



Four Simple CSP Activities for Pasture and Range

NRCS Practices Include 528, E528O, 315, 314, and 649

CSP Overview for Range and Pasture

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is a 5-year contracted program that provides an opportunity for ranchers to receive technical and financial assistance to help maintain their current levels of environmental stewardship and take their conservation efforts to the next level with newly adopted enhancements.

CSP payments are based on two things: an NRCS assessment of existing stewardship at the time of enrollment (activity payment) and the existing level of conservation on each land use (payment regarding number of land uses).

The assessment of existing stewardship will consist of a visit to the property by the NRCS District Conservationist in your area along with some possible follow-up visits to ensure everything planned to achieve the landowners' goals will be met.

As for the land uses, each part of the ranch including grazed lands, lanes and pens, wildlife areas, and the home-place are all divided by NRCS into land uses. For example, wildlife areas may be designated as associated Ag lands, the pens and lanes may be designated as Farmstead, and grazed lands designated as Pasture or Rangeland. Hay fields may be designated as Cropland. Each of these land uses are included for payment when activities are planned.

Four simple Activities to consider include prescribed grazing (528), clipping of mature forages (E528O), controlling weeds (314 & 315), and structures for wildlife (649)

Prescribed / Managed Grazing (528)

Ranchers who have previous experience with this practice in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) can tell you that this is a straightforward and easy practice to complete. It requires the landowner to keep a record of the time and date the animals are moved from pasture to pasture.



The height of the forage is also recorded by the landowner when moving pastures. Maintaining the proper grazing height helps to ensure plant health. This practice can be applied to all lands designated as pasture and rangeland.



NRCS Land Use

Crop: Land used primarily for the production and harvest of annual or perennial fields for forage (example: hay field, food, fiber, horticultural, orchards, vineyards and/or energy crops).

Pasture: Lands composed of introduced or domesticated native forage species that is used primarily for the production of livestock. They receive periodic renovation and/or cultural treatments, such as tillage, fertilization, mowing, and weed control, and they may be irrigated. They are not in rotation with crops.

Rangeland: Land used primarily for the production of grazing animals. Includes native plant communities and those seeded to native or introduced species or naturalized by introduced species that are ecologically managed using range management principles.

Associated Ag

Lands: Land associated with farms and ranches that are not purposefully managed for food, forage or fiber and are typically associated with nearby production and/or conservation lands. Examples include pivot corners, odd areas, ditches, riparian areas, and field edges.



Clipping of Mature Forages (E528O)

E528O is a Conservation Enhancement Activity (CEA) only available through CSP. E528O is described as timely clipping of mature forages through mowing, swathing or some other mechanical cutting applied to increase forage palatability by setting plants back to a vegetative state for improved grazing management and forage quality. This CEA can be used to control general weeds and even out the pasture grasses. An example is mowing smutgrass to improve palatability. This practice does require 528 to be applied at the same time. This practice is applicable to pasture.

Controlling Weeds with Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315) and Brush Management (314)

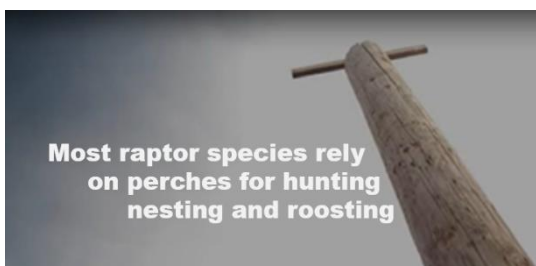
Controlling weeds is a never-ending battle for land managers. Two NRCS practices used with CSP to help with managing weeds include Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315) and Brush Management (314). Both practices can be used on lands identified as pastures and rangeland. These practices can also be applied to land designated as crop, farmstead, forest, and associated Ag lands. Ask your local District Conservationist how the two related CSP enhancements (E314A and E315A) can also be used to improve ecological sites and habitat for wildlife.

Structures for Wildlife (645)

Structures for Wildlife (645) is a very simple practice applied to enable



movement or provide shelter, cover or food to upland wildlife. Examples of this practice include modifying fences to enhance wildlife movement, modifying water structures to protect or support wildlife uses, or simply to put up a nest box for martin, bluebird, or bats. This practice can be applied to cropland (hay fields) farmstead (barns, lanes, pens, etc.), forest lands, and other associated Ag lands that are not purposefully managed for food, forage or fiber. This practice can also be applied along with the Upland Wildlife Habitat Management Practice (645) that will provide funding to monitor or maintain the wildlife structure.



Most raptor species rely on perches for hunting nesting and roosting

For more information regarding the opportunities CSP can offer to ranchers contact your local NRCS office.



Forest: Land on which the primary vegetation is tree cover (climax, natural or introduced plant community) and its use is primarily for production of wood products and/or non-timber forest products.

Farmstead: Land used for facilities and supporting infrastructure where farming, forestry, animal husbandry and ranching activities are often initiated. Examples include pens, lanes and barns.

