

PLANT Physiology

A successful riparian grazing strategy will fit the plant(s) one wants to encourage. Desirable plants that are grazed too severely, too often, or at the wrong time, will be reduced in vigor, suppressed by less palatable plants, or killed.

A grazing strategy designed to protect or encourage only riparian plants may adversely affect upland grasses and/or result in substantial under-utilization of upland forage.

Grazing strategies either must be designed to: (a) concurrently meet the needs of both upland and



Under continuous, season-long grazing, riparian vegetation likely will be severely grazed late in the growing season. At this critical time foliage is needed to manufacture and store energy for root growth and for initial foliage production the following spring.

In this area, willows put on new growth in mid-summer. This new growth becomes particularly attractive to livestock when upland forage dries out and riparian grasses have been depleted.

This riparian area had been subject to continuous, season-long grazing for many years. When this photograph was taken, livestock had been excluded from the area right of the fence for one year.

Riparian vegetation characteristically is quite different than the plants on adjacent uplands. A grazing strategy targeted on upland grasses, for example, may result in severe overgrazing of riparian grasses, forbs, shrubs and tree seedlings.

riparian vegetation over time; (b) include riparian areas in separate pastures to allow special management; or (c) exclude livestock from riparian areas through herding or fencing.