



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E612G (WITH MONTANA SUPPLEMENT)

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Tree/shrub planting for wildlife habitat

CONSERVATION PRACTICE: 612 - Tree/Shrub Establishment

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Forest; Associated Ag Land

RESOURCE CONCERN: Animals, Plants

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 15 years

Enhancement Description

Tree/shrub planting will provide the plant diversity, structure, and composition needed to enhance habitat and forage for identified wildlife species.

Criteria

- States will apply criteria from the NRCS National Conservation Practice Standard Tree/Shrub Establishment (Code 612), and any additional criteria as required by the NRCS State Office.
- Select a minimum of five species of trees and shrubs to be planted, with at least one tree species and one shrub species. (i.e., one tree and four shrubs; two trees and three shrubs; three trees and two shrubs; four trees and one shrub).
- Groupings of trees and shrubs will be managed for best growth, visual appeal, proximity to areas of wildlife use.
- Selection of species should also be chosen according to the site's natural disturbance regime. Species should be selected based on traits, successional status, structure, and composition.
 - **MT: Refer to [Conservation Trees and Shrubs for Montana](#) Brochure for a list of species suitable for wildlife food. Consult NRCS biologist and forester for planting of species not listed in the brochure.**
- Build forest resilience by favoring existing species that are better adapted to projected future climate conditions, and by enhancing relative compositional and structural diversity.
- Do not plant species on the Federal or State invasive species or noxious weed lists.



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- Only viable, high-quality and site-adapted planting stock or seed will be used.
- A precondition for tree/shrub establishment is appropriately prepared sites. Refer to criteria in NRCS CPS Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (Code 490).
- Implementation and timing of planting will be appropriate for the site and ensure successful establishment.
- Plantings must be protected from unacceptable adverse impacts from insects, disease, wildlife, and/or fire. Apply supporting practices and treatments as necessary to protect establishing trees and shrubs.
- Each site will be evaluated to determine if mulching, supplemental water, or other treatments (e.g., tree protection devices, shade cards, weed mats) will be needed to assure adequate survival and growth.
- The enhancement will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and with States' Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality.

Documentation and Implementation Requirements

Participant will:

- ☐ Prior to implementation:
 - provide an updated Forest Management Plan that documents intended objectives for wildlife habitat.
 - prepare the planned acres for trees and/or shrub establishment. Refer to NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Tree-Shrub Site Preparation (490).
 - select a combination of five trees and shrubs for their importance in providing food for native wildlife, and their adaptability to site conditions.
 - select planting technique, arrangement and spacing design, and timing appropriate for the site conditions.

Species	Note selected species characteristic(s)



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- During implementation:
 - install and maintain erosion control measures for the site, as needed.
 - protect the planting(s) from plant and animal pests and fire.
 - notify NRCS in writing of any planned changes to verify changes meet NRCS enhancement criteria.

TASK	Species	Species	Species
Planting Date			
Planting Technique			
Arrangement/Spacing			

NRCS will:

- Prior to implementation, complete the State approved NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG) as completed and certified by an NRCS or partner wildlife biologist when applicable. The total score after implementation will equal 0.60 or greater.

WHEG score after implementation = ____.

- **MT: Use Biology Tech Note MT-19 Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guides for Montana for species of concern.**
- Prior to implementation:
 - provide and explain NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (CPS 490) as it relates to implementing this enhancement. Verify the enhancement is planned for acres that have been appropriately prepared for tree/shrub establishment.
 - provide and explain NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Tree/Shrub Establishment (Code 612) as it relates to implementing this enhancement.
 - verify the enhancement is planned for the appropriate land use.
 - verify no plants on the Federal or state noxious weeds list are included in the planning combination.
 - NRCS will provide Technical Assistance, as needed, in the following:
 - Selecting a combination of species to meet enhancement criteria.
 - Selecting planting techniques, arrangement and spacing design, and timing appropriate for target native wildlife, the site and soil conditions.
 - Planning the use of additional erosion control for the site, as needed.
 - Preparing specifications for applying this enhancement for each site using approved state implementation requirements, national technical notes, appropriate state technical notes, and narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.



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- During implementation:
 - evaluate any planned changes to verify they meet the enhancement criteria and were established to specifications developed for the site.
- After implementation:
 - verify the planned trees and shrub species were established to specifications developed for the site.
 - verify the plantings were protected from plant and animal pests and fire.
 - verify all erosion control needed for the site is functioning and is maintained to specifications developed for the site.

NRCS Documentation Review:

I have reviewed all required participant documentation and have determined the participant has implemented the enhancement and met all criteria and requirements.

Participant Name _____

Contract Number _____

Total Amount Applied _____

Fiscal Year Completed _____

NRCS Technical Adequacy Signature

Date