

Appendix 1 – Certifying CRP Fields

Guidelines for Certifying Existing Herbaceous Cover:

1. Stand certification is evaluated on a field basis.
2. Existing stands must be dominated by desirable species. Desirable species are defined as those species which match the CRP offer. For example, a 50-point CP2 offer requires 5 native species to include three or more native grasses and at least one tree, shrub, forb or legume.
3. Plants of the desirable species must be healthy & vigorous.
4. Noxious plants (categories A, B & C according to county list) must be mostly absent and undergoing active control measures.
5. Other weedy invasive species will be at low enough levels as to not cause or be causing negative impact to desirable plant species. Weed pressure should be light and declining during normal precipitation years. Implement active control measures when weeds begin causing a negative impact. Weeds of concern include, but are not limited to: cheatgrass & other annual grasses, Russian thistle, Jim Hill mustard and China lettuce. Patches of Canadian thistle need to be actively controlled.
6. Existing vegetation (ALL desirable species collectively) shall meet stand density requirements shown below in Table 1.
7. Stands dominated by rhizomatous species such as smooth brome and intermediate/pubescent wheatgrass must have at least 10 stems / sq. ft.
8. Guidelines for determining when to reseed seeding failures:
 - a. Area within a field is 5 acres or larger in size
 - i. 5 acres = 41 ft. x 1 mile
 - ii. 5 acres = 467 ft. x 467 ft.
 - iii. 5 acres = 165 ft. x 1320 ft.
 - b. Area makes up one-third or more of fields smaller than 15 acres

Table 1 – **Stand Density of Existing Herbaceous Plant Species** (ALL desirable species collectively)

a. The objective of every new seeding and existing stands, for ALL desirable species, in the 12" or greater precipitation zone is 1.0 plant / sq. ft.
b. For precipitation less than 12", and for harsh, rocky or south-facing slopes, the density of ALL desirable plants shall be no less than 0.8 plant / sq. ft.
c. CRP stand evaluations begin with reconnaissance of the field. Stand density (plants / sq. ft.) is derived by belt transects. Ocular estimates may be used in lieu of transects once the evaluators eye has become calibrated AND with prior Area Office approval. Belt transects should represent "typical areas" and be based on field reconnaissance. To improve accuracy, each belt transect should be at least 100 feet long. For irregular stands, a 300-foot transect provides more accurate data.
d. For documentation, especially for marginal fields, it is suggested that each field have three belt transects on different landforms or soil types, as applicable, AND photo documentation. It is suggested that there be three photos (one landscape shot and transects shots).

e. Check with your Area CRP contact before certifying questionable fields.

9. The stand of existing vegetation must reflect the species diversity for the offer – 10-point offer, 20-point offer, 40-point offer, 50-point offer. Individual species must meet the criteria shown below in Table 2.

Table 2 – **Species Diversity – Existing Herbaceous Plant Species**

a. The density count for CP1 offers may include native and introduced species
b. The density count for CP2 offers shall include ONLY native species. Native species which have colonized into the stand may also be included
c. It is recognized that multi-species stands generally have the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Presence Condition 1: One or more species with $\geq 20\%$ cover b. Presence Condition 2: One or more species with 4-19% cover. These species are easily seen by standing in one spot. c. Presence Condition 3: One or more species with 1-3% cover. These species require more intentional looking or moving around.
d. Count any desirable species (grass, forb, legume) which meet the following conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. ≥ 0.1 plant / sq. ft. (via belt transect) b. Presence Condition 1 or 2 (ocular) c. See f. & g. below for counting desirable species in Presence Condition 3.
e. All legume & forbs may be lumped together to count as one collective legume-forb species. To count as two species, each group of legume-forb species shall meet the requirement of 0.1 plant / sq. ft. &/or presence condition 2.
f. 50-point offers shall have no more than three desirable species in Presence Condition 3. The other two species shall be in Presence Condition 1 or 2.
g. 40-point offers shall have no more than two desirable species in presence Condition 3. The other two species shall be in Presence Condition 1 or 2.
h. When the submitted offer requires native species, up to 15% of the existing herbaceous stand may be introduced perennial species and still be considered a native stand. The introduced species must be static or declining.

Guidelines for Certifying Existing Shrub &/or Tree Cover:

10. Shrubs &/or trees may be counted toward composition requirements for CP2, CP4b, CP4d and CP42 when they meet the criteria shown below in Table 3. Shrubs & trees must also be approved pollinators for CP42 offers.

Table 3 – Species Diversity – Existing Shrubs/Trees

a. Native shrubs and trees that have established on the site naturally contribute to stand diversity and also to habitat and may be counted.
b. For CP2, when shrubs have colonized the site, shrub cover is adequate with: 1-3% shrub canopy cover or meeting Presence Condition 2 or 3 on at least 5% of the offer acres w/ adequate understory stand density.
<p>c. When shrubs or trees were planted and have not expanded, and herbaceous stand density & diversity is adequate, then trees & shrubs are adequate with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CP2 <= 15" ppt.: Shrubs >= 20 stems / offer acre • CP3 Consult Forestry Tech Note 10 & increase stems/acre based on expected mortality for the local area • CP4d <=15" ppt.: Shrubs >= 40 stems / offer acre • CP4d > 15" ppt.: Shrubs >= 40 stems / offer acre Trees >= 10 stems / offer acre
<p>d. For CP4d, when trees have invaded the site from adjacent areas or expanded from the original plantings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas (strips, blocks and patches) w/ between 10 & 100 stems / acre may be retained and receive credit for stand diversity. • The size retained is limited to 10-15% of the offer acres.

***Enhancement needed when an existing multi-species stand does not meet the required components:**

*Enhancement is defined as a field or portion of a field that needs to be completely re-seeded to a required seed mixture or enhanced with one or more desirable species.

11. The acres required to be enhanced for an offer may be reduced using the conditions outlined in Table 4.

Table 4 – Enhancement Reduction Based on Existing Stand Conditions

<p>a. When an existing multi-species herbaceous stand does NOT have all of the required diversity components, but meets ALL other requirements, then the acres that are required to be enhanced are reduced by the percentage of desired species present divided by the total number of species in the mixture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 species mix w/ 2 desirable species present: $2/5 =$ requires a 60% enhancement • 4 species mix w/ 1 desirable species present: $1/4 =$ requires a 75% enhancement
<p>b. When the herbaceous cover does NOT meet stand density and species diversity criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1% of the offer acres may be retained in dense shrub cover • Areas with the best understory cover should be selected • The amount of acres required to be seeded/planted is only reduced by 1%.
<p>c. When there is 1-3% shrub cover and the herbaceous cover meets stand density, BUT NOT species diversity: the amount of acres required to be seeded/planted is reduced by 20% for the shrubs, plus 20% for each herbaceous species present.</p>

Guidelines for Certifying New Seedlings:

Certify on a field basis & use transects as outlined above.

Count any plant that has reached at least the 5-leaf stage.

First year stands shall have at least 3 plants / sq. ft. And meet the required plant diversity for the CRP offer.

Second year stands shall meet the criteria for existing cover as listed above.