CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY
E512140Z

Native grasses or legumes in forage base

Conservation Practice 512: Forage and Biomass Planting

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Crop (perennial); Pasture; Associated Ag Land

RESOURCE CONCERN ADDRESSED: Livestock Production Limitation

PRACTICE LIFE SPAN: 5 years

Enhancement Description

Establishing adapted and/or compatible species, varieties, or cultivars of perennial, herbaceous species that can provide the structure and composition needed to enhance livestock and wildlife habitat, particularly when targeted forage supply and quality, cover, and shelter are not available in other pastures.

Criteria

- Select native, perennial, grass/forb/legume plant species and their cultivars based on climatic conditions, soil condition, landscape position and resistance to disease and insects, that meet the cover demand for movement by the wildlife species of concern.

- Recommendations for planting rates, methods, depths, and dates from land grant universities (LGU), plant materials program, extension agencies, or agency field trials will be followed.

- Seeding medium that does not restrict plant emergence will be provided, and planting will take place when soil moisture is adequate for germination and establishment.

- Federal, state, or local noxious species will not be planted.

- Plant nutrients and/or soil amendments for establishment purposes will be applied according to a current soil test. Legume seed will be pre-inoculated or inoculated with the proper viable strain of Rhizobia immediately before planting.
• Plants will be selected that help meet livestock forage demand during times that normal farm/ranch forage production is inadequate. When wildlife species are of concern, plant selection will be made and maintained based on the state's approved NRCS habitat evaluation procedure.

• Forage species selected will meet the desired level of nutrition for the kind and class of the livestock to be fed. Forage species planted as mixtures will exhibit similar palatability to minimize selective grazing.

**Documentation Requirements**

• NRCS State approved Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG) as completed and certified by an NRCS or partner wildlife biologist when applicable. Wildlife species of concern for habitat continuity will be specified on the WHEG, and total score after implementation will equal 0.75 or greater.

• Documentation of seed (Pure Live Seed) and any fertilizer or amendments purchased.

• Completed forage balance sheet for farm/ranch and grazing records.
WASHINGTON SUPPLEMENT TO
CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

References for Washington Conservation Practice 512 (Forage and Biomass Planting) Enhancements  Covers all 512 Practice Enhancements except E512136Z1, E512139Z2, and E512139Z3, see WA supplements specific to those enhancements.

To meet criteria for Forage and Biomass Planting Practice Enhancements utilize one or more of the the below references or Technical Notes. For help with NRCS wind and water erosion prediction tools (not shown below) consult with local NRCS field office or Conservation District planners.

- **Forage and biomass** (pasture) species, with seeding rates, for Western Washington can be found in the Extension Publication EB1870, Pasture and Hayland Renovation for Western Washington and Oregon. Also provide guidance on site preparation and seeding. link: [http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/eb1870/eb1870.pdf](http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/eb1870/eb1870.pdf)

- **Soil information**, including productivity, and Ecological Sites for planning unit soils can be found by using the Web Soil Survey [https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm](https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm)

- **Ecological Site Descriptions** can be found in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide [https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/treemenuFS.aspx](https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/treemenuFS.aspx) in Section II. For planning unit ecological sites see next item.


- Use the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) database to identify priority wildlife and habitat in your area. [http://wdfw.wa.gov/mapping/phs/](http://wdfw.wa.gov/mapping/phs/)

- For Washington State’s Sage Grouse Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG) – contact State Sage Grouse lead (NRCS State Biologist) for the current evaluation guide.

- **Seedbed Preparation and Seed to Soil Contact**, Plant Materials Technical Note 6, can be found in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide

In depth information on pasture species for the Intermountain West can be found in Plant Materials Technical Note 19, November 2009, Pasture – Species Selection and Grazing Management Guidelines. This document is found in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/treemenuFS.aspx in Section I/Reference Lists/Technical Notes by Discipline/Plant Materials.

In depth information on suitable range and pasture species can be found in Plant Materials Technical Note 2, March 2011, Grass, Grass-Like, Forb, Legume, and Woody Species for the Intermountain West. This document is found in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/treemenuFS.aspx in Section I/Reference Lists/Technical Notes by Discipline/Plant Materials.


Available for use – **Prescribed Grazing (528) Design Worksheet/s.** This document has several useful worksheets for developing grazing plans. It can be found in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide [https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/treemenuFS.aspx](https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/treemenuFS.aspx), Section IV/Washington Conservation Practices/Prescribed Grazing (528) folder.

  - Pasture TN-104, Pasture Conditioning Index; **PCI Score Sheet**.
  - Pasture TN-104, Pasture Conditioning Index **PCI Score Sheet Procedure**