

# Instructions

## Step-Point Cover Method Worksheet

**NE-ECS-3**

### Instructions for use of NE-ECS-3

The Step-Point Cover Method involves making observations along a transect at specified intervals, using a pin to record cover "hits." It measures cover for individual species, total cover, and species composition by cover.

**Study Number:** Enter the study number. The most important factor in obtaining usable data is selecting representative areas (critical or key areas) in which to run the study.

**Date:** Enter the day of the study.

**Client:** Enter the name of the client.

**Pasture Name:** Enter the name of the pasture.

**Location:** Use at least one of the methods for identifying where the site is located as precisely as possible. Sec. (Section), T (Township) R (Range); if this method is used, be sure to mark the location in the section in the box provided. UTM (Universal Transverse Mercator); this will likely be from a GPS unit. Long. (Longitude) and Lat. (Latitude); this will also likely be from a GPS unit; however, if determined from a topographic map, attempt to determine degrees, minutes, and seconds for both longitude and latitude.

**Transect #:** Enter the Transect number.

**Direction:** Enter the direction of the transect.

**Point Spacing Interval:** Enter the name of the photographer who took the photo.

**Examiner:** Enter the name of the examiner.

**Top Canopy:** Enter plant species name or NONE (no canopy)

**Lower Canopy Layers:** Enter Species code; duff "L" for herbaceous litter; or "W" for woody litter > 1/4" diameter

Calculate the percent cover of each species along each transect by totaling all of the basal hits (soil surface points) for that species along the transect. Calculate the total percent cover for the species in the sampled area by adding together all the transect cover values for the species and dividing by the total number of points. Do the same for herbaceous litter, woody litter, embedded litter, rock, bare ground (B), and duff.

### Support References

Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG), Section IV, Conservation Practice Standard – Prescribed Grazing, 528  
<http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/NE/NE528.pdf>

Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG), Section IV, Conservation Practice Standard – Design Procedures Prescribed Grazing, 528DP  
<http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/NE/NE528DP.pdf>

Tech Note 10, Sampling Vegetation Attributes  
[http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/NE/Range\\_and\\_Pasture\\_Technical\\_Note\\_10.pdf](http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/NE/Range_and_Pasture_Technical_Note_10.pdf)

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