

Site –Level, Evaluation Matrix for Tree Planting within Minnesota’s Prairie Region

This evaluation matrix indicates the appropriateness of a possible tree planting project at the site level. It is intended to aid conservation professionals and landowners in making informed decisions regarding tree planting within the Minnesota’s prairie region and does not replace or override USDA program rules or processes. Each site characteristic should be considered to assess the degree of appropriateness of a possible project. The number and level of concerns can be weighed against benefits. Appropriate design factors should also be weighed.

Site Characteristic	Not Appropriate	High Concern	Concern	Neutral to Appropriate	Site Specific Determination
Current Land Cover	Select most appropriate box				
Native Prairie	X				
Conservation Grassland		X			
Other Grassland		X			
Cropland			X		
Wooded				X	
Developed (urban/farmstead)				X	
Adjacent/ Nearby Land Cover	Select most appropriate box				
Native Prairie (within ½ mile)	X				
Conservation Grassland (w/in ½ mile)		X			
Other grassland (adjacent)		X			
Cropland				X	
Wooded (within ½ mile)				X	
Developed				X	
Historical Land Cover*	Select most appropriate box				
Prairie (including prairie pothole wetlands)			X		
Savanna/Parkland/Brushland			X		
Forest				X	
Landscape Position	Select most appropriate box				
Large river floodplain					X
West / South facing slope			X		
North /East Facing Slope					X
“Fire Shadow” East side of large water bodies					X
At-Risk Species (within 1 mile)	Select most appropriate box				
Open Landscape Dependent	X				
Other			X		
Landscape Plans	If the answer is no, then check the “Concern” box. If the answer is yes, then check “Neutral/Appropriate” box.				
Consistent with Prairie Plan					
Consistent with Other Landscape Plans					
Appropriate design	If the answer is no, then check “Concern” box. If the answer is yes, then check “Neutral/Appropriate” box.				
Conservation objective requires trees/woody veg. (e.g., shelter belt)					
Proposed tree planting is adequate to meet the conservation objective					
Native tree species are used					
Shortest woody species suitable for objective are used.					

* Reference Marshner “Pre-settlement Vegetation of Minnesota”