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KANSAS BULLETIN NO. KS430-12-1

SUBJECT: SOI–Ecological Site Description Status Within Major Land Resource Areas 72, 73, 74, 76, 79, and 112

Purpose. To provide information and guidance on Ecological Site Description (ESD) status within Major Land Resource Areas (MLRAs) 72, 73, 74, 76, 79, and 112

Expiration Date. September 30, 2013

Background

An ecological site is defined as a distinctive type of land with specific physical characteristics that differ from other forms of land in its ability to produce a distinctive type and amount of vegetation. ESDs provide information utilized during steps (inventory resources, analyze resource data, and formulate alternatives) of the conservation process. Having up-to-date ESD information readily accessible will expedite the planning process for customers.

Explanation

Nationally there are approximately 4,000 rangeland ESDs that need to be developed. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has completed 10 percent of the potential ESDs that are available for public use. A national effort is in place to increase the rate of completion and improve the quantity and quality of ecological site products and their use in the delivery of conservation assistance at the field level.

Currently, there are 100 ESDs loaded in the Ecological Site Information System (ESIS) database that are considered to be in DRAFT status within MLRAs 72, 73, 74, 76, 79, and 112. Kansas has the lead in developing ESDs within these MLRAs. An ESD in DRAFT status will not have all the sections complete. Some examples of changes that will need to be made to each ESD are:

- Update information across state lines
- Update all state and transition models and include narratives for community pathways, transitions, and restorations
- Add rangeland health reference sheets
- Update/review DRAFT concepts

(more)

DIST: SS, A, F, S

The effort has begun to convert existing ESDs (old format) into the new format. This process will remove the DRAFT status and move all ESDs into an approved status for internal and external customers.

Existing range site conditions are located in Section II of the electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG) and are still available for use. Use caution if you are using the DRAFT ESD information that is posted on the Web for conservation planning purposes. Use the DRAFT ESD as reference only. With the exception of the state and transition model (STM), the plant community data should remain the same (e.g., lbs forage/acre). Periodically the ESDs will be pulled from public use to be updated. Once the updates are reviewed and approved, the ESDs will be made available.

If you are located in an MLRA that is not listed, the adjoining state has the lead in developing those ESDs. Please use the contact information below to assist you with finding the correct ESD.

Currently, ecological site inventory (ESI) specialists are working to complete ESDs (specifically, Loamy Upland, Flint Ridge, and Limy Upland) in MLRA 76. Technical teams will be assembled to participate in the review and development stages of ESDs. Individuals are currently being called upon to participate on the MLRA 76 technical team. Technical teams for MLRAs 72, 73, 74, 79, and 112 will be assembled once all ESDs are complete within MLRA 76.

ESDs can be accessed on the Web through Web Soil Survey (WSS) <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/> or ESIS <http://esis.sc.egov.usda.gov/About.aspx>.

Contact: Please forward questions and concerns to David Kraft, Rangeland Management Specialist, at (620) 343-7276, Ext. 105 or david.kraft@ks.usda.gov; or to Chris Tecklenburg, Ecological Site Inventory (Quality Control), at (785) 823-4574 or chris.tecklenburg@ks.usda.gov.

(signed)

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