

**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 and historic long-term success.

Species, cultivars or varieties selected, must be compatible with management objectives and adapted to climate conditions, soils, landscape position, (e.g., aspect) and range or ecological site(s).

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 or percent germination.

Additional Criteria to Improve Forages for Livestock

Selection of a species or combination of species shall be designed to meet the desired nutritional and palatability requirements for the kind and class of livestock.

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.

A mixture of shrubs and trees indigenous to the site shall be planted when riparian area, stream bank stability and water temperature criteria are important.

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 designed manner that will meet the cover requirements of the wildlife species of concern.

Additional Criteria to Increase Carbon Sequestration

For optimal carbon storage, select species that increase site biomass.

CONSIDERATIONS

Planting materials selected should contribute to wildlife and aesthetics when opportunities exist. Native species are recommended for the most environmental benefit.

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

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, seed mixture ratios).

Consider aggressiveness of each species included in the seed mix. Increasing percents of less aggressive species may be necessary to achieve desired results. Management methods may also need to be altered in order to match the needs of the less aggressive species.

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

If seedbed preparation exceeds the depth of prior ground disturbance, this activity could affect significant cultural resources and appropriate action shall be taken.

Range seedings applied to grazing lands will be planned in coordination with a grazing management plan.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

For standard plantings, appropriate forms, worksheets, etc. may be used 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.

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.

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

If grazing is planned, proper stocking rates along with adequate recovery periods following each grazing event is required.