NACD-USFS
Rangeland-Silvopasture Survey

January 6, 2012
The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) has a longstanding history of working to advance the wise management of grasslands. NACD’s national policy – for grasslands management and other natural resource issues – is set by its committees and board of directors. Some NACD committees focus specifically on grazing-lands policy, while other committees address broader natural resource topics, including grazing and grassland management. Another way in which NACD works to advance grasslands policy is by advocating for a strong Farm Bill conservation title.

NACD also participates in a number of partnerships, including the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, the Public Lands Council, and periodic national grazing conferences. In addition to these types of partnerships, NACD works closely with federal agencies in Washington, D.C. with grasslands responsibilities. The association also encourages its local members to work with their respective state affiliates, state and local governments, and private sector stakeholders interested in this area of natural resource management.

Finally, and perhaps most important, is the ongoing work of conservation districts at the local level to help farmers and ranchers plan and install conservation measures and systems on the grasslands of their respective properties. This will include in many cases developing an overall plan to incorporate private grasslands along with some publicly owned grasslands into a unified operation.

NACD has and will continue to advocate for good management of our nation’s grasslands by cooperating with other stakeholders with an interest in grasslands and grazing.

Gene Schmidt
NACD President
ABOUT THIS SURVEY

At the end of calendar year 2010, the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) entered into a working relationship with the U.S. Forest Service's Rangelands Management Office. As part of this partnership, the two organizations developed a survey to gauge the rangeland and pastureland work being accomplished by conservation districts around the country.

During the summer months of calendar year 2011, districts were encouraged to complete the survey, regardless of geographic region or level of involvement. State association leaders were also contacted and asked to encourage the district offices within their state to participate. A total of 599 entries were registered by Survey Monkey.

During the fall of calendar year 2011, the results were extracted and analyzed – first using Microsoft Excel, then Predictive Analytics SoftWare (PASW). The data was searched thoroughly for duplicates, identified by matching district name and/or IP Address. Potential duplicates were then analyzed to determine which entry provided the most accurate and complete information. After this process there were 503 remaining entries.

An intern working for NACD matched district names with states. During this process, 490 of the 503 entries were given a state designation. Those entries were then classified by region, using NACD's regional map.

The defined data was changed in Microsoft Excel to fields of 0 or 1 (0 equaling a negative or absent response, 1 equaling a positive or completed response) to make it data friendly for PASW. The data was then sorted, both by region and comparatively against other factors.
A LOOK AT THE RESULTS – BY NACD REGION

- Pacific – 24 (4.8%)
- Southwest – 51 (10.1%)
- Northern Plains – 77 (15.3%)
- South Central – 40 (8.0%)
- North Central – 154 (30.6%)
- Northeast – 27 (5.4%)
- Southeast – 117 (23.3%)

RESULTS – BY STATE (39)

- Arkansas – 1
- Arizona – 16
- Colorado – 25
- Georgia – 9
- Iowa – 12
- Idaho – 5
- Illinois – 27
- Indiana – 2
- Kansas – 38
- Kentucky – 30
- Massachusetts – 2
- Maine – 10
- Missouri – 39
- Montana – 4
- Nebrask – 9
- New Jersey – 4
- New Mexico – 5
- Nevada – 1
- New York – 5
- North Carolina – 32
- North Dakota – 1
- North Carolina – 32
- North Dakota – 1
- Ohio – 10
- Oklahoma – 31
- Oregon – 11
- Pennsylvania – 3
- Rhode Island – 1
- South Carolina – 1
- South Dakota – 25
- Tennessee – 18
- Texas – 8
- Virginia – 27
- Washington – 2
- Wisconsin – 15
- West Virginia – 1
- Wyoming – 4
### WHO RESPONDED?

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<th>Conversation District Official</th>
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<td>% within REg</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>50.0%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Exactly half of the surveys were filled out by the district manager. In cases where more than one member from the district filled out a survey, the most complete survey was kept, not the survey filled out by a particular staff member.

District administrative assistants/secretaries made up the majority of the ‘other’ answers for this question, however, a number of surveys were filled out by other staff positions not listed on the form or by non-district staff.
## PART 1: THE RANGELAND SURVEY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REg</th>
<th>Yes</th>
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<td>90</td>
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<td>76.9%</td>
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<td>North Central</td>
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<td>97</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>% within REg</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>51.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that although 253 of 490 respondents answered ‘yes’ to the question, approximately 40 of those respondents did not offer answers for follow up rangeland data, including primary vegetation and funding.

In terms of primary audience (see: pie chart), 92% of respondents listed private landowners as their primary audience, as to be expected. Other available options included: Lessee/permittee (11 responses), federal agencies (1) and state/local agencies (4). 209 of 503 respondents entered a response for this category.
# Rangeland Vegetation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Grassland</th>
<th>Bush</th>
<th>Wooded</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td><strong>North Central</strong></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>% within REg</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>South Central</strong></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Northern Plains</strong></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within REg</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Southwest</strong></td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>39</td>
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<tr>
<td>% within REg</td>
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<td>20.5%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pacific</strong></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>15.0%</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>165</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>210</td>
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<tr>
<td>% within REg</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
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<td>5.7%</td>
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</table>

Of the 12 ‘other’ responses, eight indicated a combination of the three options given. The question asked for “primary type” so we might be led to believe for these districts that it’s an equal balance of two or three types listed.
RANGELAND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The survey asked respondents whether their district provides the services listed below. Districts were asked to check all that applied.

1) Allotment management plan:
   41 respondents, or 8.4% indicated involvement. The most active regions are Pacific (25.0%) and Northern Plains (15.6%).

2) Structural improvements – water development, fencing, etc.:
   166 respondents, or 33.9% indicated involvement. Again the Pacific (70.8%) and Northern Plains (57.1%) regions were the most active, although Southwest (47.1%) and South Central (37.5%) also indicated heavy involvement.

3) Vegetation manipulation – controlled burning, chipping, invasive plants or animals:
   124 respondents, or 25.3% indicated involvement. Of all three options, this generated the most activity among northeast respondents (18.5%).

Reseeding and tree planting were among the most common answers given for ‘other’ for this question.

Below is a chart illustrating multiple technical assistance provided, by region:
RANGELAND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The survey asked respondents to list the types of financial assistance their district provides.

• 23.7% indicated federal assistance
• 32.3% indicated state assistance
• 10.8% indicated local assistance

Below is a chart illustrating multiple financial assistance provided, by region:

More than one-third of the 185 respondents listed EQIP as a source of federal assistance. That number is likely greater, as a number of respondents listed only ‘NRCS Programs,’ or something else that could indicate EQIP. As expected, both WHIP and CRP were also listed by many of those who indicated federal financial assistance.

A variety of cost share programs made up the vast majority of state- and local-level financial assistance indicated.

Partner funding, such as National Wild Turkey Federation, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, in-house grants, private funding and WRAPS were among the answers listed for ‘other’ (see Appendix A for a full listing of partners).
**RANGELAND COMMUNICATION**

The survey asked respondents to list the ways in which they disseminate information to private landowners for rangeland activities.

- 25.3% indicated presentations
- 27.3% indicated workshops/tours
- 23.1% indicated brochures
- 16.7% indicated websites

**The most common communication tool:**

- NE – Websites (18.5%)
- NP – Workshops (39.9%)
- SE – Presentations (15.4%)
- SW – Workshops (51.0%)
- NC – Workshops (20.8%)
- P – Workshops (70.8%)
- SC – Presentations (42.5%)

The website total could be an indication that districts are still not utilizing modern technologies in outreach efforts. For example, only 19 of 135 North Central respondents listed websites as a form of communication.

Newsletters and newspaper articles/press releases should have probably been a category, as more than 60 of the 180 respondents to offer an answer listed those methods under ‘other’. Other answers included site visits and word of mouth.

Below is a chart illustrating multiple communication tools used, by region:
RANGELAND PARTNERS, PROJECTS & CONCERNS

There was also a data entry component to the survey. Respondents were asked to provide an answer that most accurately addressed each question.

**How many full time specialists do you employ to conduct these activities?**
More than 50% of the 137 responses indicated either 1 or 2 full time staff. 11.6% of respondents indicated 3 full time specialists. There was a large drop off after 3.

**Do you have cost-share agreement with another agency/entity?**
As would be expected, most of the 100-plus respondents for this question listed NRCS opportunities, specifically TSP and CTA funding. Other examples of cost share included BLM, State Conservation Commission and DNR funding.

**What partners do you work with?**
A majority of respondents indicated they had formed partnerships with NRCS and/or their local Extension office. Other common partners included: BLM, DNR, FSA, city and county government, an adjoining conservation district, Department of Fish and Game, Watershed Councils/local WRAPS, State Conservation Commission, State Department of Agriculture, State Grasslands Coalition, local RC&D, county weed board, State Department of Transportation/Highway, National Wild Turkey Federation, Pheasants Forever, Farm Bureau, The Nature Conservancy, local fire department, local oil/gas companies, tribal partners, State Cattlemen Association/Pork Producers, Trout Unlimited. For a complete list of partners see Appendix A.

**What types of projects have you worked on or cooperated with?**
Close to 200 of the respondents offered exampled of projects they were involved with, or assisted in some manner. Conservation planning, brush control/management, fence work, seeding and workshops/tours were among the most common project types listed. For several specific examples of these projects see Appendix B.

**Are there resource concerns not being addressed through current programs?**
Some common examples of these concerns included invasive species/noxious weed control, assisting small acreage landowners, expiring programs and lack of funding. For several examples of these concerns see Appendix C.
RANGE LAND SUCCESS STORY

SOUTH DAKOTA: Conservation leaders use EQIP to help answer water shortage

Roughly two decades ago, producers in northwestern South Dakota had as many sheep occupying their fields as cattle.

But the removal of the Wool Incentive from Farm Bill funding led to change. Producers suddenly switched to cattle, which created a new problem. Several years of drought (precipitation levels were well below the area’s 14-inch annual average) impacted grazing, and cattle needed a better watering source than sheep, many of which were satisfied by the snow in the cold months.

The solution in Harding County has been pipeline installation. Since 2002, more than 450 miles of it, or roughly 50 miles a year, have been installed. NRCS District Conservationist Jerry Nelson says the county will probably reach that total again this year.

According to Nelson, the county has acquired $5.8 million in Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding alone to assist with pipeline installation. The county also received funding through the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) from 2001 to 2006.

Harding County has just 200 producers to occupy 1.7 million acres, or roughly 8,500 acres per producer on average. Many of those larger ranchers have installed 30 miles or more of pipeline.

“We’ve had about 150 EQIP contracts since 1997,” says Nelson. “Some have done more than one, but just about everybody has participated in ECP or EQIP.”

The Harding County Conservation District office helps with the administrative work and writing the contracts. District secretary Linda Matthews also helps to organize tours to showcase the work to other producers, and the district releases information through its quarterly newsletter. And, says Nelson, many of the district’s board members have completed pipeline projects on their property and have promoted conservation practices to their neighbors.

Note: Search for other rangeland success stories in NACD publications.
PART 2: THE SILVOPASTURE SURVEY

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<th>Count</th>
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<th>Total</th>
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<td>% within REg</td>
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<td>% within REg</td>
<td>92.2%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
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</table>

In terms of primary audience (see: pie chart), silvopasture had similar numbers as compared to the rangeland survey, with 94% of respondents listing private landowners as their primary audience. Of course, there were no lessee/permittee responses, only federal agencies (2) and state/local agencies (1).

**NOTE:** The remaining data is limited. In some cases as many as 10 respondents who offered a ‘no’ answer for silvopasture activity, offered answers for the remaining silvopasture questions.
## SILVOPASTURE VEGETATION

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<tr>
<td>Southeast</td>
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<td>97</td>
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<tr>
<td>% within REg</td>
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<td>5.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% within REg</td>
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<td>90.2%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>.2%</td>
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SILVOPASTURE TECHNICAL & FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The survey asked respondents whether their district provides the services listed below. Districts were asked to check all that applied.

1) Allotment management plan:
   8 of the respondents indicated involvement
2) Structural improvements – water development, fencing, etc.:
   34 of the respondents indicated involvement
3) Vegetation manipulation – controlled burning, chipping, invasive plants or animals:
   30 of the respondents indicated involvement

The survey asked respondents to list the types of financial assistance their district provides.

- 38 of the respondents indicated federal assistance
- 34 of the respondents indicated state assistance
- 8 of the respondents indicated local assistance

Same as was true of the rangeland survey, almost all of the federal entries listed EQIP and WHIP. In terms of multiple funding assistance, 24 of the 44 respondents to offer an answer listed two types.

SILVOPASTURE COMMUNICATION

The survey asked respondents to list the ways in which they disseminate information to private landowners about silvopasture.

- 30 indicated presentations
- 29 indicated workshops/tours
- 28 indicated brochures
- 17 indicated websites

Newsletters, newspaper articles/press releases and word of mouth were again mentioned as ‘other’ communication tools.
SILVOPASTURE PARTNERS, PROJECTS & CONCERNS

There was also a data entry component to the survey. Respondents were asked to provide an answer that most accurately addressed each question.

**Full time specialists conducting these activities**
More than 50% of the responses indicated 1 full time specialist. Roughly one-third indicated 1.5 or 2 specialists on staff.

**Cost-share agreement with another agency/entity**
The vast majority (75%) of the respondents listed NRCS as the primary source for cost share. State forestry and DNR offices were also listed.

**Partnerships for these activities**
Common partners for silvopasture work included NRCS, Cooperative Extension, BLM, FSA and local RC&Ds. For a complete list of partners see Appendix D.

**Types of projects**
Roughly two dozen respondents offered project examples for the silvopasture work they've assisted with. Among the projects listed: building fencing systems, silvopasture project tours, forest stand improvement, riparian buffer establishment and erosion control.

**Resource concerns**
Concerns respondents identified in the survey included dealing with disease/insect infested trees, managing small landowner projects, the need to use more prescribed burns and invasive species control.
SILVOPASTURE SUCCESS STORY

WASHINGTON: Conservation district clears the way for improved livestock grazing

Producers in north central Washington have been incorporating silvopasture into their grazing practices for years – just not always by that name. According to Craig Nelson, district manager for Okanogan Conservation District, the work predates his arrival in 1996. “And then we went away from those types of activities for a numbers of years,” he says. “Now people are starting to come back to them.

“I think landowners are starting to recognize how forest activities go hand in hand with grazing,” he says.

The earlier practices were classified as range management projects on state land using coordinated resources management planning. The district assisted with forest thinning in areas where there were grazing permits. Says Nelson, those practices also limited the threat of wildfire by creating natural fuel breaks and by reducing the amount of ladder fuel. “It led to great success on thousands of acres that improved water quality benefits and range resources,” says Nelson.

This fall, a district board member is building a silvopasture plan. He is now in the process of identifying which trees need to come out of the property to open up the canopy.

Okanogan Conservation District works closely with the area cooperative Extension office and other partners, and Nelson says the local work group recently ranked grazing land and forestland as its highest priority.

Producers think it’s important, too.

“We have producers who talk about being on the same leases their dad or grandfather had for years, and how their livestock has added weight quicker than any of the previous generations had.”

Note: Search for other silvopasture success stories in NACD publications.
APPENDIX A: Rangeland Partners

Here is a list of rangeland activity partners mentioned by survey respondents:

- Aroostook County Conservation Districts
- California Department of Fish and Game
- Capital RC&D
- City of Wichita
- Coalition for the Upper South Platte
- Cochise College
- Cochise County
- Coconino County
- Coeur d’Alene Tribe
- Colorado Dept of Highways
- Colorado Division of Wildlife
- Colorado Land Board
- Colorado State Extension Office
- Conasauga River Alliance
- Coronado RC&D
- Dolores Conservation District
- Douglas County Conservation Districts
- DOW
- Elevators and Grain Companies
- Elko County
- Fremont County Weed Board
- Grasslands Coalition
- Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
- Idaho Department of Fish & Game
- INCA
- Iowa Cattlemen
- Iowa Pork Producers
- Iowa State University Extension Service
- Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks
- Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition
- Kansas Rural Center
- Kansas State University Extension
- Kansas Wildlife and Parks
- Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Larimer County Weed District
- Leader Lions
- Linn County Noxious Weed Department
- Linn County Road Department
- Maine Department of Agriculture
- Minnesota Department of Agriculture
- Missouri Department of Conservation
- Moffat County Weed and Pest Management
- Muscogee Creek Nation
- Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
- Neosho County School District
- New Jersey Forest Fire Service
- Noble Foundation
- North American Wetlands Conservation Council
- North Carolina Department of Agriculture
- Okanogan County Cattlemen
- Oklahoma Conservation Commission
- Oklahoma Department of Agriculture
- Oklahoma State University Extension
- Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
- Oregon Department of Forestry
- Osage County Conservation Districts
- Pathfinders RC&D
- Placer County Fire Alliance
- Playa Lake Joint Venture
- Quail & Upland Wildlife Federation
- Sandhills Task Force
- Sierra Nevada Conservancy
- Siuslaw Watershed Council
- South Dakota Department of Agriculture
- South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources
- South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks
- Southern Iowa Forage and Grassland Committee
- Tennessee Department of Agriculture
- Tennessee Valley Authority
- Tribes of the Lower Coos, Umpqua, and Siuslaw
- University Missouri Extension
- University of Arizona Extension
- University of Maine Cooperative Extension
- University of Missouri Extension
- University of Utah
- Upper Arkansas Weed Management Area
- Vermillion Soil and Water Conservation District
- Virginia Forage and Grassland Council
- Washington State Conservation Commission
- Washington State Department of Natural Resources
- Western United Dairymen
- Wheat Growers Association
- Wyoming Department of Agriculture
- Wyoming Game and Fish
APPENDIX B: Rangeland Projects

Here is a list of some of the rangeland projects mentioned by survey respondents:

- A pilot grazing permanent wetland bank easement
- Conducted a Consauga River Water streambank protection study for locating polluting sites, and Chattata Valley Creek streambank protection from cattle grazing
- Controlled Burn Workshops, Grazing Schools
- Cost shared wind protection and pasture practices sites. Conducted tours, information programs, and constructed a native plant demo plot
- Educating bankers, agribusiness, incubator program for new farmers; formal apprenticeship program for new dairy grazers
- Grazing plans and grassland management on native grass plantings
- In stream structures to stabilize banks, pipelines and watering tanks, solar pumps and tanks, and ponds
- Livestock waste system, water well plugging, noxious weed treatments, nutrient management (soil testing)
- Livestock waterers, terraces, cropland conversion, diversions, grade stabilization structures, and many other erosion concerns
- Nutrient management and water quality in a test area in Cassia County. Checking for nitrogen leaching from fertilizers. We sell trees for wind breaks and have helped plan and plant wind breaks in the county.
- Ordering and selling native grass seed. Pond construction Providing a no-till drill for rent
- Prescribed burn workshops and demonstrations
- Rotational grazing plans, exterior/interior fencing, watering systems, vegetation management
- Small landowner workshops, coordination meetings, tree planting, flood, erosion and sediment control, water recharge
- Weed spraying along roadsides and tackling huge hoary cress infestation in and around (and spreading) the town of Tuscarora
APPENDIX C: Rangeland Concerns

Here are some example rangeland concerns mentioned by survey respondents:

- Wild hogs are damaging soil and water without any management or answers on controlling them
- A large concern is the number of acres of grass being broken out for corn production due to high corn price
- Management of invasive species
- Negative impacts to adjacent riparian areas
- Dust levels
- Loss of rangelands to industrialization (wind and solar "farms")
- Land transfer complications
- Excess water causing ponding, flooding, high water table and seeps
- Expiring CRP fencing and water facilities
- Out-wintering livestock and runoff concerns needs to be addressed better, drought management strategies
- Range plant health is inadequately funded as granting agencies are not willing to fund projects to address issues for lack of clear connection to water quality
- Shelterbelt renovation in our area is having a hard time getting funded through EQIP
- Water is becoming a more critical issue. Spraying sericea lespedeza in a cropland area with soybeans can be an issue
- Cedar tree eradication
APPENDIX D: Silvopasture Partners

Here is a list of silvopasture project partners mentioned by survey respondents:

- Arizona State Lands Department
- Benton County
- Bureau of Indian Affairs Soil & Moisture Unit
- City of Corvallis
- Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission
- Greater Flagstaff Forest Partnership
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources
- Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Kentucky Department of Forestry
- Local Watershed Groups
- Nebraska Forest Service
- New Mexico State Forestry
- North Carolina Forest Service
- Oklahoma Conservation Commission
- Oregon Department of Forestry
- Oregon Dept of Forestry
- Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
- Rhode Island Forest Consortium
- Rhode Island Tree Council
- Siuslaw Stewardship Group
- Siuslaw Watershed Council
- Tennessee Department of Agriculture
- Tribes of the Lower Coos, Umpqua and Siuslaw
- University of California Davis Extension Service
- University of Tennessee Extension
- Virginia Department of Forestry
- Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
- Washington State Department of Natural Resources