



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E5280

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Clipping mature forages to set back vegetative growth for improved forage quality

Conservation Practice 528: Prescribed Grazing

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Pasture

RESOURCE CONCERN: Animals, Plants

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 1 year

Enhancement Description

Timely clipping of mature forages through mowing, swathing or some other mechanical cutting will occur to increase forage palatability by setting plants back to a vegetative state for improved grazing management and forage quality

Criteria

- A written plan for matching the forage quantity and quality produced with the grazing and/or browsing demand will be followed.
- Maintain diversity of forage plants to optimize delivery of nutrients to the animals by incorporating the intensity, frequency, timing and duration of grazing and/or browsing needed as determined by a planning process that includes: 1) Clear objectives, 2) A resource inventory including forage inventory, structural improvements and existing resource conditions, 3) Grazing plan, and 4) All potential contingency plans.
- Supplemental feed and/or minerals will be balanced with the forage consumption to meet the desired nutritional level for the kind and class of grazing and/or browsing livestock.

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- Timely clipping of mature forage species through mowing, swathing or some other mechanical cutting will occur to set back the vegetative state of the forage species.
- Excessive stems shall be removed during the cutting process to allow sunlight to reach the lower plant canopy.
- Cut forage species to a stubble height that will promote the vigor and health of the species and maintain stem bases that store food reserves for full vigorous recovery. **Follow NRCS state conservation practice standard recommendations.**
- Clipping should be avoided when forage is entering dormancy. Cutting heights should maintain insulation for extreme heat or cold. Use **NRCS** and local Cooperative Extension Service recommendations **on dates and stages** to avoid winterkill in cold climates.



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Documentation and Implementation Requirements

Participant will:

- Y 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**
- Y Prior to implementation, identify grazing areas and locations where clipping mature forages will occur
- Y Prior to implementation, provide a plan for mechanical clipping and livestock movement activities to NRCS
- Y During implementation keep a record of clipping activities and livestock movement
- Y During implementation, monitor forage maturity stages and livestock condition
- Y During implementation, keep record of clipping heights
- Y During implementation, take photos of areas immediately **before and** after clipping
- Y After implementation, provide the following items for review by NRCS:
 - Map and records showing clipping areas
 - Forage-animal balance sheet
 - Records of livestock movement through clipping areas
 - Documentation of clipping heights
 - Written modifications to grazing management plan based on results of clipping forages
 - Photos of fields **before and** after clipping activities
 - Notify NRCS immediately after clipping

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NRCS will:

- Y As needed, provide technical assistance to participant as requested
- Y Prior to implementation, provide and explain NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Prescribed Grazing (CPS 528) as it relates to implementing this enhancement
- Y Prior to implementation, provide and explain NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Forage Harvest Management (CPS 511)
- Y Prior to implementation, review the plan provided for livestock movement and mechanical clipping
- Y After implementation, review the map, record of livestock movement, clipping activities and heights and photos.
- Y After implementation, review the modifications to the grazing management plan based on results of clipping forages

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

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WASHINGTON SUPPLEMENT TO CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

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Practice 528 (Prescribed Grazing) References

- 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 Sites and Forage Suitability Groups** 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. <https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/state/WA/documents>
- Pasture Technical Note No. 105. **The Western Oregon and Washington Pasture Calendar**, A Pacific Northwest Extension Publication PNW 699. Oregon State University, University of Idaho, Washington State University. <https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/sites/catalog/files/project/pdf/pnw699.pdf>
- 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 usefull worksheets for developing grazing plans. Location: Section 4/Conservation Practice Standards & Support Documents/Prescribed Grazing (528) folder. <https://efotg.sc.gov.usda.gov/#/state/WA/documents>

Pasture and Hay (pasture) species, with seeding rates, for **Western Washington** can be found in the Extension Publication **EB1870, Pasture and Hayland Renovation** for Western Washington and Oregon. Also provides guidance on site preparation, seeding and when livestock grazing can resume.

[EB1870, Pasture and Hayland Renovation for Western WA](#)

- **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.

- **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>