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## Grazing Management Processes and Strategies for Riparian Wetland Areas

Sandra Wyman  
*Bureau of Land Management*

Sherman Swanson  
*University of Nevada, Reno*

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## Grazing management processes and strategies for Riparian Wetland areas

Sandra Wyman , BLM , National Riparian Service Team , 3050 NE 3<sup>rd</sup> St .Prineville , OR 97754 USA and Sherman Swanson , U of Nevada , 1000 Valley Rd .Reno , NV 89512 USA sswanson@cabnr.unr.edu

**Key words :** Grazing management , riparian-wetland areas , livestock , adaptive management

**Introduction** In arid rangelands , cattle often focus grazing near riparian areas . Excess intensity or duration of grazing generally leaves inadequate riparian vegetation to stabilize stream banks against the cutting action of flowing water . Woody plants may lose diverse age structure needed for maintaining channel form or fish habitat .An excessively eroding channel may incise or entrench forming a gully that accelerates erosion . An incised stream does not access (flood) its floodplain so flood waters can not recharge an aquifer . Water rushes downstream in the wet season or during storm events , increasing downstream impacts rather than soaking into upstream floodplain soil and aquifers where it could have supported vegetation , dry-season flows , forage , and habitat .

**Methods** A technical reference *Grazing Management Processes and Strategies for Riparian Wetland Areas* (Wyman et al 2006) was developed to assist livestock operators and land managers in developing successful riparian-wetland grazing management strategies across a wide array of land types .Because of the complexity of riparian-wetland areas and issues , this technical reference does not set forth a formula or rules for identifying the type of grazing strategy best suited for an area . Rather , it provides information to help livestock managers collaborate to design appropriate grazing strategies for soil , vegetation , water , wildlife , and livestock needs .

**Results and discussion** Basic topics covered in this technical reference include riparian-wetland area attributes and processes , riparian resource assessments and inventories , development of resource management objectives , management strategy factors , grazing treatments , and collaborative monitoring .Alternatives to passive continuous grazing , employing rest or deferment from grazing when appropriate , and considering the associated uplands and the entire water catchment and its resources helps them when developing a grazing management strategy .Examples of tools , techniques , treatments , and success stories are provided . The reference is intended to provide the background and information needed for management of riparian area resources while maintaining the economic viability of the grazing enterprise . It ensures that everyone involved clearly understands riparian function and management objectives , and understand how they can benefit from proper management and improved riparian conditions . Flexibility in the grazing management plan accommodates changes in weather and what is learned from monitoring information , in a timely manner .

**Conclusions** It is important to manage grazing so that water loving plants grow vigorously and retain the structure needed to dissipate the energy of high flows post-grazing to permit natural stream function . Consequently , it is important to consider the entire water catchment and its resources when developing a grazing management strategy . A successful grazing management strategy meets the needs of the operator , livestock , wildlife , and upland and riparian resources . Monitoring how well the strategy meets these needs and adapting as necessary perpetuates success .

### References

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