

Grassland Management Planning Decision Matrix Wetlands Reserve Program

Easement Name: _____ Easement Number: _____

Easement Owner: _____

Prepared By: _____ Date Prepared: _____

Reviewed By: _____ Reviewed Date: _____

NOTE TO PLANNER: Make sure that you have ready access to the following reference documents while using this template. They can all be found at [www.ia.nrcs.gov/technical/wrp/easement management references](http://www.ia.nrcs.gov/technical/wrp/easement%20management%20references).

- WRP Purpose and Objectives (Conservation Programs Manual 514.01b & c)
- NRCS Field Office 6-Part Easement Folder (contains easement boundary map, location maps, soils map, etc.)
- Topographic map
- Aerial photo with delineation of Easement boundary and Management Area¹
- Aerial photo of 0.75 mile radius from the edges of the Management Area (Context Area²)
- Map of Iowa Wildlife Target Areas
- Species of Greatest Conservation Need lists
- Iowa Natural Areas Inventory;
<https://programs.iowadnr.gov/naturalareasinventory/pages/Logon.aspx>
- Species population separation distance table
- Iowa NRCS Native Plant Community Query Database;
<http://www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/RestorationTools.html>

Where is easement area? Township _____, Range _____, Section _____

Describe the Context Area (List approximate acres of various grassland types, upland and bottomland, as well as other land cover types. Identify prairie or wetland remnants onsite or within one mile.):

Overview description of the grassland and other areas on the easement; for grassland portions, provide any other information that can be readily attained such as restoration mix used:

¹This template is intended for use in grasslands that have soils that are well drained, excessively drained, and possibly some-what poorly drained (depending on the existing/restored hydrology), and should be used in conjunction with the Wetland and/or Woodland Management Planning Decision Matrix.

¹ Management Area: That portion of the grassland that contains similar habitat communities and will receive the similar management prescription. A Management Area may be part of an easement or may include several easements. An easement might include more than one Management Area.

² Context Area: The area within 0.75 mile of the edges of the Management Area.

Complete for each Management Area:

1. Landscape position and desired habitat types:

Topographic Position	Habitat Type ³	Acres	Predominant Slope ⁴	Predominant Aspect ⁵	Predominant Soil ⁶
Floodplain or First Bottom					
Second Bottom					
Bench					
Upland					
Total Grassland in Easement			Total Grassland in Management Area		

2. Wildlife Target Area (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

³ Use the NRCS plant community descriptions, Native Plant Community Query Database and/or appropriate reference community to determine habitat type.

⁴ Slope Range:

0 – 2%	2 – 5%	5 – 9%	9 – 14%	> 14%
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⁵ Predominant Aspect:

North: N	S: South	E: East
NE: Northeast	SE: Southeast	W: West
NW: Northwest	SW: Southwest	N/A: Aspect has no affect on habitat

⁶ Specify Soil Map Units (SMU) of this habitat type within this Management Area.

3. For each habitat type identified in 1, what are the dominant vegetative species? (Extra table on last page.)

Habitat Type:						
Structure	Current % Cover	Desired % Cover	Species in order of prevalence (note as dominant, co-dominant or associated ⁷)	Undesirable / Invasive (check if yes)	Current Species % Cover	Desired Species % Cover
Grasses and sedges						
Forbs						
Woody (Trees & Shrubs)						

4. Are there any invasive species within the **Context Area** but **not found** on the **management area**? If yes, list species and percent cover (if known).

⁷ **Dominant:** A plant species which predominates in a community because of its size, abundance or coverage (>25%).
Co-dominant: One of the most characteristic and prevalent species in a biotic community, but its abundance or coverage (10-24%) is not as great as that of a dominant species.
Associated: Species in a specific geographic area characterizing a community amongst dominant and co-dominant species (<10% cover).

5. List the breaks in habitat contiguity and their approximate widths:
Breaks in contiguity include any public roads, rivers, streams or non-grassland land uses. Narrow breaks such as a fence line, field drainage ditch, or other breaks < 20 feet wide do not break continuity. Pathways under bridges should be evaluated by a biologist to determine whether or not they maintain habitat contiguity for herpetiles and mammals.

Break Type	Width

6. a. Taking into consideration breaks identified in question 5, how many contiguous acres of grassland (all grassland on non-hydric soils) occur within the Context Area?

- b. How many contiguous acres of grassland (all grassland on non-hydric soils) occur within the Management Area and on adjacent properties under similar management?

7. For which species was the WRP Restoration Targeted to benefit and what are WRP Objectives for this easement?

8. For which WRP wildlife species/guilds⁸ is this management area suited for? (Utilize the Grassland Species of Greatest Conservation Need Table as a reference, paying particular attention to T, E, and S species if known to be found on the site or adjacent sites - use scientific sources such as Nature Serve, grassland species management requirement papers by FWS, DNR species profiles, etc.)

9. Are there State protected T&E species present on the management area or within the species population separation distance? Are there federally listed species for the county? Is there suitable habitat present for these species onsite? If so, management plan development and implementation will require consultation and concurrence with FWS and/or IDNR (contact the NRCS State Office). List the species and constraints on management activities.

⁸ Guild – a group of organisms that use the same ecological resources in a similar way.

10. What are the habitat requirements for the targeted wildlife species/guilds appropriate to the Management Area (what community type, structure, age class, etc., appropriate to supply the target wildlife habitat needs)?

11. What management practices are needed to meet the needs identified in 10? Provide the timing, extent and duration of the planned practices. Explain how each practice will be evaluated to determine whether the target species/guilds community and structural habitat requirements have been achieved?

12. Are there opportunities for further grassland restoration and improvements? If yes, explain.
