

Conservation Activity Plan - Wyoming
Sage-Grouse Initiative Grazing Management Plan Written
Practice Activity Code (110)
May 27, 2010

1. Definition

A Sage grouse Initiative grazing management plan is a site specific conservation plan developed for a client that addresses one or more resource concerns on land where grazing related activities or practices will be planned and applied to positively impact Sage grouse.

The grazing management plan will:

- a) Meet NRCS quality criteria ([Section III eFOTG](#)) for the resource concerns of soil erosion, water quality, domestic animals, fish and wildlife, and plant condition.
- b) Include the Grazed Forest, Grazed Range, Hay, and Pasture land uses within the planning area.
- c) Be developed following the principles provided in Chapter 11 of the [National Range and Pasture Handbook](#).
- d) Comply with federal, state, tribal, and local laws, regulations, and permit requirements in Wyoming.
- e) Meet the client's objectives.

2. Grazing Management Plan Technical Criteria

This section establishes the minimum criteria to be addressed in the development and implementation of grazing management plans.

a) General Criteria

- 1) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance documentation will be recorded using the Resource Concerns and Special Environmental Concerns worksheet, [WY-CPA-52](#). The Technical Service Providers (TSPs) shall complete the top section of the WY-CPA-52, through part J. Reasons/justifications for data gaps or planning limitations should be provided on the worksheet in a brief statement. Part G is a resource concern checklist. The level of resolution for inventory of these resource concerns may vary depending upon the nature, size, and intensity of possible positive and negative effects to these resources. If any are not considered, a short explanation for these data gaps should be given here.
- 2) A Grazing Management Plan shall be developed by certified TSPs. In accordance with Section 1240(A), the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) provides funding support through contracts with eligible producers to obtain services of certified TSPs for development of Grazing Management Plans. The specific criteria required for each type of certification for TSPs is located on the Website (TechReg) at: [USDA-NRCS Technical Services Provider Registry](#).

b) Background and site information

- 1) Landowner information – name, address, operation, size.
- 2) Location and plan map of parcel.

c) Identify Client Objectives such as:

- 1) Forage yield, quality, diversity, and persistence.
- 2) Improve rangeland health, production, and plant vigor
- 3) Improve cost efficiency.
- 4) Maintain or improve wildlife habitat.
- 5) Maintain or improve water quality.
- 6) Prevent or reduce erosion.
- 7) Others as appropriate.

d) Existing (Baseline) Conditions

- 1) Complete [WY-ECS-1](#) (ecological similarity datasheet) and [WY-ECS-23](#) (range trend worksheet) for at least one key area in each rangeland pasture. Large pastures may need documentation completed on additional key areas. Use previously established monitoring sites as key areas if they exist.
- 2) Complete the [WY-ECS-2](#) (range computation worksheet) for all grazed areas included in the plan. (If BLM or USFS has set stocking rates for allotments containing private land, use those rates.)
- 3) Complete the [WY-ECS-3](#) (ranch organization summary) or [WY-ECS-20](#) (year-round forage and feed balance) for feed/forage balance with livestock class and numbers.
- 4) Estimate of Big Game numbers and season of use.
- 5) Complete Wyoming General Rangeland Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG).
- 6) Complete Wyoming Sage grouse WHEG.
- 7) Description of Sage grouse habitat and if any use observed. For example: presence of birds, feathers, tracks, and/or scat. Landowner interview may be used.
- 8) Location of existing fences, water sources, power lines, oil/gas wells, wind turbines, occupied buildings, etc.
- 9) For any fence within 0.6 miles of a known lek, document whether they are marked to reduce collision hazards.
- 10) For all identified man-made watering facilities, document whether they do or do not have wildlife escape ramps.
- 11) Identify all potential threats to Sage grouse and document it on the “Threats Checklist”.
- 12) Identify all drainages with active erosion and head cuts.

e) Grazing Land Planning Documentation

- 1) Conservation plan map – consistent with [WY-ECS-90](#). Conservation Transaction Plug-in
- 2) Conservation Assistance Notes, [NRCS-CPA-6](#).
- 3) Complete [WY-ECS-414](#) for key grazing areas.
- 4) Soils map with legend (if soils are available through Web Soil Survey - <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/HomePage.htm>).

- 5) Ecological Site Map with legend for Grazed Range. If private land is part of a BLM or USFS allotment, consider using their site maps.
 - 6) Contingency plans for drought and wildfire.
 - 7) Monitoring Plan with photos and monitoring locations marked by GPS. If private land is part of a BLM or USFS allotment, consider using their monitoring sites.
 - 8) Planned animal demand/forage balance including livestock and wildlife needs.
 - 9) Conservation Plan - Record of Decisions, NRCS-CPA-69 (available in Wyoming eFOTG, Section III) to address the resource needs for the "Grazing Management Plan." The record of decisions shall include the planned practice, schedule for implementation, and site specific specifications to apply the conservation practice.
- f) The site specific specifications can be on an NRCS job sheet available for the conservation practice or in a narrative form for the non-engineering type practices. Planned engineering type practices shall include the conservation practice, schedule of implementation, and be identified on the plan map.

The plan may include, but is not limited to the conservation practices listed below:

- 1) Access Control (472)
 - 2) Brush Management (314)
 - 3) Critical Area Planting (342)
 - 4) Fence (382)
 - 5) Firebreak (394)
 - 6) Forage Harvest Management (511)
 - 7) Grazing Land Mechanical Treatment (548)
 - 8) Heavy Use Area Protection (561)
 - 9) Pasture and Hay Planting (512)
 - 10) Pest Management (595)
 - 11) Pipeline (516)
 - 12) Pond (378)
 - 13) Prescribed Grazing (528)
 - 14) Range Planting (550)
 - 15) Restoration and Management of Declining Habitats (643)
 - 16) Spring Development (574)
 - 17) Water Well (642)
 - 18) Watering Facility (614)
- g) The following additional practices, if applicable to identified resource concerns, should be considered and discussed with the client. However, they will not be planned by the TSP. Planning of these practices will be conducted by appropriately certified NRCS planners. The TSP should inform the local field office of the need to schedule these practices:
- 1) Animal trails and Walkways (575)
 - 2) Channel Bank Vegetation (322)
 - 3) Early Succession Habitat Development (647)
 - 4) Irrigation Water Management (449)
 - 5) Nutrient Management (590)
 - 6) Pest Management (595)

- 7) Prescribed Burning (338)
- 8) Riparian Herbaceous Cover (390)
- 9) Silvopasture Establishment (381)
- 10) Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (395)
- 11) Streambank and Shoreline protection (580)
- 12) Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)
- 13) Wetland Creation (658)
- 14) Wetland Enhancement (659)
- 15) Wetland restoration (657)
- 16) Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (644)
- 17) Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment (380)

3. Grazing Management Plan Technical Criteria Filing instructions

The individual components documenting the specific requirements for the Grazing Management Plan will be compiled in the 8.5 x 11 inch file folder with 6 subdivisions permanently attached. Refer also to the Conservation Plan and Contract Check Sheet, [WY-CPA-1](#). A copy will be provided to the client and an additional copy will be provided to the NRCS field office. Specific information will be filed as specified below:

- a) Section I
 - 1) Cover page – name, address, phone of client and TSP; Total Acres of the Plan, signature blocks for the TSP, producer, and a signature block for the NRCS acceptance.
 - 2) Conservation Plan and Contract Check Sheet, [WY-CPA-1](#).
- b) Section II
 - 1) Memos and correspondence.
 - 2) Conservation Assistance Notes, [NRCS-CPA-6](#).
 - 3) [WY-ECS-52](#).
- c) Section III
 - 1) Conservation Plan Map.
 - 2) Location Map.
 - 3) Soil Map.
 - 4) Ecological Site Description Map.
 - 5) Soil Interpretations.
- d) Section IV
 - 1) Conservation Plan – Record of Decisions, NRCS-CPA-69.
 - 2) Resource Inventory Documentation.
 - 3) Resource Concern Checklist, [WY-CPA-8](#).
 - 4) Verification of Planning Steps, [WY-CPA-7](#).
 - 5) Producer objectives.
 - 6) Alternatives discussed with producer.
- e) Section V
 - 1) Prescribed Grazing Checklist, [WY-ECS-90](#).
 - 2) Practice job sheets/worksheets/specifications.

- 3) Operation and maintenance requirements.
 - 4) Site specific vulnerability assessments.
- f) Section VI
Other material not specified above.