



PLATTE RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM
Technical Advisory Committee Grassland Management Workshop
June 23, 2014

Workshop Participants

Matt Rabbe (USFWS)
Jim Jenniges (NPPD)
Mike Fritz (NGPC)
Chad Smith (EDO)
Jason Farnsworth (EDO)
Dave Baasch (EDO)
Tim Tunnell (EDO)

Grassland Management Discussion

- Tunnell led the discussion and presented a summary of findings from the Program's 2013 Grassland Monitoring Study
- Fritz – remove saltwort from the Species of Concern list when we update the Grassland Monitoring Protocol
- Baasch and Jenniges – need to look into how areas could be >100% bare ground
- Fritz – most of the reed canarygrass would likely be the exotic subspecies
- Jenniges – reed canarygrass currently classified as the native subspecies
- Tunnell – liked the weighted FQI metric; seemed to represent what he sees in the field
- Tunnell – greater spread between the FQI and Weighted FQI scores (see Figure 7 in report) is an indication of greater potential for managing for native plant communities.
- Baasch – not much separation between the scores on the Shoemaker Island Complex hay meadows as compared to the grazed paddocks; Tunnell – likely the result of being hayed twice a year in the past; resting a couple of the hay meadows in 2014.
- Fritz – need to develop grazing/management plan on a site-by-site basis based on species composition
- Farnsworth – Program's primary grassland management objective is for whooping crane use (i.e., structure); secondary objectives are for grassland health/composition and other species use. ¼ of the areas should be managed for short stature for whooping cranes and the remaining ¾ of each complex should be managed with some form of rotation that includes ¼ of the area rested
- Baasch – do the hay meadows count towards the 25% short stature area or did that concept only apply to grazed area; hayed area counts towards the 25% short stature area unless it is rested
- Tunnell – not sure resting hay meadows will promote native plant community response; need to suppress exotic cool seasons (hay early) to get the native warm season plants to become more abundant; Jenniges – the Program needs to abide by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA); Farnsworth – regional non-game bird division of the FWS is considering issuing permits to hay portions of areas during the MBTA period
- Fritz – would be good to have some grassland management experts such as Chris Helzer, Kay Kottas, etc. involved in the process of developing grassland management plans



- Rabbe – need to try to manage to have a portion of the grasslands short structure, rested, and of various stages in between these extremes; all seemed to agree; Baasch tough to manage grazing intensity without knowing if it is going to be a wet or dry year; perhaps we could graze and hay or burn grazed areas we want in short stature during wet years
- Tunnell – should the Program assemble an advisory committee to review annual management plans and leases; no one seemed overly interested, but Rabbe suggested the EDO make the annual plans available that are sent to the Farm Manager that develops the leases
- Farnsworth and Tunnell – next step will be to revise 5-year land management plans for several Program properties; Jenniges – half-day workshop may be beneficial for developing site-specific management strategies for the Program’s 5-year management plans; Fritz – might be a good time to bring in some outside experts to look at the Grassland Monitoring Study results and assist in the development of the 5-year plans

Meeting adjourned at 1:45pm Central time.

Summary of Discussions from June 2014 Grassland Management Workshop

- The EDO will remove saltwort from the list of Species of Concern when we update the Grassland Monitoring Protocol.
- Develop management 5-year land management plans that include a management activities that provide 25% of each complex in short stature (~8 inches), 25% that is rested, and 50% in various stages in between these ranges. Seek outside grassland management experts such as Kay Kottas, Chris Helzer, etc. to assist and provide insight into the development of the 5-year plans.
- The EDO will pursue acquiring permits that would allow the Program to manage a portion of the grasslands during the MBTA period which would add more options to the list of potential management activities.