

## Rangeland Plant Community – Management Scale

Both the plant community and the type of management are rated on a five-tier scale.

**Plant community** (comparisons are to the respective ecological site description):

- 1 – Native plant community matching closely to the reference plant community. Very minor amounts of non-native species may be present. Similarity index likely to be 75% to 100%.
- 2 – Plant community dominated by native plants which would be dominant in the reference plant community; however, non-native invasive cool-season grasses and/or native short warm-season grasses (or other species known to negatively affect infiltration or indicate reduced infiltration capacity) have increased up to but not yet achieving a co-dominant level with the typical dominant species of the reference plant community.
- 3 – Non-native cool-season grasses and/or short warm-season grasses (or other species known to negatively affect infiltration or indicate reduced infiltration capacity) have increased to the point of being co-dominant with native species which are normally considered dominant in the reference plant community.
- 4 – Non-native cool-season grasses and/or short warm-season grasses (or other species known to negatively affect infiltration or indicate reduced infiltration capacity) have increased to the point of being dominant. Native species commonly occurring in the reference plant community are still present, but apparently in minor amounts, at least in terms of production.
- 5 – Non-native cool-season grasses and/or short warm-season grasses (or other species known to negatively affect infiltration or indicate reduced infiltration capacity) have increased to the point of being completely dominant. If present, native species are difficult to find. This may also be the rating if species are sparse and a high amount of bare ground is present (usually 5 to 10 times what is expected for the site in the reference plant community).

### **Management:**

- 1 – Prescribed grazing is applied according to the Prescribed Grazing Conservation Practice Standard (528). Recovery periods are adequate, and occupation periods are short enough to prevent most re-grazing of individual plants. The season-of-use is altered in most years so that grazing pressure occurs at different phenological stages in most years. Utilization levels do not exceed 50%, but are typically not less than 40% (moderate to full grazing use). Often this would be a higher level of management, often considered management intensive grazing.
- 2 – Most aspects of the Prescribed Grazing Conservation Practice Standard (528) are applied, but not consistently. One or more of the key management strategies (recovery period, changing season of use, or utilization) is not applied every year. Some areas receive heavy grazing, while other areas are grazed lightly or not at all, but these areas are not widespread.
- 3 – Typically this includes grazing at moderate stocking rates, but grazing periods cover most of a season (seasonal) or nearly for the entire season (season-long). Recovery periods are inadequate, and re-grazing of individual plants is relatively common. In many cases this results in a patch-grazing effect with most of the area either exhibiting overuse or underuse in patches in close proximity. This may also occur with higher than recommended stocking rates applied for shorter periods but often at the same time of year each year, or with light stocking rates at the same time of year each year.
- 4 – This typically includes moderate to heavy stocking rates that are applied season-long. Livestock often occupy the area for most of the growing season. This may also include areas that receive no grazing use in most years, or very light sporadic grazing use.

5 – This typically includes very heavy stocking rates for extended periods, often for the entire growing/grazing season. This may also include complete rest or lack of grazing by domestic livestock for several years or more.

To determine the plant community/management scale rating, rate each using the scales above, then multiply the two numbers together. The overall rating will range from 1 to 25.