

Conservation Security Program

Rangeland

Screening Tool



Name: _____

Farm/Ranch: _____





Rangeland Health Screening Tool

This section is designed to assist in preparing the documentation necessary to participate in the CSP program.

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- * IN ORDER TO BE PLACED IN A CATEGORY FOR CSP PAYMENT YOU MUST FIRST EVALUATE THE CONDITION OF YOUR RANGELAND USING THE RANGELAND HEALTH SCREENING TOOL.**
- * USE YOUR BEST JUDGEMENT AND MEMORY IF YOU ARE EVALUATING YOUR RANGELAND DURING THE NON-GROWING SEASON.**
- * AS A MINIMUM, ONE SCREENING TOOL MUST BE COMPLETED FOR EACH OPERATING UNIT.**
- * FOR ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE, A COMPLETED EXAMPLE OF A RANGELAND HEALTH SCREENING TOOL HAS BEEN PREPARED.**



RANGELAND HEALTH SCREENING

EXAMPLE

SELECT THE NUMBER OF THE COLUMN IN EACH TABLE THAT MOST CLOSELY DESCRIBES THE FIELD(S) BEING EVALUATED

Question #1

Is the **herbaceous plant community** (grasses and forbs (wildflowers) dominated by perennial species?

Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
	Herbaceous plant community is dominated by desirable and productive perennial species	↔	Herbaceous plant community is a mixture (50/50) of desirable / productive perennial and weedy / disturbance induced annual species	↔	Herbaceous plant community is dominated by weedy and disturbance induced annual species
					
					

Screening Tool EXAMPLE



Question #2

Are the expected **plant layers** present?

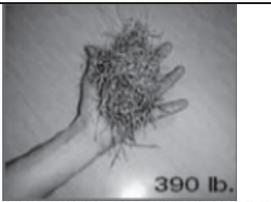
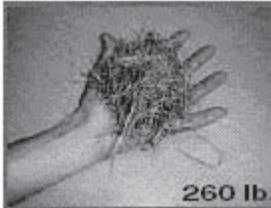
This question recognizes the various perennial life form layers (perennial grasses, perennial forbs, and perennial shrubs) that occur in a plant community.

Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
	all 3 perennial life form layers are present	one perennial life form layer is absent or significantly reduced	↔	two perennial life form layers are absent or significantly reduced	three perennial life form layers are absent or significantly reduced. The stand is predominantly annuals

Question #3

Does the site retain moisture?

Litter (also called mulch), is old plant residue left over from previous years' production. Litter protects soil against erosion, enhances forage production and buffers against dry conditions. Compare the litter present with what we would expect to find on the site by hand-raking 20 x 20 inch area (400 square inches).

Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
	litter amounts are greater than 650 pounds	390 - 650 pounds	litter is 260 to 390 pounds	less than 260	Greater than 650 pounds but predominantly from annuals
			 		

Screening Tool EXAMPLE



Question #4

Is there **active litter movement**?

Vegetation protects the soil surface from raindrop impact; it detains overland flow, maintains infiltration and permeability, and protects the soil surface from erosion.

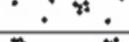
Rating: 1	2	3	4	5
No litter movement. Litter remains in place around source plant	some evidence of litter movement	moderate amounts of litter movement	↔	extreme amounts of litter movement
				

Question #5

Are **noxious weeds** present?

Using the Density Distribution Table assess the abundance of noxious weeds (Class A-C) in the field/pasture being assessed.

Rating: 1	2	3	4	5
no weeds	class 1-3	class 4-7	↔	class 8-12

Density Distribution			
Class	Weed Distribution in Field	Distribution	Weeds Score
0	None		1
1	Rare		2
2	A few sporadically occurring individual plants		
3	A single patch		3
4	A single patch plus a few sporadically occurring plants		
5	Several sporadically occurring plants		
6	A single patch plus several sporadically occurring plants		5
7	A few patches		
8	A few patches plus several sporadically occurring plants		5
9	Several well spaced patches		
10	Continuous uniform occurrences of well spaced plants		
11	Continuous occurrence of plants with a few gaps in the distribution		
12	Continuous dense occurrence of plants		



SUMMARY EXAMPLE

Rangeland Health Screening Tool Summary

Question Number	Indicator	Soil/Site Stability	Hydrologic Function	Biotic Integrity
1	Herbaceous Plant Community			3
2	Expected Plant Layers		1	1
3	Litter Amount & Kind	3	3	
4	Active Litter Movement	2	2	2
5	Noxious Weeds			2
AVERAGE ATTRIBUTE SCORE: (down the column)		2.5	2	2
ENTER RANGELAND SCREENING RATING FROM TABLE BELOW (for each Attribute Score)		Slight to Moderate	Slight to Moderate	Slight to Moderate

ENTER THE CHOSEN SCORE FOR THE INDICATOR IN THE AVAILABLE WHITE SPACES OF THE QUESTION ROW

Rangeland Health Screening Rating for Average Attribute score above

None to Slight	<1.51
Slight to Moderate	>=1.51 & < 2.51
Moderate	>=2.51 & < 3.51
Moderate to Extreme	>=3.51 & < 4.51
Extreme	>= 4.51

RANGELAND HEALTH SCREENING TOOL

Washington Natural Resources Conservation Service



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AVERAGE ATTRIBUTE SCORE: (DOWN THE COLUMN)				
ENTER RANGELAND SCREENING RATING FROM TABLE BELOW for each Attribute Score				

RANGELAND SCREENING RATING FOR AVERAGE ATTRIBUTE SCORE ABOVE

None to Slight	N / S	<1.51
Slight to Moderate	S / M	>=1.51 & < 2.51
Moderate	M	>=2.51 & < 3.51
Moderate to Extreme	M / E	>=3.51 & < 4.51
Extreme	E	>= 4.51

