

Grassland Reserve Program

NEAP 1st National Planning Meeting, Kansas City, 14-15 March 2011

Program Information

1. Are Easements meeting **National Program Objectives**?
 - a. This is defined as all GRP easements combined to meet objectives; not every easement needs to meet every objective.
2. GRP had a **major shift in the program purpose** during the 2008 Farm Bill.
 - a. The new language reads that GRP easements must have the capability of being grazed whether it is grazing livestock or haying for the purpose of supplemental feeding.
3. Average size of GRP parcels is 400 acres, but is driven by large parcels (1000+ acres) in the western US (**Rangelands**). East of the Mississippi River, parcel average size is 20 acres (**Pasturelands**).

Measurable Indicators

1. **Ecological Site Descriptions** (ESD's) should be taken into consideration when defining measurable indicators. Consider **Similarity indices**.
2. **Photo records** can be effective monitoring tools and could be recorded by landowner.
 - a. Currently photos are not labeled and stored to useable capacity
 - b. Consider landowner self-reporting photos taken at permanent reference points annually
3. **Landscape metrics** should be considered.
 - a. Parcels that score low may be a result of the composition of the surrounding landscape and not the actions implemented on the parcel itself
4. **Monitor target fauna**
 - a. Because quality habitat for a target species does not mean that species will be present. **“Build it, they may not come”**

Monitoring Implementation

1. Feasibility of measuring indicators was considered **“highly feasible”** for those indicators capable of being measured through **remote sensing applications**.
2. Feasibility of measuring indicators was considered **“less feasible”** for those indicators that required a visit to the site or **“boots on the ground monitoring”**.

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Adaptive Management

1. NRCS is interested in **linking monitoring to adaptive management** if objectives are not being met on individual parcels (i.e., indicated by a low bioassessment score) to help meet National Program Objectives.
2. Money needed for management of existing parcels comes from **current years allocations**, resulting in some new easements not being funded.
 - a. Increase **technical support funding** to maintain expected condition with management
3. Although there seems to be a disconnect between livestock grazing and grassland wildlife diversity, research suggests that the two are compatible through a **Patch burn/grazing management regime**.
 - a. Current grazing management plans can be amended to incorporate changes to management regimes.