



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E512H

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Forage plantings that enhance bird habitat cover and shelter or structure and composition

Conservation Practice 512: Forage and Biomass Planting

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Pasture, Associated Ag Land

RESOURCE CONCERN: Plants and Animals

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 5 years

Enhancement Description

Establishing adapted and/or compatible species, varieties, or cultivars of herbaceous species suitable for pasture, hay, or biomass production that can provide cover and shelter or structure and composition to birds.

Criteria

- Wildlife species of concern for cover and shelter will be specified on the state's approved NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG) and will be a species that would be present for at least part of their life cycle in the geographical/physiographic region.
- The state's WHEG will be completed by an NRCS or partner wildlife biologist. Cover and shelter habitat requirements for the wildlife species of concern will be specified on the WHEG. The total WHEG score after installation of this practice will be 0.60 or greater.
- 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, which meet the cover and shelter needs for bird species of concern when they will be present. If native forbs and legumes are not available, use available species that will provide structure and composition according to an appropriate WHEG.

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- Recommendations for planting rates, methods, depths, and dates from land grant/research institutions, 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 cover and shelter habitat requirements for specified bird species during times that normal farm/ranch forage production is inadequate. Plant selection will help to increase scores on the state's approved NRCS habitat evaluation procedure for the bird *species* of concern.



Documentation Implementation Requirements

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Participant will:

- Y Prior to implementation, select a perennial forage species or grassland mixture for establishment. *If livestock are included in the grazing system, forage species selected will meet the desired level of nutrition for the kind and class of the livestock to be fed.* (NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed.)

Species	Forage category (grass, legume, forb)

- Y Prior to implementation, select planting technique, seeding rates and timing appropriate for the site and climatic conditions. (NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed.)

Planting date	
Planting method	
Seeding rate	

- Y *If livestock are included in the grazing system, prior to implementation a grazing plan must be developed to keep grazing periods sufficiently short to allow for plants to recover before re-grazing occurs.*



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Y *If livestock are included in the grazing system, in areas where animals congregate, establish persistent species that can tolerate close grazing and trampling.*

Y During implementation, keep the following documentation:

- o Records and photographs of planting preparation and any materials purchased or materials on hand used for the implementation of the enhancement.
- o Documentation of seed (Pure Live Seed) and any fertilizer or soil amendments used for the implementation of the enhancement.
- o *If livestock are included in the grazing system, documentation and photographs of turn in/turn out grazing records for each field.*

Y After implementation, make the forage planting and grazing records available for review by NRCS to verify implementation of the enhancement.

NRCS will:

Y Prior to implementation, complete the state's approved NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG). **Target Species:** _____
WHEG score before implementation: _____
WHEG score after implementation: _____

Y As needed, prior to implementation, NRCS will provide technical assistance:

- o Planning site preparation and establishment specifications meeting NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Forage and Biomass Planting (Code 512).
- o Prepare specifications for applying this enhancement for each site using approved specification sheets, job sheets, technical notes, and narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.
- o *If livestock are included in the system, develop a grazing plan to keep grazing periods sufficiently short to allow for forages to recover before re-grazing occurs.*

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- During implementation, evaluate any planned changes to verify they meets the enhancement criteria.

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Y After implementation, verify the planned perennial grassland mixture was established 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