

ATTACHMENT 3

Datasets to Inform Site-Scale Habitat Assessment Indicators

The core and supplemental indicator data collected as part of the standardized [Assessment, Inventory, and Monitoring \(AIM\) Strategy](#) shall be used to inform the site-scale indicators (terrestrial, lentic riparian and wetland systems, and lotic/aquatic). If BLM offices have previously collected data following methods other than the AIM methods (HAF, Table 14), offices shall transition to the AIM methods for consistent measurements across the sage-grouse range. However, while some habitat assessment indicators may be applicable to multiple seasonal habitats, it is important that grass and forb-related data be collected during the appropriate phenology. Additionally, the AIM methods do not inform all site-scale indicators identified in the HAF. For example, AIM core methods do not include the distance from a lek to adequate sagebrush cover, the proximity of detrimental land uses to a lek, the proximity of trees and other tall structures to a lek, sagebrush shape, or riparian/wet meadow stability. Where these indicators are relevant to a particular GRSG Plan Amendment, geospatial analysis or supplemental methods will be needed for these indicators, including input of partner data if available.

BLM state offices, district offices, and field offices shall work with the assessment and monitoring branch at the NOC to design a sampling strategy that conforms to the AIM sampling strategy and provides adequate sample points in sage-grouse seasonal habitats to complete site-scale habitat assessment data collection. BLM offices in need of additional sampling locations to complete the habitat assessment process should use a statistically valid sampling design, as appropriate, that conforms to the AIM strategy. District and field offices shall coordinate with their state monitoring coordinator, or the NOC monitoring leads, to generate an appropriate sample design.

Where possible, quantitative data collected as part of the AIM Strategy should be supplemented with other available data (e.g., trend, riparian proper functioning condition, etc.) collected by BLM or partners to inform the indicators for the site-scale habitat assessments. All data shall be supported by: (a) repeatable and documented methods and (b) BLM's receipt of documented sources of the data, as well as the other pertinent information such as season of collection. Limitations and data gaps shall be documented in the Habitat Assessment Summary Report.

Updating Habitat Assessment Framework Site-Scale Forms

The HAF technical reference (6710-1) includes site-scale forms which document the indicators and values for suitable, marginal, and unsuitable site-scale habitat ratings initially based on Sather-Blair et al. (2000). These forms need to be updated to conform with GRSG Plan Amendments' Habitat Objectives Tables. In the absence of explicit land use plan direction, the following steps describe the process for using appropriate indicators and benchmarks in the HAF Forms:

1. Indicators that are included in the GRSG Plan Amendment's Habitat Objectives Table, but not in the HAF forms, must be added to the applicable HAF forms. In BLM offices with management responsibilities for sage-grouse habitats not contained within the

geographic area of the GRSG Plan Amendments, indicators can be added to the HAF forms that are developed for those sage-grouse habitats.

2. Indicators that are in the HAF forms but are not in the GRSG Plan Amendment's Habitat Objectives Table, will be measured and values recorded on the forms. The indicator shall not be used for the suitability rating of the monitoring location. This information may be useful for other BLM purposes beyond suitability ratings.
3. BLM offices are required to note the change(s) to the data forms in the "Rationale for Overall Suitability" section of the HAF forms and in the Habitat Assessment Summary Report.