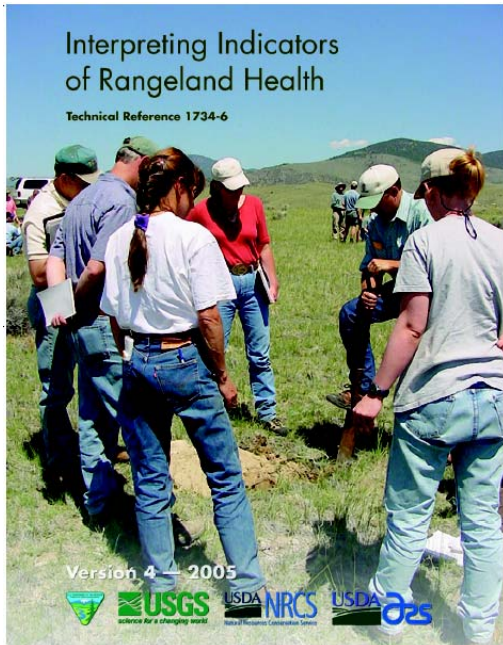


# Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health Version 4.0



**What is it?** A 17-indicator system used to qualitatively assess the status of 3 rangeland attributes:

- Soil and site stability (past, current and susceptibility to future erosion).
- Hydrologic function (capacity to capture, retain and release water to plants).
- Biotic integrity (health of the plant and soil community, capacity to resist and recover from degradation).

**What's the reference?** The reference is the potential (including normal range of variability) for each ecological site (similar soils, topography, climate). It is described for each indicator in a "Reference Sheet".

## What is it to be used for?

- Provide a cost-effective preliminary evaluation of the 3 attributes listed above.
- Help understand how and why rangeland ecosystems are/are not functioning as well as they can.
- Improve communication and consensus among interest groups by focusing discussion on critical ecosystem properties and processes.
- Identify appropriate monitoring indicators.
- Select monitoring sites.
- Provide early warning of potential problems and opportunities for recovery.
- Help decide where to locate activities (e.g. oil and gas production).

**Who developed it?** An interagency team of BLM, NRCS, USGS, and ARS with input from hundreds of individuals and organizations, including land managers, scientists, private consultants & members of the public. The system integrates rangeland research from a number of countries, including Australia, Mexico, Canada and South Africa.

## Electronic copy, dataforms and a related monitoring manual and database:

[http://usda-ars.nmsu.edu/JER/Monit\\_Assess/monitoring.htm](http://usda-ars.nmsu.edu/JER/Monit_Assess/monitoring.htm). Draft Chinese, Spanish and Mongolian translations available on request.

