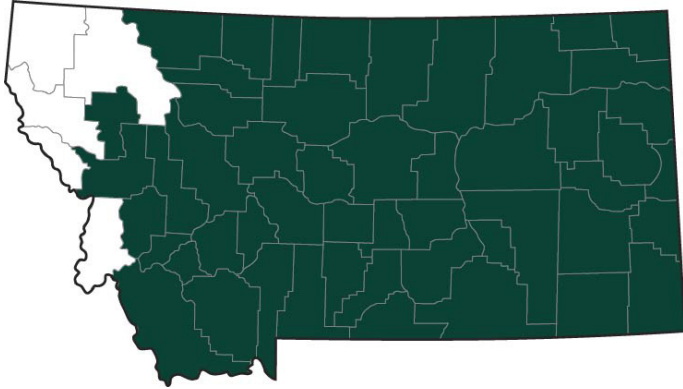




**2023 Montana Grazing Lands
Conservation Initiative (GLCI)
Annual Report**

Montana GLCI is currently supporting seven ongoing demonstration projects across the state.



Demonstration projects have been supported in nearly every county of the state that focus on new and innovative technologies in grazing management, new herbicides and their effect on perennial forages and soil health, soil biology responses to grazing management, livestock, grazing, and human influences on wildlife migrations. The results of these demonstration projects will inform decision making on a local, state and national level. Total committed funding for demonstration projects is \$148,994.

1. Technical Video Series

In partnership with Ranchers Stewardship Alliance, funds were used to create five videos. The following two videos posted on YouTube reached a combined audience of 11,254 viewers and this number will continue to grow into perpetuity.

Virtual Fencing (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONSWoWCR0us>)

Rangeland Analysis Platform (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsdPq83BPjU>)

Three more videos are in the works: Becoming the Beaver: Mimicking Nature to Stabilize Water Woes, YouTube Rancher: Navigating Do-It-Yourself in the World of Wells and Ranch Tour: Empowering Our Community Through Continued Education.

2. Eastern Montana Regenerative Ag Biological Soil Amendments

Funding was provided to Eastern Montana Regenerative Ag to investigate utilizing biological soil amendments to convert degraded land without the use of the plow or herbicides. In

June 2023, a field day was held at Indreland Angus and B Bar Ranch where 35 participants witnessed the results of using vermicast and composted slaughter waste in combination with cover crops and targeted grazing to improve degraded land.

3. Fallon County High Stock Density Grazing

Fallon County High Stock Density Grazing Project is an ongoing project in partnership with Little Beaver Conservation District, Montana Association of Conservation Districts, Dickinson State University Department of Ag, and the NRCS field office in Baker. The project is looking at the effects of high stock density on plant productivity, health, and vigor of tame grass species. The goal of the project is to optimize animal performance while improving plant and soil health. Project evaluations include forage monitoring, plant tissue analysis, soil metrics, and biological soil testing. A proposal has been submitted to provide a presentation of the current results of this project at the 9th National Grazing Lands Conference in Tucson, AZ.

4. Road Access Through the Spotted Dog Wildlife Management Area Study

In partnership with Montana State University (MSU), Montana GLCI funded a project to look at the effects of road access through the Spotted Dog Wildlife Management Area on elk use on private and public lands. The results of this project will be disseminated through 17 educational products including news releases, extension seminars, newsletter articles, press articles, podcasts, YouTube, scientific conference presentations, and journal articles.

5. Impacts of Grazing, Herbicide, and Micronutrients on Ventenata

Big Horn Conservation District has partnered with GLCI on a field trial looking at grazing, herbicide, and micronutrient applications and the effect on Ventenata and soil biology and nutrients. Ventenata is a highly invasive annual grass and investigation into alternative control methods is paramount.

6. Winnett ACES Grazing Management

Funding was provided to the Winnett ACES to sponsor a project looking at the impacts of different levels of grazing management on soil biology on native range and tame grass pastures.

7. Virtual Fencing to Manage Yearling Grazing and Soil Health

Funding was provided to World Wildlife Fund sponsoring a project to investigate the success of utilizing virtual fencing on yearling cattle to facilitate grazing management and its impact on soil health.

Grazing Lands Education

In June 2022, Montana GLCI held the Kickin' Grass Ranch Tour at the Haughian Ranch in Kinsey, MT. Speakers included Tery Haughian hosting and providing an overview of ranch history and conservation practices on the ranch, Kevin Good from Cattle Fax provided a fall cattle price outlook, Whit Hibbard discussed and demonstrated utilizing low stress stockmanship for better grazing management, Miles City Veterinary Service provided an update on the future of pharmaceutical regulations and vaccination protocols, Fort Keogh experts provided an update on the current research projects they are working on at the station, and we wrapped up the day with a tour of the ranch where attendees had the opportunity to view the conservation practices that have been implemented on the ranch such as range planting, contour subsoiling, water systems and more. The tour was attended by 50 people, 44 of those being ag producers representing 15 counties and 4 states.

Montana GLCI partnered with MSU and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation to hold the 406 Grazing Academy in Anaconda June 6-8, 2023. There were 25 participants for the classroom portion and

80 for the field tour portion of the event. The participants gained practical information to help them make strategic decisions for their ranches. The workshop was led by MSU educators, Montana ranchers, GLCI members, and other range managers from across the state. Participants gained expertise on topics that include economic optimum stocking rates, diverse grazing strategies, range monitoring, extending the grazing season, livestock-wildlife relations, targeted grazing, and coping with drought, wildfire and poisonous plants.

Montana GLCI sponsored sending Leo Barthelmess, from Malta, MT, to the 8th National Grazing Lands Conference in South Carolina to present his virtual fence project and how it has helped to facilitate improved grazing management and wildlife movements on his operation.

Mini Grants

Mini Grants and sponsorship were provided to support the Montana Wool Growers Convention, Montana Stockgrowers Convention, Beaverhead Conservation District Range Days, Montana Environmental Stewardship Award Program, Little Beaver Conservation District for a livestock handling seminar-Tom Curtain Stockmanship, Women Stepping Forward for Ag conference, Deer Lodge Conservation District 2023 Grazing Tour, Sand County Foundation Leopold Award, Farm Bureau Annual Convention, Montana Range Tour, Montana Range Days and Rangelands in the Rotunda.



Outreach

Information about GLCI projects and events was presented on Montana Ag Live by GLCI committee member Ron Leukauf. Over 10,000 viewers witnessed the Montana Ag Live episode and have the opportunity to witness into perpetuity online. Committee member Lane Nordlund discussed GLCI and its objectives at the following regional or national agriculture and livestock meetings. Public Lands Council Annual Meeting (event moderator), Red Angus Association of American National Convention (moderator), Montana Stockgrowers Annual Convention (emcee), National Cattlemen's Beef Association Summer Meeting (emcee), American Angus Association Convention, Environmental Stewardship Award National event (emcee). GLCI and its events were also discussed on Western Ag Network where Nordlund serves as a farm broadcaster and airs on 12 TV stations across Montana and 30 radio stations. Network wide they air on 92 radio stations in 8 western states: MT, CO, WY, SD, ND, UT, NM and NE.

Members of the steering committee attended numerous events and sit on many committees across the state and nation representing the GLCI and Montana ag producers including travel to D.C. to discuss the importance of rangelands, voluntary conservation, and NRCS technical assistance. A few of the events and committees include: Montana is represented on the National Grazing Lands Coalition officer board, Rangelands in the Rotunda at the state capitol, Montana Wool Growers, Montana Stockgrowers, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, American Sheep Industry Association, Montana Farm Bureau, International Society for Range Management, International Mountain Section of the Society of Range Management, Northern Great Plains Section of the Society for Range Management, Montana Association of Conservation Districts, Rangeland Resources Committee, Montana Range Days, Montana Range Tour, and the 406 Grazing Academy.

Every three years at the National Grazing Lands Conference, Montana producers participate through posters and presentations. Montana GLCI also works to promote the importance of USDA-ARS Dubois, ID, rangeland stations research in grazing and wildlife interactions and disseminating that information to regional universities and federal officials.

GLCI Background

The Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) is a voluntary effort to enhance Montana's 40 million acres

of privately owned grazing land by increasing awareness and assisting with technical assistance at the grassroots level. Montana GLCI promotes partnership, voluntary action, respect for private property rights, diversification and technical development and is dedicated to healthy, productive, and sustainable grazing lands.

This effort is led by a steering committee comprised of representatives from organizations with a vested interest in grazing lands. Steering Committee members include Dean Wang, Chairman, Montana Stockgrowers Association; Ben Lehfelddt, Vice Chair, Montana Wool Growers Association; Jim Willis, Montana Farm Bureau; John Hollenback, Rangeland Resources Committee; Lon Reukauf, Montana Association of Grazing Districts; Ron Stoneberg, Montana Association of Conservation Districts; Lane Nordlund, Nordlund Communications; Rick Caquelin, Intermountain Section Society of Range Management; and Seth Newton. Co-Coordiators on the committee include Ben Hauptman, MSU Extension Service and Kevin Derzapf, Natural Resources Conservation Service. The steering committee is also comprised of ex-officio members who provide technical guidance and includes representation from MSU Extension Range Management, Fort Keogh Ag Research Service, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Funding for Montana GLCI comes through NRCS to support demonstration projects and education programs throughout the state, in addition to providing range management technical assistance to ranchers in every county in Montana. MSU Extension is a partner in Montana GLCI activities and provides major contributions through grazing land education programs and research.

Since its inception in 1996, Montana GLCI has funded approximately 107 projects in 51 counties. Projects are focused on enhancing the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of private grazing lands.

For More Information

Visit the Montana Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative online at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/glci-grazing-lands-conservation-initiative/montana/grazing-lands-conservation>. You can find steering committee contacts and applications for demonstration projects and educational mini-grants.

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