



SHEEP GRAZING SITE SELECTION GUIDELINES

Use this form where there is a competing vegetation problem and treatment is required, where livestock grazing is not excluded by watershed, wildlife management, and higher level plans, and where livestock grazing is a potential vegetation management option.

REGION	DISTRICT	OPENING NO.	STRATUM	AREA (ha)	LICENSE NO.	C.P.-BK
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Table 1. Rating of site characteristics. Circle the one most difficult factor per row. Assess each unit or stratum separately during full leaf-out. Walkthrough method is acceptable.

SITE FACTOR		SITE CHARACTERISTICS AND POINTS RATING					
1. Forage summary (from Table 2 on back)	Moderate and high preference forage combined is >75% of cover	1	Moderate and high preference forage combined is 50–75% of cover	3	Moderate and high preference forage combined is <50% of cover	6	
2. Crop tree component	Balsam or cedar or spruce or hemlock	1	Dormant: Douglas-fir or larch or pine All species >1 m (rubbing damage)	5	Aspen or birch or poplar Flushing: Douglas-fir or larch or pine	9	
3. Slash – Coarse	Infrequent, scattered logs or grouped <1 m	1	Grouped >1 m or continuous <50 cm	5	Continuous crossed logs >50 cm	9	
Slash – Fines	Infrequent or scattered branches and tops	1	Grouped >1 m or continuous <1 m	3	Continuous >1.0 m	9	
4. Site preparation	Good burn or slash piled or windrowed	1	No prep. Mounded or trenched <30 cm hole	5	Mounded or trenched >30 cm hole	6	
5. Slope	0–35%	1	35–50%	3	Over 50%	9	
6. Soil stability	Stable soils on 0–50% slopes	1	Stable soils on 50–70% slopes	5	Unstable soil or rock on >50% slopes	6	
7. Terrain	Even to rolling	1	Rolling to gullied	3	Gullied to broken	6	
8. Visibility	One shepherd can observe entire flock	1	Two shepherds needed to observe flock	3	Three or more shepherds needed to observe flock	6	
9. Corral & camp locations	2WD access. Frequent landings	1	4WD access. Frequent trailing to work sites	3	ATV access to corrals and camps	6	
10. Water	Available on site	1	Trailing to, or hauling of, water for short distance	3	Hauling of water from a distant location	5	
SUMMARY TOTAL POINTS =	<25 points = EASY to graze. 25–45 points = MODERATE to graze. >45 points, or if 2 factors rate 6 or more points = DIFFICULT to graze. A DIFFICULT rating can increase operating costs. Grazing will require flexibility and an experienced contractor.						

NOTES:

- Forage summary** – (from Table 2 on reverse).
- Crop tree component** – Graze strata with the crop trees least preferred by sheep first. Progress to sites with more susceptible species as they harden off.
- Slash** – Sheep cannot navigate through slash over 50 cm, but will work around it. Cable yarding may align heavy slash, enabling sheep access. Consider grazing accessible sections of openings, using an alternative method elsewhere.
- Slope** – Sheep can graze slopes up to 70%. However, easy and moderate slopes should also be included. Soil stability is increasingly important as slopes increase.
- Soil stability** – Sheep can slip on loose silt, sand, gravel and wet clay. Crop tree damage (uprooting and basal scarring) may result.
- Visibility** – Terrain and brush can limit visibility and provide cover for predators.

- Corrals** – Must be outside riparian management areas and not drain directly into watercourses. Favour dry, level, non-productive sites and move often if wet. Poor access or frequent moves may reduce productivity, but still be economical.
Access between blocks – Sheep can be trailed (herded, walked) ~20 km/day. Livestock liners can be used to move sheep but this can increase costs.
- Water** – Suitable water for sheep is available ____ km from potential corral site. Riparian zones reduce flock mobility and visibility.

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| A. Number of hectares within ~20 km = ____. A herd of 1000 sheep can graze ~300 ha per season. Contracts of fewer hectares might still be economical. |
| B. Wildlife – The contractor is required to provide livestock guardian dogs to prevent sheep–wildlife interaction. Wildlife present: _____ |
| C. Streams – Enter the number of streams by class. S1/S2: _____, S3/S4: _____, S5/S6: _____.
Attach maps showing stream classes to referrals and contracts. |

Assessing the Target Vegetation for Sheep Grazing¹ – This guide approximates the suitability of a site for sheep grazing. Mandatory site viewing is recommended, as is a sheep grazing treatment plan that accommodates input from the contractor(s). Sheep eat the most-preferred vegetation first. Preferences change as plants mature. See FS 234 “Forest Vegetation Management Using Sheep” for details. An experienced sheep–vegetation management contractor will be familiar with sheep preferences, dietary requirements and forage values. They can provide expertise for managing the graze and all required equipment. Difficult sites can be grazed when combined with easy-to-treat areas and/or other brushing techniques. **Table 2** helps distinguish target species and forage. Competing vegetation species may not necessarily be edible or preferred. Forage refers to species sheep will eat. Trampling can control inedible species.

STEP 1. **Forage assessment:** Circle or add the species found on site and enter the percent cover and height into Table 2. Identify only the target species – those which inhibit conifer survival or growth.

STEP 2. Circle any poisonous species. Note or map the location.

STEP 3. **Forage summary:** Sum the total percent cover of forage by sheep preference.

STEP 4. Enter your results into Table 1 on reverse.

STEP 5. **Crop tree component:** Circle or add the crop tree species on site and enter the age and average height.

STEP 6. Enter the form (condition) as good (G), medium (M) or poor (P). Note any damage: browsed, prone, scars, vegetation press.

STEP 7. Enter the well-spaced species composition to the nearest 10%. Indicate whether multi-species crop trees are intermixed or stratifiable.

Table 2. Vegetation assessment. Assess each unit or stratum separately. Stratify by major differences in vegetation complex, conifer component, slash levels or terrain.

High sheep preference			Moderate sheep preference			Low sheep preference or not preferred (NP)			Poisonous species			Crop tree component				
	% cover	height		% cover	height		% cover	height		% cover	height			Avg.	Form	% of WSS
														Age		
<i>Calamagrostis</i> (fresh)			Beaked hazelnut			Alder spp. (<1 m)			Baneberry			Balsam spp.				
Clover spp.			Birch spp. (<1 m)			Black twinberry			Bog-laurel			Birch spp.				
Cow parsnip			<i>Calamagrostis</i> (mature)			Blueberry spp.			Cherry spp.			Cedar				
Fescue spp.			Cottonwood spp. (<1 m)			Currant spp.			Douglas' water-hemlock			Cypress				
Fireweed			Devil's club			Fern spp. (NP)			False azalea			Douglas-fir				
Peavine			Maple spp. (<1 m)			Gooseberry spp. (NP)			Indian hellebore			Hemlock spp.				
Rose spp.			Raspberry spp.			Salal (NP)			Labrador tea			Larch spp.				
Trembling aspen (<1 m)			Red elderberry			Salmonberry			Lupine			Pine spp.				
Valerian spp.			Red-osier dogwood			Thimbleberry			Monkshood spp.			Poplar spp.				
Vetch spp.			Spirea spp.			Thistle spp.			Mountain death-camas			Spruce spp.				
Wheatgrass spp.			Willow spp. (<1 m)			Trailing blackberry			Rhododendron spp.			Other:				
Other:			Other:			Other:			Snowberry							
									Seaside arrow-grass							
									Tall larkspur							
									Trapper's tea							
HIGH pref. combined = _____ % cover			MODERATE pref. combined = _____ % cover			LOW and NP pref. combined = _____ % cover			Continuous <input type="checkbox"/>			Total % cover	Avg. height	Multi-species crop trees are intermixed <input type="checkbox"/>		
Competition summary: ALL competing vegetation species on site combined. % cover _____			Avg. height _____			Patchy <input type="checkbox"/>			or stratifiable <input type="checkbox"/>							
						Dispersed <input type="checkbox"/>										

¹ Sheep grazing is a biological brushing activity used to control competing vegetation; objectives include conifer survival and growth enhancement. Grazing is also used as a site preparation tool for regeneration (planting, fill planting or natural), and seeding (conifer or grass/legumes). Other activities are site maintenance (parks and right-of-ways) and fire hazard abatement.