

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



Enhancement Description

Improve the plant diversity and structure of non-cropped areas for wildlife food and habitat through the planting and/or management of native plant species.

Land Use Applicability

The enhancement is applicable to cropland and pasture land.

Benefits

Intensively managed agricultural land does not provide the habitat required for many species of birds and animals. By establishing or improving the composition and structure of native plant species in non-cropped areas, essential habitat will provide wildlife, including pollinators, with food and cover for nesting, fawning, loafing, roosting, travel and escape from predators and adverse weather.

Criteria to improve the plant diversity and structure of non-cropped areas for wildlife food and habitat

1. Vegetation type will primarily be native to the site or recognized by NRCS standards as suitable wildlife and pollinator habitat. Vegetation density will be sufficient to control erosion, retard sediment from leaving the site, and to permit runoff water to be of high quality. Livestock will be excluded from the site unless prescribed grazing is identified in the management prescription.
2. If the non-cropped area is being managed as early successional habitat, it will be maintained by prescribed fire, periodic disking or suitable mechanical disturbance, prescribed grazing, or selective herbicide application. Maintenance activities will be conducted outside of the nesting/fawning season or by NRCS prescription. The non-cropped area will not be smaller than 0.1 acre and there will be 1 acre of habitat for every 40 acres of cropland.
3. If the non-cropped area is being managed as woodland, tree species typically associated with natural site conditions will be planted and/or maintained. Woodland patches will not be smaller than 1 acre and minimum width will be 90 feet. Woodland patches included in this enhancement will not be harvested or cut for firewood during the contract. Natural understory vegetation snags and down woody material will be maintained naturally.
4. Any existing wetlands used as the non-cropped areas for wildlife will be at least ½ acre in size and will be surrounded by a minimum of 33 feet of vegetation. See number 1 above.
5. Invasive, exotic vegetation must be controlled in all managed non-cropped habitat.



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Documentation Requirements for Improve the plant diversity & structure of non-cropped areas for wildlife food and habitat

- Map showing areas and size to be treated.
- Identify what type of land use applies to each area.
- Documentation of the existing plant species.



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Additional guidance for management of non-cropped areas:

No maintenance activities will be conducted during the nesting/fawning season, **April 1 through August 1.**

Wildlife Friendly Species

Wildlife friendly grass and forb species include all native perennial plant species typically represented by a diverse mixture as described in the representative ecological site description. Native grass species typically include bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue, Sandberg bluegrass, big bluegrass, Thurber needlegrass, slender wheatgrass, thickspike wheatgrass, western wheatgrass, and basin wildrye. On sandy sites, consider sand dropseed and Indian ricegrass. Consider native forbs and legumes such as western yarrow, arrowleaf balsamroot, buckwheat, flax, milkvetch, lupine, American vetch, penstemon and tapertip hawksbeard. Introduced grass species could include redtop, orchardgrass, meadow brome, creeping foxtail, meadow foxtail, intermediate wheatgrass, pubescent wheatgrass, tall wheatgrass, and Russian wildrye. Introduced forbs and legumes include alfalfa, small burnet, clover (multiple species), sainfoin, cicer mikvetch and yellow sweetclover. Native shrubs include chokecherry, golden current, shrubby cinquefoil, juniper, serviceberry, woods rose, silver buffaloberry, redosier dogwood, and native willows (multiple species). Native trees include cottonwood, water birch, quaking aspen, Douglas and black hawthorn, and tree willows. Introduced woody species include Nanking cherry, cotoneaster and Siberian peashrub.

For additional information, refer to the following documents:

Idaho NRCS Plant Materials Technical Note 2, *Plants for Pollinators in the Intermountain West*. <ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/ID/programs/technotes/pollinators07.pdf>

Idaho NRCS Plant Materials Technical Note 24, *Grass, Grass-like, Forb, Legume and Woody Species for the Intermountain West*. ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/ID/programs/technotes/tn24_seedspecies

Idaho NRCS Plant Material Technical Note 24, Supplement: *Intermountain Planting Guide*, USDA-ARS Forage and Range Research Lab/Utah State Extension, AG 510. <ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/ID/programs/technotes/tn24supplement>.

Idaho NRCS Plant Materials Technical Note 32, *Native Shrubs and Trees for Riparian Areas*. ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/ID/programs/technotes/riparian_woodys.pdf

Idaho NRCS Plant Materials Technical Note 38, *Wetland Species and Grasses for Riparian Areas*. ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/ID/programs/technotes/herb_wetland_plants.pdf

Idaho NRCS Plant Materials Technical Note 43, *Tree Planting Care and Management*. ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/ID/programs/technotes/treecare_1007.pdf

University of Idaho Bulletin 547, *Idaho Forage Handbook*. <http://info.ag.uidaho.edu/forage/index.html>

USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station. *Conservation Buffers: Design Guidelines for Buffers, Corridors and Greenways*. General Technical Report SRS-109. http://www.unl.edu/nac/bufferguidelines/docs/conservation_buffers.pdf.