



NDGLC Update from the Chairman

Jerry Doan, Chairman NDGLC

Wow, it sure has been an interesting winter weather pattern! It was probably the best weather for winter grazing I have seen for a long time, even though there was an arctic blast that challenged many water systems. We didn't have storms or blizzards to contend with and the milder weather sure allowed cows to come through in good body condition. That is the good side! On the negative side, we continue to be very short of moisture across much of N.D. and a big chunk of the Western U.S. Here at our place the potholes and dams are all dry or very close to it.

We now see one of the major benefits to water development, bringing fresh well water to every pasture with poly pipe. If it were not for all those years of working with partners to develop that water resource, we would hardly be able to graze a cow this year! For those of you looking to develop water, there are several partners to help with cost-share and planning. Please contact Trish Feiring of the NDGLC for help or reach out to the NDGLC mentors. They have a lot of experience in what has worked for their operations.

I would like to thank everyone that came to Medora for the Winter Conference. We had an excellent turnout with many new and young producers. It was fun to engage with the challenging questions and discussion! We are all always learning in this regenerative arena, and we should always challenge our thinking. Gabe Brown did a great job of challenging our traditional thinking. Jesse Kalberer's story on changing his operation, and the new and exciting lessons he has learned were engaging and informative and Diane Rogers brought great insight into beef and how we work through national issues.

I would like to thank everyone involved in the Munch on This virtual series. For our first time out of the gate, I think it went really well. If any of you have thoughts or suggestions please let us know.

I have had a couple of questions that have come to my attention from many discussions with producers as they look to explore the journey to regenerate their rangeland and cropland. How fast should a producer make changes and the feeling of having to be like others that have been engaged in regeneration for a while? I answer this by first challenging you to ask yourself why do you want to go down this path? Only you can answer that question. Then you need to develop some goals, both short and long term, and a vision of how to get there. This is your journey and you need to own it. Not me or anyone else. I have found that sometimes folks think they need to be a mob grazer or an intensive grazer to be successful. In my opinion, after you answer your tough questions and develop goals and a vision start slow. I have seen too many failures because a complete system was put in without the time to learn and adapt. Find what works for you and be happy. As time goes on you may want to move forward being more aggressive, or maybe not. That is your choice. It so depends on your goals. Lastly, ask for help from our mentors or others that have been involved in these different ways of thinking. My point in this is to find what works for you and do it, regardless of what others are doing or saying. If you have moved the needle forward on soil health, profitability, or quality of life you can be proud!

As we move into spring, I sure hope we can get some much-needed moisture! Be safe as you get busy with Springs's work and think about how we can regenerate our resources and then tell the story to the public. And finally, stop and enjoy the beauty of rural N.D. and have some fun!

Winter Grazing in the Midwest

Winter grazing is a practice many NDGLC mentors implement and recommend. It helps manage soil health in the winter, provides inexpensive feed for cows and promotes carbon sequestration. “You can cut your costs to winter a cow. We do not wean calves until mid to late March, which lets the calf learn from his mother how to graze in the winter,” said Kenny Miller, an experienced NDGLC mentor.

Miller’s winter grazing practices include rotating cattle through paddocks, just like he does in the summer and fall. “For example, if we think there are four to five days of grass to graze on in a paddock, we will let the cattle graze on it for three days before moving to the next paddock,” Miller said.

The cows graze on stockpiled native rangeland Kenny has prepped the fall before. Once the prepped land has been grazed over, Miller starts a second rotation through the paddock using supplements, usually high-quality alfalfa hay.

Although winter grazing has several benefits, it also comes with its challenges. “Deep winter snows, blizzards, extremely cold stretches, and frozen water sources can make you want to quit,” Miller said. “But NDGLC mentors have been through it and can offer advice on how to prepare for these challenges in the fall, minimizing the challenges in the winter.”

He noted the past two winters have been extremely dry and mild. “We winter grazed until Jan. 5, and then started bale grazing across paddocks,” Miller said.

If you are interested in winter grazing or have questions, contact [Trish](#), NDGLC field representative. She will connect you with mentors in your area who have experience with winter grazing.

Field Update

Trish Feiring, NDGLC Field Representative

Spring is just around the corner! The Grasslands Regeneration Program is in full swing, working with producers for 2021. If you’re looking for assistance on grazing planning, funding for conservation projects or just need someone to run an idea by, give me a call at 701-228-4622 and I’ll do my best to help. To date, we have partnered with Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, N.D. Natural Resources Trust and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service on projects and look forward to many others. These partners are ready to step up to the plate and assist with grass seeding, fencing, water developments, etc.

I consider myself an optimist, but I also like to be a realist. It may be a good idea to have a drought management plan in place this year. Does that mean selling cows or does it mean renting more grass or buying more hay? Regardless of what it means for you, we want to create a plan that benefits you and your regenerative practices in the long run. Grazing systems are most important when producers are dealing with drought. These systems don’t need to be extravagant. It’s as simple as starting with one cross fence.

Be sure to keep an eye out for a few additional “Munch on This” virtual presentations and discussions covering topics such as drought planning, holistic management and grazing strategies.

The Progress of the Bakken Development and Working Lands Program (BDWLP)

Jesse Beckers, ND Natural Resource Trust

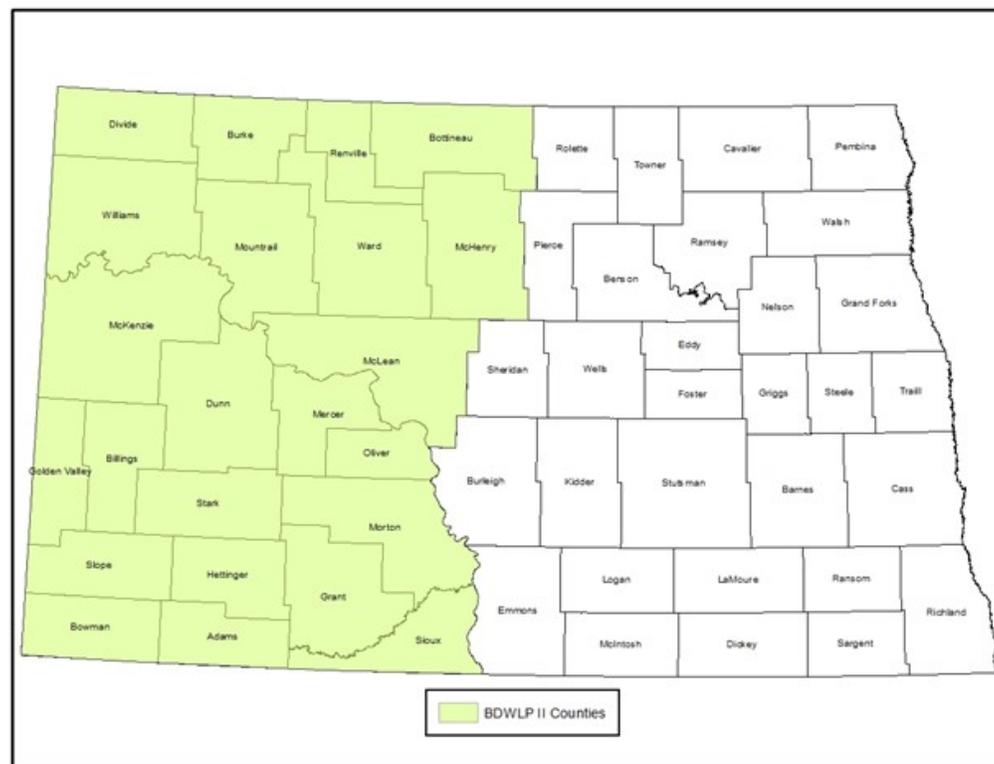
As the deep freeze left and the weather started changing for the warmer, I overlooked a field that has been cropped for many years that probably should not have been. Jed Rider and I stared across the expanse of gravel and light soils and individually wondered what the best way would be to establish a native grass stand where wheat had been the norm. Should the area be planted to native grass? Maybe tame grass or a combination of cover crops one year and native or tame grass the next year? The conversation then moved on to cross-fencing, water tanks, water pipelines, and a rotational grazing plan. All of this can be overwhelming for a landowner who is considering changes to the land on which they operate. Not only with which direction to go, but how to pay for it all as well.

There is a light of hope though for many ranchers who raise our food on four legs and want to increase their grassland cover, put more cows on the ground, sequester carbon, improve soil health, and implement an infrastructure that will encourage a rotational grazing system. N.D. Natural Resources

Trust, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners Program, Ducks Unlimited, and Pheasants Forever all have programs that address these types of projects and can assist landowners in establishing perennial cover. In some cases, the Trust has worked with and combined programs with other conservation entities to provide the best options possible for a landowner or renter.

For the purposes of this article, we will focus on the Bakken Development and Working Lands Program (BDWLP), now on its second round of funding. Since the program was first funded in 2018 through the Outdoor Heritage Fund, landowners and public entities have been able to improve soil health, restore grasslands and wildlife habitat, and enhance farming and ranching practices on private and public lands. The BDWLP was developed to create opportunities for those affected by energy development and those who reside in oil-producing counties. The North Dakota Grazing Lands Coalition (NDGLC) and local soil conservation districts are available to assist landowners in managing these acres and adjacent grasslands, while providing best management practice guidelines for livestock grazing. Fencing is used for new or enhanced rotational grazing systems, as well as fencing for crops (including cover crops) to enhance soil health and rest native grassland pastures. Cost-share is 60/40 between the BDWLP and the landowner, and fences are to adhere to current NRCS cost-share rates. Grass plantings, both native and tame, and cover crops are designed by natural resources professionals and the landowner.

We would like to thank the NDGLC for its leadership in delivering the BDWLP and providing recommendations for landowners looking to increase productivity on their lands. For more information, please contact an [NDGLC mentor](#) near you or Trust employee [Jesse Beckers](#) at 701-223-8501.



Events

Grazing Lands Ecology Workshop - June 1-5

The Grazing Lands Ecology Workshop is for education professionals looking to expand their knowledge in ecology, grazing and regenerative practices in North Dakota. Graduate professional development credit is available through the University of North Dakota Center for Teaching and Learning and Minot State College. The Grazing Lands Ecology Workshop is comprised of four online lectures and a one-day field event for educators interested in ecological applications and land management. The field event includes presentations from Audubon Dakota, North Dakota Game and Fish, North Dakota Grazing Lands Coalition, Envirothon and Ecological Insight Corps. The class will be instructed by Dr. Rebecca Phillips, an ecologist that works closely with NDGLC and its partners. [Learn more.](#)

NDGLC Summer Tour - available soon

The NDGLC will be hosting its summer tour at Brad Sand's ranch near Ellendale, N.D. Registration information will be available soon.

North Dakota Leopold Conservation Award Tour - available soon

The North Dakota Leopold Conservation Award and North Dakota Grazing Lands Coalition Summer Tour will take place at the Dockter-Jensen Ranch, the 2020 Leopold Conservation Award Winners, near Denhoff. Registration information will be available soon.

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NDGLC CAP

\$30 PER CAP PLUS SHIPPING

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Mentor Network

NDGLC has established a grassroots-based network of North Dakota grazing land managers who have agreed to provide guidance and counsel to interested ranchers and agency personnel on grassland management.

[Learn more](#) about NDGLC mentors.

EASY WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Are you a member looking for a way to get involved with NDGLC?

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Like us on Facebook. Liking us on Facebook and engaging with our posts helps us share our message with a new audience.
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Share your stories with us. We want to hear from you. Please share your stories with us. Your experience is a great resource.
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Invite people to our events. NDGLC hosts many events open to the public. Bring a friend the next time you come.

Become a Member Today!

The mission of NDGLC is to promote the health and regeneration of North Dakota's grasslands. Farmers and ranchers can become members of the NDGLC for annual dues of \$30. Members will receive newsletters plus email notifications of pertinent events, legislation and other opportunities on a regular basis. Members may also attend field days and other workshops at a discounted rate.

Join Now

Let NDGLC Share Your News!

[Contact the NDGLC office](#) for questions or information to be included in the next newsletter.



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