

Appendix I:

Suitability for Grazing and Browsing

Background

The planning regulations at 36 CFR 219.20 requires lands to be identified which are capable and suitable for producing forage for grazing animals and for providing habitat for indicator species. The following table displays the results of this process and the capable and suitable land base associated with the Revised Forest Plan.

A map displaying these acres accompanies this document.

The information was derived from 30-meter digital elevation data, from the Rocky Mountain Resource Information System (RMRIS) and from information on 1:24000 scale maps. The information was processed using ARC/INFO. Some errors may have occurred due to drawing of the maps, coding of the information, or processing in the ARC/INFO system. Continual refinement of this information will occur, and will be maintained in the ARC/INFO system.

Capability and suitability for grazing and browsing use is presently determined at two Forest Service planning levels (i.e. Forest Plans (suitability) and project plans (AMPs) (capability)). This appendix represents the Forest Plan level, in accordance with the planning regulations.

Capable rangelands are accessible to livestock, produce forage or have inherent forage producing capabilities, and can be grazed on a sustained basis. Capable rangelands include lands that can also become accessible and will produce forage. These lands are called transitory range even though forage may be produced 10 or more years before natural or man-caused changes terminate the production or accessibility.

Suitable rangelands are appropriate for grazing considering environmental and economic consequences, and alternative uses.

The suitability determination is used to determine capacities for livestock use. It does not imply that livestock are to be limited to these lands. Livestock may be seen in areas designated as unsuitable if they have not been restricted from access by a fence or other means or if they are being used as a tool within the unsuitable area for management of the vegetative resource.

Some land uses are incompatible with grazing and browsing. Existing commitments render some lands as inappropriate for grazing. Lands which have been or can be closed to grazing or browsing include administrative sites, fenced recreation sites, fenced highway rights-of-way, designated management areas or parts there of, long term research study sites and exclosures, special use sites, RNAs, critical habitat for T&E species, etc.

Other areas across the Forest have been closed to grazing or browsing for biological reasons on either a temporary or permanent basis. These lands include regeneration sites for ponderosa pine and aspen, riparian areas, developed springs, fens and bogs, and other sites. Generally, these types of closed sites are fenced to exclude livestock grazing until conditions of a temporary closure have been fulfilled or they are permanently closed for long term site needs. Areas which are closed permanently to grazing are considered as lands of foregone uses relative to rangeland resources management.

No acres were classified as being unsuitable solely on the basis of economics. The Black Hills is largely roaded, and severe terrain was already considered not capable. In addition, the planning regulations do not prohibit grazing which may be below cost. The intent of Congress is to have a managed livestock grazing program, where cost efficiencies are taken into consideration when deciding between range management prescriptions (36 CFR 219.20(b)).

Table I-1. Acres Of Land Determined As Suitable Or Unsuitable For Livestock Grazing And Browsing

| | Acres of Classification | Running Totals after Deduction |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Black Hills National Forest Acres | | 1,531,715 |
| a. Less Private land | 289,002 | |
| Net National Forest Acres | | 1,242,713 |
| b. Less Non-vegetated Acres or Water | | |
| Rock, Developed, etc. | 398 | |
| Water | 2,012 | |
| TOTAL | 2,410 | 1,240,303 |
| c. Less Roads or Streamcourses | | |
| Roads | 5,779 | |
| Streams | 304 | |
| TOTAL | 6,083 | 1,234,220 |
| d. Less Dense Overstory Spruce Forest Types | 21,737 | |
| TOTAL | 21,737 | 1,212,483 |
| e. Less Steep Slopes or other Areas Where Resource Damage Could Occur | 139,198 | |
| TOTAL | 139,198 | 1,073,285 |
| TOTAL CAPABLE FOR LIVESTOCK GRAZING | | 1,073,285 |
| f. Less Capable Portions of Areas Managed for other Multiple Uses | | |
| Black Elk Wilderness outside of Palmer Gulch Allotment | 3,971 | |
| Upper Pine Creek RNA (Not included in the Wilderness acres above) | 510 | |
| Spearfish Canyon MA 4.2A | 2,853 | |
| Portion of Norbeck Wildlife Preserve in Spokane Allotment | 7,150 | |
| Fenced Recreation Complexes | 3,093 | |
| Fenced Developed Recreation Sites outside of Recreation Complexes | 304 | |
| Administrative Sites | 585 | |
| Primary and Secondary Road Right-of-Ways Fenced | 1,648 | |
| Fenced Springs/Ponds | 546 | |
| Mine Sites | 0 | |
| Special Uses | 334 | |
| Resource Protection | 427 | |
| Other (Exclosures, Study Sites, Outside of Allotments, Walk-in Fisheries, etc.) | 1,126 | |
| TOTAL | 22,547 | 1,050,738 |
| g. Less Capable Portions of Closed Allotments | 13,140 | |
| TOTAL | 13,140 | 1,037,598 |
| h. Less Uneconomical Areas (See narrative) | 0 | 1,037,598 |
| TOTAL | 0 | 1,037,598 |
| TOTAL SUITABLE ACRES | | 1,037,598 |