EQIP PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Restoration and Management of Declining Habitats (643):
Manage Grazing on Wet Pasture (bog)
Practice Life: 15 years

Participant: _____
EQIP Contract Number: _____

Purposes of Cost Share Practice: This practice scenario is designed to control livestock access to identified nesting habitat (current or potential) within existing pastures in order to conserve declining Bog Turtle habitat while sustaining grazing. **Bog Turtle** (*Glyptemys muhlenbergii*) populations have drastically declined throughout the northeastern US because of significant habitat loss. As a result, the southern population has been federally designated as threatened due to similarity of appearance to the northern population.

Conditions for Practice Eligibility: Participant must meet all EQIP requirements to be eligible for financial assistance. The planning area must be located within a county identified as currently inhabited by bog turtles and must be approved the NRCS Biologist, Government Agency Biologist, or Certified Wildlife Biologist. Refer to the Natural Heritage website for current maps that indicate observed bog turtle locations (http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/NC/CountyListsofTESpp.pdf). The conservation plan associated with the cost shared practice must be approved by the NRCS Biologist, Government Agency Biologist, or Certified Wildlife Biologist. The planned land unit must be owned by participant or the owner must adequately designate that participant has control of the land for the life of the contract.

Minimum Practice Requirements: The practice scenario will be planned and cost shared for three (3) consecutive years. In order for practice to be certified, the following requirements must be met:

- Livestock must be excluded from identified nesting habitat during the bog turtle nesting season (June 1 through September 30). Nesting habitat will be identified by the NRCS Biologist, Government Agency Biologist, or Certified Wildlife Biologist.
- Livestock must be excluded from identified nesting habitat when the forage height has been reduced to the forage types appropriate grazing stop height. Livestock can be returned to the identified nesting habitat once appropriate grazing start height has been achieved.
- Limit the use of equipment in the identified nesting habitat between November 1 and March 31, with additional caution if ground is not frozen.
- If permanent fence is planned within the identified nesting habitat, contact the NRCS Biologist, Government Agency Biologist, or Certified Wildlife Biologist prior to installation.

Measurement for payment and certification will be rounded to the nearest half acre. Practice must be part of a contract that obligates at least $1000.

Considerations

- Utilize this practice scenario in cooperation with Prescribed Grazing (528).
- Utilization of this practice scenario DOES NOT restrict the use of other EQIP/WHIP practices that support the objectives of the Conservation Plan.
- Inspect stand regularly for future habitat needs.

EQIP Practice Eligibility Checklist

☐ **yes** ☐ **no** Participant meets all EQIP requirements and is eligible to receive financial assistance.
☐ **yes** ☐ **no** The NRCS Biologist, Government Agency Biologist, or Certified Wildlife Biologist has approved the conservation plan associated with this cost shared scenario.
☐ **yes** ☐ **no** Location is clearly identified on the contract plan map and acreage to the nearest half acre has been determined for treatment area.

Comments:

EQIP Practice Certification Checklist

☐ **yes** ☐ **no** Conservation practices have been installed to NRCS specifications.
☐ **yes** ☐ **no** The NRCS Biologist, Government Agency Biologist, or Certified Wildlife Biologist has been notified prior to installation of permanent fence within the identified nesting habitat.
☐ **yes** ☐ **no** The completed upland wildlife management operation is in compliance with all state and local laws, regulations and ordinances.

Comments:

Follow-up Recommendations: Visit site with the participant following treatment to review need for additional wildlife management, forage management, and/or grazing management practices.

Certification
This practice has been installed according to NRCS specifications and meets the EQIP requirements and the Restoration and Management of Declining Habitat (643) practice criteria

The suitability of _____ acres (to nearest half acre) of nesting habitat have been managed to the level described in this practice guideline document.

_____

Designated Conservationist Date

2nd and 3rd Operation and Maintenance Recordkeeping:

Date of Inspection	*Acres In Compliance*	*Participant initials*	*Designated Conservationist initials/comments*