



## **Animal Enhancement Activity – ANM08 – Improve the plant diversity and structure of non-cropped areas for wildlife food and habitat**

### **State Criteria (same as NATIONAL CRITERIA)**

#### **Additional Criteria for Nebraska**

NOTE: Distribution of non-cropped areas for wildlife food and habitat is an important requirement of this enhancement. There must be a minimum of 1 acre of habitat in or adjacent to each 40 acres of cropland or pastureland where this enhancement is applied. This habitat can be established on existing cropland or pastureland to meet the requirements of this enhancement.

#### **HERBACEOUS HABITATS:**

- Habitat areas that currently consist of those species determined to be acceptable on the [“wildlife friendly” plant list](#) AND support a minimum of 25% forbs/legumes can be managed to maintain and improve plant diversity. A minimum of one management activity must be implemented.
- Habitat areas that are comprised of those species on “List B – Other Plants” must be converted to a mixture of desired plant species as noted under mixture requirements below. Management practices should be designed to destroy the existing stand prior to re-seeding the area to the desired plant mixture.

Choose one of the following management activities to complete prior to interseeding or reseeded mixture:

**Tillage** – The use of disking or other similar tillage method to create a minimum bare ground of 33% (50% bare ground to be used on sites with sod-forming, cool-season grasses). No tillage will be conducted May 1-July 15 to protect ground-nesting birds.

**Prescribed Burning** – Typically, this is only effective on sites dominated by warm-season grasses where introduced legumes are interseeded. Spring burns are the most common but fall burns are acceptable. No burning will be conducted between May 1-July 15. A prescribed burn plan and burn permit is required.

**Herbicide Application** – (This will likely be the option used to convert unsuitable species to the appropriate mixture. In those instances, “full rates” of herbicide will be used to completely remove existing vegetation.) Apply contact herbicide (i.e. glyphosate) at the appropriate time and rate to suppress existing vegetation to the extent that newly seeded species can become established. This will often require a pre-application treatment such as haying, mowing, or burning to remove residual growth and improve translocation of the herbicide.

Mixture planted to improve plant diversity following management activity:

A minimum of 2 species of grasses, forbs or legumes (or more if needed) must be used in combination in order to meet a total of 5 desirable species within the stand. A plant species must constitute 10% of the stand and be present throughout the area to be considered toward the total diversity. Acceptable grass and legume species are located on the “wildlife friendly” plant list. All seedings must contain forbs and/or legumes at a seeding rate of 50% of the total mixture (100% forbs/legumes is acceptable provided adequate grass species are present). Minimum seeding rate for interseeding is 10 PLS/ft<sup>2</sup> but may be increased to improve success of establishment.



Mixture planted to reseed areas being converted from unsuitable species:

A minimum of 5 species of grasses, forbs or legumes must be used in combination. A plant species must constitute 10% of the seed mixture to be considered toward the total diversity. Acceptable grass and legume species are located on the [“wildlife friendly” plant list](#). All seedings must contain forbs and/or legumes at a seeding rate of 25% of the total mixture. Minimum seeding rate for reseeding is 10 PLS/ft<sup>2</sup> on non-erosive sites and may be increased up to 30 PLS/ft<sup>2</sup> total to address areas subject to erosion.

**WOODED HABITATS:**

- Habitat areas dominated by mature trees should meet the requirements outlined below:

**General Elements (required for all wooded habitats):**

1. Create and maintain snags (standing dead trees) that are > 6 feet tall and 6 inches DBH to provide habitat for cavity-nesting species. At least 3 snags per acre are needed (on average) with at least one snag > 10 inches DBH.
2. Manage downed wood to create/maintain brush piles or scattered slash as described below.
  - Provide one brush pile or more per acre on 25% to 75% of the total forest area. Each brush pile should be a minimum of 15 feet in diameter and 5 feet tall.
  - Scatter additional slash material in loose patches throughout the stand on 25% to 75% of the total forest area. These loose patches can also be positioned to protect desired seedlings and saplings from damage caused by deer browsing and livestock trampling.
3. Allow a select number (approximately 1-2 per acre, on average) of older cull trees to remain as wildlife den trees or roost trees. These trees often provide either hollow trunks or open limb structure.
4. Complete one of the following activities to improve plant diversity:
  - Remove trees, shrubs, and vines considered invasive, or that provide low wildlife value, in favor of beneficial woody species. This removal may facilitate establishing snags and brush piles as described above.
  - Plant native vegetation (by Vegetative Zone) within the stand to increase diversity of species composition and/or structure. A priority should be placed on mast-producing trees, shrubs, and vines.

The following activities are allowed for operation/maintenance:

**Haying** is permitted up to once per three year period (following establishment) provided it is conducted after July 15<sup>th</sup> and prior to September 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Grazing** is permitted up to once per three year period (following establishment) provided it is conducted after July 15<sup>th</sup> and does not exceed a 30 day period during the growing season OR a 60 day period during the dormant season.

**Documentation Requirements (SEE NATIONAL ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY JOBSHEET)**



United States Department of Agriculture  
 Natural Resources Conservation Service

NE-ANM08 2011 Ranking Period 1

Complete the table below to document approved operation/maintenance and management activities:

To be completed by NRCS and Producer during planning			To be completed by Producer during certification		
1	2	3	4	5	6
Tract(s)	Field(s)	Acres Planned	Acres Treated	Management Activity Implemented	Date Completed
<i>EX. 1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>Sprayed smooth brome with glyphosate and interseeded diverse grass/forb mixture.</i>	<i>March 2013</i>

EX= EXAMPLE, COLUMNS 1-3 NRCS COMPLETES, COLUMNS 4-6 PRODUCER COMPLETES

**I certify that the enhancement criteria have been met and the required documentation provided to NRCS.**

**Certified by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

URL for "wildlife friendly" plant list:

[http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/NE/Wildlife\\_Friendly\\_Plant\\_List.pdf](http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/NE/Wildlife_Friendly_Plant_List.pdf)