



# CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

## CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY E528E (With Montana Supplement)

### Improved grazing management for enhanced plant structure and composition for wildlife

#### Conservation Practice 528: Prescribed Grazing

**APPLICABLE LAND USE:** Pasture; Range; Forest; Associated Ag Land

**RESOURCE CONCERN:** Plants

**ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN:** 1 year

#### Enhancement Description

Managing the harvest of vegetation with grazing and/or browsing animals for the purpose of improving the quantity and quality of the structure and composition of the plant community that is available for wildlife.

#### Criteria

- Must follow a written plan for matching the forage quantity and quality produced with the grazing and/or browsing demand.
- 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.
- 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.
- Both the specie(s) of concern and the plant functional groups providing structure and composition will be identified in the objectives of the prescribed grazing plan.
- **MT: Species of concern can be any targeted wildlife species determined by the landowner.**
- Plan the intensity, frequency, timing and duration of grazing and/or browsing to provide for the development and maintenance of the plant structure, density and diversity needed for the desired fish and wildlife species of concern.
- Manage the afore-mentioned aspects of grazing events to maintain a minimum score of 0.60 when evaluated with the state NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG).
- **MT: Use Biology Technical Note MT-19 (Rev.4) *Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide for Montana* for species of concern.**



**Documentation and Implementation Requirements**

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**Participant will:**

- Prior to implementation, obtain a written grazing plan (NRCS can provide assistance as needed). Plan must include:
  - Clear goals and objectives of the plan, including identification of the specie(s) of concern and the plant functional groups providing structure and composition.
  - Contingency plan for events that trigger adverse results.
  - Forage/Animal Balance.
  - A grazing plan narrative describing the basis for when livestock movement or rotation will occur, including deferment plans.
  - Contingency plans for forage shortfalls.
  - Monitoring locations, key species, and monitoring techniques.
  - Map identifying all permanent pastures, water sources, and any riparian area or watershed drainage locations improved or maintained by this management.
- Prior to implementation, work with NRCS to complete an assessment of the site using the state's approved NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG).
- During implementation, keep the following documentation:
  - Livestock herd management records with seasonally important phenological stages of plant growth relative to species of concern.
  - Annually complete a forage utilization worksheet, such as NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Prescribed Grazing (Code 528) job sheet.
  - Grazing intensity records for all key grazing areas that accommodate the criteria.
- During implementation, consult with NRCS to adjust and adapt the grazing plan to current conditions to verify the changes meet enhancement criteria. Changes to the grazing plan will be documented in writing.

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- After implementation, make all records available for review by NRCS to verify implementation of the enhancement.
- After implementation, complete an assessment of the site with NRCS using the state's approved NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG).

**NRCS will:**

**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.
- Prior to implementation, explain the functionality of this enhancement with Enhancement E314A, if sequentially applicable.
- 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).



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**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

