

TECHNICAL NOTES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

STATE OF COLORADO

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

PLANT MATERIALS TECHNICAL NOTE NO. 78

February 27, 2015

To: All Field Offices and Area Offices

From: Christine Taliga, Colorado Plant Materials Specialist

Re: Conservation Cover Assessment

This Technical Note replaces Colorado Plant Materials Technote 56 and details guidelines for planners, producers and consultants on certifying establishment of seeded vegetation. These methods should be utilized for both irrigated and non-irrigated sites, as applicable, to plan and apply conservation practices such as the following:

- Conservation Cover (327)
- Contour Buffer Strips (332)
- Critical Area Planting (342)
- Cross Wind Trap Strips (589C)
- Early Successional Habitat Development/Management (647)
- Field Border (386)
- Filter Strip (393)
- Forage and Biomass Planting (512)
- Herbaceous Wind Barriers (603)
- Range Planting (550)
- Vegetative Barrier (601)
- Vegetated Treatment Area (635)



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Conservation Cover Assessment Colorado



Purpose

The purpose of assessing conservation cover is to ascertain which seeded species have established and to evaluate if the abundance of the seeded species meets the conservation goals and objectives.

Method

Assess conservation cover establishment one to two growing seasons post seeding utilizing the following methods:

1. Conduct a site inventory of all species observed noting which species were in the original seed mix.
2. Use one of the following two methods to ascertain number of seeded plants per square foot.
 - a) Walk perpendicular or diagonally to the seeded rows and place a 4.8 or 9.6 sq.ft hoop at random intervals across the seeded field (3 locations), record the total number of seeded species by species in each hoop and divided by 14.4 or 28.8 to estimate plants per square foot. Take three photo points.
 - b) Walk a straight line perpendicular to the seeded rows, stopping every 10 paces to count the number of seeded plants within a 1 sq. ft. area. Note a minimum of 10 readings per field. When 10 samples have been completed, divide by 10 to determine number of plants per square foot. Take three photo points (beginning, middle and end point).
3. Stratify samples according to topography, soils and other obvious field variables.
4. Confirm seeding is established based on number of plants/sq.ft.by soils and precipitation.

Allow three seasons post-seeding before determining stand failure unless erosion and site instability is of eminent concern.

Expected Seedling Densities for Established Conservation Cover in Colorado		
Precipitation	Soils	Seeded plants/sq.ft.
20+	Sandy to Loamy to Clayey	3.0 - 5.0
	Shallow or Gravelly	2.0 -4.0
15-20	Sandy to Loamy to Clayey	2.0 – 4.0
	Shallow or Gravelly	1.0 -3.0
10-15	Sandy to Loamy to Clayey	1.0 – 3.0
	Shallow or Gravelly	0.5 – 2.0
<10	Sandy to Loamy to Clayey	0.5 - 1.0
	Shallow or Gravelly	0.25 – 0.5

For the purpose of this assessment a seedling is defined as a plant with three or more true leaves and in good overall healthy condition. There should not be evidence of insects, disease, or physical damage to the plants.

Lower seedling densities may be allowed if in the judgement of the District Conservationist, an adequate stand will result.



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