



From the Ground Up

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Wisconsin DNR

Pea Glacial Habitat Restoration Area, Fond du Lac County

Committed Leadership for Managed Grazing:



Stock DNR Grazing sign Circa unknown

2015-2017 Managed Grazing Pilot/Research Project on WMA’s partnering with The Pasture Project, UW-Madison, Agroecology Masters Program and a fantastic advocate that would not take No for an answer!

Funding Source: USDA Hatch Grant
“Understanding Opportunities and Challenges Associated with Grazing Public Grasslands of Wisconsin”

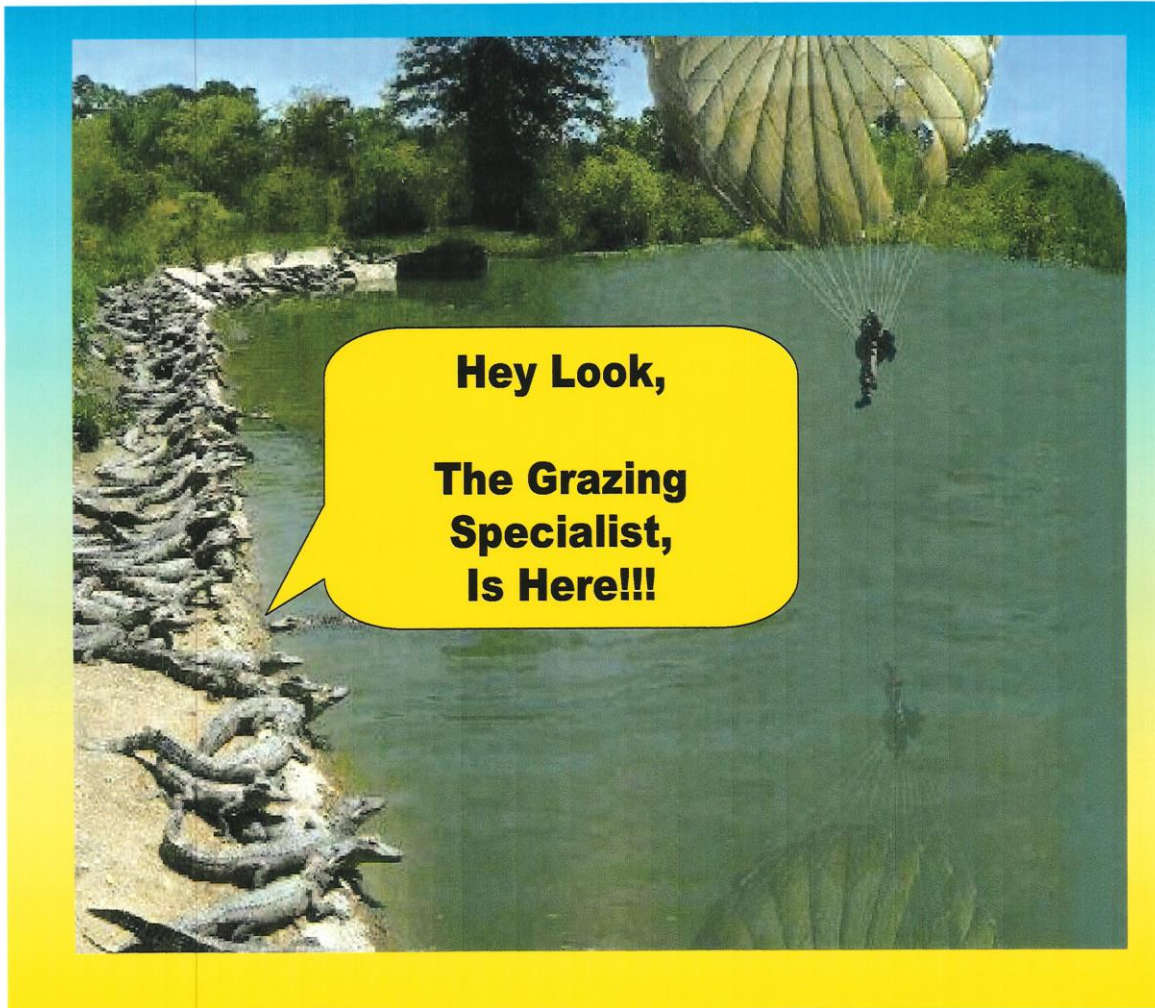
Bureau of Wildlife Management - Bird and Habitat Section:

2017- Groundwork completed inclusion of grazing in Pittman-Robertson allocation titled “Expansion of Conservation Grazing to Improve Wildlife Habitat on Public Lands”

Goal: Hire a Specialist
create Policy, inventory, and add 2000 acres of public grass land managed with grazing practices (brief summary)



Bob Jackson Fisheries Habitat Demonstration Area



Organizing the boots on the ground:

Inventory existing sites already using some type of grazing as a management tool and gauging level of use

Identify additional sites for potential grazing management (PR Timeline)

Coordinate a statewide educational sessions

Identifying a team to assist writing the State-Wide Operations Plan

Connect with WDNR other Bureau's that have Grazing sites

Organizing Internal needs

Grazing Site Dashboard
tracking spreadsheet for all sites

Land Management System
part of a year long Farm Policy and Guidance update and computer program to collect more data

Policy document needed
1 overarching doc or multiple to address policy, manager needs and Natural Heritage Inventory requirements

Annual report for grazing sites
livestock producer summary

Coordination of new sites
assessment of grazing as a viable tool

Promotion of Grazing Program
workshops and conferences



2019 Fencing Day at Leola Wildlife Area



Building the Internal Grazing Strategy and Support Documents:

Grazing Operations Team- members from Wildlife Management, Natural Heritage Conservation, Office of Applied Science, USFWS, GrassWorks and Pheasants Forever

Support provided by the *Ag Policy and Use Advisory Committee-* members from Fish, Wildlife, Parks, Forestry, Water Resources, Natural Heritage Conservation, Wisconsin Farm Bureau and Wisconsin Farmers Union

Products:

2021 Habitat Manager Guide to Conservation Grazing

2022 Wisconsin DNR Grazing Program Strategy

2022 Grazing for Conservation: Guide to Grazing for Non-game Habitat

Opportunities:

Expand public land access to non-Traditional User Group

Foster relationship not based on compliance

Enhance existing user group experiences

Work Across State Departments and Internal DNR Divisions for the benefit of Achieving our Mission

Create and enhance existing grasslands with a new management tool



Successes:

Efficient Use of PR Funds-
Original Goal=2000 acres
Achieved Goal=3504 acres

Opening communication doors with Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association, GrassWorks, Farm Bureau and Farmers Union

Increased positive exposure (when able) to attend in person farmer pasture walks, during covid virtual events fill the gap

Staff Training for Grazing systems

Networking with other Agencies- local, state and federal

Achieving buy-in across the DNR

The Internal WDNR Audience

Wildlife

Parks

Fisheries

Natural
Heritage
Conservation

Office of
Applied
Science

External Services

Office of Ag and
Water

Environmental
Management

The Ox is slow....but the Earth is Patient!

Depending on the level of acceptance within your agency to use grazing as a new tool, you will need to be patient.

Some people readily accept grazing, some people take the watch and wait approach while others will let you know that grazing is just plain not going to work.

Take the time needed to educate, inform and show examples on-site of how Grazing works.



MANAGED GRAZING IN PROGRESS

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is evaluating the use of cattle grazing to improve public lands. If done correctly, managed grazing can:

- Limit the spread of invasive plant species
- Improve diversity and root systems of native grasses and wildflowers
- Increase habitat for ground nesting birds and other species
- Improve soil health and reduce run-off
- Increase water retention and improve water quality

Managed grazing can mimic some of the positive impacts of the once great bison herds of the North American grasslands. Rotating livestock through paddocks can create beneficial disturbance, if followed by adequate periods of rest and recovery for the soil and plant communities. Manure left behind by cattle supports soil microorganisms and insects that increase the presence of game and birds. Grazing can generate revenue or services that may reduce the public cost of managing the land with burning, mowing, cutting, and spraying.

Wisconsin DNR and its partners continue to monitor the effects of managed grazing on the plants, animals and soils of this site. For more information or to make a comment, please visit: dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/grazing.html

Managed herd at Wisconsin DNR wildlife area grazing site.

Great Spangled Fritillary butterfly at Wisconsin DNR wildlife area grazing site.

WISCONSIN DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

College of Agricultural & Life Sciences UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Extension UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Pasture Project



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"WILD WISCONSIN:
OFF THE RECORD"