

MANAGEMENT NOTES January through April



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The winter season is here and it's time to deal with winter conditions. Also, it's time to close out 2010 and start managing both resources and finances for 2011. Look back to see what we have accomplished or didn't get done which should remind us that we have plenty to deal with in 2011. We also need to begin updating our 2011 and 5-year plan. Here are some points to consider.

- Water should always be your highest priority.
 - Continue monitoring your water resources over the winter for availability and quality. Develop options if sources appear to be less than optimal.
 - If temperatures are low for an extended period, check water sources to insure ice doesn't prevent animals from drinking.
- Nutrition is important during very cold weather.
- Do your animals need extra energy to optimally maintain themselves in very cold conditions?
- If so, what changes in their diet are needed. Check with a good animal nutritionist if needed.
- Review rainfall records for the past 12 months, the forecast for the next 3-6 months, and determine the current soil moisture availability. Even if current soil moisture is good, projected plant growth may be below average if drought conditions continue as some predictions indicate. If drought conditions occurred, plan for below average growth in 2011.
- Evaluate the status of grazing and browse use to date. The amount of use on highly desirable species is critical. If use was heavy, reduce use this winter if possible and plan to reduce 2011 stocking rates to allow the preferred species to recover and improve.
- Routinely check and repair or replace all improvements such as fences, water sources, and equipment.
- As you close out 2011 financial data, compare them to the 2010 grazing and economic management budgets. Update financial plans for 2011 and update the 5-year management and economic plans based on current and projected weather plus current and projected economic conditions.
- Review broadleaf and woody plant controls for 2011 broadleaf and woody plant control.
- Finalize prescribed burns for 2011 against the objectives. Complete burn plans for 2011.
- Finalize the management of 2010 seeded areas for long term management.
- If you haven't started a land resource record, start now. If you use photographs, establish points that you can return to and photograph at least once each every year.
- Manage for today and the future based on what has been documented in 2010, what is planned for 2011, and how weather, economic conditions, and your personal life interact. Management is not easy!
- If you haven't developed a business management plan, please get started! 