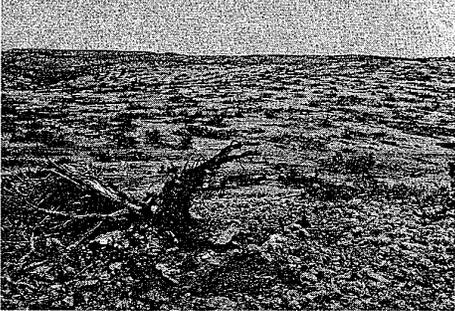


RANGE CONSERVATION - TECHNICAL NOTES

AER. CHEMICAL PLANT CONTROL



CHAINING PINON JUNIPER

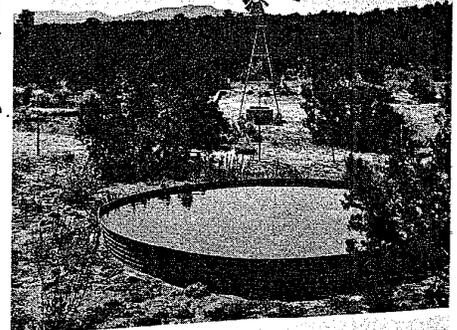


PROPER RANGE USE PAYS



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
NEW MEXICO

GOOD LIVESTOCK WATERING



CHOLLA CONTROL



RANGE TECHNICAL NOTE NO. 41

June 20, 1970

SUBJECT: RANGE - Range Sites - Ground Cover

Range site and condition class determination is the official method used by the Soil Conservation Service in its range inventory. Range site yields are expressed in pounds per acre for Excellent, Good, Fair and Poor range condition. Species composition of a range site is determined on a percent by weight basis.

These procedures minimize the importance of ground cover density as a range inventory determination. Different range sites have different potentials for producing kinds and amounts of vegetation. It follows that they also have varying optimum ground cover densities. Managing for greater density of ground cover is practical only if the optimum ground cover has not been reached. Excessive ground cover actually can reduce the productivity and erosion control capability of a site.

AO

Area Range Conservationists

Regional Range Conservationist, RTSC

Adjoining States: Arizona, Colorado, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah

Management objectives directed toward approaching the potential of the range site emphasizes composition by weight, and ground cover automatically falls into place.

In SCS we continue to indicate the optimum ground cover for the potential plant community in each range site description because it helps to describe that potential plant community. In inventorying the range resource we record the present ground cover on Form NM-26 to guide us in determining range trend and treatment and management needs. On the other hand, ground cover as such is not used as a criterion for adjusting range condition class. Paragraph 2.564, National Handbook for Range and Related Grazing Lands provides examples for such adjustments.

In order to standardize ground cover as used in SCS the following interpretations are made:

1. On rangeland, composition by weight based on total annual yield is determined for all plant species including trees, shrubs, grasses, and forbs. (See Paragraph 4.11, National Handbook for Range and Related Grazing Lands.)
2. On rangeland, ground cover is considered to be the percent ground surface shaded "at high noon" by all live vegetation growing on the site.
3. On grazable woodland, the determination of yield and composition by weight is confined to the understory species within reach of livestock and game animals (See paragraph 3.40 National Handbook for Range and Related Grazing Lands; refer to Section II-F, work unit technical guide, for the criteria for identifying grazable woodlands.)
4. On grazable woodland, therefore, ground cover is determined only for those species within reach of livestock and game animals and then just to the grazing height. Canopy cover of trees for woodland inventory purposes is a separate determination.