



Natural Resources Conservation Service
210 Walnut Street, Room 693
Des Moines, IA 50309-2180

August 16, 2012

IOWA BULLETIN NO. IA190-12-11

SUBJECT: ECS – REVISED NEPA GUIDANCE REGARDING CONSERVATION
PLANNING FOR CRP EMERGENCY HAYING/GRAZING AND
AFFECTS TO T&E SPECIES

PURPOSE: Provide revised direction for evaluating and documenting potential effects on T&E species from emergency haying or grazing of lands enrolled in the CRP.

EXPIRATION DATE: September 30, 2013

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has received additional input from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources regarding likely impacts of grazing or haying of lands enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to state-listed threatened or endangered species. In light of this input, NRCS planners will use the following procedures to evaluate and document environmental effects of haying or grazing on CRP lands.

Determine potential affects to federal or state protected threatened or endangered (T&E) species by accessing the *CRP_E_T_Buffer* ArcMap layer located on the field office's geodata server located at f:\geodata\endangered_habitat (discontinue use of the *T_E_PLSS_Sections* ArcMap layer). In this layer, highlighted buffer zones depict sensitive areas near wood turtle, eastern massasauga, or ornate box turtle populations.

- If the CRP land is not located within a buffer zone, the exclusion of all remnant habitats (herbaceous or woodland) and adherence to the guidance provided in the official *CRP Emergency Haying/Grazing Plan* will not adversely affect federal or state protected T&E species. Note this determination on the *CPA-52 Environmental Evaluation Worksheet*.
- If the CRP land is not located within a buffer zone and remnant habitat (herbaceous or woodland) will not be excluded, NRCS is to notify FSA of potentially adverse T&E species impacts on the *CPA-52 Environmental Evaluation Worksheet*.
- If the CRP land is located within one of the buffer zones and the producer is planning to graze, this action will not adversely affect federal or state protected T&E species. Note this determination on the *CPA-52 Environmental Evaluation Worksheet*.
- If the CRP land is located within one of the buffer zones and the producer is planning to harvest hay, NRCS is to notify FSA of potentially adverse T&E species impacts on the *CPA-52 Environmental Evaluation Worksheet*.

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NRCS is to only complete CPA-52 Environmental Evaluation sections A-P (or the equivalent on older forms), at which point NRCS has completed all Endangered Species Act related responsibilities. If the addition of haying or grazing to the CRP plan...

- Does not change the "Determination of Significance or Extraordinary Circumstances" in Section O (or the equivalent on older forms), then pen and ink changes to the existing CPA-52 are acceptable.
- Does change the "Determination of Significance or Extraordinary Circumstances" in Section O (or the equivalent on older forms), then a new CPA-52 shall be completed.

As the responsible federal agency, Farm Service Agency (FSA) will consult with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) or United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for haying or grazing plans that have the potential to affect T&E species as indicated by NRCS on the CPA-52.

Questions may be directed to Marty Adkins, State Resource Conservationist, or Jennifer Anderson-Cruz, Biologist, at (515) 284-4370.

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