

# GRAZING

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## RESOURCE DESCRIPTION

The grazing resource within the Moose Range is dominated by bluejoint grass in several vegetation types. Moderate to high potential grasslands occur above forests near the 1,500 to 2,000 foot elevation in the western portion of the Moose Range. Wetland areas in the Moose Range also contain potential grazing resources, yet have been ranked as having low grazing potential because of possible impacts on the wetland areas through grazing activities (see Map 4 on page 27).

Open Forest (25-60% tree cover) and woodland (10-25% tree cover) birch - spruce forests contain bluejoint and/or shrub understories depending on site histories, conditions, and tree cover. Shrub understories appear to occur on more riparian sites while grass understories occur at higher elevations. Other plant species present in varying amounts include fireweed, cow parsnip, ferns, grasses, sedges, rushes, willow, bunchberry, rose, highbush cranberry, lowbush cranberry, alder, white spruce, paper birch, and aspen. Forbs such as fireweed and ferns are utilized by domestic grazing animals.

Grazing lands with high potential appear to be located mainly in the river valleys and southern-facing slopes and generally lie within the 1,000-2,500 foot elevation level.

Presently, 7,300 acres in the Moose Creek drainage on southern slopes of the Talkeetna Mountains near the western boundary of the Moose Range are under grazing lease or permit.

The Susitna Area Plan noted general areas within the Moose Range as having some potential for grazing. These areas are open to grazing permits and leases under the DNR Department Order 112, Susitna Area Plan regional guidelines and Moose Range guidelines. Field reconnaissance of the Range has shown grazing potential to be limited. (See Map 4 on page 27 for lands with grazing potential.) The existing lease areas near Moose Creek have the highest known potential. Map 10, page 199, shows the location of existing grazing leases and proposed new lease/permit sites.

## RESOURCE EVALUATION

From available data, it appears there may be 35,000-45,000 acres of grazing land with potential for grazing lying within the Moose Range; 25,000-35,000 acres occur on state land and 8,000-10,000 acres occur on Native-selected land. Presently, 20-25% of the state grazing lands are being utilized under lease or permit.

Forage analysis indicates that between 7 and 13 acres are needed to support one head of livestock for a four month summer grazing season in this area. The state grazing land may have the potential to provide supplementary summer grazing for approximately 2000 to 5000 head of livestock. Unfortunately, much of the unleased potential grazing lands are located on unstable slopes, in inaccessible locations and in disjointed parcels. The most suitable large acreages of grazing land are already leased or permitted to individuals.