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.

PURPOSES

This practice may be applied as part of a conservation management system to accomplish one or more of the following purposes:

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On rangeland, native or naturalized pasture, grazed forest or other suitable location where grazing and/or prescribed burning will be used to manage the vegetation. This practice shall be applied where the stand of desirable vegetation is below the acceptable level for natural reseeding to occur in a timely manner, or where there is low potential for enhancement of the vegetation by ecological management practices.

CRITERIA

GENERAL CRITERIA APPLICABLE TO ALL PURPOSES

Species, cultivars, or varieties selected must be compatible with management objectives and adapted to climate conditions, soils, landscape position (e.g., aspect) and 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. Certified seed is the only assurance that the selected cultivars are obtained.

Seeding rates will be calculated on a pure live seed (PLS) basis unless noted otherwise.

Range planting should be planned so the cooperator has an understanding of the management required in achieving and maintaining the desired plant community.

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA FOR IMPROVED FORAGES FOR LIVESTOCK

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

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 the primary objective is to maximize water yield from an area.

A mixture of shrubs and trees indigenous or proven effective to the site shall be planted when riparian area quality, 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.

CONSIDERATIONS

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

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, Pest Management, or Grazing Land Mechanical Treatment may be needed 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 for stand success.

Any special handling requirements for planting materials need to be followed for best results (e.g., debearding seed, scarifying hard seed coats, stratifying seed prone to long dormancy, and inoculating legumes with proper rhizobium).

Aggressiveness of each species and management of the stand will influence the proportions of species that become established. Consider increasing the proportion of less competitive species in seed mixtures. Consider management methods and timing that will favor less competitive species.

In fields that have more than one ecological site, consider sculptured seeding, i.e., planting a separate mixture on each site.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications shall include the required seedbed condition and acceptable preparation methods; soil and seed amendments needed, if any; the acceptable variety or origin, and amount of each species to be planted; acceptable planting dates and depths; and description of acceptable planting equipment. Instructions will be provided as needed for placing different seed types (i.e., fluffy, large, small, slick, and dense) in suitable drill boxes.

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: Schedule periodic stand evaluations until the vegetation is established. Any necessary replanting due to drought, insects or other uncontrollable event which prevented adequate stand establishment should be addressed as soon as possible and completed in a proper manner. Recommendations may vary from complete re-establishment to overseeding or spot replanting. Thin stands may only need additional grazing deferment during the growing season.