Conservation Planning with the NRCS

Jacob Dixon. Natural Resource Specialist
Santa Maria F.O. NRCS

Matt Prendergast. Range Management Specialist
Templeton F.O. NRCS

Natural Resources Conservation Service

nrcs.usda.gov/

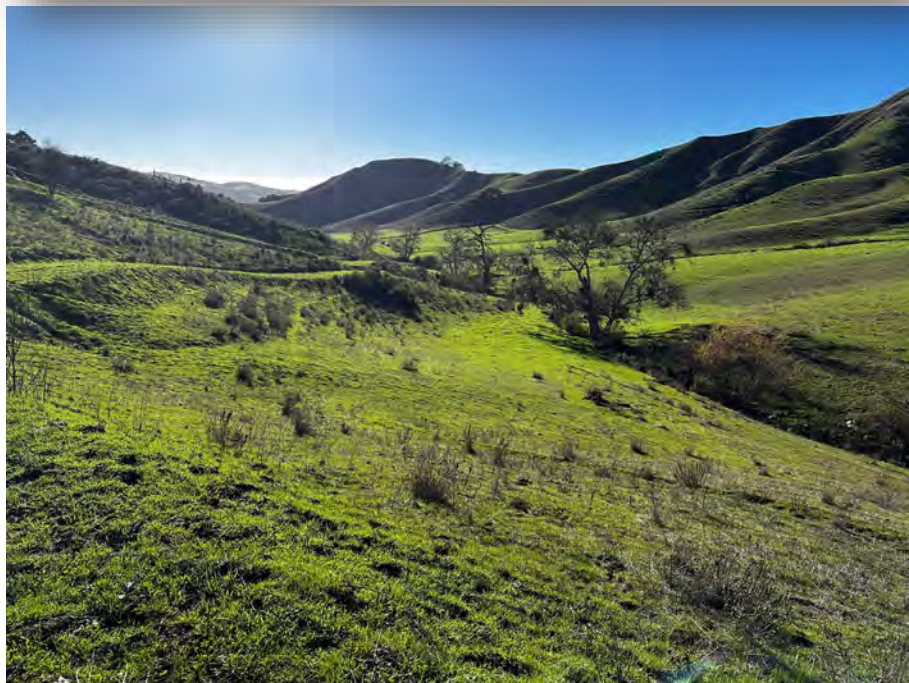
Background

- Soil Conservation Service (SCS) was formed from the aftermath of the dustbowl.
- Our Motto: "Helping People Help the Land."
- Our Mission: Deliver conservation solutions so that agricultural producers can protect natural resources and feed a growing world.
- Our Vision: A world of clean and abundant water, healthy soils, resilient landscapes, and thriving agricultural communities through voluntary conservation.

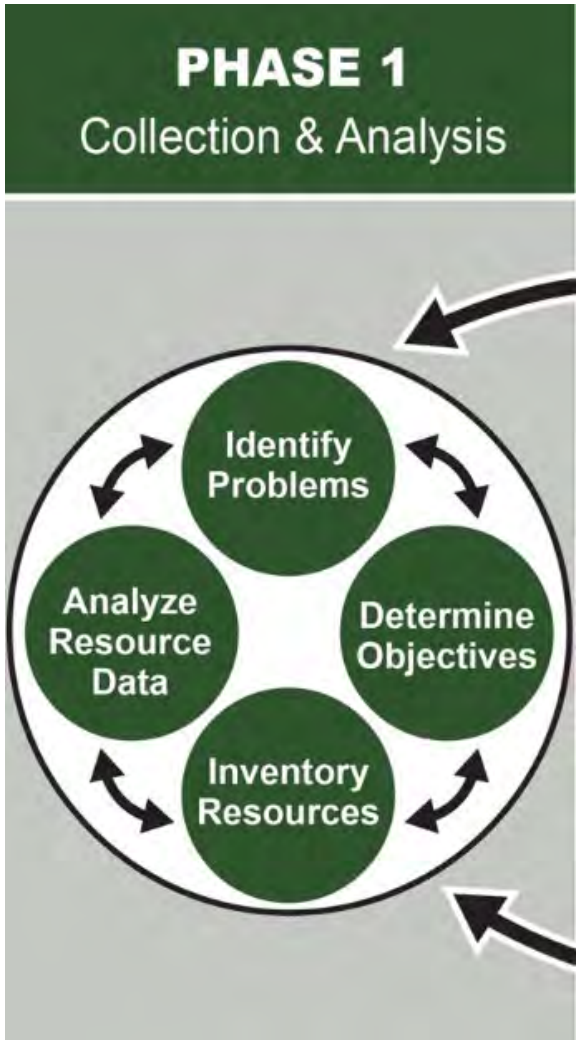
Voluntary Restoration

- **What drives restoration for client**
  - Land improvement in context of their operation
  - Maintaining cultural values
  - Funding opportunities/technical assistance

- **What drives restoration for NRCS**
  - Preservation of natural resource concerns on working lands
  - Ongoing opportunities for restoration
  - Farmer/ranchers who are looking to improve their land for future generations



NRCS Conservation Planning



1. Identify Problems and Opportunities
2. Determine Objectives
3. Inventory Resources
4. Analyze Resource Data

Typical timeline – Phase 1

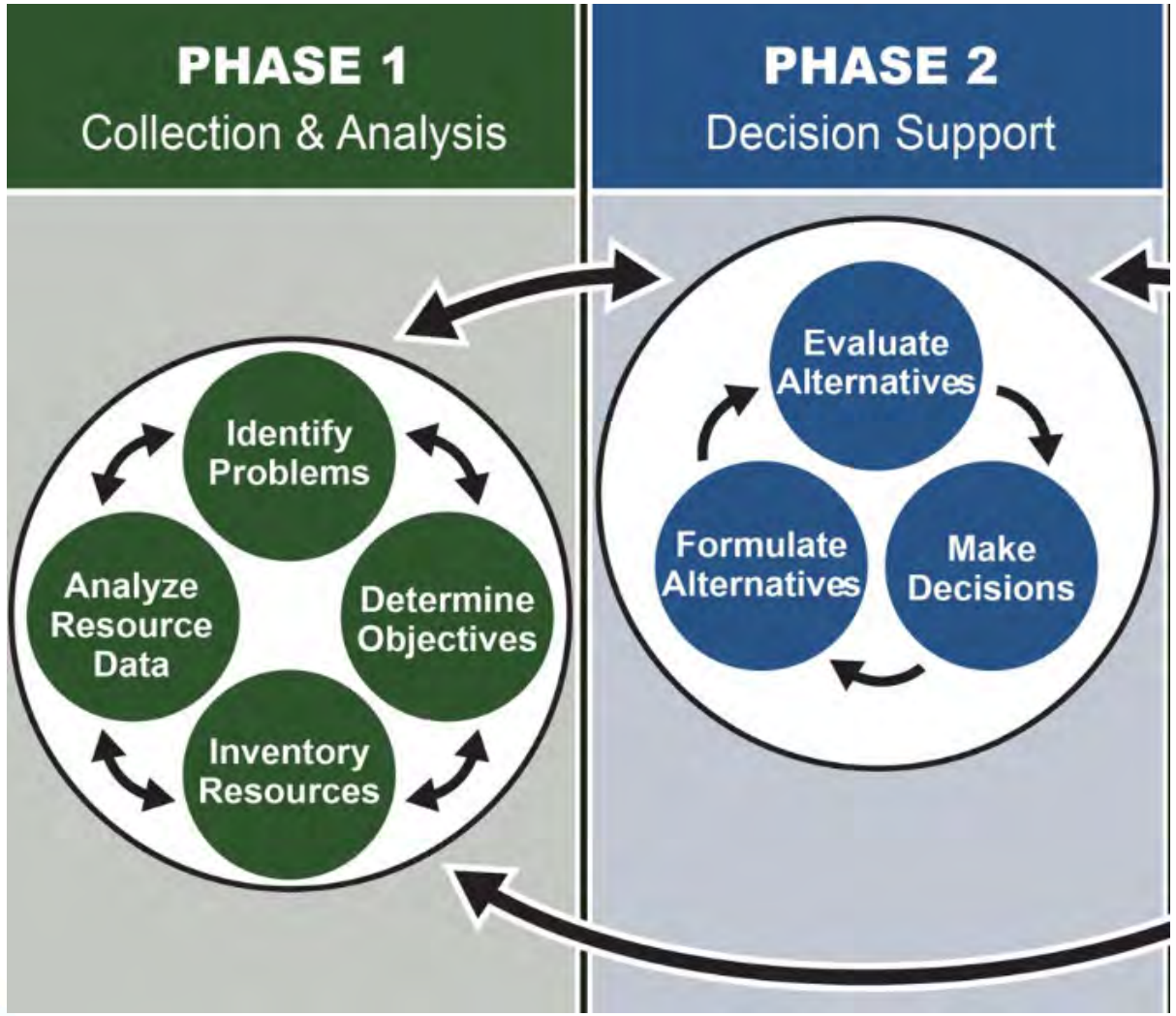
Contact NRCS

- Identify objectives, existing conditions, and resource concerns with field staff.

Site visit

- Address concerns as discussed and additional concerns seen in the field.
- **Resource Management System**
  - Identifying and evaluating all resource concerns present on site.
- May pull in other specialties if needed:
  - Engineering, biology/wildlife, forestry, soils, agronomy, etc.

NRCS Conservation Planning



5. Formulate Alternatives

6. Evaluate Alternatives

7. Make Decisions

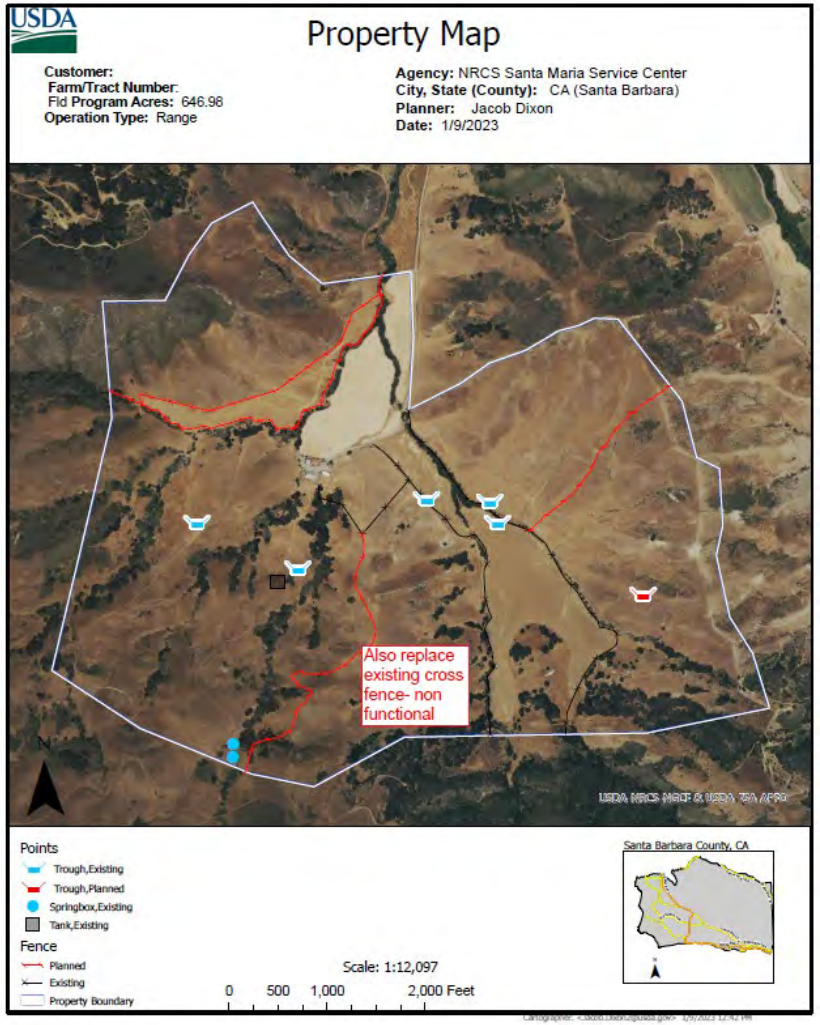
Typical timeline – Phase 2

Develop alternatives

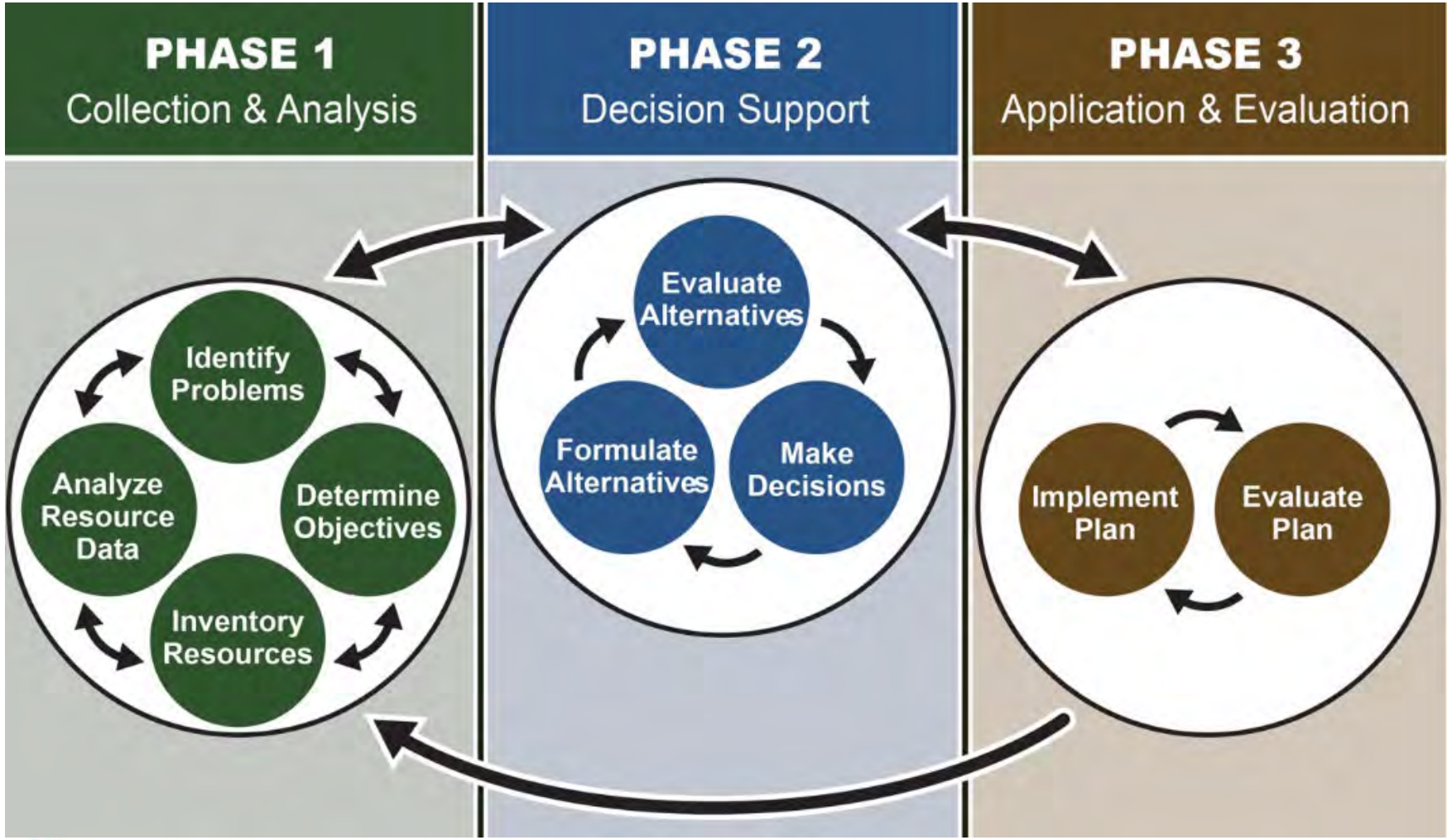
- Meet core objectives and resource concerns
- May pull in other specialties if needed:
  - Engineering, biology/wildlife, forestry, soils, agronomy, etc.

Present alternatives

- **Resource Management System**
  - Present alternatives that address all resource concerns, select options that are feasible
- Evaluate alternatives in context of feasibility and/or effect on other resource concerns
  - NEPA/Cultural Resources
  - Permits
- Deliver draft plan map, plant lists, engineering designs, estimated project cost, etc.



NRCS Conservation Planning



8. Implement Plan

9. Evaluate Plan

Typical timeline – Phase 3

Implement plan

- NRCS provides completed designs and implementation requirements (i.e. practice specifications).
- Client is responsible for obtaining necessary permits, implementing planned practices.

Evaluate plan

- **Resource Management System**
  - Revisit remaining resource concerns (RC)
  - Plan for future project to address remaining RC's
- Long term viability of conservation plan is dependent on continued operation, maintenance, and evaluation by producer.

Resources for Restoration

Engineering

- Livestock water design
- Gully/streambank stability
- Irrigation design

Biology Staff

- ID species
- Establish work windows
- On site monitoring
- Coordinate w/ regulators

Soil Scientist

- Wetland delineation
- Soil interpretations

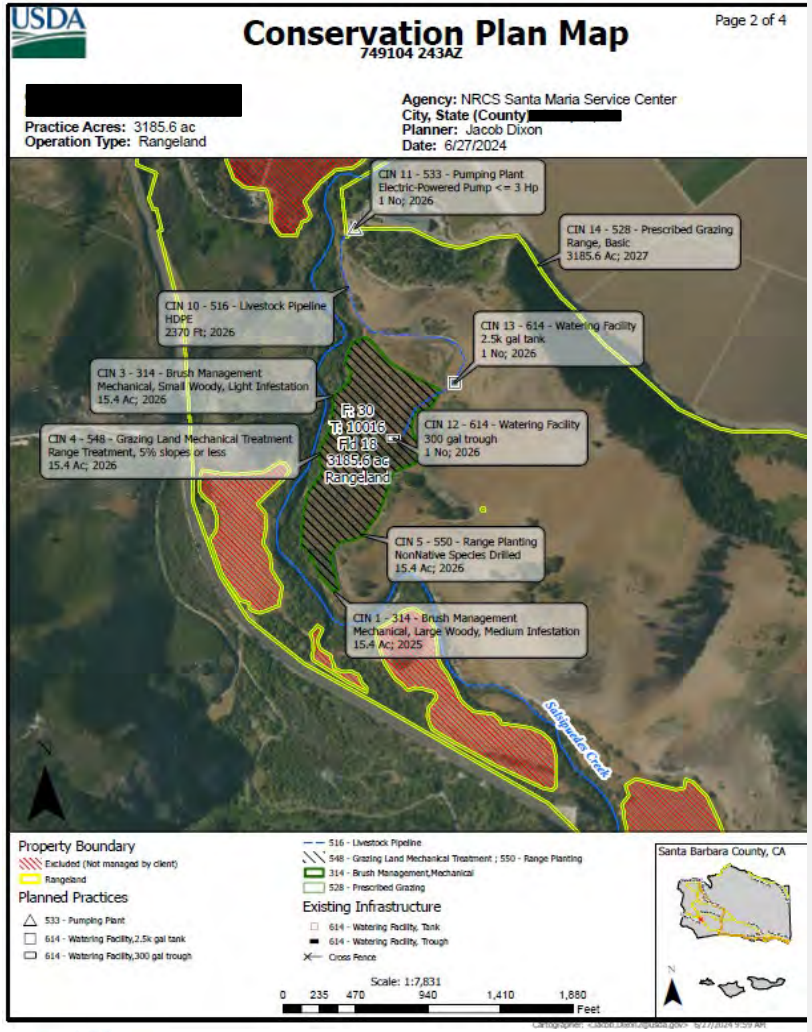
Range Specialist

- Grazing/Monitoring Plan
- Plant ID
- Seeding Recommendations/rates

Coordination with partner agencies

- Resource Conservation Districts
- USFW
- Point Blue
- UC Cooperative Extension

Typical Range Project



S12-IR-2

4. **PLANNED**: Species, Planting Methods, Seeding Rate (PLS), Date of Planting, and Depth of Seeding

Species	Method	PLS Rate (lbs/ac)	Planting Date	Seeding Depth	Field Number	Acres
California brome (*Bromus carinatus*)	Drill	2.1	Oct. – Jan.	½"	1	5.2
Soft chess (*Bromus hordeaceus*)	Drill	0.6	Oct. – Jan.	½"	1	5.2
Winter vetch (*Vicia villosa*)	Drill	3.8	Oct. – Jan.	1"	1	5.2
Barrel clover (*Medicago truncatula*)	Drill	0.5	Oct. – Jan.	¼"	1	5.2
Sub clover (*Trifolium subterraneum*)	Drill	5.0	Oct. – Jan.	¼"	1	5.2
Lacy phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*)	Drill	0.2	Oct. – Jan.	½"	1	5.2
	Total	**12.2**				

5. **Early establishment requirements**: (*Grazing deferment, harvest plans/deferment*).

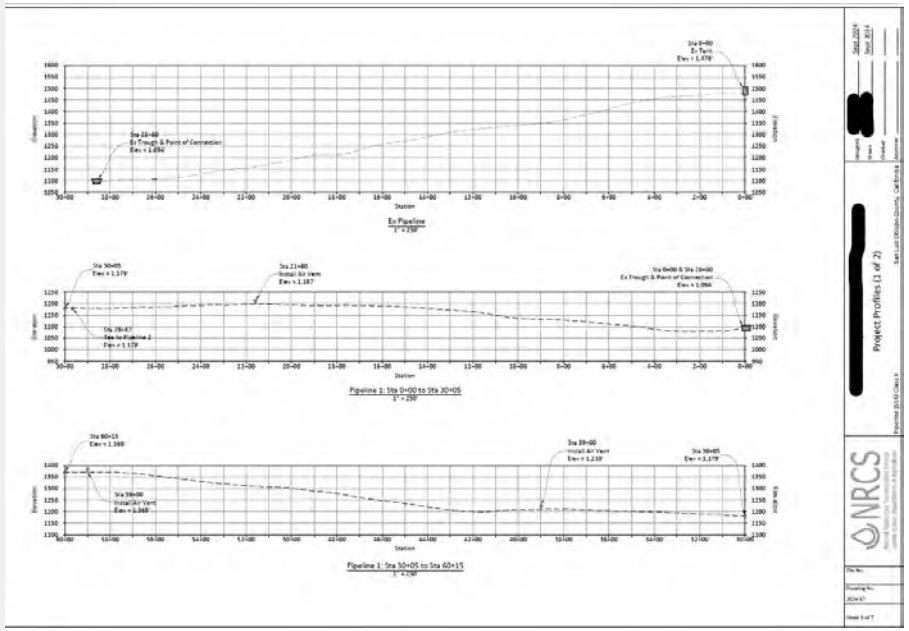
Grazing will be deferred until planted annual mix matures and sets seed (August – September). Keep livestock and heavy machinery off of the planted area to ensure a successful planting.

Grazing is deferred to ensure established plants produce and set seed for future propagation. Livestock must not be grazed until seeded plants have matured; no earlier that July (see Implementation Requirements for CIN 11 – Prescribed Grazing: Deferment).

6. **General grazing recommendations** to meet operator's goals and objectives, post-establishment.

After planted seeds have been established and CIN 11 has been completed, follow the Implementation Requirement for CIN 12: Prescribed Grazing – Range, Basic. Livestock shall be rotated through the planted field in a manner that allows for forage regrowth and adequate residual dry matter for soil protection and organic matter cycling (see implementation requirement for CIN 12).

NRCS, CA
September 2017



Natural Resources Conservation Service
nrcs.usda.gov

Typical Range Project Cont.

Subsoiling then range planting


CAT

Jacob Dixon
NRCS Santa Maria Service Center
Santa Barbara County
920 E. Stowell Rd.
Santa Maria, CA 93454
Office: (805) 863-9924
jacob.dixon2@usda.gov

Matthew Prendergast
NRCS Templeton Service Center
San Luis Obispo County
65 S Main St, Ste 108,
Templeton, CA 93465
Office: (805) 536-3180
matthew.prendergast@usda.gov

Questions?