

Indicators of Rangeland Health

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Open Space Grasslands. Science and Management Symposium
Society for Range Management, Annual Meeting
11 February 2010, Denver, CO

Science-based grassland management requires an understanding of the current status of the land relative to its potential. Rangeland health assessments help increase the cost-effectiveness of management by identifying where a change in management may be required, and the types of ecological processes that need to be addressed. We will discuss a suite of 17 indicators that are used throughout the United States to assess three attributes of rangeland health: soil and site stability, hydrologic function and biotic integrity. A unique reference for assessment is developed for each type of soil and climate. These references are based on both scientific knowledge and local knowledge. We will also discuss how this indicator-based assessment system can be used together with other tools, including state and transition models, and monitoring, to improve management.