

APPENDIX E Livestock Management Grazing Guidelines for Canada Lynx Foraging Habitat in Montana

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The following livestock grazing guidelines and habitat characteristics will be followed in occupied lynx habitat throughout Montana, as identified and defined in the USFWS Recovery Outline: Contiguous United States Distinct Population Segment of the Canada Lynx, September 14, 2005.

By following the NRCS Prescribed Grazing (528) standard and specification, these guidelines should already be met. If a prescribed grazing plan is not implemented, it is recommended that livestock be fully excluded from aspen regeneration communities that are less than four years old, woody browse areas, or riparian willow communities that are within lynx habitat.

Please note that this document provides specific information to assist in the development of a grazing management system, and measurable criteria necessary to establish a quantifiable monitoring program.

1. If livestock grazing occurs from August to December within aspen regeneration communities that are less than four years old, woody browse areas, or riparian willow communities, grazing management will incorporate adequate rest periods so that:
 - a. Small-diameter twigs (≤ 0.5 inch [1.3 centimeters]) are available for cover and browsing by snowshoe hare within 10 feet (3.0 meters) of the ground surface, and
 - b. Canopy cover of all woody species within 10 feet (3.0 meters) of the ground surface will be maintained at a minimum of at least 25%. Canopy cover less than 25% may not provide adequate cover or forage resources. Canopy cover greater than 40% may limit the vigor, reproduction and abundance of herbaceous species and leaf/twig growth of browse species during subsequent growing seasons.
2. Under all grazing management scenarios, the herbaceous stubble height in riparian willow communities should be maintained at 4.0 inches (10.0 centimeters) or greater to optimize livestock use of herbaceous rather than woody species (Clary and Leininger, 2000).
3. Distance between cover patches (woody species), deadfall, or mature tree stems should not exceed 35.0 feet (10.7 meters). This provides connected cover patches for snowshoe hare and offers them relatively unexposed foraging and resting areas on one or more sides.