

Animal Enhancement Activity – ANM09 – Grazing management to improve wildlife habitat



Enhancement Description

Implement a grazing management plan that will allow for rest periods to provide adequate residue for nesting and fawning cover and increase diversity of vegetation structure to benefit a variety of wildlife species.

Land Use Applicability

Pastureland, Rangeland, Forestland

Benefits

Wildlife habitat can be greatly improved through proper grazing management. Proper grazing management is essential to healthy wildlife populations because plants supply many species of birds and animals with food and cover for nesting, fawning, loafing, roosting, travel and escape from predators and adverse weather. These include song birds, quail, turkey, pheasants, deer, and rabbits to name just a few. Some species of ground nesting grassland birds are in decline and others have become uncommon. Healthy stands of forage can be managed to provide habitat for a wide array of wildlife.

Conditions Where Enhancement Applies

This enhancement applies to all pasture (including silvopasture), range or forest land use acres.

Criteria

1. Defer 33% of the grazing land on the land use from grazing during the nesting/fawning season each year.
2. Develop and implement a written grazing management plan that identifies the following:
 - a. wildlife management objectives for grazing land,
 - b. targeted wildlife species,
 - c. nesting or fawning dates,
 - d. the location and number of acres to be deferred each year,
 - e. a schedule for the year of deferment, and
 - f. stocking rates that will allow proper forage utilization while maintaining proper plant heights that provide food and shelter for wildlife and maintain plant health.

Additional criteria for silvopasture

1. Inventory the habitat condition of the silvopasture, the farm, and adjoining farms to determine habitat needs for the targeted wildlife.
2. Use one or more of the following methods to improve habitat for the targeted species.
 - a. Establish additional understory vegetation (e.g., native grass, forbs and shrubs) that will improve habitat conditions for the targeted species.



- b. Establish clusters of other tree species if needed as a food source (e.g., oaks for mast).
- c. Manage tree canopy to achieve the desired understory plant community.
- d. Leave some dead or dying trees as snags if cavity nesting wildlife is targeted.
- e. Remove trees or invasive plants that do not provide the desired habitat.
- f. Replace removed trees by planting new trees or shrubs that will provide the desired habitat.
- g. Thin less desirable trees to encourage the growth of trees that will provide the desired wildlife habitat.

Adoption Requirements

This enhancement is considered adopted when a grazing management plan targeting selected wildlife species has been written and one-third of the grazing land is avoided during the nesting/fawning season each year as prescribed.

Documentation Requirements

1. A schedule of when grazing activities occurred documenting that grazing activities were deferred on a minimum of 33% of the available acreage.
2. A map showing the acreage where these activities are applied.

References

Holechek J. L., R. Valdez, S.D. Schemnitz, R.D. Pieper and C.A. Davis. 1982. Wildlife Society Bulletin Vol. 10, No. 3: 204-210.

Lyons, R.K. and B.D. Wright. 2003. Using Livestock to Manage Wildlife Habitat. Available electronically from <http://hdl.handle.net/1969.1/87188>

Nistler, C. M., J. Boren and D. Rollins. 2006. Proceedings – Symposia: Prescribed Livestock Grazing to Enhance Wildlife Habitat. 112 pages. Society for Range Management.

Undersander, D., S. Temple and J. Bartlett and L. Paine. 2000. Grassland Birds: Fostering Habitats using Rotational Grazing. University of Wisconsin-Extension Publication A3715.

USDA-NRCS. 2010. Conservation Practice Standard: Prescribed Grazing-Code 528.

Indiana CSP Enhancement Supplemental Information

ANM09 –Grazing Management to Improve Wildlife Habitat:

- “Nesting/fawning season” = April 1 through August 1.

Additional criteria for silvopasture:

- Only applicable to existing pastureland that presently has trees, or where trees will be planted.
- Does not apply to native forestland, or woodland managed for timber production or for wildlife habitat.
- Only applicable to hard-mast producing trees that will be planted/maintained (see the appropriate [CSP Wildlife Plant Species](http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CSP/csp2010/2010%20CSP%20Wildlife%20Plant%20Species.doc) tables
<http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CSP/csp2010/2010%20CSP%20Wildlife%20Plant%20Species.doc>)
- Wildlife species that may be benefitted include: squirrels, deer, turkey, and woodpeckers.
- Existing canopy cover of the trees cannot exceed 30%.
- A prescribed grazing/browsing plan must be written and followed.
- The acreage will not be utilized as only a “lounge” area for adjacent pasture.
- Water access shall be available at a distance no more than 1200 feet from any grazed portion. Natural springs, creeks, streams or rivers shall not be utilized as the water source and shall be protected.
- Livestock will not be allowed to graze/browse these sites when conditions are present for excessive compaction or erosion problems. Vegetative cover shall be maintained at all times.
- Grazing/browsing outside the normal growth period for the species present will not be allowed – not to be used as a winter “barn”.