

GRASSLAND ACTIVITY DATES SPECIFICATION SHEET

INTRODUCTION

The information contained in this Specification Sheet should be used with the following Standards and Specifications, and Conservation Sheets which are available on the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)-Michigan electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG):

- Conservation Cover (327)
- Early Successional Habitat Development/Management (647)
- Forage Harvest Management (511)
- Pasture and Hayland Planting (512)
- Prescribed Burning (338)
- Prescribed Grazing (528)
- Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)

SUMMARY

A wide range of wildlife species use grassland habitats for producing young throughout the spring, summer, and early fall. These species include birds, mammals, insects, reptiles, and amphibians. While it is important to protect these species, it is also important to disturb grassland in Michigan in order to provide quality habitats.

Disturbance of grasslands will always be a balance between short-term detriments of some species reproduction in order to provide long-term quality habitat. Therefore, the Michigan Technical Committee has identified allowable grassland activity dates by management practice and the purpose of conducting the practice. We believe that this is the best method of minimizing wildlife impacts while maximizing long-term habitat benefits.

The following tables identify these allowable activity dates by management practice and purpose. To use the following tables: 1) determine the appropriate chart based upon the location of the farm; 2) determine the practice and its purpose; and 3) determine the appropriate wildlife status.

In all cases, plans provided by NRCS will ensure that Threatened and Endangered species habitat concerns, if present, are addressed. For example, known fields with nesting Henslow Sparrows will not be disturbed before 9/15.

NOTES

1. Prescribed burning must be done according to a Burn Plan and in accordance with NRCS Standards and Specifications. Fall burns (October) tend to favor forbs and spring burns tend to favor grasses.
2. The following tables provide dates that will minimize adverse impacts to grassland nesting birds in Michigan. For guidance on the proper timing and method of the activity within these dates to meet various resource objectives, consult the Conservation Cover (327), Early Successional Habitat Development/Management (647), Forage Harvest Management (511), Pasture and Hayland Planting (512), Prescribed Burning (338), Prescribed Grazing (528), and/or Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645) Standards and Specifications, and Conservation Sheets available on the eFOTG.
3. Of the possible activity methods, Haying/Mowing generally provide the least benefits for grassland habitat. Therefore, the activity dates are designed to allow for re-growth to provide winter cover habitat.
4. Wildlife-friendly hay plan includes: mowing during daytime; mowing from inside out or adjacent passes; refuge area away from edges or woody cover; refuge area rotated yearly; and field contains a diversity of forage mixtures.
5. Wildlife-friendly grazing plan includes: rotational grazing system with average 8-inch minimum height; 10% annually rotated refuge area located away from edges or woody cover; haying less than 50% of paddocks according to wildlife-friendly haying plan; a diversity of forage species including both Warm-Season (minimum 5% of stand) and Cool-Season grasses; and a winter sacrifice area which will be reseeded.

SOUTHERN MICHIGAN ACTIVITY DATES *

ACTIVITY	Wildlife resources in relation to Agriculture production		
	Primary (WHIP, WRP, etc.)	Equal (GRP, etc.)	Secondary (EQIP, etc.)
Establishing the Stand			
Mowing Haying Herbicides Inter-seeding	As needed until the stand is established and the stand is seeded according to standards and specifications. Herbicides applied according to labeled directions. Inter-seeding according to standards and specifications.		
Periodic Successional Disturbance	<10 acres : whole field 10-40 acres : 1/2 of field >40 acres : 1/3 of field	<10 acres : whole field 10-40 acres : 1/2 of field >40 acres : 1/3 of field	100% of the field
Burning	In accordance with a Burn Plan - CS**: 10/1-5/1 WS**: 10/1-5/15		
Herbicide	Anytime according to labeled directions		
Disking	CS: Before 5/1 or 8/1-8/15 WS: 6/1-7/5 (no more than 1/3 of field) OR 8/1-5/1		
Disturbance & Inter-seeding	CS: Before 5/20 and 8/1-15 WS: 5/15-6/15 or 11/1-3/1		
Long-Term Maintenance of Grass Stand			
FireBreak	Disturb up to 3 times per year as needed for non-burn years. For Burning years, follow Burn Plan.		
Mowing	Anytime as needed for up to 5% spot treatment. If >5% of area, concurrence of Resource Professional and/or Contract Administering Agency.	Follow program guidance	
Burning	In accordance with a Burn Plan - CS: 10/1-5/1 WS: 10/1-5/15		
Herbicide	Anytime as needed for up to 5% spot treatment. If >5% of area, concurrence of Resource Professional and/or Contract Administering Agency.	Follow program guidance	
Disking	Same dates and percentage of field as for mid-contract disturbance.		Follow program guidance
Disturbance & Inter-seeding	Same dates and percentage of field as for mid-contract disturbance.		Follow program guidance
Haying	Up to 1/3 of area between 8/1-9/4 or for CS: 15% before 5/20 and 15% 8/1-9/4; WS: 15% 6/15-6/30 and different 15% 7/25-8/15 with wildlife-friendly haying plan.	CS: Up to 50% prior to 6/1 and up to the same 50% after 8/1 according to a wildlife-friendly haying plan. WS: Up to 50% 6/15- 7/25 according to wildlife- friendly haying plan.	Follow program guidance
Grazing	Same as Haying	According to wildlife- friendly grazing plan.	Prescribed Grazing Plan

* Southern Michigan is defined as south of and including a line from Bay to Oceana Counties.

** CS = Cool-Season grasses such as timothy and orchardgrass.

WS = Warm-Season grasses such as switchgrass, big bluestem, and indiagrass.

NORTHERN LOWER MICHIGAN ACTIVITY DATES *

ACTIVITY	Wildlife resources in relation to Agriculture production		
	Primary (WHIP, WRP, etc.)	Equal (GRP, etc.)	Secondary (EQIP, etc.)
Establishing the Stand			
Mowing Haying Herbicides Inter-seeding	As needed until the stand is established and the stand is seeded according to standards and specifications. Herbicides applied according to labeled directions. Inter-seeding according to standards and specifications.		
Periodic Successional Disturbance	<10 acres : whole field 10-40 acres : 1/2 of field >40 acres : 1/3 of field	<10 acres : whole field 10-40 acres : 1/2 of field >40 acres : 1/3 of field	100% of the field
Burning	In accordance with a Burn Plan - CS**: 10/1-5/8 WS**: 10/1-5/20		
Herbicide	Anytime according to labeled directions		
Disking	CS: Before 5/8 or 8/1-8/15 WS: 6/8-7/5 (no more than 1/3 of field) OR 8/8-5/8		
Disturbance & Inter-seeding	CS: Before 5/20 and 8/1-10 WS: 5/21-6/20 or 11/1-3/1		
Long-Term Maintenance of Grass Stand			
FireBreak	Disturb up to 3 times per year as needed for non-burn years. For Burning years, follow Burn Plan.		
Mowing	Anytime as needed for up to 5% spot treatment. If >5% of area, concurrence of Resource Professional and/or Contract Administering Agency.	Follow program guidance	
Burning	In accordance with a Burn Plan - CS: 10/1-5/8 WS: 10/1-5/20		
Herbicide	Anytime as needed for up to 5% spot treatment. If >5% of area, concurrence of Resource Professional and/or Contract Administering Agency.	Follow program guidance	
Disking	Same dates and percentage of field as for mid-contract disturbance.	Follow program guidance	
Disturbance & Inter-seeding	Same dates and percentage of field as for mid-contract disturbance.	Follow program guidance	
Haying	Up to 1/3 of area between 8/8-9/4 or for CS: 15% before 5/27 and 15% 8/8-9/4; WS: 15% 6/20-7/5 and different 15% 7/28-8/12 with haying plan.	CS: Up to 50% prior to 6/8 and up to the same 50% after 8/8 according to a wildlife-friendly haying plan. WS: Up to 50% 6/20-7/28 according to wildlife-friendly grazing plan.	Follow program guidance
Grazing	Same as Haying	According to wildlife-friendly grazing plan.	Prescribed Grazing Plan

* Northern Lower Michigan is defined as north of and including a line from Arenac to Mason Counties not including the Upper Peninsula.

** CS = Cool-Season grasses such as timothy and orchardgrass.

WS = Warm-Season grasses such as switchgrass, big bluestem, and indiagrass.

MICHIGAN UPPER PENINSULA ACTIVITY DATES *

ACTIVITY	Wildlife resources in relation to Agriculture production		
	Primary (WHIP, WRP, etc.)	Equal (GRP, etc.)	Secondary (EQIP, etc.)
Establishing the Stand			
Mowing Haying Herbicides Inter-seeding	As needed until the stand is established and the stand is seeded according to standards and specifications. Herbicides applied according to labeled directions. Inter-seeding according to standards and specifications.		
Periodic Successional Disturbance	<10 acres : whole field 10-40 acres : 1/2 of field >40 acres : 1/3 of field	<10 acres : whole field 10-40 acres : 1/2 of field >40 acres : 1/3 of field	100% of the field
Burning	In accordance with a Burn Plan - CS**: 10/1-5/15 WS**: 10/1-5/25		
Herbicide	Anytime according to labeled directions		
Disking	CS: Before 5/15 or 8/1-8/15 WS: 6/10-7/5 (no more than 1/3 of field) OR 8/10-5/15		
Disturbance & Inter-seeding	CS: Before 5/25 WS: 5/21-6/20 or 11/1-3/1		
Long-Term Maintenance of Grass Stand			
FireBreak	Disturb up to 3 times per year as needed for non-burn years. For Burning years, follow Burn Plan.		
Mowing	Anytime as needed for up to 5% spot treatment. If >5% of area, concurrence of Resource Professional and/or Contract Administering Agency.	Follow program guidance	
Burning	In accordance with a Burn Plan - CS: 10/1-5/15 WS: 10/1-5/25		
Herbicide	Anytime as needed for up to 5% spot treatment. If >5% of area, concurrence of Resource Professional and/or Contract Administering Agency.	Follow program guidance	
Disking	Same dates and percentage of field as for mid-contract disturbance.	Follow program guidance	
Disturbance & Inter-seeding	Same dates and percentage of field as for mid-contract disturbance.	Follow program guidance	
Haying	Up to 1/3 of area between 8/15-9/4 or for CS: 15% before 6/1 and 15% 8/15-9/1; WS: 15% 6/25-7/10 and different 15% 7/29-8/12 with haying plan.	CS: Up to 50% prior to 6/8 and up to the same 50% after 8/8 according to a wildlife-friendly haying plan. WS: Up to 50% 6/20-7/28 according to wildlife-friendly grazing plan.	Follow program guidance
Grazing	Same as Haying	According to wildlife-friendly grazing plan.	Prescribed Grazing Plan

* Michigan Upper Peninsula is defined as all counties in the Upper Peninsula.

** CS = Cool-Season grasses such as timothy and orchardgrass.

WS = Warm-Season grasses such as switchgrass, big bluestem, and indiagrass.