

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

RANGE PLANTING

(Ac.)

CODE 550

DEFINITION

Establishment of adapted perennial vegetation such as grasses, forbs, legumes, shrubs and trees.

PURPOSE

- Restore a plant community similar to its historic climax or the desired plant community.
- Provide or improve forages for livestock.
- Provide or improve forage, browse or cover for wildlife.
- Reduce erosion by wind and/or water.
- Improve water quality and quantity.
- Increase carbon sequestration

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On rangeland, native or naturalized pasture, grazed forest or other suitable location where the principle method of vegetation management will be with herbivores. This practice shall be applied where desirable vegetation is below the acceptable level for natural reseeding to occur, or where the potential for enhancement of the vegetation by grazing management is unsatisfactory.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

Specified seeding/plant material rates, methods of planting, date of planting and/or species selection shall be consistent with documented guidance cited by Plant Materials Program,

research institutions or agency demonstration trials for achieving satisfactory establishment.

Species, cultivars or varieties selected, must be compatible with management objectives and adapted to climate conditions, soils, landscape position, (e.g., aspect) and range site(s) or ecological sites. Refer to the Certified Perennial Grass Varieties Recommended for Nebraska, Range Planting Specification (550S) and Herbaceous Vegetation Design Procedures (550DP) for additional guidance on species selection.

Species, cultivars or varieties selected shall provide adequate cover to control erosion by wind and/or water within an acceptable period of time.

Seedbed preparation and planting methods will be suitable to meet any special needs for obtaining an acceptable establishment of planted materials.

Planting depths, dates, seeding rates, soil amendments and fertilizer needs for establishment, minimum seed quality standards and management during the establishment period such as weed control and deferment from grazing shall be followed to enhance establishment success.

Seeding rates will be calculated on a pure live seed (PLS) basis. A minimum of 20 PLS/square foot of grasses must be planted.

Additional Criteria to Improve Forages for Livestock

Selection of a species or combination of varieties and species shall be designed to meet the desired nutritional and palatability requirements for the kind and class of livestock. Refer to the Certified Perennial Grass Varieties Recommended for Nebraska.

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

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Selection of species or combination of species shall be designed to meet the desired season of use or grazing period.

Additional Criteria for Improved Water Quality and Quantity

Select a species or combination of species that will maintain a stable soil surface and increase infiltration.

Species that have high evapotranspiration rates, such as some woody species and phreatophytes, shall not be planted when watershed yields are the primary objective.

When sensitive areas, such as riparian habitats are present, additional practices may apply such as: Riparian Forest Buffer (391); Riparian Herbaceous Cover (390); Tree/Shrub Establishment (612); Streambank and Shoreline Protection (580).

Additional Criteria for Improving Forage, Browse or Cover for Wildlife

Selection of planted species shall meet dietary and palatability requirements for the intended wildlife species.

Species will be selected and planted in a manner to establish micro-habitats among plant communities that will meet the cover requirements of the wildlife species of concern.

Refer to the NE-CPA-35 Rangeland Habitat Evaluation Worksheet to aid in selecting plant species and providing for other habitat requirements.

Additional Criteria to Increase Carbon Sequestration

For optimal soil carbon storage, select species that provide optimum biomass production.

CONSIDERATIONS

Planting materials selected should contribute to wildlife and aesthetics when opportunities exist.

Other practices such as Brush Management (314), Pest Management (595), Prescribed Grazing (528), Prescribed Burning (338) or Grazing Land Mechanical Treatment (548) may be used to promote a satisfactory site preparation to insure a successful range planting.

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Use of certified planting materials should be encouraged, however, distance and source limitations on seed and planting stock should be considered in terms of logistics and costs.

Any special handling requirements for planting materials need to be followed for best results, (e.g., beards or awns on seed, hard seed coats, and seed mixture ratios).

Where air quality concerns exist, site preparation techniques should be utilized that will minimize airborne particulate matter generation and transport.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

For standard plantings, refer to Herbaceous Vegetation Design Procedures (550 DP), Range Planting Specification (550S), and Certified Perennial Grass Varieties Recommended for Nebraska. Use NE-CPA-8 Job Sheet for Grass Seedings to develop specifications and documentation. Plantings that require more detailed information, may require the use of other practices prior to planting and require a specific site specification prepared.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Operation. Identify any required items needed to assist in stand establishment such as mowing, burning, flash grazing and herbicides to control weeds. Address insect and disease control needs where they are likely to create establishment problems. Refer to Section 16 of the Herbaceous Vegetation Design Procedures (550DP) for guidance in stand evaluation. Use NE-CPA-8A for stand evaluation documentation.

Maintenance. Any necessary replanting due to drought, insects or other uncontrollable event which prevented adequate stand establishment should be addressed as soon as possible. Recommendations may vary from complete re-establishment to overseeding, interseeding or spot replanting. Thin stands may only need additional grazing deferment during the growing season.