

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN - STEP 1
ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES

Name (MFP)

Twin Falls

Activity

Watershed

Objective Number

WS-2

Objective: WS-2

Improve or maintain soil productivity by stabilizing non-geologic erosion through management and treatments.

Rationale:

The Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976 requires that:

"the public lands be managed in a manner that will protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource...values."

Section 102a(8); "and that management be on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield unless otherwise specified by law."

Section 102a(7); (underlining supplied).

Basic Manual Guidance (1602.42C2a) supplements this with the objective:

"To conduct land use and resource management programs to utilize, and at the same time maintain the productive capacity of natural ecosystems to meet resource production and other human needs, now and in the future."

Erosion reduces the productive capability of watersheds, creates the potential for greater downstream damages from floods and sedimentation and increases surface water pollution through contamination from transported sediments and dissolved solids. The loss of soil productivity results in a concurrent loss in the ability to sustain yield and maintain the productive capacity of ecosystems.

Further support for the prevention of erosion and maintenance of soil productivity are contained in:

Supplemental guidance (1603.12E3a) which conveys the long-term objective to "restore, maintain and improve soil productivity to enhance on-site resource uses";

Watershed Manual 7000 which imparts the policy to: "conserve, improve, and manage the soil and water resource base in a manner that will provide for a sustained yield of multiple use benefits and accomplish objectives which may enhance the present and future quality of the environment." (7000.06) and to specific objective to "control and prevent erosion to the extent practicable." (7000.02B1).

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RECOMMENDATION-ANALYSIS-DECISION

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Watershed

Overlay Reference

Step 1 WS-2.1 Step 3

Recommendation: WS-2.1

Control surface disturbing activities on soils in the severe erosion susceptibility class by prohibiting mechanical range treatments and by restricting road building, ORV and grazing use.

Rationale:

Soil mapping units with severe erosion susceptibility are identified and discussed in URA 2 (.38B). Because of the nature of these soils removal of cover even for short periods of time can result in erosion losses high enough to reduce the productive capacity of these soils. These soils are only suitable for aerial treatment and this should be guided by the maintenance of adequate cover.

The disturbance from road building and ORV use is usually localized. However, without design to prevent gully formation, productivity is lost off-site as well as on-site.

The use of soils when they are saturated disturbs and destroys plant roots and compacts the soil resulting in reduced vegetative cover and higher erosion rates. All surface disturbing activities including grazing should be restricted until the soil will support the activity without disturbing the root zone.

For further discussion see URA 3 and URA 4 (.45A2, 45A3 and .45B3). Preventing loss of soil productivity is consistent with FLPMA, Basic BLM Manual Guidance (1602.42C2a), supplemental Manual Guidance (1603.12E3a) the Watershed Manual and the State Five Year Goals as discussed in the Objective rationale.

The Twin Falls Public Opinion Survey indicates that 43% of the respondents favored restrictions, including reductions in ORV and cattle use, to improve watershed conditions

Note: Attach additional sheets, if needed

Instruction:

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Step 1 WS-2.1 Step 3

Multiple Use Analysis

Soils of this Severe Erosion Susceptibility Class (SESC) are scattered throughout the Planning Unit and are arranged in variable relief. Some are relatively flat areas while others are on steep slopes.

This recommendation calls for restricted mechanical use of the SESC areas regardless of slope, or need for resource treatments. The recommendation conflicts with lands and minerals. These conflicts are resolved by managing future exploration and developments on these soils for minimal disturbance and prompt rehabilitation. Conflicts are stronger with range improvements, proposing no mechanical treatments on these soils. This recommendation must be modified to consider slope and need for treatment, allowing more flexibility to treatment planning while advising caution when dealing with these soils.

When a mechanical range treatment is the best feasible method to accomplish resource management objectives, these measures should be followed:

1. Leave untreated buffer strips along the contours and limit the width of treatments.
2. Do not treat drainage ways.
3. Use a seed mixture that is well adapted to the specific site.
4. Use equipment designed to reduce compaction and surface disturbance.

If these suggestions are followed, mechanical range improvement on susceptible soils can be done with minimal erosion impact.

(Decision)

Multiple Use Recommendation:

Reasons:

Modify WS-2.1 -
Allow mechanical treatments in special situations where benefits can be greater than losses, taking all precautions to minimize soil disturbance.

All treatment situations are different and some demand mechanical treatments for success. There are sites where watershed conditions can be improved by converting from sagebrush to perennial grass and forbs.

Refer to overlay MFP-1 WS-2.

This multiple use recommendation is consistent with WS-3.1.

Support Needs:

Alternatives Considered:

Soil Scientist -
To assist in preparing treatment plans.
R. A. Staff -
Project identification, planning, layout, and design.

1. Accept WS-2.1.
2. Reject WS-2.1.

Note: Attach additional sheets, if needed

(Instructions on reverse)

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Step 1 WS-2.2 Step 3

Recommendation: WS-2.2

Adjust livestock grazing to maintain vegetative cover in areas with severe erosion susceptibility. In areas with moderate SSF's (41-60) or with significantly higher sheet erosion rates institute management practices that allow development of healthy vegetative cover and thus reduce surface soil loss.

The following management practices are recommended:

- for severe erosion susceptible areas adjust stocking rates so that utilization is 50 percent or less;
- for areas with identified erosion problems adjust stocking rates so that utilization is 40 percent or less, or manage within a 3 to 6 pasture rest-rotation system;
- for areas with identified erosion problems restrict ORV use to roads and trails that are properly designed and restrict use on saturated soil.

Restrict ORV Use.

Support:

Range to establish grazing practices to maintain the desired utilization and monitor it or to manage the rest-rotation grazing system.

Rationale:

Fifty percent utilization is considered good range management to maintain healthy plants (SCS Range Management Handbook, 1003.1(c)) with large, deep root systems which act to stabilize the soil, provide ample litter to encourage germination and seedling establishment and minimize surface runoff. Thus, reducing erosion and maintaining soil productivity as required by FLPMA, Basic BLM Manual Guidance (1602.42C2a), Supplemental Manual Guidance (1603.12E3a), the Watershed Manual and the State Five Year Goals (See Objective Rationale).

Because maintaining vegetative cover is very important on soils in the severe erosion susceptibility class (URA2.38B) to prevent erosion, utilization should be maintained below 50 percent.

When accelerated erosion has been identified either by a moderate SSF or by modeling high sheet erosion (URA3 .45A2 and .45A3) utilization has previously exceeded 50 percent. Reducing utilization to 40 percent in these areas would allow recovery of the existing vegetation, litter accumulation and seedling establishment. This opportunity was recognized in URA 4 (.45B3) and will reduce the erosion rates and maintain soil productivity. Rest-rotation grazing systems with 3 to 6 pastures allow at least one spring rest which restores plant vigor and allows seed formation.

The Twin Falls Public Opinion Survey indicates that 43 percent of the respondents favored restrictions, including reductions in ORV and cattle use, to improve watershed conditions.

Note: Attach additional sheets, if needed

(Instructions on reverse)

Form 1600-21 (April 1975)

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Overlay Reference

Step 1 WS-2.2 Step 3

Multiple Use Analysis

This recommendation conflicts with RM-3.1 for those areas with identified erosion problems. Allocation of forage in RM-3.1 is based on biological limits, through the SVIM process. Thirteen allotments currently have some identified erosion problems. All of these allotments are managed or are proposed to be managed, under rest or deferred rotation systems.

Concentrated ORV use is presently occurring on sites in the Western Stockgrowers Allotment. None of those erosion problem areas in this or any other area can be attributed to ORV use. The areas are currently all open to ORV use. Stipulations will be developed to restrict ORV use on areas being damaged and during seasons when damage occurs. For example, an ORV recommendation to close the foothills area during wet seasons and coordinate with USFS closures in the South Hills. An ORV designation plan is proposed for development for the Twin Falls Planning Unit in FY 1981.

(Decision)

Multiple Use Recommendation:

Modify the recommendation to use the following management practice:

- Allow no more than 50 percent utilization on native ranges.
- Manage those allotments with identified erosion problems with grazing systems that allow periodic spring deferment.
- Restrict ORV use on areas which can be shown to be damaged by excessive use. Needed restrictions will be developed as needed in the Twin Falls Planning Unit ORV plan based on current soil-vegetation inventory data.

Reasons:

As stated in MFP I Recommendation, 50 percent is considered good range management to obtain healthy plants with large deep root systems which act to stabilize the soil, provide ample litter to encourage germination and seedling establishment and minimize surface runoff.

As stated in the recommendation, a deferred system or a rest rotation system will provide rest from spring grazing.

No areas have been identified in URA3.45A2 or .45A3 which show resource damage due to ORV use. The entire Planning Unit is currently open to ORV use. Site specific restrictions will be instituted as problem areas are identified.

Note: Attach additional sheets, if needed

(Instructions on reverse)

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Step 1 WS-2.3 Step 3

(Decision)

Recommendation: WS-2.3

Treat actively eroding gullies as they are identified by correcting contributing factors such as poor road placement and by using site appropriate methods such as gully head stabilization, water spreading, dams, dikes on gabions, and/or planting of deep rooted species.

Rationale:

Gully erosion, severe enough to destroy site potential and existing roads, has been identified at Winter Spring and on North Cottonwood Creek.

These gullies and any others should be treated to stop further reduction in soil productivity and loss of on-site resource uses (Supplemental Guidance 1603.12E3a). Treatments should be carefully studied by the hydrologist, engineer, and resources with on site uses to assure that the problems are not aggravated by the treatment.

Support:

Engineer and hydrologist to plan site specific treatments.

Multiple Use Analysis

This recommendation does not conflict with any resource. It is an attempt to stop gully type erosion wherever it is identified. Only two problem areas have been located and each should be treated to minimize damage. As new gullies are found they should be evaluated and proper action taken.

Note: Attach additional sheets, if needed

(Instruction on reverse)

Form BLM-100 (April 1977)

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Overlay Reference

Step 1 WS-2.6 Step 3

Recommendation: WS-2.6

Prevent gully formation and excessive erosion by blocking from use and by rehabilitating roads and trails with excessive slopes.

Rationale:

There are several ORV tracks and roads identified in URA 4 (.45B3b3) which require these attention, include both sides of the Lost Creek summit road, ORV tracks in the North Cottonwood Creek drainage, and Cherry Springs Road. These and any other roads and tracks which have excessive slopes and have the potential for gully formation should be blocked by fencing, construction of berms, placement of rocks or other acceptable means that will prevent further use. Rehabilitation of the scars should follow the recommendations discussed in the Rationale of WS Recommendation 2.6.

The prevention of erosion to preserve site values is consistent with FLPMA, Basic Manual Guidance (1602.42C2a), Supplemental guidance (1603.12E3a), and Watershed Manual section 7000.

Public opinion as indicated in the Twin Falls Survey supports restricting ORV use to improve watershed conditions. With 43% of the respondents favoring restrictions.

Support:

Division of Operations to install blocks and to seed appropriate mixtures.

Multiple Use Analysis

There are no conflicts from this recommendation, which proposes the blocking and rehabilitation of roads and trails on steep slopes in order to stop erosion. This type of action could interfere with other interests if the