

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
PRACTICE DOCUMENTATION GUIDE
PRESCRIBED GRAZING**

528

528 – STEP 1. INITIAL EVALUATIONS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this step is to determine the landowner's desire to apply prescribed grazing to predetermine areas for the intended purpose(s). (See Natural Resources Conservation Service, Practice Standard and Specification 528).

The landowner must be interviewed to determine the purpose and needs for prescribed grazing. Considerations will include the landowner goals and objectives, existing condition and effects of this practice on existing soil, water, air, plant, animal and human resources. A discussion of NRCS prescribed grazing standards and specifications should also take place. Role of the landowner and the person assisting with the grazing plan should also be discussed. Additional pertinent questions should be asked on a site-specific basis.

528 – STEP 2. INVESTIGATIONS, SURVEYS, AND INVENTORIES

PURPOSE

The purpose of this step is to identify the mandatory preliminary resource inventory and operations that are required before prescribed grazing can be planned and implemented. Resource inventories will include all data and information needed to make informed decisions in the development of the prescribed grazing plan and any follow-up management needs. Appropriate resource inventories could include soils, ecological sites, similarity index and/or rangeland health, pasture condition score, range trend, grazing lands inventory summary, feed and forage balance, forage utilization, water, animal numbers and all physical features such as fencing and water wells etc that might have an effect on planning of prescribed grazing.

Adjacent land resources that would be affected by grazing or livestock movements should also be considered. Identify map resources needed such as the proper USGS 7.5 minute quadrangle sheet, soils, and road maps as well as aerial photography. Also include identifying all needed utility clearances, archeological clearances. Also see Natural Resources Conservation Service, Conservation Practice Job Sheet(s) 528 1 - 7, Environmental Evaluation Checklist.

528 – STEP 3. PRACTICE DESIGN

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this step is to develop a prescribed grazing plan. This practice will be applied in accordance with all federal, state and local laws and ordinances. Resource inventories and local conditions will need to be assessed for the proposed land units in the development of a grazing plan. A complete prescribed grazing plan will be developed with the client that meets the intended goals and objectives. The grazing plan will meet the need of the plant and animal resources by balancing livestock numbers with available forage. Key areas, key species and/or plant growth will be identified and documented in order to monitor and assure proper grazing use. All appropriate job sheets, maps and reports must be developed with landowners input, review and concurrence. See Practice Standard and Specification 528, & Job Sheets (528 5-7).

II. SITING

The purpose of this step is to insure that the client fully understands which grazing units are involved in the prescribed grazing plan. Care should be given to make sure the grazing unit and livestock handling facility locations involved in the prescribed grazing plan are known by all involved. Access locations for

Practice Documentation Guide 528-2

livestock and vehicles should also be known by all involved in implementing the plan.

III. MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT

The purpose of this item is to insure an understanding of the materials/equipment used to implement and monitor prescribed grazing. Further knowledge would include the types of fences, animal watering facilities, grazing enclosures and types of equipment used to move animals. Those involved in implementing the grazing plan should also be able to use monitoring equipment such as grass clippers, clipping frames, weight scales, cameras, as well as all other measuring devices needed for monitoring purposes. Appropriate standards, job sheets and expectations that include the types and number of each type of materials/equipment will need to be provided to the landowner and all those involved in the implementation of the plan.

528 – STEP 4. PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this step is to document and describe each component of the prescribed grazing plan, which includes step by step instructions, construction methods and materials to be used while carrying out prescribed grazing. This will include the documentation of all components described in Prescribed Grazing Job Sheet 528 1 - 7. Additional reference material should include as needed and appropriate. The landowner must be provided with a complete prescribed grazing plan in the form of NRCS Job sheet 528 6 and/or 7 in order to document the prescribed grazing implementation process. Any items not described in Job Sheet 528 6 and/or 7 that are essential for implementation prescribed grazing will be added to the Job sheet.

528 - STEP 5. MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION, MAINTENANCE

PURPOSE

The purpose of this step is to assure the proper management and maintenance is completed before, during and after prescribed grazing. (See Natural Resources Conservation Service, Practice Standard and Specification 528, Job Sheet 528 5, 6 & 7).

This requires a familiarity with soils, ecological sites, plant ecology, grazing animals, monitoring and grazing management in order to assure that the grazed area meets goals and objects and that the plant community continues to improve over time. A monitoring program that assesses indicators of ecological processes, animal numbers, and utilization should be implemented as per the NRCS National Range and Pasture Handbook and the New Mexico Interagency Rangeland Monitoring Handbook. These measures should be discussed with and understood by the landowner.

528 – STEP 6. COMPLIANCE OR SPOT CHECKING

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this step is to determine that all work has been completed to the standards required by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

All completed NRCS forms should be collected from the landowner and submitted to the appropriate persons. (See Natural Resources Conservation Service Practice Standard and Specification 528 and Job Sheet 528 1 - 7, NM-CPA-52 Environmental Evaluation Checklist).

II. DOCUMENTS

Copies of all completed job sheets and associated work sheets should be submitted to the Natural Resources Conservation Service representative within 10 working days of completion of the prescribed grazing plan. This includes the Practice Requirements for Prescribed Grazing, Job Sheet(s) for 528 and any other job sheets that may be needed for this practice to meet the intended goals and objectives.