



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E528138Z

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Incorporating wildlife refuge areas in contingency plans for prescribed grazing for wildlife access to water

Conservation Practice 528: Prescribed Grazing

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Pasture, Range

RESOURCE CONCERN ADDRESSED: Fish & Wildlife Inadequate Habitat

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 1 year

Enhancement Description

A prescribed grazing plan that includes 18 month (or longer) deferment of a grazing unit that consists of native or adapted grasses and/or legumes and/or perennial forbs for the purpose of meeting the needs for drought/disaster contingency plans that will also provide wildlife habitat for a period of time.

Criteria

- Must follow a written plan for matching the forage quantity and quality produced with the grazing and/or browsing demand by livestock and wildlife.
- Enhance diversity of pasture 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:
 - Clear objectives,
 - A resource inventory with ecological site description or reference sheet and structural improvements and existing resource conditions,
 - Grazing plan, and
 - A contingency plan.

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- 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.
- Identify species of concern in the objectives of the prescribed grazing plan. Water must be available for wildlife use in the refuge area, or nearby where the refuge provides cover needed for such access.
- An area that constitutes at least 15% of the planned enhancement acreage (or a minimum of ten acres, whichever is larger) that is predominantly adapted grasses and/or legumes and/or perennial forbs will be deferred from any and all harvest or prescribed burning for a period of 18 months or longer. The deferment area must be a pasture (or located in a pasture) that scores a minimum of 0.5 on the state NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG).
- In the event of the utilization of the wildlife refuge area as a drought/disaster contingency for prescribed grazing during the life of the contract, it must be restored or recovered or another pasture designated and deferred for 18 months following the emergency utilization.



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Documentation and Implementation Requirements

Participant will:

- Prior to implementation, review NRCS Conservation Practice Standards Prescribed Grazing (Code 528) and Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (Code 645), including any state approved job sheets or work sheets.
- Prior to implementation, work with NRCS to complete an assessment of the site using the state's approved NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG).
- Prior to implementation, obtain grazing/wildlife habitat management plan specifying what species the enhancement is targeting and how grazing management is being modified to benefit that species. The written grazing plan must describe the management and harvest of vegetation with grazing and/or browsing animals, conditions creating need to implement contingency plan, and monitoring plan.
 - The grazing plan will include a minimum of 18 month rest period on 15% of enrolled acres incorporated into grazing strategy. Supporting documentation identifying baseline conditions will be based on state NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Prescribed Grazing (Code 528) specifications.
- During implementation, keep actual use records (dates, time, and number of head).
- During implementation, collect monitoring data used to determine contingency activation such as precipitation, drought, fire, and flooding or forage availability.
- During implementation, consult with NRCS to adjust and adapt the plan to current conditions to verify the changes meet enhancement criteria. Changes to the plan will be documented in writing.
- After implementation, make the follow items available for review by NRCS to verify implementation of the enhancement:
 - Grazing/wildlife habitat management plan.
 - Monitoring data and actual use records.
 - Any documented changes to the plan as result of contingency or monitoring data.

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NRCS will:

- As needed, provide technical additional assistance to the participant as requested.
- Prior to implementation, provide and explain NRCS Conservation Practice Standards Prescribed Grazing (Code 528) and Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (Code 645) as they relate 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.
- After implementation, review actual use and monitoring data used to implement grazing strategy and provide recommendations for adjustments, or additional practices to facilitate future improvements in wildlife habitat.
- 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: _____



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

