



## CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E528G

# CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

### Improved grazing management on pasture for plant productivity and health with monitoring activities

CONSERVATION PRACTICE: 528 - Prescribed Grazing

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Pasture

RESOURCE CONCERN: Plants

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 1 years

#### Enhancement Description

Managing the harvest of vegetation with grazing and/or browsing animals as adjusted when following recommendations of a qualifying professional, as detailed in the enhancement criteria, generated through Pasture Condition Scoring (PCS).

#### Criteria

- A written plan for matching the forage quantity and quality produced with the grazing and/or browsing demand will be followed.
- 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.
- Adjust intensity, frequency, timing, and duration of grazing and/or browsing (providing sufficient recovery time to meet planned, written objectives) to meet the desired objectives for the plant communities and associated resources.
- 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.
- The narrative management recommendations and implementation for duration and intensity of grazing and/or browsing will be based on the desired plant health and productivity objectives.
- Perform a soils test on the applicable acres for organic matter and nutrient analysis through a land grant university or accredited lab.
- Apply fertilizer and/or soil amendments according to a current soil test when plant vigor needs improvement.
- Follow guidelines provided by a Certified Forage and Grassland Professional, Certified Range Management Consultant, or Certified Professional in Range Management, NRCS Technical Service Provider approved for a DIA 159, or a non-affiliated consultant with a bachelor or higher level degree in agronomy, range science or other closely-related plant science discipline and a minimum of five years' experience in pastureland conservation planning, monitoring, and consulting regarding use of pastureland improvement practices generated through the Pasture Condition Scoring (PCS) assessment tool.

### **Documentation and Implementation Requirements**

#### **Participant will:**

- Prior to implementation, acquire a Grazing Management Plan with all the following components (provide plan to NRCS for review and approval):
  - Producer goals, objectives, and resource concerns
  - Location and condition of structural improvements
  - Watering sites with availability, quantity, and quality
  - Forage inventory
  - Forage-animal balance sheet
  - Grazing plan for livestock movement
  - Contingency plan
  - Monitoring plan
- During implementation, perform a soil test on the applicable acres.



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- During implementation, secure a Certified Forage and Grassland Professional, Certified Range Management Consultant, Certified Professional in Range Management, NRCS Technical Service Provider approved for DIA 159, or a non-affiliated consultant with a bachelor or higher level degree in agronomy, range science or other closely-related plant science discipline and a minimum of five years' experience in pastureland conservation planning, monitoring, and consulting regarding use of pastureland improvement practices to:
  - 1) Select a monitoring site in each forage type or forage mixture on the enrolled acreage to assess with the Pasture Condition Scoring tool.
  - 2) Conduct assessments on those sites using the Pasture Condition Scoring tool and document the location.
  - 3) Develop a written recommendation including duration and intensity of grazing and/or browsing based on desired health and productivity objectives while addressing adequate cover, litter, and canopy to maintain or improve infiltration, soil health and reduce soil compaction and other resource concerns identified during the Pasture Condition Score (PCS) assessment.
  
- During implementation, identify key grazing areas and key forage species and monitor pastures for grazing utilization.
  
- During implementation, keep pasture/herd in/out records.
  
- During implementation, complete forage utilization job sheet at the end of the grazing season for NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Prescribed Grazing (528).
  
- During implementation, document adjustments needed to maintain feed and forage balance.
  
- After implementation, provide the following items for review by NRCS:
  - Pasture Condition Score Sheets with all field notes and locations.
  - Soil test analysis.
  - Written documentation from professional with recommendations and follow up actions.
  - Pasture/herd in/out dates.
  - Completed forage utilization job sheet.
  - Animal/forage balance sheet.
  - Written modifications to the grazing management and monitoring plan which address the resource concerns identified from the assessment.



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**NRCS will:**

- As needed, provide technical additional assistance to participant as requested.
- Prior to implementation, provide and explain NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Prescribed Grazing (CPS 528) as it relates to implementing this enhancement, including forage utilization job sheet.
- Prior to implementation, provide soils information and/ or Forage Suitability Groups as requested.
- After implementation, review all Pasture Condition Score sheets and written recommendations made by professional.
- After implementation, review soil test analysis.
- After implementation, verify implementation of the grazing management plan by reviewing grazing/herd in/out records, forage utilization job sheet, animal/forage balance records and changes made to the plan to address resource concerns identified during the Pasture Condition Scoring assessments.

**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.

Participant Name \_\_\_\_\_

Contract Number \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Applied \_\_\_\_\_

Fiscal Year Completed \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
NRCS Technical Adequacy Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## WASHINGTON SUPPLEMENT TO CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

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### Practice 528 (Prescribed Grazing) References

To meet criteria for the Prescribed Grazing Enhancements utilize one or more of the the below references or Technical Notes:

- A list of **Certified Range Management Consultants** can be found on the Society for Range Management’s website under the Education Tab. <http://rangelands.org/>
- **National Range and Pasture Handbook**. Location: eDirectives,Handbooks,Title 190 – Ecological Sciences,Part 645 National Range and Pasture Handbook.
- **Ecological Site Descriptions** can be found in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide <https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/state/WA/documents> in Section 2. For planning unit ecological sites see bullet below.
- **Ecological Sites** for planning unit soils can be found by using the **Web Soil Survey** <https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm>
- **Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health**, Technical Reference 1734-6, Version 5 (*Range Technical Note 103 Rangeland Health Assessment*). Location: Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG), Section 1/Reference Lists/Technical Notes by Discipline/Range folder. [WA FOTG Range Folder](#)
- **Pasture Condition Scoring** (*Pasture Technical Note 104 Pasture Condition Scoring Guide*). Location: Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG), Section 1/Reference Lists/Technical Notes by Discipline/Pasture folder. [Washington | Field Office Technical Guide | NRCS - USDA](#)
- Information on native and non-native grass species critical growth periods can be found in **Range Technical Note 34**. Location: Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG), Section 1/Reference Lists/Technical Notes by Discipline/Range folder. [WA FOTG Range Folder](#)



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- **Prescribed Grazing (528) Design Worksheet/s.**  
This document has several useful worksheets for developing grazing plans. Location: Section 4/Conservation Practice Standards & Support Documents/Prescribed Grazing (528) folder. [Washington | Field Office Technical Guide | NRCS - USDA](#)
- **Herbaceous Stubble Height as a Warning of Impending Cattle Grazing Damage to Riparian Areas.** Hall, Frederick C.; Bryant, Larry. 1995 Gen. Tech. Rep. PNW-GTR-362. USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station. 9 p.  
<https://www.treesearch.fs.fed.us/pubs/3062>
- **Managing Grazing of Riparian Areas in the Intermountain Region.** Clary, Warren P.; Webster, Bert F.; 1989. Gen. Tech. Rep. INT-263. USDA Forest Service, Intermountain Research Station. 11 p. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/research/treesearch/24605>
- **Monitoring the Vegetation Resources in Riparian Areas.** Winward, Alma H. 2000. RMRS-GTR-47. USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station. 49 p.  
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/research/treesearch/5452>
- Use the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) **Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) database** to identify priority wildlife and habitat in your area.  
<http://wdfw.wa.gov/mapping/phs/>
- Washington State's Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG) is **Biology Technical Note 14 Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG)**. Location: Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG), Section 1/Reference Lists/Technical Notes by Discipline/Biology folder.  
[WA FOTG Biology folder](#)
- For Washington State's **Sage Grouse Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG)** – contact State Sage Grouse lead (**NRCS State Biologist**) for the current evaluation guide.