

Rest-Rotation Grazing

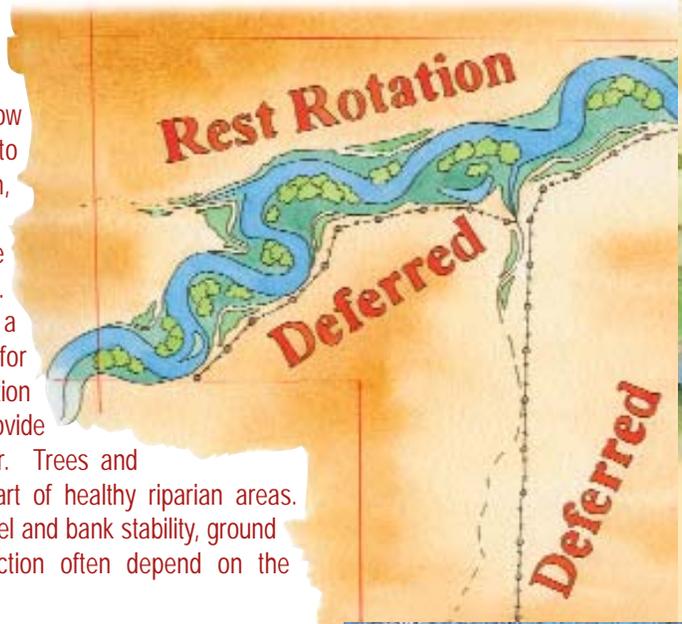
When it's critical to restore woody vegetation in riparian areas, a more conservative grazing strategy like rest-rotation grazing may be necessary.



Woody seedlings like this willow plant, will establish under deferred grazing, but may be grazed out during the dormant season. Rest-rotation helps to add this critical woody component to your riparian area.

A deferred rotation may allow new woody seedlings to establish in the short term, but without sufficient rest, the young plants may be grazed out by livestock. Rest-rotation grazing is a method to consider for maintenance or perpetuation of trees and shrubs that provide your livestock with shelter. Trees and shrubs are an integral part of healthy riparian areas. Riparian values like channel and bank stability, ground water and forage production often depend on the presence of "big wood".

Rest-rotation means providing a field with a rest period for the entire growing season or even calendar year. In some cases, rest may need to be applied for a series of years! For example, if riparian cottonwoods are unable to establish or get above the reach of cattle, there will be no recruitment of young trees to replace the old ones that eventually die and fall over. In these circumstances, a field may require many years of complete rest to allow new seedlings to establish and grow into forms that are more resistant to grazing. The amount and sequence of rest periods will depend on the species of trees and shrubs you have in your riparian area.



This riparian area shows no regeneration of woody plants and will require rest-rotation grazing to establish them. Livestock can be managed to allow plants to return and reach a grazing resistant stage.



This cottonwood sapling has established itself but is not yet resistant to livestock use.



These cottonwoods have reached a grazing resistant pole stage and the riparian area can absorb grazing pressure. Monitoring is key to ensure this vital component of the riparian area is maintained.

Tiny seedlings to tall trees grow - If we let them!