Part 316 – Interagency Rangeland Ecological Site Implementation Plan

316.0 Purpose

This national instruction provides instructions and guidance for participation in interagency and interdisciplinary ecological site (ES) implementation plan work groups at the State and local level, including annual reports of progress and needs.

316.1 Background:

Title 190, “Rangeland Interagency Ecological Site Manual,” Part 500 (190-RIESM-500) identifies the establishment of an interagency, interdisciplinary workgroup. A national interagency workgroup, comprised of employees from Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Forest Service (FS), and NRCS provides leadership in the implementation of 190-RIESM and Title 190, Interagency Ecological Site Handbook for Rangelands.

316.2 Local Implementation Plan Work Group Establishment

A. Responsibilities

(1) A State-level interdisciplinary working group will be established under the direction of the NRCS State conservationist, FS regional foresters, and BLM State director.
   (i) This group discusses ecological site activities, considers the priorities of all agencies, and recommends actions.
   (ii) Their responsibility includes coordination and oversight for the development and maintenance of ecological site descriptions and interpretations to ensure they meet unique agency business needs.

(2) A local-level interdisciplinary working group will be established to consolidate ecological site description (ESD) and interpretation needs into interagency local work plans.
   (i) This group will be under the direction of State-level discipline leads.
   (ii) The group will generally be convened by the NRCS State rangeland management specialist, who will bring expert knowledge together.

(3) The interagency local work plan will be developed by major land resource area (MLRA) and will more specifically define interdisciplinary team membership, methods for the identification, inventory, analysis, documentation, and interpretation of ecological sites.

   The implementation plan should provide a crosswalk to other classification and mapping system hierarchies used by the agencies.

(4) An ESD provides interpretations about the land uses and ecosystem services that an ES can support and management alternatives for achieving land management objectives. The interagency local implementation work plan will include review of ESDs to ensure they meet land and resource interpretation needs for each agency.

(5) Persons who interact with the land on a regular basis may have gained practical knowledge about how ecosystems function by living and managing them and thus can be included in this group.
   (i) Where ESs cover both private and public lands the local work group will include public land agency personnel.
Every effort should be made to invite and involve local experts from sources such as, scientists, academia, agency professionals, conservation partners, land owners, and land managers.

316.3 The National Rangeland Interagency Ecological Site Implementation Plan

A. Use the guidance on plan development, implementation, and reporting found in the annually updated National Rangeland Interagency Implementation Plan https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/technical/ecoscience/desc/

B. Deputy chiefs will annually review interagency ecological site progress reports to recommend new or revised national metrics as needed to document and verify interdeputy area, intra-agency, and partner collaboration in ES program development and recommend actions to ensure that ES projects are developed collaboratively in accordance with interagency and intra-agency policy, responsibilities, and procedures.

C. National Rangeland Interagency Ecological Site Implementation Plan Content Outline

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