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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

MANUAL TRANSMITTAL SHEET

Subject

4180 - RANGELAND HEALTH STANDARDS

1. Explanation of Material Transmitted: This release transmits a new Manual Section describing the authorities, objectives, and policies that guide the implementation of the Healthy Rangeland Initiative. Implementation will provide for the assessment of public land health, and for taking appropriate action to achieve, or make progress toward achieving, specified rangeland health standards.
2. Reports Required: None.
3. Material Superseded: None.
4. Filing Instructions: File as directed below, immediately following the Manual Section.

REMOVE:

None

INSERT:

4180 Manual

(Total 6 Sheets)

Acting Director,
Bureau of Land Management

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H-4180-1 - Rangeland Health Standards

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- .01 Purpose. This Manual Section sets forth the policies, minimum requirements, and roles and responsibilities for developing and implementing Land Health Standards established in land use plans as provided in the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1.

The purpose is also to establish a unified framework and process for evaluating land health. Specific resource program direction for implementing the process within the framework are or will be covered in a series of BLM Manual Sections and Handbooks.

- .02 Objectives.

A. The objective of this Manual Section is to provide a process for implementing Land Health Standards.

- .03 Authority.

A. ***The Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, as amended, (43 U.S.C. 315 et seq.)*** provides that the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to establish grazing districts from any part of the public domain of the United States (exclusive of Alaska) which, in his opinion, are chiefly valuable for grazing and raising forage crops, to regulate and administer grazing use of the public lands, and to improve the public rangelands.

B. ***The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended, (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.)*** provides for the public lands to be generally retained in Federal ownership; for periodic and systematic inventory of the public lands and their resources; for multiple-use management on a sustained yield basis; for protection of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archaeological values; for recognizing the Nation's need for domestic sources of mineral, food, timber, and fiber from the public lands.

C. ***The Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978, (43 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.)*** provides for the improvement of range conditions on public rangelands, research on wild horse and burro population dynamics, and other range management practices.

D. ***National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.)*** Requires the preparation of environmental impact statements for Federal projects which may have a significant effect on the environment. It requires systematic, interdisciplinary planning to ensure the integrated use of the natural and social sciences and the environmental design arts

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in making decisions about major Federal actions that may have a significant effect on the environment.

E. *The Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.)* directs Federal agencies to ensure that their actions do not jeopardize threatened and endangered species, and that through their authority they help bring about the recovery of these species.

F. *The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 as amended (16 U.S.C. 1271 et seq)* directs management of designated Wild and Scenic Rivers for preservation of their free-flowing condition and protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. Section 10 requires management to protect and enhance the values which caused it to be included in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

G. *The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)* directs Federal agencies to take into account the effect of any Federal undertaking on properties included in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and to give the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation a reasonable opportunity to comment on the undertaking.

H. *The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-62)* requires 10 federal agencies to launch a 3-year pilot project beginning in 1994, to develop annual performance plans that specify measurable goals, and produce annual reports showing how they are achieving those goals.

I. *Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300f)* requires compliance with all Federal, State, or local statutes for safe drinking water.

J. *Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977 (16 U.S.C. 2001)* provides for conservation, protection and enhancement of soil, water, and related resources.

K. *The Clean Air Act of 1990 as amended (42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq)* requires BLM to protect air quality, maintain Federal and State designated air quality standards, and abide by the requirements of the State implementation plans.

L. *The Clean Water Act of 1987 as amended (33 U.S.C. 1251)* establishes objectives to restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the nation's water.

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M. *Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, May 24, 1977 (42 F.R. 26951)* provides for the restoration and preservation of national and beneficial floodplain values, and enhancement of the natural and beneficial values of wetlands in carrying out programs affecting land use.

N. *The American Indian Religious Freedom Act, 1966 (42 U.S.C 1996 et seq.)* directs Federal agencies to ensure that the views of Indian leaders will be obtained and considered when a proposed land use might conflict with traditional Indian religious beliefs or practices, and that unnecessary interference with Indian religious practices will be avoided during project implementation.

O. *Executive Order 13007 ("Indian Sacred Sites"), (61 FR 104, May 29, 1996)* directs Federal agencies to accommodate access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners, and to avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of such sacred sites. It also requires agencies when fulfilling this direction to comply with the Executive memorandum of April 29, 1994, "Government-to-Government relations with Native American Tribal Governments".

P. *Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, May 25, 1977 (42 F.R. 26961)* directs that wetland and riparian habitats on the public lands be identified, protected, enhanced, and managed.

Q. *Executive Order 12088, Federal Compliance with Pollution Control Standards October 17, 1978 (43 F.R. 47707)* sets the requirements for standards applicability, agency coordination, and limits on exemptions from standards.

R. *Executive Orders 10046, 10175, 10234, 10322, 10787, 10890* authorize the transfer of certain lands from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of the Interior for use, administration, or exchange under the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934.

S. *The Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929, as amended (16 U.S.C. 715) and treaties pertaining thereto* provides for habitat protection and enhancement of protected migratory birds.

T. *Executive Order 13186, January 11, 2001* directs each Federal agency taking actions having or likely to have a negative impact on migratory bird populations to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop an agreement to conserve those birds.

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U. *The Sikes Act of 1974, as amended (16 U.S.C. 670 et seq.)* provides for the conservation, restoration, and management of species and their habitats in cooperation with State wildlife agencies.

V. *National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Establishment Act, as amended, (16 U.S.C. 3701)* established the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation as a nonprofit corporation to encourage, accept and administer private gifts of property, and to undertake activities to further the conservation and management of fish, wildlife, and plant resources of the United States.

W. *Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 4100* provides regulatory direction for integrating livestock grazing administration with Land Health Standards.

X. *The Administrative Procedure Act of 1946 (5 U.S.C. 551 et seq)* provides direction for processing applications for permits.

Y. *Federal Advisory Committee Act, (5 U.S.C. App. 1)* provides for the establishment of the Resource Advisory Councils and defines their advisory role in the management of public lands.

.04 Responsibility.

A. The Director and Deputy Director are responsible for:

1. Requiring the implementation of Land Health Standards in the management of the public lands, to meet the unique Program needs and responsibilities of the BLM.
2. Ensuring accountability for effectively fulfilling Program requirements through the BLM Employee Performance Plan and Results Report (EPPRR).
3. Promoting the Land Health Standards Program to employees, volunteers, contractors, and the interested public.

B. The Assistant Director, Renewable Resources and Planning is responsible for:

1. Exercising the authority and responsibility of the Director for establishing and effectively implementing Land Health Standards within the BLM by promulgating this Manual and other Program policies, procedures, and controls.

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2. Managing the priority setting processes to reflect adequate funding and staff at all organizational levels in the BLM pursuant to 43 CFR 4180, to effectively carry out the requirements of this Manual Section and support national, Departmental, and Director management priorities.
 3. Advocating Program initiatives and reporting accomplishments to the Director and Executive Leadership Team (ELT).
 4. Reporting the status of Land Health Standards implementation to the interested public.
- C. The Assistant Directors, State/Center Directors, and Field Managers are responsible within their respective areas of jurisdiction for:
1. Ensuring compliance with this Manual Section, Handbooks, and all supplemental Program directives.
 2. Documenting, through the Bureau's EPPRR system, each manager's and supervisor's responsibility and accountability for effectively fulfilling Program requirements.
- D. The Group Managers for: Planning, Assessment and Community Support (WO-210); Rangeland, Soil, Water and Air (WO-220); and Fish, Wildlife and Forests (WO-230) are responsible for:
1. Ensuring that data collection and storage standards are agreed to by all resource management disciplines in the BLM.
 2. Coordinating direction for implementing the Land Health Standards amongst their groups.
- E. Managers and Supervisors are responsible for:
1. Providing their employees and volunteers with the direction and training to perform their assigned tasks in compliance with Public Law and Federal, the DOI, and the BLM standards and policy.
 2. Managing the budget and priority-setting processes to assure adequate funding to carry out their responsibilities under this Manual Section and budget directives.

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- F. All Employees are responsible for:
1. Familiarizing themselves with this Manual and related handbook and any other special instructions in order to consistently apply the land health standards for public land.
 2. Working collaboratively across program boundaries to achieve a consistent assessment of the condition of the public lands.
 3. Working collaboratively across program boundaries to collect, compile and store resource information once
 4. Sharing data with BLM's partners.

.05 References.

- A. 1220 - Records and Information Management.
- B. Supplemental Guidance. Supplemental guidance is available from many sources in the form of technical and operational publications, national consensus standards, and professional assistance.

.06 Policy.

- A. The regulations in 43 CFR 4180 require the State Directors, in consultation with Resource Advisory Councils (RACs), to develop rangeland health standards for lands within their jurisdiction. The BLM has agreed to work with the RACs to expand these rangeland health standards so that there are public land health standards that are relevant to all ecosystems, not just rangelands, and that they apply to all actions, not just livestock grazing. (Manual Handbook H-1601-1 Land Use Planning)
- B. Evaluations will be used as a tool to communicate with all interested publics, local, State, and tribal governments. Evaluation schedules, findings, monitoring schedules, and planned actions, and progress toward meeting standards will be reported on a regular basis.
- C. Watersheds (Fifth level, ten digit Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC)) will generally be used as the geographic basis for conducting Land Health Standards evaluations.

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- D. BLM will evaluate the health of public lands and will do so on a priority basis. Monitoring progress toward achieving standards or maintaining standards in high priority areas will take precedence over monitoring and evaluation in low priority areas.
 - E. Public lands will be managed to achieve or make significant progress toward achieving land health standards developed for that region unless specified otherwise in the Land Use Plan. Appropriate action will be taken to make significant progress toward achieving standards in watersheds where standards are not being achieved. For Livestock Grazing management, appropriate action will be taken as soon as practicable but no later than the beginning of the next grazing season.
- .07 File and Record Maintenance. All land health records will be managed according to established records retention and disposal policies. See BLM Manual 1220, Records and Information Management, for policies and procedures. See General Records Schedule 4 for disposition of resource management, environmental planning, inventory, study and assessment files. See Schedule 16 for committee and plan files. See Schedule 17 for cartographic, aerial photographic and remote sensing files. See Schedule 23 for general correspondence and reference and working files. The General Records Schedule can be accessed at www.mt.blm.gov/blmgrs.
- .08 Programmatic Implementation of Land Health Standards.
- A. Rangeland Program. The Rangeland Program provides technical assistance and policy guidance in implementing Rangeland Health. This includes integrating rangeland health standards into land use plans. This specific guidance is provided in the Rangeland Health Standards Handbook H-4180-1.
 - B. Forestry Program. The Forestry Program provides technical assistance and policy guidance in implementing Land Health Standards for forests and woodlands administered by the BLM. This includes integrating forest health standards and indicators applicable to forests and woodlands into land use plans. This specific guidance is provided in the Forest Health Standards Handbook (reserved).
 - C. Fish and Wildlife Program. The Fish and Wildlife Program provides technical assistance and policy guidance in implementing Land Health Standards in regards to habitat quality for native plant and animal populations, communities, and special status species. The program will provide guidance for consultation or conference in accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Specific guidance is provided in Special Status

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Species Manual Section 6840. The program also provides technical assistance and policy guidance in implementing aquatic health standards for lakes ponds, rivers, and streams administered by the BLM. This specific guidance is provided in the Aquatic Health Standards Handbook (reserved).

- D. Soil and Water, and Riparian Programs. The Soil and Water, and Riparian Programs provides technical assistance and policy guidance in implementing Land Health Standards. Using watersheds as a basis for Land Health Standards evaluations assists in determining whether State clean water standards are being achieved as directed by the Clean Water Action Plan and the Unified Federal Policy.
- E. Use Authorization Programs. Programs that authorize uses on public land will provide guidance and direction in manuals sections, handbooks or policy direction necessary to ensure consistency of use authorization programs with this manual section and the intent of healthy land standards. Program managers will ensure that program requirements are applied to use authorizations so as to best implement Land Health Standards and related provisions of applicable land use plans.

.09 Land Use Planning. Evaluations may also identify the need to make adjustments in activities in order to achieve or make significant progress toward achieving Land Health Standards. Where significant departure from the land use plan is required to achieve standards, a land use plan amendment or revision may be needed. Land Use Plans shall identify where meeting statutory or regulatory requirements will prevent achievement of Land Health Standards, or where Land Use Plan decisions will prevent achievement of Standards.

When developing additional Standards or Guidelines, or making significant modifications in existing Standards or Guidelines, document that they are in conformance with existing land use plans, and that adequate NEPA analysis has occurred. If they are not in conformance, then a Land Use Plan Amendment and accompanying NEPA document are required.