United States Department of Agriculture

NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

RESEEDING & ESTABLISHING GRASSES AND/OR LEGUMES

Site Preparations

If necessary, divert offsite water away from the critical area. This may require a permanent diversion, or in other instances, a temporary measure that will be effective during the period of vegetative establishment.

Protect the area from strong erosive winds, if necessary, to provide protection for the temporary cover. This may require the use of barrier, such as snow fence, or material such as nylon or plastic netting to hold protective mulch in place.

On areas with a 3:1 slope or flatter, and where practical, grade the area to facilitate the use of conventional equipment for seedbed preparation, seeding, and mulching application. Cabling of equipment may be necessary on steeper slopes, such as on newly constructed cut-and-fill areas.

On construction sites or critical areas where the existing surface material is either physically or chemically unsuited to support adequate vegetation, the best available soil material will be evenly spread on the surface in sufficient depths to maintain plant growth. Required depths of suitable surface material should be determined for each site.

Soil amendments that alter soil acidity or alkalinity (lime, sulfur, gypsum) or organic materials may be needed and practical on some sites.

Seedbed Preparation

The seedbed should be relatively firm but not too compact. Tillage implements or other means may be used to provide a firm but friable soil that is free of large clods. (Note- on sites with "hydrophobic" soil conditions due to fire, the soil should be raked or tilled as needed to break up the hydrophobic soil layer.)

Seed and Seeding

Species-an on-site determination of site conditions such as soil, slope, exposure, and climate should be made to select species best adapted to the site.

Quality-certified seed of named varieties shall be used when available. Otherwise, seed of natural ecotypes that are adapted to the soil and climate of the area should be chosen.

For alternative seeding mixes, refer to the USDA-NRCS Fact Sheet on ***'Alternatives for Revegetation on Burned Areas.'***

Seeding Methods

The proper amount of the appropriate seed mix must be evenly distributed and placed at the proper soil depth of one inch or less. The seedbed should be firmed to insure that the seed is in contact with the soil. The following seeding methods may be used.

Broadcasting: Broadcast seeding is the preferred method and should be used when possible. Distribute the seed evenly by using something like a cyclone seeder. Cover the seed by harrowing or raking by hand. If at all possible, the area should then be firmed by rolling or culti-packing.

Drilling: Drills must be equipped with seed hoppers that will properly meter out the specific kind of seed being planted. This may require a special drill for fluffy seeds. The drill should obtain the proper seed depth and should be equipped with packer wheels to firm the seed.

Mulching

Where to use: Mulch should be used on all critical areas where the goal is to establish vegetation as soon as possible and where there is danger of erosion during the period of establishment.

Kind: The best vegetative mulch in order of preference is clean, weed free, unweathered, long stemmed materials consisting of any of the following types: (a) native grass hay; (b) meadow hay; (c) introduced grass hay; (d) small grain straw; (e) fine stemmed sorghums.

On some critical areas, such as on slopes steeper than 2:1 or in areas of concentrated water flow, jute netting or erosion control blankets may be used instead of vegetative mulch.

Manure also makes a suitable mulch providing it contains enough bedding material (vegetative matter) to bind the manure and hold it in place.

Rate: Mulch should be applied uniformly over the entire seeded area.

Hay or straw: Two to 2 ½ tons of hay or straw should be applied per acre.

Manure: Five to ten tons of manure, depending on straw content and type of manure, should be applied per acre.

July 2002 Arizona