

**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**

Evaluate the site's potential for invasion by undesirable plants during practice planning and design. Monitor planted and adjacent areas to enable early detection and control of invasive plants.

This practice is not applicable where its use

could reduce the quality of existing sage-grouse (SG) habitat.

Utilize the following table to determine practice restrictions based on SG lek proximity.

Practice Implementation Criteria	Practice distance from SG lek	
	Core	Non-Core
Initiate High Priority joint planning (NRCS/WGF MOU) through the Regional Wildlife Coordinator to ensure compliance with the Governor's Executive Order.	Within 0.6 mi. of lek	Within 0.25 mi. of lek
Practice activities will not be conducted from March 15 to June 30 to avoid disturbance to breeding and nesting SG.*	Greater than 0.6 mi. from lek	Between 0.25 and 2.0 mi. of lek
No SG restrictions	NA	Greater than 2.0 mi.

*Activities conducted in unsuitable habitat (as defined by the Governor's Executive Order 2010-4) or that are clearly beneficial to SG may be subject to less restrictions consistent with WGF case by case recommendations.

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.

Utilize client objectives, local resource inventories, plant materials suitability, habitat needs of sage grouse and other species of concern, and Ecological Site information to plan and design the practice. All seedings will contain a minimum of four native species represented in the ESD or

pre-approved by the SRC.

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.

Consider including big sage when seeding suitable sites that could serve as sage-grouse habitat.

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.

Post-establishment grazing management should be designed to maintain or improve habitat quality for sage grouse and other species of concern in accordance with NRCS site specific specifications developed with NRCS or State Wildlife Agency biologist assistance.

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).

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

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications shall be prepared for each site or planning unit according to the Wyoming NRCS Conservation Practice 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 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.

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 or spot replanting. Thin stands may only need additional grazing deferment during the growing season.

REFERENCES

Memorandum of Understanding between the USDA, NRCS and the State of Wyoming, Wyoming Game and Fish Commission. August 11, 2010.

State of Wyoming, Governor's Executive Order 2010-4 and Attachments. Greater Sage-Grouse Core Area Protection. August 18, 2010.