

M04t15_Soil

When we're in the field what we do first is, is assess the indicators and we use a sliding scale to do this. If what we see in the field matches up what we call reference then we rate it none to slight, if we are seeing departure from the reference than that can range anywhere from slight to moderate to extreme to total and you see all five of the, of the ways that we can rate the indicators on this particular sheet. But, we don't stop there, the product of rangeland health evaluation is not a single rating of the 17 indicators, but, it turns out that we use those 17 indicators to put together an assessment of three attributes representing what we consider to be important ecological characteristics of our, characteristics of ecological systems. The first of these is soil and site stability, the second one is hydrologic function and the third one is integrity of the biotic system and the, what we're looking for here is very, very seldom we have something that is so cut and dried that we know for a fact that, that this or that is happening on the rangeland and can make a clear cut judgement that something is good or something is bad. So, what we're looking at from the 17 indicators put together into these three attributes is we're looking for the preponderance of evidence to give us guidance on what we think is happening to our rangeland resources. The first of these attributes is soil and site stability and this is, this is the capacity of an area to limit redistribution and loss of soil resources, it's that, those characters, those indicator that we've talked about that basically contribute to soil development, the maintenance and long-term productivity, development of soil and ultimately then the stability of the site and you can see these two pictures on a desert grassland that we've got two very, very different situations

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and you can look at the one on the right in particular and you can see the bare ground and the water flow patterns that have been moved through there, the hammocking or the pedestaling of the plant and know that that's a site where you have not managed to have soil and site stability. Now, this next slide is the list of those indicators that we use to actually evaluate this attribute and so, we use the, the ones that are in yellow to rate soil site stability and we rate them as being, as no variation from the reference, (i.e.) none to slight all the way to extreme to total variation or departure from the reference. So, this is, these are then the indicators that you would put together in your evaluation Matrix for soil and _____.