

# Nebraska Land Judging Changes for 2018

These are the changes that have taken place based upon decisions made at the Nebraska State Land Judging Committee Meeting that took place in January 2018.

The Highlighted information is new.

- The following information was added to the description for using Treatment #20 in the Guidebook (Page 39) and the Guide for Applying Conservation Treatments for Land Evaluation (Page 3)
  - **20. Control brush or trees:** This may be accomplished with chemicals and/or use of machinery. Use with Class V, VI, VII land when undesirable brush and trees are a problem. Brush and trees are defined as woody perennials. Woody perennials are not always undesirable. Red cedars, Elm, Russian olive, Salt cedar, sand sagebrush, serviceberry, buckbrush and yucca are common woody plants across Nebraska's range and pastureland. (Salt cedars are always undesirable.) However, cedars, elm, and Russian olive are often present in windbreak plantings. These are desirable instances of these plants. Undesirable instances are where seedlings establish outside a windbreak planting and any one individual tree either gets too large to control by grazing [trunk diameter at 4 foot: greater than 1 inch] or percentage of ground cover [brush and/or trees] is in excess of 10% of the area being judged. In the drier parts of Nebraska (SW-area, West-Area, North Central area) where droughtiness is a constant threat to the range; woody species such as yucca, sand sagebrush, service berry, and even buckbrush become a *desirable* part of the prairie (capturing snow and reducing wind scouring—even preserving remnants of more palatable species during drought within their canopy) where the range is thin due to very steep slopes and or wind erosion.
- The following Language has been changed to Clarify the use of Diversion Terraces in flood plain situations.
  - (Language in Guide Book Page 32)
    - *Overhead 'Runoff ' water: Overhead water is water flowing across the area from a higher landscape position. Overhead water is normally only present during the storm event when excess water is flowing off the higher landscape position. Diversion or sediment basins are usually constructed on a large scale and are not farmed. Practice no.13 is not used for diversion. Diversion or sediment basins are not constructed on floodplains for control of flooding. This condition does not take the area out of Class I but would require a diversion or sediment basin. Flooding is overflow water from natural drainage system. Flooding may occur a significant time after the storm event and may remain for an extended amount of time.*
    - (New Paragraph) The purpose of terraces are to control runoff while it is still sheet flow. We terrace soils, therefore, (preferably) from the top of a drainage basin first and then progressively further down. They are used

to slow down the water *before it becomes concentrated* into rills and gullies. In contrast, a diversion structure is used *after the runoff water has become concentrated* and terracing can no longer prevent or control this concentration. A diversion is constructed to protect highly valuable farmland from gully erosion and or sedimentation below the steeper hill(s).

- (Language in Guide for Applying Treatments Page 2)
  - 13. Terrace and farm on contour: Terrace land classes II, III, and IV in all areas with slopes over 2%, except coarse and very coarse soils where terracing is not feasible due to the coarse and very coarse soil texture (control section). Do not use on gravity irrigated soils in the West area. A terrace is an embankment or ridge of earth constructed across the slope to control runoff and minimize erosion. *Do not use where overhead water is stated as a problem.*
- The following information was added to the Setting Up and Holding a Land Evaluation Contest (Page 7)
  - Soil Scientist or an official should state their intentions and thoughts on when they would use Treatment #23 (Defer Grazing) or Treatment #24 (Continue Grazing)
- No other content was changed, however in an effort to “clean-up” some of the documents, some re-formatting was done in all documents along with additions or changes listed above.

## SCORE CARD UPDATE COMING IN 2019!!!

- This was not caught before score cards were printed for 2018, but to eliminate confusion, the ponding information located in the Field Information Notes will be updated to OP and FP instead of Occ. and Freq. This has led to interpretation issues when using the Land Capability Charts to determine the correct land class.