



CLIMATE
ACTION
RESERVE

Grassland Project Protocol Summary of Changes from Version 1.0 to Version 2.0

January 18, 2017

The Grassland Project Protocol Version 2.0 incorporates the following significant changes from Version 1.0.

- **Updated Project Definition to Allow Irrigation of Project Area (Section 2.2).** The project definition has been updated to allow for irrigation of project area, previously prohibited. This change reflects common practice for grasslands management, while facilitating improved rangeland health. Simultaneous changes to quantification requirements ensure accounting for any increased irrigation related electricity emissions.
- **Updated Project Definition to Remove Accounting for Shrubs (Section 2.2).** The project definition has been updated to remove the optional accounting for above ground shrub carbon. The existing quantification methods in the Grassland Project Protocol V1.0 did not adequately account for all aspects of shrub management. Additionally, accounting for shrubs would require significant resources, with minimal additional emission reduction potential. Neither work group members, nor members of the public expressed any intention to utilize the optional shrub accounting, nor did they object to removal of the option for shrub accounting from the protocol.
- **Changed Terminology from “Project Developer” to “Project Owner” (Section 2.3.2).** The first version of the GPP applied the term “Project Developer” to the entity which legally owns the rights to the GHG emission reductions resulting from the project activities. This terminology has led to some confusion among stakeholders. In order to more accurately reflect the intent of the term, it has been changed to “Project Owner” throughout the protocol.
- **Updated Start Date language (Section 3.2).** The start date definition has been adjusted to provide an additional option to use the date of submittal of a grassland project to the Reserve as the project start date. This approach is common under the Reserve’s forestry protocol, and simplifies requirements for cooperative management. The existing, more complex, option for cooperatives has been removed.
- **Updated Suitability Threshold (Section 3.3.1.2).** The minimum threshold for the percentage of the project area which must contain soils with a Land Capability Classification of I-IV has been changed from a national default value to two options: 1) a MLRA-specific default value; or 2) a process for developing a site-specific assessment. These options result in a threshold for the suitability of the project area to conversion to cropland which is more representative of local conditions.
- **Updated Eligibility Requirement to Add Periodic Ecosystem Health Assessments (Section 3.7).** Periodic ecosystem health assessments are now required to maintain project eligibility. This requirement enhances protections for the long-term health of grasslands, makes the detection of reversals easier, and increases the stability of belowground carbon

pools, with minimal additional work. Projects must undertake a simple (BLM Rangeland Health) assessment before their 2nd verification, and at least every 6 years thereafter. Any areas of seriously degraded lands must show improvement between assessments.

- **Removed Buffer Pool Contribution for Accredited Land Trusts (Section 5.4.3).** Updated the buffer pool contribution for risk of financial failure to entirely eliminate the 10% contribution requirement where the Project Owner is an Accredited Land Trust. Such entities are required to demonstrate financial security to obtain accreditation, thus they are financially stable counterparties for the PIA.
- **Updated Soil Texture Category Names (Section 5.1).** The soil texture categories have been renamed to reduce confusion and more accurately reflect the logic behind the groupings. The previous terms are mapped to the new terms as such:

GPP V1.0	GPP V2.0
Sand	Coarse
Loam	Medium
Clay	Fine