

WORKSHEET 10 – VISUAL, RESIDUAL DRY MATTER (RDM) AND PHOTO MONITORING

Visual Inspections

Annual visual monitoring can be done to capture the general readiness of the ranch for the oncoming wet season, and general ranch water quality conditions during the wet season. Visual monitoring can consist of:

- Two dry season inspections including one in September of the entire ranch prior to the rainy season.
- Wet season inspections of the ranch following storms or every month (Dec.-April).
- One stream survey above and below or upstream and downstream of the ranch.

Use these inspections with Pasture and Stream Assessments (RWQP Worksheets 4 & 5) to decide if further management practices are needed to improve water quality on the ranch. For rangeland health indicators, refer to the [Rangeland Health Assessment](#) guide from the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Start the yearly task of compliance monitoring on the ranch in September, at the onset of the rainy season. Follow this up with two wet season inspections and one inspection in the late-spring. The late-spring inspection can be used to

plan conservation practice implementation before the winter rains arrive. To monitor more efficiently conduct the stream survey above and below the ranch during one of the wet season or dry season inspections.

In the table below, note the results of monitoring activities for field observations of potential water quality concerns found during visual inspections, estimates of Residual Dry Matter (RDM), and photographs taken

Residual Dry Matter (RDM) and Photo-Monitoring

Estimate RDM in the fall by visual and clip/dry/weigh methods. A useful guide for estimating RDM is available from [Wildland Solutions](#). Interpret data as less (<), equal (=), or above (>) the minimum RDM objective for each pasture using the Pasture Inventory (RWQP Worksheet 3). Refer to [Guidelines for Residual Dry Matter \(RDM\) Management](#).

Photographs are taken from the same location over time to document 1) RDM monitoring, 2) implemented conservation practices such as upgrading culverts, and 3) improvements at a site over time such as increased vegetation cover. List and describe the locations of photo-points and attach photos if possible. Refer to [Photo-Monitoring for Better Land Use Planning & Assessment](#).

| Date | Location (pasture/site) | RDM estimate (check method, photo, minimum) | | | Visual inspection observations, RDM explanations and notes |
|------|-------------------------|---|--------|--------|--|
| | | visual | clip | photo | |
| | | RDM = _____ lb/ac | | | |
| | | > min. | = min. | < min. | |
| | | visual | clip | photo | |
| | | RDM = _____ lb/ac | | | |
| | | > min. | = min. | < min. | |
| | | visual | clip | photo | |
| | | RDM = _____ lb/ac | | | |
| | | > min. | = min. | < min. | |
| | | visual | clip | photo | |
| | | RDM = _____ lb/ac | | | |
| | | > min. | = min. | < min. | |