



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Western South Dakota WMD Complex
Huron WMD
20721 392nd Ave. Wolsey, South Dakota 57384

February 5, 2026

Dear Agricultural Producer,

The Huron Wetland Management District (WMD) is seeking operators to submit applications for grazing opportunities. Grazing unit maps may be viewed on our website at <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/huron-wetland-management-district>. Additional grazing information is available there as well. Please familiarize yourself with the Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA) that have been put forth for grazing. Please review the maps and descriptions before submitting your application(s) and evaluate requirements for fencing (permanent and electric), water options, and other details required for successful grazing operations.

All applications will be opened on the same day and each applicant will be evaluated using a competitive ranking process. Applicants will be ranked by the WMD based on a series of questions included with the application(s). You may submit applications for multiple WPAs; however, only one WPA can be grazed per cooperator. The exception to this will be if no other applications for a WPA are received, at which time an applicant who has already applied for and received a unit will be eligible for additional unit(s). If you have grazed more than one unit being offered in the past, please rank the units in your order of preference. Huron WMD reserves the right to reject any or all applications that do not meet the requirements identified in the application. Furthermore, the Huron WMD also reserves the right to reject applications from any operator that has previously violated the terms of grazing Special Use Permits (SUP).

All applications must be received (address above), by email, or postmarked to the Huron WMD by March 10, 2026, to be considered. Applications received after this date will be returned. If you would like to email your application, you can send it directly to me at fred_oslund@fws.gov and I will reply with confirmation of receiving. Selected operators will be notified by March 12, 2026. Successful applicants must complete a Cooperative Agricultural Agreement (CAA) within three weeks of notification, and before any livestock is released onto the grazing unit. The CAA will include the: (1) Commercial SUP and (2) Annual Plan of Operations.

Thank you for your interest in our cooperative agriculture program. Please reach out with any questions or concerns to Fred Oslund (605) 350-0712 or Elizabeth Sicard (605) 461-9308.

Sincerely,

Fred Oslund, Wetland District Manager

Fencing: Permanent boundary fence maintenance and inspections are required, and interior electric fences may be constructed each year of the CAA to separate the WPA into grazing paddocks (see unit grazing maps). USFWS will supply materials needed for maintaining permanent boundary fencing. Electric fencing materials will be the responsibility of the permittee and all electric fences will be removed one month after the final grazing date.

Water Source(s): The available sources will likely provide adequate amounts for livestock during the length of the grazing period, but this is not guaranteed and should be checked throughout the grazing period. If circumstances arise where water is inadequate, then water will need to be supplied by the permittee and deductions from grazing fees will be applied.

Salt and Minerals: Salt and mineral containers need to be moved throughout the grazing period and placed away from water sites.

Rotation: Planned grazing rotation start and end dates are approximations and are a guide; it is understood by both parties that deviation from the planned dates will occur. The Cooperator must make a good faith effort to follow the grazing days more so than the grazing dates. The Cooperator must make the Refuge Manager aware of such deviations from the planned grazing dates. The Cooperator must maintain records of livestock stocking rates and grazing dates and provide them to the Refuge Manager within 15 days after the grazing period has concluded for the year.

Payment: The Huron WMD will submit a bill to the Interior Business Center (IBC) by November 10th, then IBC will generate an invoice that will be sent to the permittee. Payment is due 30 days after the invoice is received and is accepted through a check or credit card.

**Please refer to the Special Conditions section for all other permittee responsibilities.*

Grazing Special Conditions

- To be eligible to apply you must be a current livestock owner/operator.
- The entire amount of AUM's specified must be utilized during the period specified. More livestock for a shorter period will be allowed upon mutual agreement between the Cooperator and the WMD.
- Confinement of livestock to the unit is the responsibility of the permittee as is any damage to surrounding lands caused by the permittee's livestock.
- You are responsible for the care of your livestock, i.e., moving them on the specified dates and into the correct pastures, ensuring they have water, etc. You are liable for any damage to neighboring lands should your livestock escape the WPA. All liability relating to livestock and livestock management to include all persons working for the Cooperator, whether related, hired or as a partner is strictly that of the Cooperator as listed on the SUP.

- The permittee is responsible for all existing permanent and electric fence maintenance and repairs. The USFWS can provide materials used for a new or replacement permanent fence greater than a quarter mile or deduct the material costs from the grazing fee after receipts are provided. All permanent fences will become the property of the USFWS after the grazing agreement has expired. Temporary electric cross fences remain the property of the permittee and are to be removed one month after the removal of livestock. 4
- If permanent fence installation is needed, it will be required that the permittee follow the fence specifications of the USFWS. All new fences will have 3 strands of 12-gauge barbed wire and 1 strand of smooth wire at the bottom; H-braces (if replaced) will be steel well pipe braces; gates (if replaced) will be 4 strand wire with stays, and the maximum spacing for steel posts will be 16 feet.
- Natural water sources may exist on each WPA. Known water sources will be indicated on maps for each WPA. It is the permittee's responsibility to check the condition of the water sources. If water sources are inadequate, the permittee will need to provide water. Costs associated with providing water should be considered by the permittee before applying.
- The use of salt and minerals are allowed but should be located away from water sources to reduce overuse of the area by livestock. Mineral must be moved at the same time the livestock are rotated. All minerals must be removed at the end of the grazing period.
- All private property, including containers for minerals, salt, or other supplemental feeds or feeders, must be removed at the end of the grazing period.
- With the exceptions of ear tags, no insecticide may be used on livestock while they are on the WPA. Treatment may be done before livestock are brought to the WPA.
- The cooperator must own at least 50% of the livestock that are to be grazed under the permit. If you use another person's livestock, you can only collect the same dollar amount per AUM as you are being charged by the USFWS. As the person named on the permit, you are responsible for 100% of the livestock grazed, the amount paid and compliance with all conditions of this permit. Subletting is not permitted. **We urge you not to increase the size of your herd based on the availability or the expectation of annually grazing FWS lands.**
- The permittee must notify the Refuge Manager of deceased livestock. Deceased livestock must be removed from the WPA within 48 hours of discovery.
- Any damage to government property must be reported to the Refuge Manager immediately and replaced by the permittee.
- All liability relating to livestock and livestock management, including all persons working for the permittee, is strictly that of the permittee listed on the CAA.
- Permittee must comply with all state and local livestock health regulations.

- The Cooperator must maintain records of livestock stocking rates and grazing dates and provide them to the Refuge Manager within 15 days after the grazing period has concluded for the year. 5

THE USFWS RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MODIFY OR TERMINATE THE CAA IF HABITAT CONDITIONS WARRANT. IF CHANGES TO THE PERMIT ARE DEEMED NECESSARY, THE PERMITTEE AGREES TO ABIDE BY THE CHANGES OR THE PERMIT WILL BE VOIDED. THE PERMITTEE WILL BE NOTIFIED AHEAD OF TIME IF ANY SUCH CHANGES ARE IMPLEMENTED.

ANY VIOLATION OF THE ABOVE REGULATIONS MAY RESULT IN THE IMMEDIATE CANCELLATION OF YOUR GRAZING PERMIT AND FORFEITURE OF FUTURE APPLICATIONS ON GRAZING UNITS.

To apply please submit the Huron WMD application form and the ranking questionnaire. Please turn in your applications to the FWS Huron Wetland Management District office no later than **March 10th, 2026. All envelopes must be marked WPA Grazing Application in the lower left-hand corner of the envelope.** Applications will be received in person or by:

Mail: Huron WMD
20721 392nd Ave.
Wolsey, SD 57384
e-mail: fred_oslund@fws.gov

For any questions or further information please contact Fred Oslund (605) 350-0712 or Elizabeth Sicard (605) 461-9308 at the Huron Wetland Management District.

Grazing Fee Rates

The Cooperator will be charged the rates consistent with Service policy and based on the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) annual publication “Grazing Fee Rates for Cattle –States, Regions, and United States”. Grazing fee rates will be for the term of the SUP and annual stocking rates (AUMS) are specified on the annual Plan of Operations.

Grazing fees for calendar year 2026 are based on the average grazing fee rates published in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) annual publication of Agricultural Prices. **Prices for South Dakota are \$32.50 for Mature Cow and \$39.00 for Cow/Calf Pairs.**

Examples of how to calculate stocking rates:

The stocking rate for cow/calf pairs, using 180 AUM's (Animal Unit Months), 1.2 AUE (Animal Unit Equivalents), and the grazing period ratio of 42 days/30.5 days= 1.38 months

Step 1: AUM's / AUE → 180 AUM's / 1.2 AUE = 150 Animals

Step 2: Number of Animals/Grazing Period → 150 Animals/1.38 Months= 109 cow/calf pairs

The stocking rate for yearlings, using 180 AUM's (Animal Unit Months) and 0.7 AUE (Animal Unit Equivalents)

Step 1: AUM's / AUE → 180 AUM's / 0.7 AUE = 257 Animals

Step 2: Number of Animals/Grazing Period → 257 Animals/1.38 Months= 186 yearlings

Stocking Requirements: Huron Wetland Management District will use 1.2 AUE's (Animal Unit Equivalents) to define a cow with a nursing calf less than 6 months of age. Other livestock will have AUE rates calculated according to the chart below.

Animal Unit Equivalents:

1 mature cow	1.0 AUE
1 cow/calf pair	1.2 AUE
1 bull	1.5 AUE
1 weaner calf.....	0.6 AUE
1 yearling (9-18 months).....	0.7 AUE

Qualifying Deductions with verification:

- Deductible expenses may be the cost of materials, labor, equipment, or infrastructure necessary to implement practices within the management unit e.g., fixing existing boundary fence
- Grass and forb seed
- Fencing materials, fence removal/construction including the installation and removal of electric fence
- Hauling and pumping water
- Livestock watering infrastructure maintenance, repair, or installation
- Livestock rotations and transportation as directed by the annual Plan of Operations
- Onsite livestock herder(s)

Huron WMD Grazing Application Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone: _____

First Choice Grazing Unit: _____

Second Choice Grazing Unit: _____

Competitive Ranking Factors

**Please check Yes or No to the following questions and return with the application.*

Have you ever been involved with the planning and/or grazing management on this unit?

Yes ____ No ____

If not, have you ever been in involved with the planning and/or grazing management on a Waterfowl Production Areas with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Yes ____ No ____ * If yes, _____ WPA in _____ County.

Have you ever been involved with the planning and/or grazing management of any Refuge or WPA in the Dakotas? Year Grazed?

Yes ____ No ____ Year _____

Have you ever had grazing privileges revoked by the USFWS?

Yes ____ No ____ Year _____

What is the approximate distance from land you own (operate) or rent from the WPA?

**Please check what best describes the closest parcel of land you own (operate) or lease:*

- Shared boundary with the grazing unit being offered _____
- 1 to 3 miles from the grazing unit being offered _____
- 4 to 10 miles from the grazing unit being offered _____
- >11 miles from the grazing unit being offered _____

What is the location of the nearest pastureland you own or rent?

Township _____ Range _____ Section _____ Quarter _____

Are you willing to maintain permanent fences and use/remove temporary electric fence?

Yes ____ No ____

Are you willing to do significant quality repairs to permanent fences?

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Yes ____ No ____

Are you willing to provide water to grazing unit that may not have a reliable water source?

Yes ____ No ____

Are you able to respond to an animal or infrastructure emergency within 2 hours (e.g., cattle outside unit)?

Yes ____ No ____

Can you provide the number of livestock available for this unit that is required in the grazing plan?

Yes ____ No ____

Can you demonstrate that you have implemented a rotational grazing program in the past on your own or rented land?

Yes ____ No ____

Are you willing to communicate with Fish and Wildlife management staff before and during the grazing period? Additionally, are you willing to adhere to prescribed grazing management practices based on vegetation utilization, which may vary from year to year?

**Examples of prescribed grazing practices are rotating cattle in a timely manner as directed, grazing during time periods determined in the plan or operations, and grazing the number of days specified by the manager.*

Yes ____ No ____

Are you able to mow/hay the ROW adjacent to maintained county or township road as well as any WPA parking areas as requested by the USFWS?

Yes ____ No ____

Do you own land with a USFWS Wetland or Grassland Easement in place?

Yes ____ No ____

I certify that all information provided above is true to the best of my knowledge and I meet all qualifying standards for this application. I further understand that selection as a permittee is not a guarantee of grazing rights on waterfowl production areas and can be cancelled by either party with 45 days' notice if either party is not carrying out their roles and responsibilities of the agreement.

Printed Name

Signature

Date