Steam corridor fencing allows vegetation to stabilize and protect the steep bank on the left, and to create wildlife habitat. With careful management, livestock grazing can be controlled to prevent damage to the streambank on the right. Without careful management, the very high intensity grazing system on this property could be disastrous for riparian values.

The 170 acres were divided into fifteen pastures and grazed April-October by a single herd of 600 yearling steers. Fences blocked livestock from Sand Creek and all earthen drain and irrigation ditches. Stock water was piped to troughs.

The grazing system was designed to meet the physiological needs of the dense stand of fescue, and thereby maximize forage production. Plants were allowed to reach Soil Conservation Service-recommended height before animals were turned in. High animal density encouraged uniform forage utilization. When the recommended minimum stubble height was achieved, animals were moved to the next pasture.

Grazed pastures received the SCS-recommended amount of rest for regrowth before livestock were reintroduced. The recommended minimum stubble height was maintained late in the growing season to encourage storage of energy for forage production the following spring.

This grazing system more than doubled the pounds of beef traditionally produced on this property. The cost of grazing improvements was recovered during the first year of operation.

Fencing livestock out of earthen irrigation and drain ditches reduced operating costs and production of sediment. Denying livestock access to streambank loafing areas reduced erosion. Streambank vegetation fenced off from livestock provides excellent habitat for waterfowl, upland game birds and other wildlife, and filters irrigation water running off pastures.

- Achieving the long-term benefits of restored riparian areas and reduced nonpoint source water pollution was compatible with short-term profits.

- Meeting the physiological needs of the forage plants was the key to maximum profit.

- This grazing strategy obtained dramatic, profitable results by applying centuries-old grazing concepts and commonly available forage management guidelines and technical assistance.