

# LINKING GRASSLAND AND RANGE NATIONAL GOALS WITH THE GRAZING LANDS CONSERVATION INITIATIVE FOR NATIONAL BENEFIT

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## ABSTRACT

Grassland and Range National Goals (GRNGs) were developed to identify national research and education needs for these resources, both public and private. The Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) developed within the NRCS to address the need for technical assistance for the management of privately held grazing lands. These activities are complimentary and, when combined, will address the national need for research, education, and technical assistance leading to better management of grassland and range resources.

## KEYWORDS

GLCI, GRNGs, forage, AFGC

## INTRODUCTION

Grassland and range resources are found in all 50 states and cover more than half the land area in the U.S. These public and private grassland and range areas provide an extensive, renewable forage resource that is transformed into useful food and fiber by livestock and wildlife. They conserve our soil and water resources by reducing soil erosion and serving as filters to purify surface and ground waters. Management of grassland and range areas affects the life of every American through the food produced from these areas, the recreational and aesthetic benefits provided, and the environmental protection afforded by their vegetation.

## METHODS

In September of 1993, the Cooperative State Research Service (CSRS) of USDA sponsored a national workshop entitled "Innovative Systems for the Utilization of Forage/Grassland/Rangeland Resources." The GRNGs working group developed following this national workshop. The GRNGs working group represents research and education professionals within the USDA and affiliated agencies and organizations.

The GLCI is supported by range, livestock, and conservation groups and has been authorized within the 1995 Farm Bill. Funding will be used to hire National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) personnel for providing technical assistance for improved grazing management. To assist with focusing effort on this issue, a national point person was appointed within NRCS.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The GRNGs working group has collaborated to develop a brochure (Hannaway et al., 1994) and proceedings of the national workshop (Wedin and Jones, 1995).

In June of 1995 the GLCI Steering Committee voted to appoint a GRNGs working group member to help coordinate joint efforts related to research and education projects affecting grasslands and range. In March of 1996, the Experiment Station Committee on Policy (ESCOP) and Extension Committee on Policy (ECOP) chairpersons were authorized to appoint an individual from each group to serve on the national GLCI Steering Committee.

Agreement has been reached to pursue joint activities to further Research and Education goals in what is being called "Phase Two"

of GLCI efforts. A recent GLCI National Steering Committee Meeting included "Phase Two" discussions with the expanded committee. Representation includes American Forage and Grassland Council (AFGC), ESCOP, and ECOP appointees.

In 1996 and 1997, the following will be pursued: 1) Appointment of a national point person to coordinate GRNGs efforts with GLCI efforts. 2) A presentation at the ESCOP and ECOP summer meetings to describe the GLCI and GRNGs objectives and needs. 3) Developing funding level requests with ESCOP and ECOP and within the Cooperative States Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), and the NRCS for furthering research, education, and technical assistance needs for managing and utilizing these national resources. 4) Coordinating activities nationally through a special grants program. 5) Developing a WWW segment to facilitate communication of needs, activities, and progress on the national Grassland and Range goals.

More information is available of this effort in the GRNGs and GLCI brochures and the Workshop Proceedings. Information on these is available on the FIS WWW (Hannaway et al., 1996) (URL:<http://www.forages.css.orst.edu/Projects/National/>). You may also contact David B. Hannaway ([david@forages.css.orst.edu](mailto:david@forages.css.orst.edu)), Walter F. Wedin ([wedin001@maroon.tc.umn.edu](mailto:wedin001@maroon.tc.umn.edu)), or Gerald W. Evers ([eversg@tamu.edu](mailto:eversg@tamu.edu)) for additional details.

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