

Additional Information Regarding a Short-Term Targeted Grazing RFP for Point Reyes (v. 2)

Prepared by The Nature Conservancy, in coordination with the National Park Service, in response to questions from grazing operators.

Note: The answers below are based on what's currently known. If conditions change or do not turn out as expected, TNC and NPS intend to work collaboratively with the rancher selected for this RFP to adapt plans as reasonably needed to support the goals of the interim grazing. It is fine to draft your proposal with this in mind, and we welcome your ideas for how to deal with potential issues or uncertainties.

Category	Question	Response
Infrastructure	What are the conditions of perimeter fence? Will NPS and TNC do anything to address perimeter fence issues prior to the start of this contract?	<p>TNC and NPS will replace any currently missing gates along the perimeter, and fix broken fence along public roads (i.e. Sir Francis Drake Boulevard). Perimeter fence bordering other sections of Point Reyes National Seashore or the beach area are being offered "as is". While TNC/NPS are conducting their own assessment, it is the responsibility of applicants to do their due diligence in vetting the condition of existing infrastructure. It is acceptable to incorporate the cost of fixes to non-roadside perimeter fence into proposals.</p> <p>The fence along the beach in the F West paddock is beyond short-term repair. Grazing may need to be limited at this site, or alternative herding/fencing (e.g. electric) would be required. See question below, regarding electric fence.</p>
Infrastructure	Is it okay to come back to review perimeter fence on horseback, ATV, or otherwise?	Yes. Please provide a written request to Sasha Gennet sgennet@tnc.org with dates you are available and prefer to return, whether you will be with horses (preferred) or ATV, and your proposed route. TNC will meet you at the gate when you arrive and open the gate for you to depart.
Infrastructure	What is the status of getting water online for G Ranch? And for F Ranch?	<p><u>G Ranch:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TNC has received a quote for replacing a pump to feed existing troughs. Once the pump is installed, the viability of the existing system will be tested and compared to alternative options. <p><u>F Ranch:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opening a valve will send water to a ~2,500 gal storage tank near the old corrals. The outlet PVC pipe currently has a crack in it and will be replaced. The inlet PVC pipe will also be tested and repaired, if necessary. This tank feeds a nearby trough. - An additional trough at the southern end of the ranch area is fed by a spring. The pipe from the spring would need repair, flow rate tested, and possibly new trough installed. We are looking into getting this spring back online but do not know if it will be operable by March.
Infrastructure	Is it okay to lay hose or pipe above ground in order to supply temporary troughs and reduce the amount of water being trucked in?	Yes, temporary hose and/or aboveground-pipe to move water to temporary storage or trough locations is permitted. However, in consideration of sensitive natural and cultural resources NPS will need a plan (with a map) in advance, for approval. Please describe the proposed system in your application. Note that plans may ultimately require adjustment to avoid certain natural or cultural resources, etc. The map that is included in the RFP shows areas with fewer sensitive resources (tan-colored zones).
Infrastructure	Is it okay to use electric fence? Can operators pound in temporary fiberglass rods, vs. t-posts, vs. digging in wood posts?	Electric fence is permitted. If adding cross-fencing to subdivide paddocks, NPS will need a plan (with a map) in advance, for approval. Please note that more ground disturbance will require more intensive review. Please describe the proposed fencing in your application and note that plans may ultimately need to be modified in an effort to avoid sensitive cultural or natural resources. The map that is included in the RFP shows areas with fewer sensitive resources(tan-colored zones).
Infrastructure	Will virtual fence be used this spring?	Although the longer-term plan is to utilize virtual fence technology to support targeted grazing, virtual fence is not being proposed for this grazing contract and term.
Infrastructure	What are the specs for road-side and perimeter fence?	Roadside fencing should be a standard 3-5 wire fence with top wire at 48 inches. Interior fences should be more wildlife friendly with top wire being no more than 42 inches.
Infrastructure	What is the price of water?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The water at F Ranch and the fill station at Drakes Beach Visitor Center are on the "Beaches" water system. The cost is \$3.37 per CCF (748 gallons). 2) There is no fee for water at G ranch, however, electricity will be billed for pumping from the pond. <p>* The cost for water and electricity will be billed monthly.</p>
Infrastructure	What is the flow rate for the water refill station at Drakes Beach Visitor Center?	This is a functional and serviced fire hydrant that meets minimum requirements by NFPA (e.g. 500 gpm) and has been tested recently. The flow rate will change once a flow meter and backflow preventer is installed, and the final output cannot be guaranteed at this time.
Infrastructure	Is on-site lodging/housing is available?	There is a trailer pad that is hidden from the road. It has a sewer clean out access point. There is no potable water. Electricity would be from a generator or it may be possible to run a 110v extension cord from a 15 or 20 amp breaker.
Infrastructure	F Ranch: if PG&E power goes out, how does water get distributed?	The "Beaches" pump on F Ranch is run by the NPS for the Drakes Beach Visitor Center and other uses. If the power goes out, there is a solar array and a propane tank managed by NPS as backups. The water tank at F ranch is filled by this system via a separate line that has a meter and backflow preventer installed.

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Liability	What would result in or trigger a 30-day removal of livestock from the premises?	<p>Aside from cattle achieving forage utilization goals, which will be regularly discussed and should not come as a surprise, the 30-day window could be triggered by unusual circumstances that pose significant risk if cattle were to remain on-site.</p> <p>Note that this 30-day timeframe was selected to strike a balance: we recognize that this is a very fast turnaround for most grazing operations. And if there were a serious resource or safety concern, an additional 30 days of grazing could result in significant impacts. It is also worth noting that this timeline is embedded within the context of a contract with a maximum of 7.5 months.</p>
Liability	Is there a public trail through F Ranch? How does that factor into this RFP?	All areas within the RFP are public lands and allow public access. With that said, the Bull Point Trail runs through a portion of F Ranch. There is a thin v-shape passage for humans near the Bull Point Trailhead parking lot. Cattle grazing infrastructure must not obstruct the trail. Any electric fence running along any sections of the trail should be marked with warning signage.
Liability	What are the fence conditions for archaeological sites at F Ranch?	There are two areas on F Ranch with resource protection fences. We understand that one is in fair condition, the other has a few failing H-braces. Their repair is not the responsibility of the grazing contractor.
Liability	What about elk? To what extent do they use these areas?	NPS staff have only seen individual bull elk, and small groups less than 10 bull elk, roaming through F and G ranches. The range of the larger elk herds have, to date, been limited to other parts of the park.
Livestock Mgmt.	Is there flexibility in the stocking rate? Is there a predetermined number of starting animal units?	The stocking rate, i.e., number of animals/pairs and timing, should be proposed by the applicant based on projected productivity (as described in the RFP and observed during site visits) and operational needs of the grazer. The estimated maximum animal unit months (AUM) for the period of the contract is 3000 AUM assuming an average rainfall year. The timing and intensity should be proposed by the grazer, to meet the goals of the contract, and to be coordinated with TNC and NPS. Conservation goals will drive decision-making, but there are tradeoffs to grazing a very high density of livestock on these 2,000 acres, which will also be considered.
Livestock Mgmt.	Is there an expectation for short duration and high density grazing?	It is up to the operator to propose what grazing management is within their capacity, and appropriate based on site conditions (vegetation, infrastructure, etc).
Livestock Mgmt.	Will TNC and NPS tell the grazer when to move?	This will be a collaboration. The known conditions that would prompt moving cattle will be communicated upfront, as will recognition of pieces that will be learned together, along the way. The goal is to avoid surprises.
Livestock Mgmt.	Is it allowed to bring in mineral, supplemental or substitute feed? Note selenium and copper, perhaps magnesium, as deficiencies	<p><u>Mineral</u>: Yes. Copper and selenium (perhaps also magnesium) were identified as deficiencies to be aware of.</p> <p><u>Supplemental</u>: Yes, if needed, for seasonal balancing of feed intake, stress periods, and/or nutritional gaps (including protein/molasses, grain). Discussion may be needed to identify locations, and types of supplement.</p> <p><u>Substitute</u>: No, unless emergency necessitates, with discussion and approval by TNC beforehand.</p>
Livestock Mgmt.	Is it okay to bring cattle on and off this ground during the growing/ grazing season?	Yes. Any desire to change the number of head grazing this area during the duration of the contract should be communicated in advance of making plans, be in alignment with the goals of the contract, and coordinated with TNC and NPS. Cattle will need to be temporarily quarantined upon arrival (see question below).
Livestock Mgmt.	How do cattle get from one side of the highway to the other?	<p>F Ranch: There are two under crossings, with gates.</p> <p>G Ranch: Cattle must be herded across the road, through existing gates that are opposite one another.</p>
Livestock Mgmt.	Are there ponds that can be used for watering stock?	Seasonal standing water is present in several locations, however may not be sufficient or well located to incorporate into stock water planning.
Livestock Mgmt.	Will the cattle need to be quarantined when they arrive?	Yes, cattle should be held in the G ranches holding corrals for at least two days to reduce potential introduction of new invasive plant species to the Seashore. Further quarantine may be required if cattle are coming from longer distances. Please provide information about the likely source of cattle and an overview of your husbandry, hygiene and veterinary practices in your proposal, or as that information becomes available.

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Livestock Mgmt.	If one or more cattle dies, how should it be handled?	As is the case with other ranching leases within the GGNRA and Point Reyes, the animal(s) must be transported from the park and disposed of, as appropriate.
Roles	What level of communication is expected of the rancher, for checking in, reporting back, or monitoring/documentation?	<p><u>Communication expectations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Text or quick phone conversations to address things as they arise, with everyone respecting working hours (aside from emergencies). Regular frequency for first weeks (e.g. every few to handful of days), less often thereafter. - Scheduled virtual meetings / field walks to check in every 1-2 weeks in the first month and likely 2-4 weeks thereafter. <p><u>Documentation expectations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial number of head of cattle, and any changes over duration of contract. - Photo updates of pasture condition. Up to a few times per week in sensitive areas. - Cattle movement plans and records (if high-frequency and short-duration moves, then more general specificity is okay) <p>Coordination between the grazer, TNC and the Park will be more frequent when cattle are grazing in sensitive areas, especially during key phases of the growing season.</p>
Roles	If cattle get into neighboring sections of land, how does this get managed? If they cause damage, who is liable?	The grazing operator is responsible for returning wayward cattle to the premises in the RFP. There are three zones adjacent to F and G Ranches: (1) The risks and responsibilities of grazing along roads are similar here as anywhere else in the state. (2) If cattle get into non-grazed areas (e.g. coast guard area; white on map) the grazing operator must immediately retrieve them and deploy fences or other effective means to prevent further excursions. (3) If cattle move onto adjacent grazed lands under a separate grazing lease - that should be handled between operators as would be done elsewhere in the state. To support positive outcomes between neighbors and communicate fencing needs, notify TNC of all incidents of cattle escaping.
Roles	If fence with neighboring sections of land need repair, who is responsible for it?	Roadside fence will be evaluated and repaired prior to the start of the grazing contract. Other perimeter fence is being offered "as is". Any grazing applicant can consider the costs of fence repairs/upgrades in their proposal. As needed, ongoing maintenance is the responsibility of the grazing applicant.
Roles	Who puts the PG&E meter in their account and pays for electricity?	TNC will be the PG&E account holder and bill the grazing contractor for electricity related to pumping, electric fencing, or other usage. Billing will be monthly.
Stewardship	Is the RDM threshold different for flat ground?	No. The RDM minimum of 1200 lbs/ac (pasturewide average) is the standard across the entirety of the grazing lands managed by the National Park in Point Reyes National Seashore and Golden Gate National Recreation Area lands.
Stewardship	Are areas with naturally low productivity going to be subject to the same 1200 lbs/ac RDM rule?	1200 is a pasturewide average, and grazers will not be "pinged" for small areas that do not typically reach 1200 lbs/ac RDM due to naturally low productivity (e.g. very sandy soils).
Stewardship	Are corrals and holding fields subject to the same RDM limits?	Corrals and holding fields for loading and sorting cattle have been heavily impacted for decades. These specific zones, while they should still be managed with intention and care, will not be held to the same RDM standards as the main pastures / grassland areas.
Stewardship	When is RDM going to be measured?	RDM is measured at the end of the growing season. During the grazing contract, the grazer's observations and TNC and/or NPS monitoring of utilization will be used to collaboratively identify move dates.
Stewardship	Are we grazing with the intent to remove velvet grass, or other invasive plants?	Full eradication of many of the invasive species in coastal grasslands of California is not feasible. However, the ongoing spread and increasing density of these invasive species impacts native habitat. Therefore, applying grazing and trampling pressure can reduce standing dead biomass (thatch) and suppress further growth of the invasives, providing more opportunity for native plants to grow, flower and set seed.
Stewardship	What are the federally listed plants that are in this space? Do they need to be grazed at the same times or different times to be benefited? What about state-listed species?	Sonoma alopecurus (<i>Alopecurus aequalis</i> var. <i>sonomensis</i>) grows in small pockets of wetland habitat. The Sonoma spineflower (<i>Chorizanthe valida</i>) grows limited areas with sandy, well-drained soils. The areas where these plants occur would ideally be grazed relatively heavily (within the framework of the RFP) in early spring and then not grazed again until the fall.
Stewardship	What about grazing a fire break along the roads? Is there a desired fire break width?	<p>There are several additional state-listed species within the entire Seashore. Full list: https://www.nps.gov/pore/learn/nature/upload/plantspecieslist_rare.pdf</p> <p>Grazing a fire break could have risk reduction benefits, but infrastructure limitations may make this challenging in 2026. Grazing a fire break has not been done by grazers in the Park previously, and there is no expectation to do so this coming season.</p>