to the local economy and environment (pages 5-6, 11).
2. County industries such as agriculture, mining, tourism and recreation depend on the continued use and availability of public lands and the accompanying resource for economic growth and stability (page 14).

3. One economic opportunity for the county would be for the sale of additional calves produced from a relatively small increase in the present number of mother cows (page 64).

The consistencies of BLM management actions with the San Juan County Master Plan regarding domestic livestock grazing are as follows:

***Statement 1**

- Although current economic and/or monitoring data is lacking on many allotments, the necessary data is obtained prior to taking permit action on any allotment. For this reason, current BLM actions are considered to be consistent with this statement.

***Statement 2**

- Current BLM management is consistent with this statement.

***Statement 3**

- The sale of additional calves from BLM lands, as noted in this statement, would require increases in authorized animal numbers. This, in turn, would require extensive investments of resource dollars plus implementation of numerous intensive management systems.

8.6 ISSUES OR CONCERNS

The identified issues or concerns are as follows:

1. What changes, if any, are needed to bring grazing by domestic livestock into compliance with Utah's standards and guidelines for rangeland health?
2. Standards for Healthy Rangelands should be applied to all programs and resource uses.

8.7 MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND LIMITATIONS

As stated under Section 1.3 (Current Management Practices), 72 of the total 74 allotments currently being grazed do not have allotment management plans (AMPs). Opportunities for management that could occur under an AMP include: (1) change in kind or class of livestock; (2) adjustments in permitted numbers; (3) change in season of use; (4) initiation and/or change in the grazing system; (5) land treatments such as chaining, prescribed burning, etc.; and/or (6) range structures such as drift fences, water development, etc.

Limitations for improving management are:

1. Limited or small amounts of BLM land in an allotment.
2. Limited opportunities for positive economic return on public investments.
3. Lack of available funding for planning and construction of range improvements.
4. Restrictions from the resource management plan and the public concerning range improvements and grazing management practices.

8.8 GLOSSARY

Active Use – The current authorized use, including livestock use and conservation use. Active use may constitute a portion, or all, of permitted use. Active use does not include temporary nonuse or suspended use of forage within all or a portion of an allotment

Allotment – An area of land designated and managed for grazing of livestock.

Allotment Management Plan (AMP) – A documented program developed as an activity plan, consistent with the definition at 43 U.S.C 1702(k), that focuses on, and contains the necessary instructions for, the management of livestock grazing on specified public lands to meet resource condition, sustained yield, multiple use, economic, and other objectives.

Animal Unit Month (AUM) – The amount of forage necessary for the sustenance of one cow or its equivalent for a period of one month.

Class of Livestock – The ages and/or sex groups of a kind of livestock.

Conservation Use – An activity, excluding livestock grazing, on all or a portion of an allotment for purposes of:

1. Protecting the land and its resources from destruction or unnecessary injury;
2. Improving rangeland conditions; or
3. Enhancing resource values, uses, or functions.

Deferment – The delay of livestock grazing on an area for an adequate period of time to provide for plant reproduction, establishment of new plants, or restoration of vigor of existing plants.

Deferred grazing – The use of deferment in grazing management of a management unit, but not in a systematic rotation including other units.

Desired Future Condition (DFC) – The future condition of rangeland resources on a landscape scale that meet management objectives. Desired future condition is based on ecological (such as desired plant community) social, and economic considerations during the land and resource management planning process. Desired future condition is usually expressed as ecological status or management status of vegetation (species composition, habitat diversity, age and size classes of species), and desired soil qualities (conditions of soil cover, erosion, compaction, loss of soil productivity).

Potential Natural Community (PNC) – The biotic community that would become established if all successional sequences of its ecosystem were completed without additional human-caused disturbance under present environmental conditions. Grazing by wildlife; natural disturbances such as drought, floods, wildfire; insects; and disease are inherent in the developments of PNCs. *Note – It is generally not the policy of BLM to manage for PNC.*

Rest-Rotation – A grazing management scheme in which rest periods for individual pasture, paddocks or grazing units, generally for the full grazing season, are incorporated into a grazing rotation.

Suspension – The temporary withholding from active use, through a decision issued by the authorized officer or by agreement, of part or all of the permitted use in a grazing permit or lease.

8.9 REFERENCES

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APPENDIX 8-1 - SUMMARY OF ALLOTMENT SITUATION

MONTICELLO FIELD OFFICE		
Allotment Status		
Permitted	73	
Not Permitted	1	
Number of Allotments by Class of Livestock		
Cattle	60	
Cattle/Horses	13	
Animal Unit Months		
Active (Cattle)	77,365	
Active (Horses)	1,431	
Total Active Use	78,796	
Suspended	17,173	
Exchange of Use (Other Ownership)	7,299	
Livestock Grazing System		
Season-long	35	
Deferred	11	
Deferred Rotation	27	
Total Acres Within Allotments	2,268,736	
BLM	1,760,584	77.6%
State of Utah	190,336	8.4%
Private	53,544	2.4%
National Park Service	261,574	11.5%
Water	2,701	0.1%
Total Acres Excluded From Livestock Grazing	137,440	6.1%
Acres of Riparian	28,994	
% of area within allotments consisting of riparian	1.30%	
Number of Allotments With Riparian	49	
AMP's Completed	2	
Allotment Category		
Maintain	9	
Improve	29	
Custodial	36	
Ecological Condition by Percentage of Allotment		
Potential Natural Community	3.6%	
Late Seral	13.9%	
Mid Seral	55.4%	
Early Seral	17.7%	
Rock Outcrop/Badlands	10.6%	
Seeding	2.8%	
Standards for Rangeland Health		
Allotment Meeting Standards	17	
Not Meeting, But Action Taken	5	
Not Meeting, No Action Taken	0	
Not Meeting and Not Livestock Related	4	
No Assessment	48	