

Midwest Perennial Forage Working Group

Value proposition, operations plan, timeline, budget and deliverables

05/17/16

Value Proposition:

1. Integration of livestock is key to broad adoption of Continuous Living Cover strategies and increased acreage in CLC systems. Livestock and livestock-derived products are established marketable items right now. Integration of livestock into CLC cropping systems, utilization of perennial crops and cover crops as livestock feed, and sale of livestock-based products can be the bridge that allows biomass, perennial grain, and agroforestry markets to develop. Integration of livestock can accomplish this by providing a baseline market for those products, allowing acreage to expand while other value chains are being created.

2. The Midwest Perennial Forage Working Group is made up of individuals who have broad expertise on integration of livestock into landscapes and cropping systems, and deep connections to the grazing and livestock production networks in the Upper Mississippi River Basin. The MPFWG members want the Working Group to become an integral part of GLBW; forming working relationships with the other Working Groups and the Watershed Initiative, and serving as a resource for those groups.

Structure:

- Part-time staff person (approx. 10% time)
- Two co-chairs, compensated for 2 hours/month each
- Two-tiered structure of MPFWG with a core group and a larger “in the loop” group.
 - Core group includes members from IA, IL, MN and WI.
 - Recruitment of members from MO and IN will be a goal.

Operations plan:

- Bi-weekly check-in via phone or email between staff person and co-chairs
- Monthly email update

- ⊖ Outreach to a wider group of grazing and perennial forage educators
- Quarterly regular conference calls of MPFWG (in-person meeting counts for one quarter):
 - July 6, 2016
 - October 5, 2016
 - January 4, 2017
- Ad-hoc conference calls for subcommittees or project teams, if needed, on a schedule to be determined by those groups
- Annual in-person planning meeting of MPFWG: April 4, 2017
- Documentation of in-kind contributions from MPFWG members
 - Meeting participation
 - Outreach/connections with local & regional groups
 - Mini-grant participation
 - Grant writing or other project collaboration among members

Criteria for projects planned by MPFWG:

- Feature integration of livestock with Continuous Living Cover practices
- Relate to MPFWG & GLBW priorities: soil health, water quality, system resilience to climate change
- Build local & regional teams/partnerships/sponsorships
- Foster collaboration among WG members
- Foster collaboration among GLBW entities: Working Groups and Watershed Initiative

Priority topics for field days or workshops:

- Contract grazing to establish partnerships between neighboring farmers to establish CLCs with grazing (e.g. grazing cover crops or grazing brush infested DNR lands)
- Getting perennial forage conservation provisions into contracts or leases
- Conservation programs that can be used to support adoption of CLCs
- Other conservation practices, especially related to water quality (a major thrust of most of our funders)
- Climate adaptation/resilience through integration of livestock and CLC practices

Commented [JGJ1]:

Dick Cates generates grazing contracts for his farm and provided sample contracts that are available for download on the MPFWG website.

Laura Paine worked as a grazing broker for Southwest Badger RC & D and facilitated grazing contracts between farmers, livestock owners, and livestock graziers.

Land Stewardship Project (Terry and others) are working on multi-landowner grazing projects in western MN.

Steve John, a nominal MPFWG member, has experience with forage harvesting agreements between hay producers and cash grain farmers in central IL.

Commented [JGJ2]: Kent Solberg's work with cover crops and high-stock-density grazing in north central MN has led him to consulting work with Central Lakes College in Staples, MN and R.D. Offutt, a very large potato producer that is looking for cropping system-based solutions to water quality issues on the land it owns and leases.

See Kent's profile in the CLC manual for more detail on his system:
http://greenlandsbluewater.net/Kent_Linda_Solberg_2015_profile.pdf

Commented [JGJ3]: Gene Schriefer has planted 12 acres of Big Bluestem (native warm-season perennial, deep-rooted prairie grass) to be used for grazing livestock. His intent is that this will be a hedge against drought so that he can keep his beef cattle on grass if his cool-season pastures fail. He also intends to experiment with winter grazing of this grass.

Gene also has a woodlot that borders his pastures, and he uses it for shade for the livestock during extreme heat events in the summer. This isn't quite the same as silvopasture, but it is an agroforestry practice that many farmers are considering as extreme heat events become more common.

See Gene's profile in the CLC manual for more detail on his system.
http://greenlandsbluewater.net/Gene_Schriefer_profile_fina1.pdf

Richard Cates has also established warm-season grasses and agroforestry practices. From the survey of MPFWG members:

"The Cates Farm would enjoy hosting a field day this summer. We are only 20 minutes from Gene Schriefer's farm. We could demonstrate rotational grazing, contract grazing, riparian area protection, warm season plantings, and oak savanna restoration."

Timeline

Dec. 2015 – May 2016	MPFWG is funded for 4 hours/week staff time and \$2,500 in program funds to hold an in-person meeting. Deliverables: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPFWG planning document [this document] • Begin work on future projects
Mid-March 2016	Workplan and budget request due to Richard Warner for inclusion with Green Lands Blue Waters funding request to foundations.
April 2016	GLBW submits funding request to Walton Foundation.
April or early May 2016	In-person meeting of MPFWG: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focused planning on major project: Mini-Grants • development of structure for the group going forward [May include ID of “core” group to steer future agenda]
June 2016	Begin operation under new funding agreement with GLBW.
June – December 2016	Implement projects planned by the group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini-Grant program • Session development for 2016 GLBW Conference • Herbicides & Grazing Cover Crops fact sheet • Slide library
June 2016 – end of 2017	Opportunity to participate in SARE R & E project on grazing of grain-type intermediate wheatgrass (Kernza™)
November 2016	Host the MPFWG session at GLBW Conference in Columbia, MO; Nov. 29-30, 2016
April 2017	In-person meeting to plan 2017 project(s)
June 2017-December 2017	Conduct MPFWG project(s)
Fall 2017	GLBW Conference hosted by CIAS and MPFWG
January – April 2018	Planning for next biennium
April 2018	In-person meeting to plan 2018 project(s)

Budget proposal for two years, June 2016 – June 2018

Item	Amount	Tasks
Staff time, 4 hours/week	\$16,000	<p>Basic and enhanced website development</p> <p>Communication with members and outreach to wider grazing educator audience</p> <p>Coordination & follow-up tasks for meetings</p> <p>Coordinate mini-grant plan development and administer program</p> <p>Project work, coordination of project team(s)</p>
Co-coordinator time, 4 hours/month split between 2 co-coordinators	\$8,000	<p>Engage with same tasks as staff person</p> <p>Communicate with MPFWG members</p> <p>Communicate with other related organizations</p> <p>Assist with fundraising if that is identified as a task (e.g. for the 2017 conference)</p>
Travel	\$6,800	<p>Two in-person meetings in Decorah, IA:</p> <p>Mileage = \$1,500</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terry = 564 mi. RT • Laura = 200 mi. RT • Jane = 600 mi. RT <p>Hotel = \$600</p> <p>Total Decorah = \$2,100</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Conference in Columbia, MO</p> <p>Air travel, 2 from MSP = \$1,400 1 from Madison = \$1,200</p> <p>Hotel = \$600 (3 rooms x 2 nights)</p>

		<p>Total Columbia = \$3,200</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Conference in Platteville, WI</p> <p>Mileage = \$900</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terry = 780 mi. RT • Laura = 60 mi. RT • Jane = 810 mi. RT <p>Hotel = \$600 (3 rooms x 2 nights)</p> <p>Total Platteville = \$1,500</p>
Program support funds	\$5,000	<p>Support MPFWG members' travel to in-person meeting, meeting venue & meals</p> <p>\$2,500/ year x 2 years</p>
Project funds	\$50,000	<p>Develop "mini-grant" program to support field days or workshops that hit MPFWG priorities – and that also satisfy outreach requirements of MPFWG members' programs. The intent is that this mechanism of creating outreach events will begin to put MPFWG in a supportive & strengthening role for its members and for other GLBW entities: Working Groups and Watershed Initiative</p> <p>MN and WI in-state SARE programs and Iowa Beef Center program serve as models for this mini-grant program.</p> <p>Detailed plan & criteria developed for the mini-grant program at 5/3/16 in-person meeting.</p> <p>Administration of the mini-grants can be mostly covered by Jane's staff time w/ some help from co-chairs.</p>
Printing costs	\$2,790	<p>Printing of CLC manuals for distribution at field days funded by mini-grants.</p> <p>\$8/manual (incl. binder) x 300 = \$2,400</p>

		Printing of Contract Grazing fact sheets for distribution at field days: $\$1.30/\text{set of } 4 \times 300 = \390 Printing of Herbicides & Grazing Cover Crops fact sheet for distribution at field days: $\$0.40 \times 300 = \120
2016 Conference program budget	\$ 2,000	MPFWG session development for Columbia, MO conference in 2016
2017 Conference planning budget	\$ 2,000	Travel expenses for MPFWG members to attend planning meetings convened by CIAS
2017 Conference program budget	\$ 2,000	MPFWG session development for 2017 GLBW conference in Wisconsin
Total budget request for 2 years:	\$94,710	

Deliverables from this budget

Advancement toward MPFWG Goals for a Grazing Educator Network

These Grazing Educator Network goals were generated at the April 7, 2015 meeting of the MPFWG in Decorah, IA and were presented in each of six webinars co-produced with Pasture Project during May – October 2015:

1. Connect Upper Midwest Educators through discussion and sharing
2. Assess education materials and tools; determine what's missing and fill the gaps
3. Create a platform to house and access materials and tools
4. Share what works and why
5. Cross-pollination of staff, students, apprentices and programs
6. Involve established grazing education programs
7. Access materials and tools no longer in circulation
8. Build collaboration that is more "grass-roots" than "top-down"
9. Include educators of various types; farmers, academics, agency and consultants
10. Establish basic principles of managed grazing that are taught by all

Progress toward these goals is embedded in many sections of the MPFWG plan that follows:

- **Creation of a slide library.**

The grazing educator webinar series co-produced with Pasture Project in 2015 resulted in six webinars that were recorded and placed on the Pasture Project's YouTube channel. These are linked to the MPFWG's website:

http://greenlandsbluewater.net/Perennial_Forage/grz_ed_webnr.html

Webinar participants requested making slides from these webinars available for use in their own presentations. Most webinar presenters agreed to allow their slides to be made available.

- Slides featuring key points, charts, graphics, or other useful educational items will be pulled out of presentations and placed on templates that give proper credit to the presenter who generated the slide.
 - These slides will be housed on the MPFWG website and will be available to anyone who wants to use them in their own presentations.
 - There will be a minimum of 72 slides (6 webinars x 12 slides/webinar) in the initial slide library.
 - The slide library will be augmented by material from workshop presentations sponsored by MPFWG and from future presentations at GLBW conferences
 - This slide library will help to meet MPFWG goals #1, 2, 3, 9 and 10 for a grazing educator network:
- **Upgrading website.**
 - MPFWG members have asked for the website to include grazing and perennial forage resources from other sources. They want a comprehensive perennial forage and grazing resource to turn to, and to refer other educators to.
 - Creating the resource library will involve communication among MPFWG members and their circles of influence.
 - The resource library will include materials from a minimum of six organizations that have ties to the MPFWG or GLBW, or that are recruited into the project by MPFWG members.
 - The process of development of an upgraded website with added resources will help to meet MPFWG goals #2, 3, 6, 7, 8 and 9 for a grazing educator network.
 - **Regular communication and outreach.**
 - MPFWG operations will include intra-group communication (monthly updates) to remind members to find and use resources on the MPFWG website, and to invite sharing of stories or insights.
 - Forwarding of monthly updates will be a mechanism for members to do outreach to other grazing educators, inviting them to use the MPFWG website resources.
 - MPFWG staff will generate and distribute 22 monthly updates between June 2016 and June 2018.

- Establishment of regular communication will help to meet MPFWG goals #1, 4 and 5 for a grazing educator network.

Contribution to GLBW goals and programs

- **Development of mini-grant program.**

- The mini-grant program will be modeled after in-state SARE programs but with regional reach and topical focus.
- Funding support will be provided for a minimum of 5 field days, workshops, or other projects in 2016 and 5 field days, workshops, or other projects in 2017, that hit MPFWG and GLBW priorities (see page 2; “Criteria for Projects Planned by MPFWG” and “Priority topics for field days or workshops.”)
- Collectively reach a minimum of 300 farmers and educators.
- The field days will provide venues for dissemination of the CLC Manual, Contract Grazing Fact sheets, and other brochures or materials produced by GLBW.
- Field day topics can be chosen to align with topics to be featured at GLBW fall conferences in 2016 and 2017.
- Documentation of the program development so that it can be replicated with other working groups, if successful.

- **Updating and development of fact sheets.**

- The Contract Grazing fact sheet series produced in 2013 will be updated with current rates for pasture rental and grazing management services. These fact sheets have been used at many field days in IA, MN, and WI; and demand continues.
- Development of a fact sheet on herbicides and grazing of cover crops, to support integration of livestock into cropping systems that include cover crops.
- These fact sheets will be distributed at all field days and events sponsored or co-sponsored by MPFWG or its members.

- **Production of Working Group session at 2016 GLBW Conference**

- This Conference will be held in Columbia, MO and led by the Center for Agroforestry at the Univ. of MO
- Speakers and presentation topics will be chosen to align with MPFWG and GLBW priorities, and to lay the groundwork for expanded discussion of integration of livestock with agroforestry practices.
- Presentations given in the MPFWG session will be used to expand the MPFWG slide library.**

- **Co-hosting of 2017 GLBW Conference**

- Institutional host for the 2017 conference will be the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems UW-Madison
- MPFWG has close ties to CIAS and will assist with development of a conference program with two major foci:
 - Integration of livestock as a unifying theme for implementation of multiple CLC strategies.
 - Outreach and recruitment of grazing & perennial forage educators and researchers from IA, IL, and IN; and relationship-building with established educators and programs in MN and WI
- MPFWG members are well-connected and can assist with recruiting presenters, finding an appropriate venue, conducting outreach to potential participants and sponsors, etc.
- Presentations given at this conference will be used to expand the MPFWG slide library.**

** In the view of MPFWG, the conferences should become a mechanism for collecting up-to-date research information on integration of livestock and CLC strategies; and then the Working Group should be a conduit for delivering that information to grazing educators in a format that they can easily access for further delivery of that information to their own networks of graziers, farm advisors, local governments, watershed district personnel, etc.

Slides that are easily available to download and add to presentations is one key way that MPFWG sees to get current research information disseminated widely.