



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY E528N (WITH MONTANA SUPPLEMENTS)

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Improved grazing management through monitoring activities

CONSERVATION PRACTICE: 528 - Prescribed Grazing

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Range

RESOURCE CONCERN: Soil, Water, Plants

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 1 years

Enhancement Description

Three predominant key grazing areas are evaluated utilizing the Rangeland Health Assessment (where reference material is developed) or Describing Indicators of Rangeland Health protocols (where reference material is not developed) to determine how well the ecological processes of the site(s) are functioning. Utilizing knowledge learned from this as a part of the ranch resource assessment, a qualifying professional, as detailed in the enhancement criteria, will provide recommendations or follow-up evaluations toward mitigating some of the degradation risks that are initially identified.

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 rangeland 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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- Secure the services of an experienced, knowledgeable Certified Range Management Consultant, 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 range science or other closely related plant science discipline and a minimum of five years' experience in rangeland conservation planning, monitoring, and consulting regarding use of rangeland improvement practices to:
 - 1) Select monitoring sites needed (three are required for this enhancement activity)
 - 2) Assess rangeland conditions using Rangeland Health Assessment (RHA) or Describing Indicators of Rangeland Health (DIRH) at these locations
 - 3) Provide all measured data collected
 - 4) Assist in determining any areas that are potentially at risk of degradation
 - 5) Develop a written recommendation identifying strategies for mitigating some of the degradation risks identified during the assessments

Current NRCS employees do not qualify as “non-affiliated consultants” regardless of their experience or education.

- RHA is used, departure from reference categories will be determined, justified, and ratings described for soil and site stability, hydrologic function, and biotic integrity in Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health (IIRH) Version 5 (Technical Reference 1734-6).
- DIRH is used, guidance must be followed in the procedure of Appendix 7 of Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health (IIRH) Version 5 (Technical Reference 1734-6) and the information and data will be compared to established NRCS state criteria guidance.

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



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- ☐ During implementation, secure a 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 range science or other closely-related plant science discipline and a minimum of five years' experience in rangeland conservation planning, monitoring, and consulting regarding use of rangeland improvement practices to:
 - 1) Select 3 monitoring sites to assess rangeland health.
 - 2) Conduct Rangeland Health Assessments (RHA) on these sites using the Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health Version 5. (Technical Reference 1734-6) or
 - 3) Conduct Describing Indicators of Rangeland Health (DIRH) on these sites using Appendix 7 of the Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health Version 5. (Technical Reference 1734-6).
 - 4) Develop a written recommendation identifying strategies for mitigating degradation risks identified during the assessment.

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- ☐ During implementation, identify key grazing areas, key forage species, and monitor pastures for grazing utilization.
- ☐ During implementation, keep pasture/herd in/out records.
- ☐ During implementation, complete NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Prescribed Grazing (528) Trend worksheet.
- ☐ During implementation, complete forage utilization job sheet at the end of the grazing season for NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Prescribed Grazing (528).
- ☐ After implementation, provide the following items for review by NRCS:
 - Assessment Sheets with all field notes and locations.
 - Written documentation of range professional's follow-up actions and recommendations.
 - Records of pasture/herd in/out dates.
 - Completed Trend worksheet.
 - Completed forage utilization job sheet.
 - Written modifications to the grazing management and monitoring plan which address the resource concerns identified during the assessments.



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NRCS will:

- ☐ As needed, provide technical assistance to 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 Trend worksheet and forage utilization job sheet.
- ☐ Prior to implementation, provide Ecological Site Descriptions and the ESD map and soil-ecological site correlation as requested for the Range Health Assessment (RHA) or NRCS state criteria guidance for Describing Indicators of Range Health (DIRH).
- ☐ After implementation, review assessment evaluation sheets and written recommendations made by range professional.
- ☐ After implementation, verify implementation of the grazing management plan by reviewing grazing/herd in/out records, forage utilization job sheet, trend worksheet, and changes made to the plan to address resource concerns identified during the RHA or DIRH 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