



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E528E

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Improved grazing management for enhanced plant structure and composition for wildlife

Conservation Practice 528: Prescribed Grazing

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Pasture; Range; Forest; Associated Ag Land

RESOURCE CONCERN: Plants

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 1 year

Enhancement Description

Managing the harvest of vegetation with grazing and/or browsing animals for the purpose of improving the quantity and quality of the structure and composition of the plant community that is available for wildlife.

Criteria

- Must follow a written plan for matching the forage quantity and quality produced with the grazing and/or browsing demand.
- Removal of herbage will be in accordance with site production limitations, rate of plant growth, the physiological needs of forage plants, and the nutritional needs of the animals.
- Deferment (non-grazing period less than one year) and/or rest (non-grazing period equal or greater than one year) will be planned for critical periods of plant needs (such as post-planting or renovation, severe drought, etc.).
- Manage grazing and/or browsing animals to maintain adequate cover on sensitive areas (such as riparian areas, wetlands, habitats of concern, karst areas, etc.)

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- Manage livestock movements based on rate of plant growth, available forage, and allowable utilization target. Develop and follow contingency plans to deal with episodic disturbance events.
- Both the specie(s) of concern and the plant functional groups providing structure and composition will be identified in the objectives of the prescribed grazing plan.
- Plan the intensity, frequency, timing and duration of grazing and/or browsing to provide for the development and maintenance of the plant structure, density and diversity needed for the desired fish and wildlife species of concern.
- Manage the afore-mentioned aspects of grazing events to maintain a minimum score of 0.60 when evaluated with the state NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG).



Documentation and Implementation Requirements

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Participant will:

- Prior to implementation, obtain a written grazing plan (NRCS can provide assistance as needed). Plan must include:
 - Clear goals and objectives of the plan, including identification of the specie(s) of concern and the plant functional groups providing structure and composition.
 - Contingency plan for events that trigger adverse results.
 - Forage/Animal Balance.
 - A grazing plan narrative describing the basis for when livestock movement or rotation will occur, including deferment plans.
 - Contingency plans for forage shortfalls.
 - Monitoring locations, key species, and monitoring techniques.
 - Map identifying all permanent pastures, water sources, and any riparian area or watershed drainage locations improved or maintained by this management.

- Prior to implementation, work with NRCS to complete an assessment of the site using the state's approved NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG).

- During implementation, keep the following documentation:
 - Livestock herd management records with seasonally important phenological stages of plant growth relative to species of concern.
 - Annually complete a forage utilization worksheet, such as NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Prescribed Grazing (Code 528) job sheet.
 - Grazing intensity records for all key grazing areas that accommodate the criteria.

- During implementation, consult with NRCS to adjust and adapt the grazing plan to current conditions to verify the changes meet enhancement criteria. Changes to the grazing plan will be documented in writing.

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- After implementation, make all records available for review by NRCS to verify implementation of the enhancement.
- After implementation, complete an assessment of the site with NRCS using the state's approved NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG).

NRCS will:

- As needed, provide technical additional assistance to the participant as requested.
- Prior to implementation, provide and explain NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Prescribed Grazing (Code 528) as it relates to implementing this enhancement, including any state approved job sheets or work sheets.
- Prior to implementation, complete an assessment of the site with the participant using the state's approved NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG).

Species of Concern: _____

WHEG score before implementation: _____

WHEG score after implementation: _____

- Prior to implementation, assist the participant with development of a grazing plan, if requested. If NRCS does not assist with plan development, the plan(s) will be reviewed by NRCS for approval prior to implementation to confirm the written objectives meet the criteria of the enhancement.
- Prior to implementation, explain the functionality of this enhancement with Enhancements E314332Z and E314134Z, if sequentially applicable.
- During implementation, as requested, assist the participant with adapting the grazing strategy and plan to current conditions.
- After implementation, review grazing plan, records, and documentation to verify the enhancement was implemented to meet the criteria.
- After implementation, complete an assessment of the site with the participant using the state's approved NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG).

WHEG score after implementation: _____

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NRCS Documentation Review:

I have reviewed all required participant documentation and have determined the participant has implemented the enhancement and met all criteria and requirements.

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Participant Name _____ Contract Number _____

Total Amount Applied _____ Fiscal Year Completed _____

NRCS Technical Adequacy Signature

Date



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SOUTH DAKOTA (SD) SUPPLEMENT TO CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

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E528E

Additional Criteria for SD:

In addition to the criteria specified in the national job sheet E528E, the following additional criteria apply in SD:

- Criteria related to the written grazing management plan:
 - Start of grazing period will be changed by a minimum of 2 weeks in each pasture/paddock each year during the growing season.
 - Adequate recovery periods must be provided:
 - Minimum of 30 days between grazing events on pasture, 45 days on range.
 - Longer recovery periods will be needed during slow growth period and during drought.
 - Maximum utilization will not exceed 50 percent (%) by weight of the total current year's growth.
- Grazing should not commence before the following minimum heights are reached:
 - 4 inches: little bluestem, sideoats grama;
 - 8 inches: big bluestem, Indiangrass, intermediate wheatgrass, pubescent wheatgrass, prairie sandreed, sand bluestem, tall wheatgrass;
 - 12 inches: switchgrass;
 - 6 inches: all other species.
- Maximum seasonal utilization rates will be based on guidelines referenced in Range Tech Note 9, Table 4 for grassland nesting birds.
- Nesting/fawning dates in SD are May 1 through August 1.

Additional Documentation Requirements for SD

In addition to the documentation requirements specified in the national job sheet E528E, the following additional documentation requirements apply in SD:

- Complete the SD Range Tool (SD-CPA-39 Forage/Animal Inventory, Grazing Schedule using the SD-CPA-15 or similar form, and SD-CPA-16 or similar grazing records document).
- Complete a drought contingency plan using the SD Drought Tool or provide the participant with a copy of the example drought contingency plan located within the SD Prescribed Grazing Technical Note 9.
- Must complete SD-CPA-19 (WHEG) and attain a minimum score of 0.60.