United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Bismarck Plant Materials Program

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http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov

2007 Highlights of American Indian Partnerships

The Bismarck Plant Materials Center (PMC) is active in providing seed, plants, and technical information assistance to Tribes and Tribal land users. The majority of plant species provided are culturally significant. The PMC also provides seed and plants of other species for conservation purposes, including lakeshore stabilization, erosion control, and invasive species competition. Plant and seed requests are reviewed and approved by Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota Plant Materials Committees. Most of the special plantings are community projects to demonstrate "how-to" on-site preparation, planting, maintenance, and harvest. Generally, special plantings are limited to 10 plants of each species. Cooperators are encouraged to prepare a clean-tilled, garden-like site, and to water and weed the plantings until they become established. Sweetgrass and white sage are rhizomatous and multiply rapidly on well-maintained sites. Since 2002, approximately 3,300 sweetgrass plants were distributed, primarily to individual Tribal cooperators and communities.

Plant materials provided in 2007:
630 sweetgrass plants for 25 plantings
180 white sage plants for 15 plantings
359 various other plants for 12 plantings

Technical assistance, plant materials distribution, and evaluations are ongoing with Tribal partners. Activities in recent years include:

- United Tribes Technical College (UTTC): provided plants, medicine wheel assistance, class presentations, demonstration plantings
- Sisseton-Wahpeton Tribal College: provided plants, prairie restoration assistance
- Rosebud Reservation and Sinte Gleska University: provided plants, workshops, medicine wheel assistance
- Standing Rock Reservation and Sitting Bull Tribal College: provided plants, PMC tour
- Fort Berthold Reservation: native landscaping presentation, native landscaping demonstration planting
- Mille Lacs Reservation: provided plants, plant identification assistance, lakeshore stabilization assistance
- White Earth Reservation: provided plants, field plantings, provided technical information on native seed harvest, plant identification and inventory, lakeshore stabilization assistance
- Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College and Fond du Lac Reservation: provided plants, medicine wheel assistance, plant presentation, outdoor classroom assistance
- Red Lake Reservation: tour and technical assistance

Culturally significant native plants established on the Standing Rock Reservation

Planting sweetgrass on a well-prepared site at Prairie Island Reservation

Sweetgrass and white sage for community propagation beds at White Earth Reservation

Children from "Horses on the Prairie", a UTTC summer learning program, collecting native plants for demonstration at the college

Helping People Help the Land

The authority for NRCS to provide technical assistance to Tribal cooperators is through various Public Laws, Executive Orders, and Memorandums. The foundation of the government-to-government relationship between the United States and Indian Tribes is the United States Constitution, treaties, and other laws involving American Indians and Alaska Natives, including case law.

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March 2008