Grazing Management for Conservation Goals

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Is grazing good or bad?

Can grazing help me achieve my land management objectives?
THATCH – An unnatural situation.
Powering the nitrogen cycle in rangelands.

THE NITROGEN CYCLE

- Beneficial fungi
- Soluble nitrates
- Nitrifying bacteria
- Macroorganism Breakdown
- Fungal Decomposition
- Earthworms
- Ammonia compounds
- Bacterial action
- Nitrites

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http://mrskingsbioweb.com/ecology.html
Grazing can be used to

- Alter species composition of site. Manage for forbs and wildflowers.
- Maintain or create specific habitat constituents for a species.
- Fuel reduction
- Target graze to reduce specific invasive species.
Grazing Systems

• Sites are not simply grazed or ungrazed!

• Variables include
  – Grazing intensity
    • Stocking rate
    • Length and season of use
  – Species and class of animal
    • Goats, Sheep, Livestock
      – Cow/Calf pairs, “stockers”, different breeds.
Developing a grazing program.

Infrastructure needs:

- Fencing to contain cattle on site.
  - Very expensive if not present.
- Water sources.
- Access to bring livestock on and off property.
Goals and Objectives

• Goals – what you want to happen on the land.
  – “Increase percent cover of native forbs”
  – “Increase active SKR burrows”
  – “Increase or maintain native perennial grass cover”

• Objectives – what you are going to do to get there.
  – “Decrease annual grass biomass by 60% by doing winter, early spring grazing.”
  – “Target graze mustard invaded pasture from May to July”.

Developing a grazing program.

- Stocking rate = (number of head X length of time)
  - Results based, what do you want to leave on the ground.
  - Adaptive, not prescriptive.
- Season of use
  - Critical consideration to meet goals and objectives.
Developing a grazing program

• Other resources to include in a plan:
  – Riparian resources
    • Adaptive management – fence last approach
      – Season of use, water sources, supplements, herding all effective at limiting riparian impacts
  – Soil impacts (compaction and erosion)
  – Water quality
    • Lots of emerging research
    • Small buffers have big impacts.
  – Recreation
  – Chaparral and CSS
Developing a grazing program

• Relationship with operator
  – Grazing program must be economically feasible for operator to be sustainable.
  – They need some sense of security and flexibility in the relationship.
Including the operator in the sustainability equation.
Resources to help:

• Certified Rangeland Managers – CRM
  – Certified by California Dept. Of Forestry. Required to be involved with rangeland management activities on “forested landscapes”.
  – List can be found at [http://casrm.rangelands.org/](http://casrm.rangelands.org/)

• University of California Cooperative Extension.
• Local livestock operators
• Your colleagues north of the grapevine
March 5, 2012 – Rangeland Coalition signatories sent Senate Committee on Agriculture letter highlighting mutual priorities for 2012 Farm Bill. Click here to read the letter.

February 2, 2012 – Rangeland Coalition wrote a letter of support for 5 Dot Ranch for the Beef Improvement Federation Producer of the Year Award. Click here to read the letter.

Click here for event highlights, materials and presentations.
Useful links

• UC Cooperative Extension: Livestock, Range and Natural Resources. http://ucanr.org/sites/uccelr/