

Missouri Prairie/Grassland Community WHAG Model Instructions

Prairie/Grassland:

(1) Field Size:

- For the first part of this question, measure to any woody cover, including single tree lines, grazed timber, etc. You may use the openland category on sites where we know of prairie chickens or other T&E grassland birds, otherwise use edge.
- When completing this form in the office, assume dense woody cover is present in woody draws/fencelines in excess of 30' in width, ungrazed woodland, or where you have personal knowledge that 0.1 acre of dense woody cover is present or until field verified.

(2) Desirable Forb/Legume Diversity:

- This includes introduced legumes, native prairie forbs, and most 'weeds' (such as ragweed). Refer to 643, legumes rated good or excellent for wildlife in 327, common quail foods listed in the Missouri Bobwhite Quail Habitat Appraisal Guide (University of Missouri Extension (MP 902)) or contact your Area Biologist.
- It takes very diverse grassland to exceed 20 species of forbs.
- Noxious weeds, sericea lespedeza, crown vetch, spotted knapweed, poison hemlock and horse nettle should not be included.

(3) Desirable Forb/Legume Canopy Coverage:

- Estimate the percent of the soil surface that is shaded by desirable forbs. If you were able to look at a square meter plot from overhead, estimate the percentage of the plot that is covered by desirable broadleaf plants.
- Noxious weeds, sericea lespedeza, crown vetch, spotted knapweed, poison hemlock and horse nettle should not be included.
- Non-native legumes/forbs would not be considered desirable in a native grassland community (birds foot trefoil in a native prairie), while it could be considered desirable in a planted pasture or hayfield. Use best judgment.

(4) Grassland Management:

- Any rotational system that would meet 528 standard would receive all 8 points in this category.
- Most commonly-managed CSG or CSG/legume hayfields will require leaving 10% of the field unmowed in order to score points. Unmowed/unhayed strips must be a minimum of 30 feet wide.
- Add 7 points if 25% of the evaluated grassland acres are burned annually or if 10% of the grassland acres are left idle (no grazing, haying, or mowing) between May 1 and July 15.

(5) Grassland Composition:

- To receive the 15 points a mixed native grass and forb/legume grassland will contain at least two native grass species. A native grass specie must comprise at least 10% of the grassland composition to count as a specie in the mix. Desirable forbs and/or legumes shall comprise 10 to 75% of the canopy coverage to receive the 15 points. A big bluestem and Indian grass hay field with less than 10% or greater than 75% forb or

legume canopy coverage would score 4 points. A native grass monotype would score 4 points.

- To qualify as wildlife friendly, 60% of the mix will be dominated by species having a good or excellent wildlife rating (see Table 2, 327 Conservation Cover Std.) to score 12 points. Fields dominated by species rated fair or lower will score lower. Any mixture with more than 25% of a specie rated poor for wildlife automatically drops to the next line.
- The 8 point option would capture fields dominated by species rated fair for wildlife habitat (Table 2, 327 Conservation Cover Std.), or with 25%-40% species rated poor for wildlife.
- An alfalfa or red clover hayfield, with just a smattering of grass, would score four points.
- A reed canarygrass, fescue, Bermuda or Old World bluestem monotype would score zero points

(6) Introduced Species:

- If any of these species represents 10% or more of the field, score zero points.