

GRAZING LANDS CONSERVATION INITIATIVE (GLCI)

Introduction

Privately owned grazing land of the United States are truly a national treasure. There are many uses and values that make them extremely important, not only to the landowners, but also to the entire nation. Other non-federal lands making similar contribution include state, local government, and tribal lands.

The opportunity exists for a national initiative to assure the sustainability of all private grazing lands to enhance these lands for future use and to inform the public of the benefits of making this national commitment and investment.

Background

Private grazing land in the United States has provided many products and benefits to their owners and to society for over 200 years.

Historical use of these lands occurred without the benefit of grazing land science, as we know it today.

Today there are more potential conflicts than ever before on private grazing lands within the United States.

Demands by landowners and society for grazing land benefits, values, and products are increasing. Private landowners require a solid economic business.

Society benefits from an available supply of food and fiber; clean air, healthy wildlife populations and habitat; improved fisheries and aquatic systems; healthy riparian areas,

Provides opportunities for improved nutrient management from land application of animal manure and other by-product nutrient sources, reduces soil erosion from wind and water, reduced potential for flooding, less sediment in streams and reservoirs, and economic and social stability.

Owners of private grazing lands must continue to recognize conservation problems and opportunities and receive sound voluntary technical assistance to improve their grazing land resource to meet ecological and economic demands.

The Initiative

The Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative is a nationwide collaborative process of individuals and organizations working together to maintain and improve the management, productivity, and health of the Nation's privately owned grazing land.

GLCI was developed to provide for a coordinated effort to identify priority issues, find solutions, and effect change on private grazing land. This initiative will complement and enhance existing conservation programs.

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Strategies

GLCI seeks to strengthen partnerships, promote voluntary assistance and participation, respects private property rights, encourages diversification to achieve multiple benefits, and emphasizes training, education, and increased public awareness.

Private grazing landowners are eager to voluntarily improve their lands. However, they need technical assistance to help them use the latest and best technology to make grazing land management decisions.

Existing technical assistance is limited for those who own grazing land and does not meet the needs for adequately sustaining or enhancing the resources.

Progress

Through GLCI efforts, Congress has identified funds in the Natural Resources Conservation Services' budget to be used directly for technical assistance and public awareness activities to support conservation activities on private grazing lands.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service is one of the primary players in the initiative. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is the technical agency of the US Department of Agriculture that provides assistance to conservation districts and individuals in planning and carrying out conservation activities.

NRCS has the expertise and experience to provide technical assistance to owners and managers of private grazing land for the long-term productivity and ecological health of grazing land. NRCS assists with public awareness activities to inform the public on the values and benefits of private grazing land.

Coalitions

Coalitions are made up of individuals and organizations that work collectively to accomplish the goals and objectives of the initiative.

When opportunities exist, coalitions can be expanded to include individuals and organizations that have an interest in private grazing lands to help achieve the objectives of the initiative. Generally, personnel from government agencies and universities serve in an advisory capacity to the coalitions.

Coalitions actively seek sources to increase technical assistance and public awareness activities that maintain or enhance grazing land resources.

State and local coalitions support national strategies and also develop local strategies and goals to meet their local needs.

Summary

Today and tomorrow's decisionmakers must have an ecological understanding of the grazing land resources to make wise land management decisions that will provide for present and future demands of the resource.

It is imperative that adequate technical assistance is available by personnel trained in grazing management to help landowners use the latest and best technology.

This assistance will provide owners and managers of private grazing land information to make management decisions that will conserve and enhance private grazing land resources and provide related benefits to all citizens of the United States.

For More Information

Contact your state or local GLCI coalition, your local conservation district, or NRCS for more information. Information is also available on the following web site:
<http://www.glci.org>.