

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service
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SUBJECT: Revision of Bog Turtle Habitat Maintenance
Grazing Guidance

DATE: November 22, 2011

TO: Field Offices

FILE CODE: 190-14

The document *Bog Turtle Habitat Maintenance Grazing* has been revised (previous version dated February 2008), and will be maintained in Section II of the eFOTG.

The document provides guidance for maintenance grazing in bog turtle habitat, i.e. grazing to maintain habitat that has been restored or does not require restoration. When grazing plans are developed by NRCS and partner staff in areas occupied by bog turtles, there is a responsibility to avoid adverse impacts to the turtles. In their biological opinion - a legal document on some activities conducted in bog turtle habitat - the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has recognized "light to moderate" grazing, under certain conditions, as "not likely to adversely affect" bog turtles. The guidance document provides both recommendations and requirements when developing grazing plans for bog turtle habitat. The requirements are those specified by the biological opinion, and are noted in the document by the phrase "Required by BO."

The application of planned grazing to benefit bog turtles is in its developing stages. Careful planning and monitoring, adaptive management, and discussion with knowledgeable sources is recommended.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 443-482-2928 or steve.strano@md.usda.gov.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Strano", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

STEVE STRANO
State Biologist

ATTACHMENT