

DEVELOPING REMNANT PRAIRIE GRAZING PLANS FOR WITH CONSERVATION AS THE HIGHEST PRIORITY FOR THE MINNESOTA PRAIRIE BANK PROGRAM

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Abstract: Many remnant prairies in the upper Midwest remain as prairie pastures today. The Native Prairie Bank Easement program in Minnesota seeks to permanently protect remnant prairie sites, including those currently grazed or hayed. Developing grazing plans to maintain or improve the quality of remnant prairie requires careful adaptation of traditional grazing planning tools developed with maximum forage production and utilization as the first priority. We will discuss our experience adapting traditional planning tools to develop grazing plans for remnant prairie with species composition, function and structure as the highest priority. Importantly, for grazing plans associated with Native Prairie Bank Easement sites in Minnesota, these grazing plans are specifically referenced in easement documents and require producers to conduct grazing as described in their Prairie Stewardship Plan. We will share examples from work with producers from a variety of backgrounds, interests, at quality remnant prairie sites throughout Minnesota.