



# United States Department of the Interior



## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE Mountain-Prairie Region

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
FWS/R6/

MAILING ADDRESS:  
Upper Souris NWR  
17705 212<sup>th</sup> Ave. NW  
Foxholm, ND 58718

Dear Applicant,

February 28, 2024

In 2022, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service established a new policy for awarding Cooperative Agricultural Agreements (CAAs). The new policy requires an open and competitive process for awarding CAAs.

If you are interested in applying for a CAA (grazing permit), you must return application(s) to Upper Souris NWR office by March 29, 2024. A separate application is required for each unit. Potential cooperators may only submit applications for up to three units. Cooperators must prioritize units of choice. A maximum of two units may be issued to a cooperator. Cooperators will be selected based on answers provided within the application.

Applicants who receive the highest score for a particular unit will be awarded a Special Use Permit (SUP). Please be advised, falsifying information on the ranking application will result in forfeiture of the application.

SUPs will be valid for a period of up to 5 years without competition. Grazing rates and timing will be determined annually, although there may not be grazing allowed every year. Grazing rates and deductions will be determined similar to previous years, i.e. deductions are given for temporary fencing, fence repair, cattle moves, etc.

All applications must be returned to Upper Souris NWR by 3:30 pm on March 29, 2024 to be considered. Mail or deliver applications to:

Upper Souris NWR  
17705 212<sup>th</sup> Ave. NW  
Foxholm, ND 58718

or email them to:  
tom\_pabian@fws.gov.

Cooperators will be selected and notified by April 1, 2024.

Applications, units available and more information can be found at:  
<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/upper-souris>

Tom Pabian  
Refuge Manager  
Office: 701-468-5467, ext. 119



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## 2024 USNWR Grazing Permit Conditions

Grazing on National Wildlife Refuge and Waterfowl Production Areas provide unique opportunities for a cooperative effort between ranchers and the US Fish and Wildlife Service for the betterment of wildlife and their habitats while providing pasture for ranching operations. The cooperative agreements benefit both parties, but are only successful with strong partnerships, frequent communication, and quality documentation. This letter details expectations for grazing cooperators on Upper Souris NWR units listed in this memo. These expectations for maintenance of fences and/or rotation and stocking rates are not all inclusive. Successful applicants are encouraged to communicate regularly with staff at Upper Souris NWR to reach mutual goals and needs, and to alleviate any possible confusion.

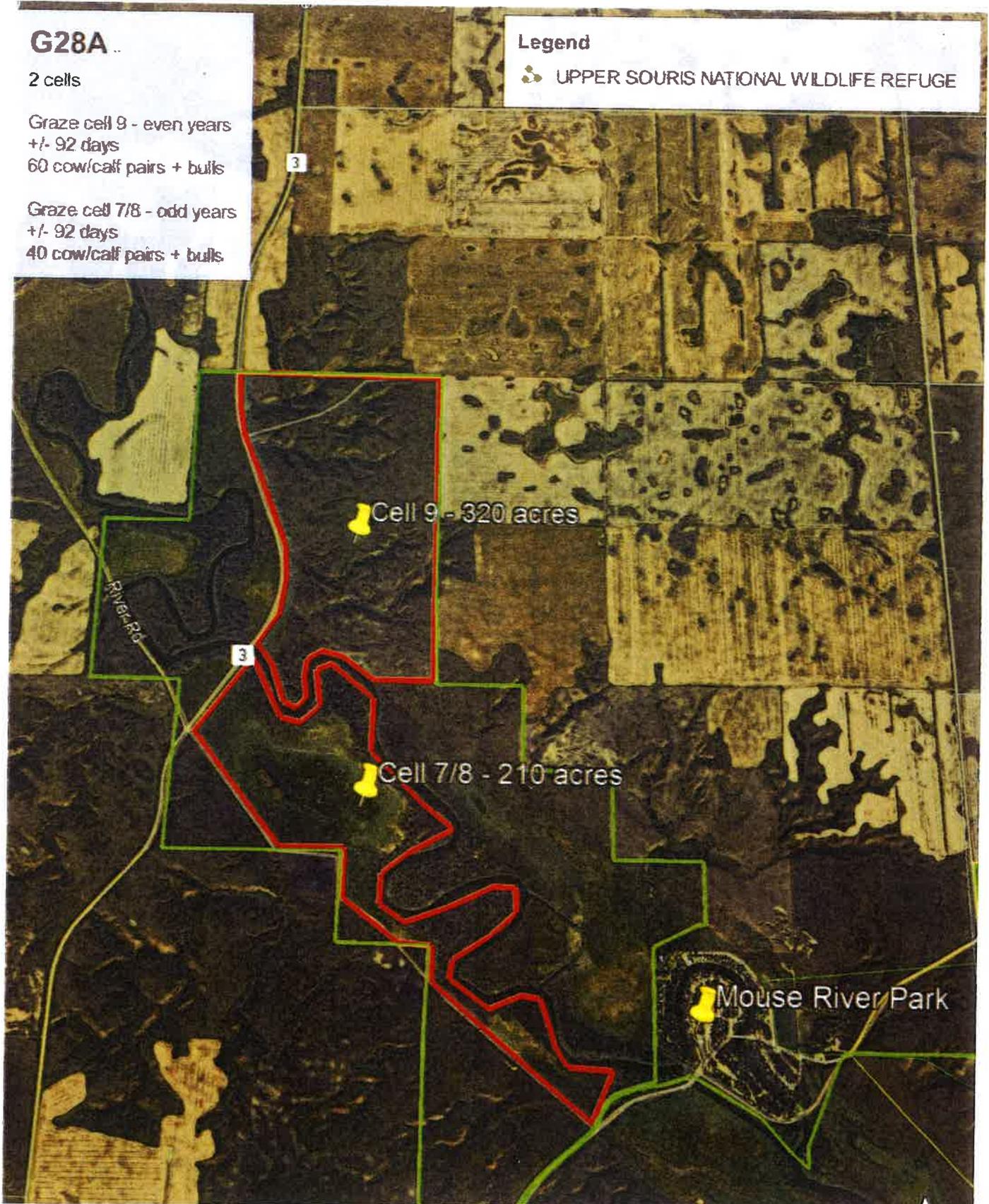
Page 2 of this memo details which refuge units are open for applications for grazing from 2024-2028. Selection criteria will remain uniform for all applicants regardless of their choice of units. If multiple locations are desired, a separate application will be required for each unit. Potential cooperators may only submit applications for up to three units. Cooperators must prioritize units of choice. A maximum of two units may be issued to a cooperator. Only one applicant will be selected for each unit. Selection criteria will be based on the following considerations:

1. Operational capacity and qualifications.
2. Proximity of operations
3. Experience with USFWS grazing operations on National Wildlife Refuges or Waterfowl Production areas, or other public conservation lands.
4. Understanding of grazing management practices focused on conservation.
5. Past Performance under USFWS cooperative agreements.

### **General Expectations:**

All grazing operations are expected to provide general upkeep of the refuge grounds, to include fence and gate maintenance, cleanliness, and adequate containment of animals to prevent escape. This may require construction of new barbed wire fence and/or installation of temporary electric wire. Any materials required will be provided by FWS or may be reimbursed through deductions from the grazing bill. For larger fencing projects, deductions can be spread out over the 5-year permit period. Prior coordination with the Refuge Manager is required. Successful applicants are also expected to abide by the prescribed grazing rotation and number of animal units as prescribed annually.

Unit G28A: Unit is fully in Renville County, Grover TWP (portion of sections 33 & 34), McKinney TWP (portion of section 3). Access is good. Grazing unit contains two cells, mostly native prairie, livestock water Souris River.



**Upper Souris NWR  
2024  
Northwest North Dakota NWR & WMD Complex  
Cooperative Grazing Application**

Unit #     G28A    

1. Do you have experience with cooperative grazing or infrastructure maintenance on Upper Souris NWR within the past 3 years?

Yes           No

1b. If no, do you have experience grazing on other NWRs or WMDs?

Yes           No

1c. If yes, what NWR or WMD? \_\_\_\_\_ Year grazed?

2. Do you currently own or lease private or public ground within 15 miles of this NWR?

Yes           No

2b. If yes, choose what best describes the closest parcel of land you own or lease:

Shares boundary with NWR \_\_\_\_\_

0 to 5 miles from the unit \_\_\_\_\_

5 to 10 miles from the unit \_\_\_\_\_

10 to 15 miles from the unit \_\_\_\_\_

2c. If yes, are you willing to graze this land in rotation with FWS land?

Yes           No

2d. If yes, are you willing to rest private grazing acres during years that you graze on FWS units?

Yes           No

3. Can you provide the necessary stock to graze the unit following a prescribed grazing plan?

Yes           No

4. Are you able to follow a grazing plan and maintain records including numbers of stock, dates in and out of units, maintenance completed, and other records that might be necessary to help ensure management objectives are being met for the unit?

Yes

No

5. Are you willing to install (either yourself or hire out) and maintain all fence necessary to execute this agreement?

Yes

No

6. Are you, or your designee, able to respond within 2 hours to address any urgent needs that may arise during grazing, including escaped livestock, infrastructure maintenance, neighbor complaints, etc?

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.*

*Signature* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date* \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name

Mailing Address

Phone