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(01.18.13 hl)

Plan Components
Grassland and Shrubland Vegetation

Desired Condition:

Grassland plant communities are dominated by native bunchgrasses, and conifers are absent or occur as scattered individuals. Non-forested breakland vegetation is dominated by bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue, prairie junegrass, and Sandburg's bluegrass, along with a variety of native forbs including arrowleaf balsamroot, lupine, cinquefoil, geranium, lomatium, phlox, and yarrow. Non-native invasive weeds comprise a minor component (<5%) of the plant species composition. Lower elevation grasslands also include sand dropseed, red three-awn, and needle-and-thread grass.

Populations of species of concern are proliferating due to conservation of their habitats.

The threatened species, *Silene spaldingii* is found infrequently on the Forest and occurs in certain grassland habitats dominated by Idaho fescue and prairie june grass. The threatened species, *Mirabilis macfarlanei* occurs in low elevation, dry canyon grasslands dominated by bluebunch wheatgrass, sand dropseed and red-threawn. The unique habitat features for *Mirabilis* is very limited on the Forest and no occurrences have been found; however, populations do occur in very close proximity to the Forest boundary. Habitat for these threatened species continues to be protected and/or conserved enabling individual plants to reproduce and populations of the plant to expand.

Mid to high elevation grassland and dry meadow communities are dominated by native species including Idaho fescue, mountain brome, blue wildrye and western needlegrass, and assorted sedges. Conifers do not encroach on riparian meadows, upland meadows, grasslands or climax shrub communities. Subalpine grasslands are dominated by native grasses, sedges, and forbs.

Shrubland plant communities on cool moist and north exposure sites are dominated by ninebark, ocean spray, alder, maple, snowberry, menziesia and huckleberry. On warm dry sites, mountain mahogany (primarily a non-sprouting species), hackberry, and smooth sumac comprise the dominant shrub vegetation. Cold subalpine shrublands support a variety of native shrubs including heather and grouse whortleberry, as well as native grasses, sedges, and forbs.

Riparian meadows on all settings are dominated by native species such as *Carex aquatilis* and other riparian grasses, sedges, forbs and shrubs. They are

primarily maintained in an open condition by seasonally high water table, and by fire or mechanical treatment of encroaching trees.

No new invasive weed species become established in any of the plant communities on the Forest.

Objectives:

To maintain existing meadows and grasslands, reduce conifer encroachment into meadows and grasslands (xxx acres/year)

Implement an annual Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategy for the management of invasive weeds. The IPM strategy would include prevention, inventory, treatment, monitoring, and restoration. Treatment includes the use of approved herbicides, hand pulling, and biological control

Annually participate in Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMAs). Recommendations submitted by the CWMAs to aid the Forest in determining weed management priorities, projects, budgets, and annual programs. The Forest should cooperate with the CWMAs to promote public weed awareness through brochures, displays, and forums.

Forest managers meet annually with county, state and/or university personnel to identify and discuss new invasive weed species in the state of Idaho, or adjacent states, which may pose potential threat to the Forest.

Five years after plan approval, invasive species are treated in or adjacent to all known populations of *Silene spaldingii*.

Forest managers meet annually with state, tribal, university and/or other agency personnel to share information on the distribution, management, status and conservation of species of conservation concern.

Within ten years after plan approval, survey the Salmon River grasslands for threatened plant species on FS lands

Standards

Guidelines

- Upland forage utilization should not exceed 45% to allow forage plants to maintain vigor, root development and soil cover. Specific utilization guidelines should be developed during grazing allotment environmental analysis and allotment management plan development which consider variables such as ecological condition of the vegetation, timing and duration of use, and other resource values in the area.

- The Forest should allow only certified “weed free” hay, feed, straw, and mulch to be brought on to national forest lands to prevent the introduction of invasive weed seed.
- The Forest should apply only certified “weed free” seed for restoration projects to prevent the introduction of invasive weed seed.
- Livestock salting should be excluded from riparian areas, meadows, designated sensitive plant habitat, seedling conifer regeneration areas, and prescribed restoration areas to reduce localized impacts resulting from concentrated livestock use and associated trampling.
