

SECTION III - GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS

Rangeland

Planning Resource Management Systems (RMS)

Successful resource management on rangeland is the correct application of a combination of practices that will meet the needs of the total range ecosystem--the soil, water, air, plant, and animal (SWAPA+H) resources--and the objectives of the land user. The land user's objective must be consistent with the potential production capabilities of the resources.

The minimum criteria that must be met on rangeland for each of the resource concerns is explained in Section III Quality Criteria of the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG).

In planning a RMS for rangeland, vegetation management or grazing management is the foundation on which the RMS is built. Prescribed Grazing and Upland Wildlife Habitat Management are ESSENTIAL for vegetation management. A plan of how the animals (domestic and wild) are used to manipulate and be balanced with the plant community to meet the needs of the SWAPA+H resources is the basis of a RMS. Water for animals of concern must be provided, thus making water facilities necessary for a rangeland RMS.

All other practices planned on rangeland are both to facilitate the application of the vegetative management practices and are identified as FACILITATIVE practices, or are needed to cause or accelerate changes in the rangeland ecosystem and are identified, as ADDITIONAL practices. These additional practices are planned when necessary to treat specific resource problems to meet the criteria for managing the SWAPA+H resources.

Resource Management Systems include a combination of practices that are:

1. **ESSENTIAL:** These vegetative management practices are necessary to successful management of rangeland and are generally planned in the RMS.
2. **FACILITATIVE:** These practices enhance the vegetative management of the rangeland.
3. **ADDITIONAL:** These practices are planned when necessary to cause or accelerate changes in the rangeland ecosystem that cannot be achieved through application of vegetative management and facilitating practices. These practices become ESSENTIAL when conditions make their application necessary to achieve the quality criteria for the resource, the quality level for rangeland, and the landowner's objective.

A RMS on rangeland is developed with the landowner through the planning process. A RMS generally includes the ESSENTIAL practices plus a combination of FACILITATIVE and/or ADDITIONAL practices whose combined effects will meet the criteria established for each resource (SWAPA+H). When multiple land use is an objective, the needs of each use and effects of each practice must be considered in the selection, application, and design of each practice to ensure compatibility. The RMS must also meet the quality level of rangeland. The quality level for rangeland is defined as: Plants which are properly used by grazing and/or browsing animals and range similarity index is 51 percent with an upward range trend.

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Following is a listing of conservation practices divided into ESSENTIAL, FACILITATIVE and ADDITIONAL categories. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive. See FOTG Section IV for a complete list of practices and individual practice standards for applicable land uses.

ESSENTIAL:

Prescribed Grazing
Livestock Water Facilities¹
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management

FACILITATIVE:

Fence
Water Facilities²
Prescribed Burning³
Animal Trails and Walkways

ADDITIONAL:

Use Exclusion
Range Planting
Brush Management
Prescribed Burning⁴
Critical Area Treatment
Erosion Control Structures
Grazing Land Mechanical Treatment
Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management

¹ Water needed to supply the minimum needs of drinking water for livestock and/or wildlife

² Additional drinking water may be needed to facilitate grazing management

³ Burning for livestock distribution or forage production/ palatability

⁴ Burning for other objectives

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The following Guide Sheets give examples of a RMS on rangeland. Situations are described based on range similarity index and associated problems. Two or three examples are given for each situation. The first example represents the lowest level of management necessary to achieve the planning of a RMS. The second and/or third example represents higher levels of management. As management level increases, the application of some ADDITIONAL practices becomes necessary to the application of the vegetative management practices. (Example: The ADDITIONAL water development and/or fence needed to implement an intensive Prescribed Grazing System, or Prescribed Burning for Forage Quality, etc.)

The Guide Sheets are to be used as guides only to help understand the thought process used during the planning process and to assess the effects of conservation practices on the considerations and problems associated with the five resources.