

Grazing Public Lands: Public/Private Partnership



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USFWS - St. Croix Wetland Management District**

Objectives

- Mission
- Evolution of our Grazing Program
- Public lands grazing challenges
- 2014 grazing project
- Lessons learned
- Update current capacity to graze



TAI POWER SEEFF/GETTY IMAGES



**Mission: Restore historic prairie and wetland complexes
and oak savannas to benefit
waterfowl and grassland dependent birds**

Points to Begin with:

- 1. Lots of Science to support grazing**
- 2. Grazing, when done correctly, benefits wildlife habitat**
- 3. My office cannot burn all the acres it would like to burn annually.**
- 4. Starting a grazing program on public lands is not easy.**

Where we came from...

- Just working with our neighbors
- No outreach to other potential grazers
- Season-long grazing
- Landscape scale management using only prescribed burning

Public Land Grazing Challenges

- Lack of infrastructure
- Variable and inconsistent water sources
- No electricity
- Minimal public awareness of the value grazing provides to wildlife habitat
- Each unit provides it own unique challenges
- No standard rental rated for public lands in WI



Producer Meeting: Learn more about public lands grazing opportunities



April 17st 6PM-8PM

Meeting Purpose:

- To find Producers interested in grazing public lands
- Inform Producers of the public lands management goals grazing will help achieve
- Provide Producers with the opportunity to ask questions about grazing public lands

RSVP at 715-246-7784 ext 111

Note: Producers who are interested grazing public lands are encouraged to attend this meeting to learn more about opportunities.

Meeting Location:

**St. Croix Wetland Management District Office
1764 95th Street
New Richmond, WI 54017**

Steps taken...

- River Country RC&D Partnership 2012
 - Established Listening Groups
 - Preliminary Site Visits
 - Invited the WI-DNR
- What do Producers need?
 - Water
 - Fence (Generally Electric Preferred)
 - Managing livestock at the grazing unit (loading and off loading)
- Began Producers Contact List
- Adapted the Minnesota DNR Grazing Plan template to address our local management plan needs.

2014 Pilot Year Project

- 2013 Completed the boundary fence for south portion of Spring Meadows Grazing Unit
- Talked to neighbors asking about the idea of buying water and electricity (worried about liability)
- Explored fencing contracts (Decided to install fence with FWS and DNR staff and volunteers)
- Built solar energizer and temporary fence kits
- Sent letters out in 1-mile radius around grazing unit

Fencing Kit: loan out for grazing season

solar energizer, pigtail posts, braided wire and wire reels ~\$2500



Permanent Boundary Fence

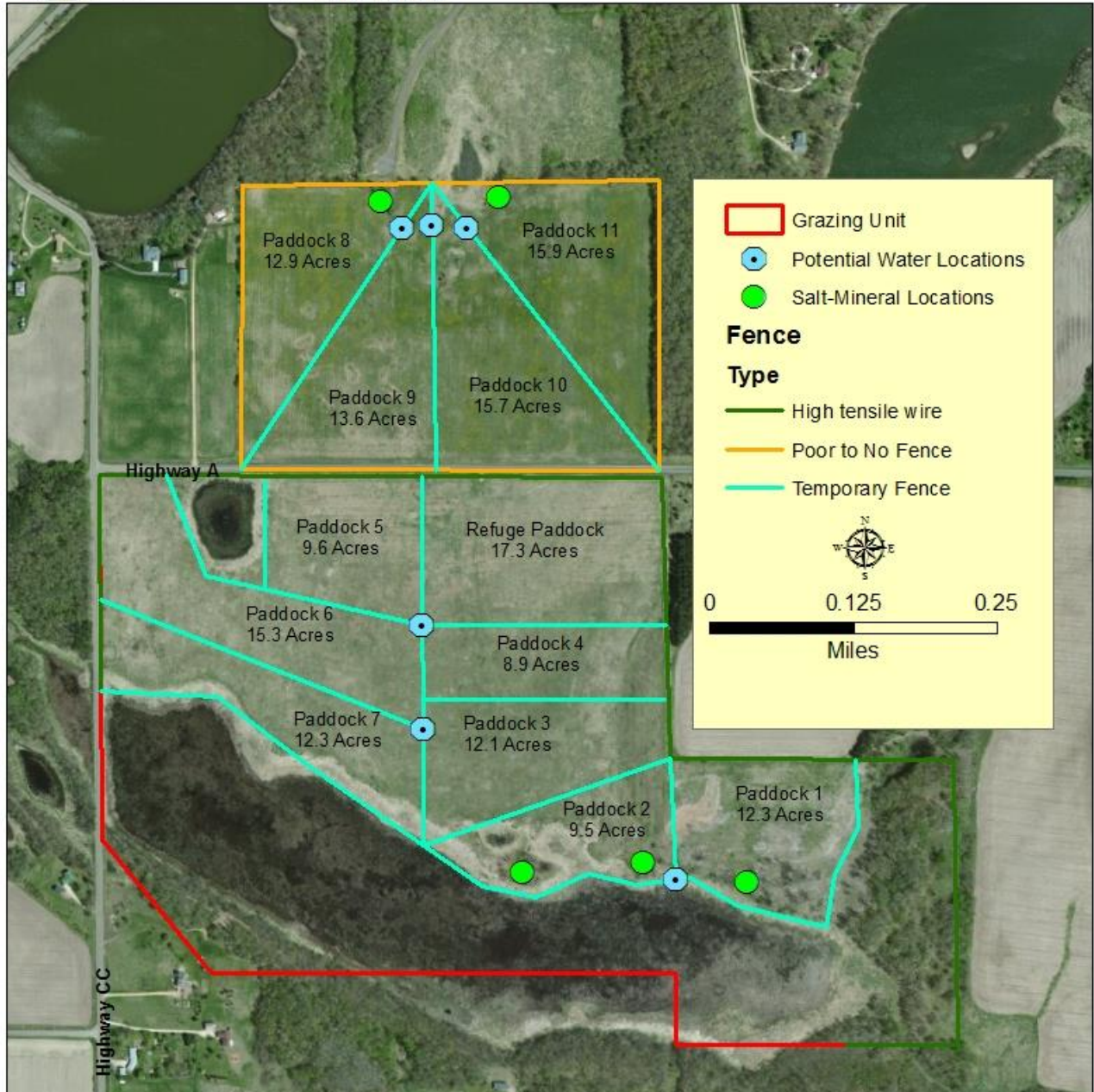


Temp Fence





U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Wisconsin DNR
Spring Meadows Complex
Management Intensive Grazing Plan Map
138 Acres



Boundary Fence:
\$12,000
Materials & Installation

Temporary Fence:
\$3,000
Materials & Installation

Note: Reusable and installed by high school students and college interns



Grazing Land for Rent

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources are seeking Producers to graze paddocks on one property in Polk County, WI. The purpose of grazing is to promote native plant diversity and to provide a competitive advantage to native grass species.

Where:

1. **Spring Meadows Complex(Waterfowl Production Area and State Wildlife Area), Section 28 and 33 (T32N-R17W), Alden Township, Polk County (138 acres)**

(See attached map for specific paddock location)

To bid:

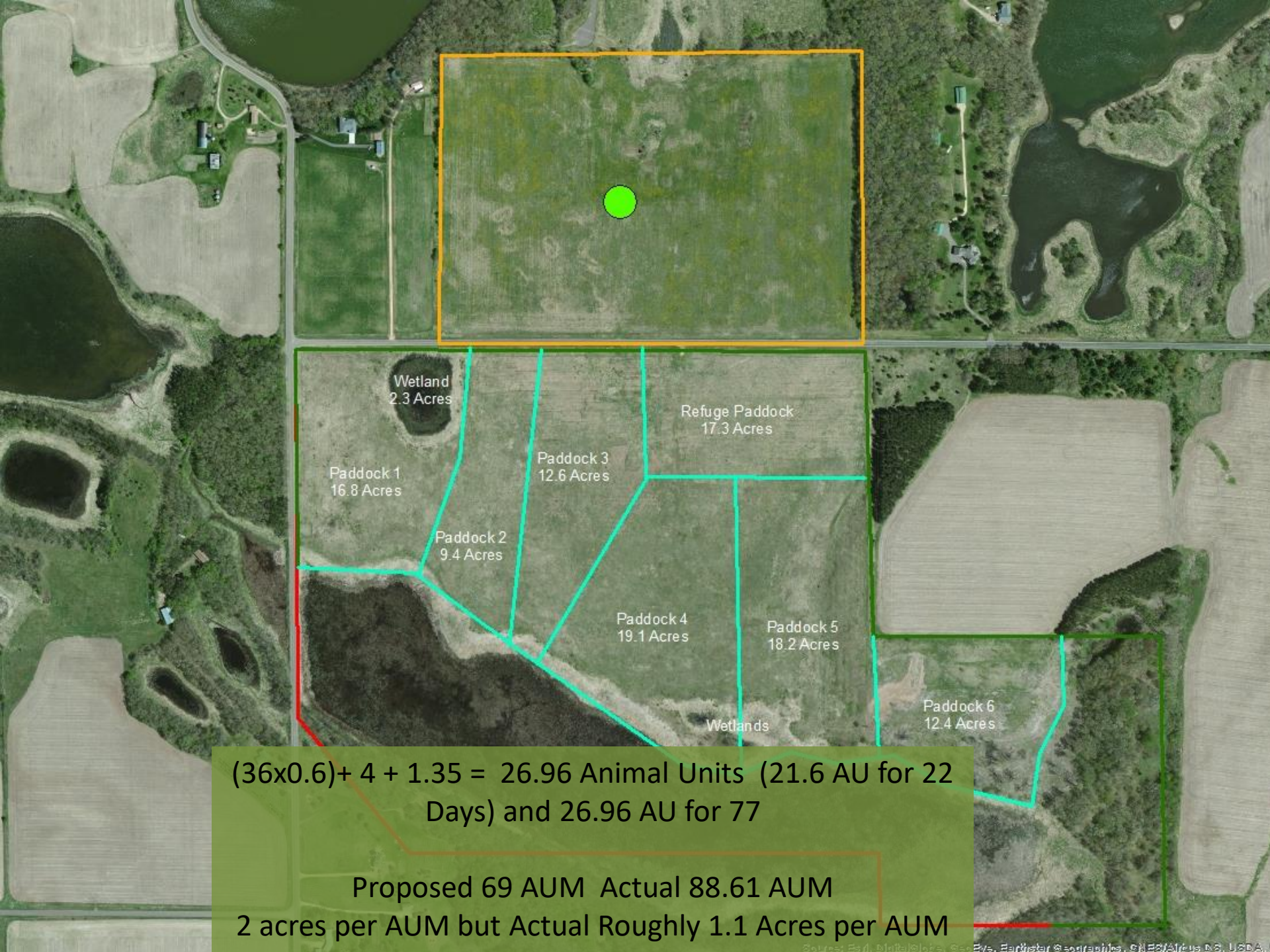
1. Review special conditions sheet (page 2-4)
2. Fill out bid sheet (page 5)
3. Complete and Return with bid sheet the General Special Use Application Form (Page 6-7)
4. Return bid sheet to St. Croix WMD office by 2pm, April 28, 2014
1764 95th Street, New Richmond, WI 54017
5. High bidder will be selected to graze for the next two years, in the event of a tie a random drawing will decide the renter
6. A public Bid Opening will be held on at 9 AM on April 30th, 2014
at the St. Croix WMD Office (1764 95th St, New Richmond, WI 54017). All bidders are welcome to attend.
7. Questions: contact Chris Trosen at 715-246-7784 ext 116

Continued...

- Grazing Project-Bid System highest bidder (spring of 2014)
 - Ended up with one bid (\$5/AUM)
 - Producer talked to insurance company (higher Rate)
 - No electricity and no water from neighbors
 - Backed out

Continued...

- Priority System:
 - Talked with potential Permittee: grazed at NO Cost
 - Wet year and didn't need the pasture
 - Had to move his cattle
 - He did some fencing
 - FWS completed the temporary boundary fence



$(36 \times 0.6) + 4 + 1.35 = 26.96$ Animal Units (21.6 AU for 22 Days) and 26.96 AU for 77

Proposed 69 AUM Actual 88.61 AUM

2 acres per AUM but Actual Roughly 1.1 Acres per AUM

Something to Chew On

Historically, natural disturbance such as wildfire and grazing by bison and elk maintained the grasses and prevented the invasion of trees.

We use managed grazing and controlled fires to restore these natural processes in western grasslands, benefiting many species of wildlife including birds, pronghorns, meadowlarks, and bison.

For more information about us visit us Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/BLMlandfill>


Bureau of Land Management
1000 14th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005
703/251-4777



Welcome To
SPRING MEADOWS
Waterfowl Production Area
Respect the birds. They are the reason we're here.
Respect the water. It's the lifeblood of the area.
Respect the land. It's the home of the birds.
Respect the people. They are the heart of the area.

GRAZING AREA
Caution
If you are in this area, you are in a grazing area. Please do not feed the animals. Feeding can be harmful to the animals and is illegal. Please do not enter the area if you are not authorized. Please do not enter the area if you are not authorized.

Your
Duck Stamp
Dollars At Work!



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Division of Wildlife Management
Purchase of the National Wildlife Refuge was authorized with
Duck Stamp funds.

Duration: July 9th through September 24th
-36 yearlings
-4 cows (August - September)
-1 bull (August- September)



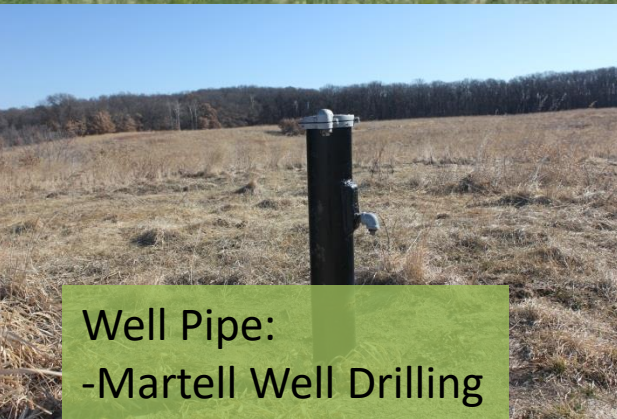
For 2015 Season:
Installed a 120' well: \$3,000
Solar Watering System: \$8,600



1" aboveground Water pipe:
-4000 foot



900 Gallon Tank:
Plastic-Mart.com



Well Pipe:
-Martell Well Drilling



Solar Pump System:
-Lorentz, SD

“OK Coral”:

- System purchased by Permittee for loading and unloading cattle.
- Available for rent

Pasture Walk: River Country RC&D/Wisconsin DNR/USFWS



Lessons Learned

- Grazing public land is possible but we need to find the right partner for success.
- The Producer and the Public Land Manager need to stay flexible and must **Communicate**.
- Mobil watering system and electric fences provides for greater flexibility.
- Building grazing infrastructure on public land will take time
- Experiential Learning is KEY!

Currently

- List of 69 Producers
- 6 WPAs have infrastructure to support grazing
- Grazed four of those sites three growing seasons and one site 6 growing seasons.
- Two sites will hopefully be grazed in 2022.
- I still have 38 more units to explore grazing opportunities on.
- Explore the exchange for services idea to build infrastructure to support grazing

“When land does well for its owner, and the owner does well by his land; when both end up better by reason of their partnership, we have conservation.”

– Aldo Leopold, *The Farmer as a Conservationist*

Contact Information

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