

IDAHO'S ICONIC RANGELANDS



Rangelands are vast natural landscapes that cover nearly half of Idaho.

They are symbols of the wide-open West. These iconic western landscapes influence those who live, work, and recreate amidst or near rangelands. Rangelands have a complicated cultural and ecological history, and have been the subject of debate among citizens, land managers, scientists, and policy-makers. Complex issues surround range lands today in an era of ecological, societal, economic, and climatic change.

Diverse publics agree that rangelands hold great intrinsic value for many reasons, including generations of family ranching, open landscape beauty, fish and wildlife, rich history and culture, public land, hunting and fishing, conservation, and recreation.

Rangelands are ecologically interdependent communities, as are the human communities that work together to use and manage these lands to improve and preserve them.

Rangeland stewardship is vital to all interests because it ensures the ecological and economic health of these lands that are integral to Idaho's past, present, and future.

Solid, unbiased science continually provides more information about this highly variable ecosystem.

Our next generation of well-educated students promise to guide the future of rangelands for all.

The University of Idaho's Rangeland Center and its many partners can help connect you to resources, science, education - and people like you who want the best for Idaho's rangelands.

We're in this together.

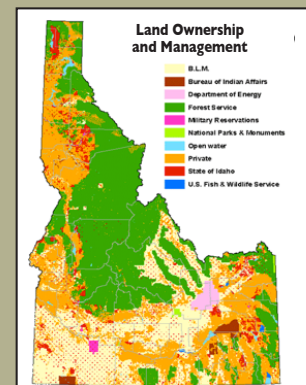
University of Idaho
Rangeland Center

WHAT ARE RANGELANDS?



Rangelands are a type of land, not a specific land use. Rangelands are described as:

- Non-cultivated (non-agricultural) land. Rangelands typically cannot sustain farming because of low precipitation, shallow soils, and rugged topography.
- Lands that don't include dense forests. Rangelands may have trees, such as juniper and aspen, but are typically dominated by lower-growing, diverse grasses and shrubs, with flowering plants.
- Diverse habitats for wildlife and livestock. The rich ecological diversity provides food, cover, and rearing-ground for healthy fish, birds, wildlife, livestock, and non-domesticated animals.
- Lands that can be a renewable natural resource. Depending on soils, precipitation, and topography, between 30-50% of the annual production for forage plants can be safely harvested each year without damage to soil, vegetation, or wildlife resources.
- More than 40% of the earth's land area and approximately 50% of the 17 western states (excluding Alaska and Hawaii) are rangelands.
- Idaho rangeland vegetation regions include Pacific bunchgrass, mountain meadow, salt desert shrubland, juniper woodland, and sagebrush grassland.
- These lands are both publicly managed and privately owned.
- Rangelands support diverse interests and uses: ranching and livestock production, wildlife conservation, hunting and fishing recreation, energy development, and more.



Source: Inside Idaho, Surface Management Agency (Federal Land Status) for Idaho

University of Idaho
Rangeland Center