

Request for Grazing Application

Cooperative Agriculture Program

**Prescribed Grazing on
Quivira National Wildlife Refuge**

Date: 2/11/2026

Quivira National Wildlife Refuge

1434 NE 80th St.

Stafford, Kansas

Point of contact

Kathryn Brenner

Refuge Manager

quivira@fws.gov

Office: 620-410-4011

PART – 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Introduction

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), Quivira National Wildlife Refuge (Quivira NWR or Refuge), is seeking applications from qualified individuals to provide resource management services in the form of cattle grazing to promote and enhance native community diversity and control invasive species.

Quivira National Wildlife Refuge is home to many spectacular and fascinating sights and sounds. Established in 1955, Quivira NWR contains 22,135 acres of mixed grass prairie and wetland habitat. Located south of the great bend of the Arkansas River in central Kansas, the Refuge is a popular destination for birders, hunters, and other nature enthusiasts. Situated in the zone where the east meets west, mixed grass prairie and wetlands provide a haven to a diverse variety of waterfowl, shorebirds, and many other species of birds, mammals, reptiles, and other animals.

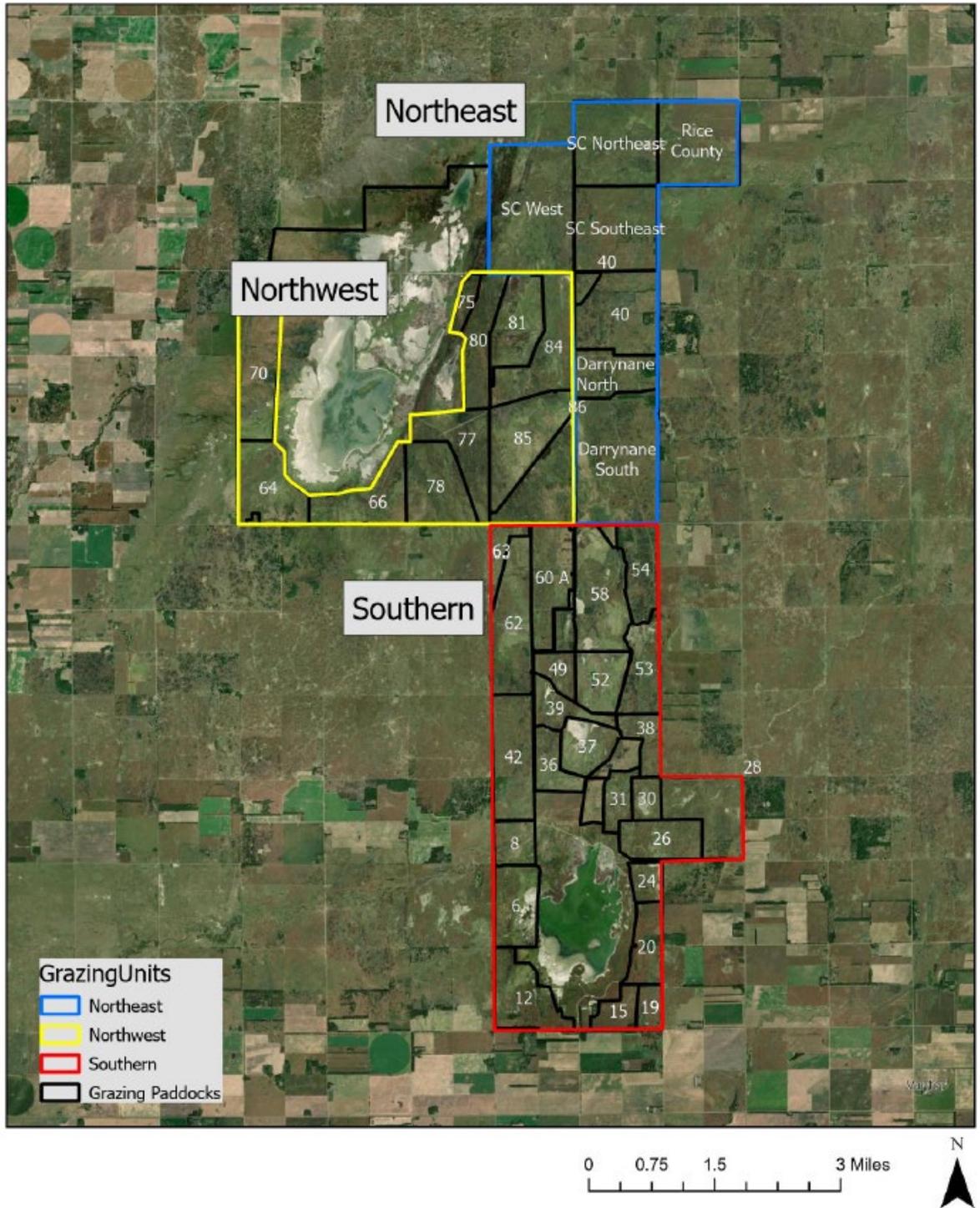
B. Purpose

Prescribed grazing is used for habitat restoration and management on Refuge lands. Grazing Quivira NWR can support and enhance habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife through effective program management. Prescribed grazing can rejuvenate native grasses and help control the spread of some invasive plant species. Results are watched closely, so that adjustments can be made to meet habitat goals and objectives.

C. Scope of work

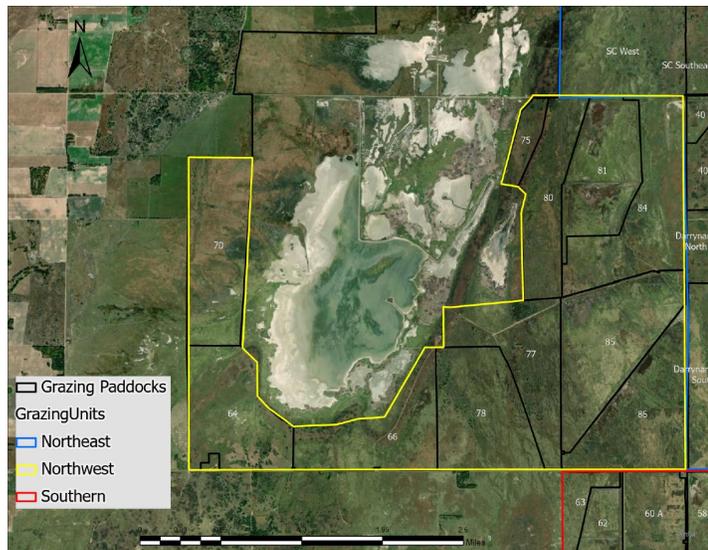
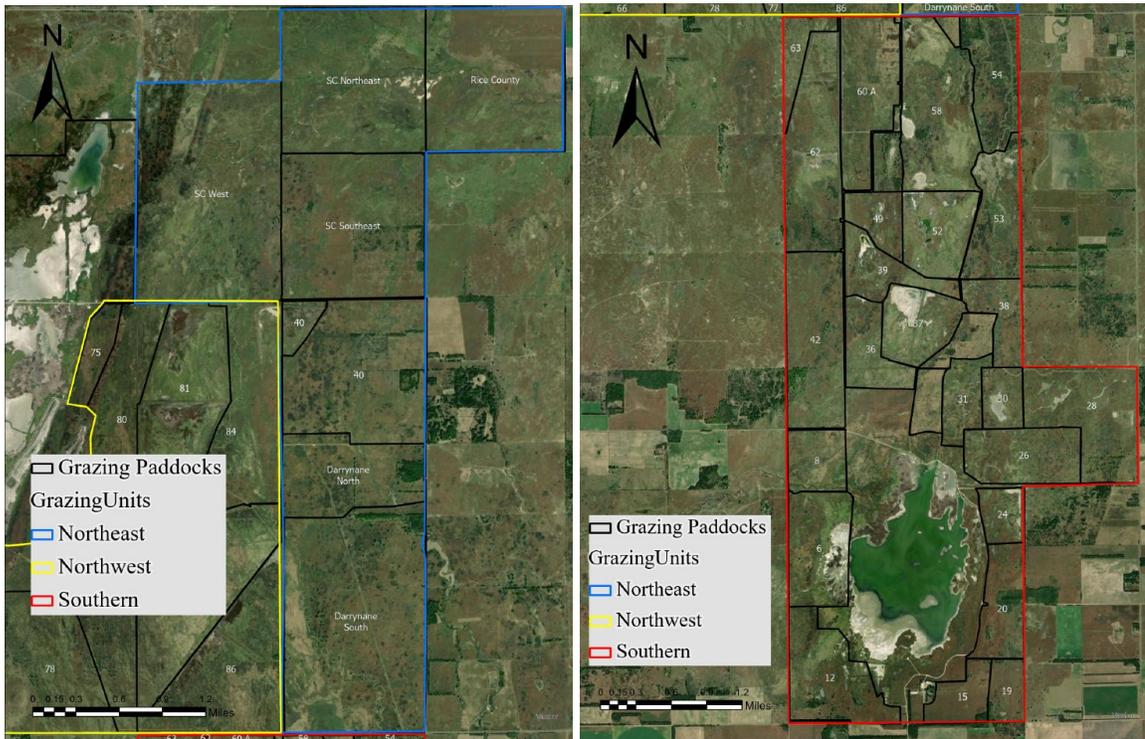
The selected producer will operate under a Cooperative Agriculture Agreement as a “cooperator” with the Service. Under this agreement, the cooperator will be responsible for providing the requested number of cattle and providing the necessary labor and materials to adequately fulfill the responsibilities of the refuge grazing program. Cattle will be maintained in one herd (currently 60 cow/calf pairs and up to 3 bulls or 75 mature cows) to graze one of the three management areas on Quivira NWR for a period up to five grazing seasons. Based on current conditions, grazing is planned to occur May 1 through August 15th. There may be opportunities to graze paddocks for special management considerations, such as annual brome in April, extended growth seasons beyond August 15th, or other considerations.

Grazing Units for Quivira NWR 2026-2030



Individual unit maps are provided below to get a better understanding of the layout in each unit. Around 2,000 acres will be available for grazing in each unit. Paddocks available to be grazed are not necessarily grazed every year of the 5-year period. Refuge staff will determine annual grazing schedules and potential adjustments with

consideration of many factors (e.g., drought, flooding, prescribed fire, other management plans, maintenance needs).



D. Grazing pricing

Grazing fees are based on USDA and local grazing recommendations. The grazing fee is subject to increase if USDA or local grazing recommendations are higher than the original amount, but the increase in grazing fees will not be more than \$1 per animal unit

per year. Grazing fees published for 2026 are \$24.50/mature cow, \$28.00/cow/calf pair, and \$26.00/bull in Kansas.

E. Eligibility and minimum qualifications

The Service is seeking grazing applicants with the flexibility to adapt their grazing operations to refuge requirements and conservation objectives. The producer will be selected through an open, transparent, and competitive process.

PART – 2: INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS

A. Required meeting and Refuge tour

Applicants that have never grazed Quivira NWR in previous years are required to attend a property site visit and discuss any questions or concerns with Refuge Staff prior to submitting an application. Site visits for interested operators will be conducted in late February/early March at Quivira NWR. Applications will not be accepted from operators that did not attend a site visit. Transportation to and from the refuge will be the responsibility of the interested operator(s). Contact Kathryn Brenner to attend a site visit.

B. Application process schedule

1. Grazing opportunity announcement will be mid-February.
2. Site visits will take place prior to the application deadline.
3. Application must be received by March 13th by 4pm to be considered eligible.
4. All applications will be opened and reviewed using the criteria of Part 3.
5. Selection will be announced no later than March 27th.
6. Permit finalization will be conducted by April 3rd.
7. Permit to graze will commence in May 2026.

C. Submission of required documents

Eligible livestock operators meeting the minimum qualification listed above are encouraged to submit applications. A mailed, emailed, or delivered in person application will be accepted. Mailed and delivered in person applications must be in a sealed envelope and marked as indicated below. If you wish to highlight grazing experience, or special interests or qualifications, a cover letter is appreciated.

Mail applications:

Send To:

Quivira National Wildlife Refuge
Attn: Kathryn Brenner
Grazing Application
1434 NE 80th St.

Stafford, KS 67578

Email applications:

Subject:

Grazing Application

Send To:

quivira@fws.gov

PART – 3: BASIS OF SELECTION

A. Selection process

The selection process will proceed as follows:

1. Review of applications, including qualification requirements.
2. Ranking of the most qualified applicants based on submitted applications.
 - a. If multiple applications rank equally, a lottery will be held among those with the highest rank.

B. Selection criteria

The producer(s) will be selected through an open, transparent and competitive process where applications will be scored and ranked by the following objective criteria:

1. Operational capacity and qualifications.
2. Positive experience with grazing systems on National Wildlife Refuges or other public conservation lands.
3. Understanding of grazing management programs focused on conservation.

C. Administrative conditions

- This request does not commit the Service to pay any cost incurred by respondents in the preparation or submission of applications.
- The Service reserves the right to reject any and all applications. The determination of qualifications is solely with the Service.
- The Service reserves the right to conduct discussions with any applicant if it is deemed necessary for understanding, clarity, or negotiations.
- There will be no more than one Cooperator selected for each individual unit.
- Grazing dates and stock numbers may be adjusted, and grazing may be suspended during the agreement period, based on weather, habitat conditions and the refuge operational needs and priorities.

Part – 4: Conditions of the Cooperative Agreement (CAA)

1. The terms and conditions for the CAA and Special Use Permit (SUP) are established in accordance with Region 6 Cooperative Agricultural Guidance and Quivira National Wildlife

Refuge Agricultural Compatibility Determination. Only the Refuge Manager or their designee has the authority to make changes to this agreement and/or yearly Special Use Permit.

2. Ownership - The livestock and their offspring must be branded or marked with the brand or mark of the permit holder which means the owner must be able to prove ownership in a manner identifiable by the Refuge Manager.

- **No subleasing is permitted.** You must own one hundred per cent (100%) of the cattle to be grazed on the refuge. You will be solely responsible for all of the livestock grazed, the amount paid, and the requirements of the permit.
- Cooperators awarded a permit cannot have any association with any other grazing permit or operations awarded on Quivira NWR during the 2026-2030 grazing period (e.g., cooperators cannot share/coordinate resources or be involved with cattle moves or operations associated with more than one permit).
- Cooperators will be required to comply with all applicable Kansas State livestock laws.
- All Refuge regulations are in effect and apply to the permittees and their agents.

3. Cattle are permitted only: 1) within the prescribed allotment, 2) during the specified period of use, 3) in the authorized numbers, and 4) in the specified classes from the accepted application for the duration of the CAA and/or Special Use Permit.

4. Water for Livestock – **It is the responsibility of the cooperator to turn on and check the water for their livestock and complete repairs during the use of water facilities. Cooperators will be responsible for cleaning out the grazing tanks of vegetation to not clog or damage the tank, plugs, and pipes.** If major repairs are required on the tanks, windmill, solar panel, wells, or other facilities, the cooperator must contact Refuge staff to schedule repairs or obtain permission for them to make the necessary repairs which will be deducted from the cooperators grazing fee. While the water source is being repaired it is the cooperator's responsibility to provide water to their livestock. There are two sources of water to fill water wagons on the refuge, at the headquarters and at a central location on the Refuge known as the "tin shed." On days when the wind is not sufficient to run a windmill, or the solar panel is not receiving enough charge, the cooperator will be responsible for providing water until there is adequate power to the wells. If a water source is out of order for an extended period of time the grazing rotation may be altered. The Refuge does not monitor water quality in the wells or small wetlands. If there are concerns, please reach out to Refuge staff.

5. Mineral - Salt and mineral supplement may be used but must be placed in a tub or mineral feeder at least ¼ mile away from the cell center to encourage cattle movement throughout the grazing paddock(s). All tubs must be removed at end of grazing season.

6. Pesticide Usage - Dust bags, oilers, or other insecticide treatment or sprays may not be used on the refuge. Treated ear tags may be used. Any other types of chemicals brought onto the Refuge must be approved by Refuge staff.

7. Movement of Livestock – Prior to the grazing season each cooperator is provided with a grazing schedule for the season. However, the cooperator should be aware that, in some cases (e.g., drought, vegetation conditions, or other factors), the cattle moves may need to be adjusted

from the original schedule, according to Refuge staff's determination. Livestock will be moved on the dates scheduled in the Special Use Permit or as near as possible to that date to keep within the rotation plan, to prevent undesirable impacts (overgrazing) of natural resources. If varying from the schedule more than 1 day, then the Refuge will be notified. **The movement of livestock is the complete responsibility of the cooperator. In an emergency, the cooperator is responsible for arranging the movement of their livestock.** On the last day of each month and within 2 weeks after the end of each season, the cooperator must submit an accurately completed copy of their move sheet that indicates when and where moves occurred so Refuge staff may analyze the planned vs. actual movements. Move sheets may also be requested at any time by Quivira NWR staff. Failure to provide move sheets in a timely manner could lead to removal of livestock from the refuge and/or risk of future eligibility of refuge grazing.

8. Monitoring Conditions – Cooperators are expected to monitor and inform Refuge staff of overgrazing conditions. While Refuge staff will periodically assess conditions, it is the responsibility of the permittee to monitor grass conditions, communicate with Refuge staff, and to move livestock according to staff direction. Monitoring is beneficial to maintain desired wildlife habitat and healthy environmental conditions, and necessary to ensure adequate recovery time for the grass.

9. Drought Conditions - If severe drought conditions occur, livestock may need to be removed early from the Refuge, stocking rates or times adjusted, or the grazing season may be completely cancelled. Adjustments to the grazing fees will be recalculated to reflect changes. It is the responsibility of the cooperator to have or find alternative pastures or locations for cattle under these conditions.

10. Flood Conditions - If flooding conditions occur livestock may have to be removed from the Refuge and returned when flooding has subsided. If this were to occur, adjustments in the grazing fees would be recalculated. It is the responsibility of the cooperator to have or find alternative pastures or locations for cattle under these conditions.

11. Grazing cell centers - should not be used as catch pens for large numbers of cattle. They may be used only with the set-up of portable cattle panels within or adjoining the cell center. Cell centers are not designed to be used as crowding pens.

12. Equipment –Traveling off established roads and trails is prohibited. Use of trucks, tractors, other large vehicles or equipment, or aircraft (including drones) cannot be used for driving or herding cattle and facility or fence maintenance. However, horses and ATVs/UTVs are permitted off trail and within grazing cells for scheduled facility or fence maintenance, treating sick livestock, moving cattle, or in emergencies. Any use of horses and ATV's/UTV's within grazing units or cells must be in a manner that minimizes disturbance to wildlife and wildlife habitat. Cooperators should contact Refuge staff for approval if they believe that the use of vehicles or equipment is warranted in their grazing unit for any purpose.

13. Weed Free Equipment/Animals -All equipment (including horses) that are used when checking and moving livestock will be weed free prior to use on Quivira NWR to prevent the spread of noxious weeds and invasive plant species.

14. Temporary Electric Fences – There may be situations where temporary electric fence will be required for refuge goals. The cooperators are responsible for putting up and taking down any temporary electric fence. Cooperators will mow where the temporary electric fence is to be placed and supply the necessary materials. Cooperators will get a deduction in their bill for the labor. The cooperators are responsible for providing fence chargers when electricity is not available. **The cooperators will be responsible for connecting fence chargers and providing adequate grounding to ensure cattle stay in designated area.** The cooperators will conduct electric fence repairs and maintenance before cattle are brought onto the paddock. The cooperators are responsible to keep electric gates and the fences in operation throughout the time cattle are in the unit.

15. Routine Maintenance– The routine maintenance of permanent fences and other range improvements in the assigned grazing cell is the responsibility of the permittee. Maintenance includes but is not limited to broken wires, tree or tree limbs that have fallen on a fence, gates, etc. The cooperators may obtain supplies for maintenance and repairs from the Refuge or furnish supplies of comparable type and quality, receiving a deduction on their grazing fees. All work and materials must be communicated to Refuge Manager or designee and documented to receive deductions.

16. New Structures - Construction, development, and maintenance of temporary and/or permanent range facilities such as wells, reservoirs, corrals, etc., must be approved in advance by the Refuge Manager or designee. Prior written authorization is required before any construction.

17. Improvements - The Refuge will determine/approve what services or materials are needed to complete grazing unit improvements. Improvements will primarily be performed by the cooperators or their employee. The cost will be deducted from the cooperators' final grazing fees. Materials are located at the Refuge headquarters to complete improvements.

18. Gates & locks – Locks are placed on majority of the gates across the Refuge. Keys will be issued to the cooperators at the beginning of the season to allow access to their unit and paddocks. Keys must be returned to Refuge staff at the end of each season.

19. Cattle Loss - The Refuge will not guarantee a head count during the grazing season or at the end of the season; this is the responsibility of the permittee. When cattle are moved from paddock to paddock, the permittee should move all cattle at one time. If cattle are mistakenly left in a paddock, the permittee should move them to the proper paddock as soon as possible. If any cattle remain at the end of the grazing season they should be retrieved immediately and removed from the Refuge.

The Refuge office should be informed of any death losses, theft, etc. The grazing season and the allowed cattle numbers begin on the date indicated on the Special Use Permit. If cattle are removed from the grazing cell early or there is a death loss, the rate will remain the same (unless approved by Refuge Manager). In such cases, the permittee should re-stock to bring numbers back to what was permitted for that grazing season. Any dead livestock discovered in the grazing

cell will be moved by the permittee to a remote area of the grazing paddock within 24 hours of discovery. If uncertain, the Refuge Manager will coordinate the choice of such a site. The Refuge Manager may request to have the dead animal removed from the Refuge.

Grazing Questionnaire for Cooperative Agriculture Agreement Application 2026-2030

1. Are you willing to make periodic adjustments in grazing plans to accomplish the refuge's goals (e.g. move a week early for a prescribed burn)?
2. Are you prepared to remove your cattle early to avoid undesirable impacts of grazing, especially during drought or flooding conditions?
3. Will you be willing to target graze a smaller section of a unit with a high intensity graze to benefit management goals?
4. Are you prepared and willing to haul in water, if necessary, to complete management goals (e.g. if windmill goes down, if there is not enough sun to keep solar running)?

8. Describe availability and expected response time (be specific) in the event you are notified of an issue, such as livestock/human conflict, sick or injured livestock, cattle out of assigned paddock, or cattle on roadway. Please consider travel time to refuge in your response.

9. Describe your expected response and completion time (be specific) for minor repairs or damages to fence, gates, water gaps, and windmills/solar panels.

10. Additional comments and information that you would like to add to your application:

**Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, Kansas
Applications for 2026-2030 Grazing Permits**

SEALED APPLICATION DUE – March 13th

An applicant may apply on more than one permit, but the most an applicant can be awarded is one permit. Awarded applicants cannot have any association with any other grazing permit or operations awarded on Quivira NWR during the grazing period (e.g., permittees cannot share/coordinate resources or be involved with cattle moves or operations associated with more than one permit).

Grazing is one of many management strategies used to support Refuge habitat objectives to sustain a diversity of native plant communities and conditions. The cattle-grazing season will generally occur May 1st through August 15th (107 days, 1 month = 30.5 days in stocking rate calculations). However, there may be opportunities to graze paddocks for special management considerations, such as annual brome in April, extended growth seasons beyond August 15th, or other considerations. Moves among paddocks will commonly occur every 20 to 45 days, based on paddock size, conditions, management plans, and other factors. Acres planned to be grazed for each unit may vary from 1,000 acres to over 2,000 acres. All paddocks are over 100 acres in size and have an average size exceeding 350 acres each.

Name of Applicant: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please mark the boxes of the units you would like to be considered for. You can mark all the units but only one of the three units will be selected. If selecting more than one unit, please specify your preference.

Northwest Unit Permit

Northeast Unit Permit

South Unit Permit

First Preference (if applying for more than one unit): _____

Please mark if you would prefer to graze with cow/calf pairs and bulls or mature cows based on your cattle operation.

60 cow/calf pairs, up to 3 bulls

Fee per cow/calf pair (1.2 AU) = \$28.00*

Fee per bull (1.5 AU) = \$26.00*

75 mature cows

Fee per cow (1 AU) = \$24.50*

***Prices based on 2026 published rates and subject to change in subsequent years per Part 1 Section C.**

I have read, understand, and agree to the terms of this application and Refuge regulations. I am currently a livestock operator and at least 18 years of age. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Quivira National Wildlife Refuge) reserves the right to adjust, or halt use, to protect the resource and to reject any and all applications.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Applications may be hand-delivered to Quivira NWR in a sealed envelope labeled “**Grazing Application**”, emailed to Refuge staff with the subject line “**Grazing Application**” at quivira@fws.gov, or mailed to:

Quivira National Wildlife Refuge
Grazing Application
1434 NE 80th Street
Stafford, KS 67578