



# CRP Habitat Establishment

## Step 1: Planning and Site Preparation

## Step 2: Seeding Timing and Methods

## Step 3: Management

### Step 1: Planning and Site Preparation

What is currently growing on the site?

- Most new CRP seedings occur on harvested row crop fields (harvested corn or soybeans)
- Fall dormant seedings and winter broadcast seedings do not need herbicide applications
- Late spring seedings may need an application of straight glyphosate IF annual weeds / grasses start greening up before conducting the seeding

Site preparation for harvested soybean field?

- Once field is harvested, it is ready for the seeding
- A harvested bean field is the perfect site preparation for a pollinator seeding
- DO NOT WORK, DISK, TILL, OR TOUCH A HARVESTED BEAN FIELD

Site preparation for harvested corn field?

- Once field is harvested, the crop residue (excess stalk litter) must be removed for seeding
  - ✓ Residue can be removed by prescribed burning or baling the stalks
  - ✓ If burning or baling isn't an option, ground must be lightly worked in fall
    - Chisel once, then disk once
    - Need at least 50% bare ground for seeding

Site preparation for an existing cool season filter strip to warm season grass conversion?

- Existing vegetation must be killed
  - ✓ At least 2 applications of Round-up will be needed
    - Use 5% glyphosate mix (2 quarts gly per 10 gallons water per acre)
    - Spray in spring, summer, or fall when grass is green and actively growing
    - Spray, spray, and spray again until grasses and weeds are completely eradicated
- Once project area is sprayed, the dead grass residue (excess litter) must be removed
  - ✓ Must have 50% bare ground
  - ✓ Residue can be removed by burning or raking
  - ✓ If burning or raking isn't an option, ground can be lightly worked
    - Lightly work top 1" of soil

- Working ground will cause grass and weed flush – after working ground wait 2-3 weeks then spray again

## **Step 2: Seeding Timing and Methods**

Best timing for planting native seed mixes?

November 15 – Ground Freeze (early December)

- Use a No-till Native Seed Drill (Truax or Great Plains) for fall dormant seedings
  - ✓ Use filler / carrier (rice hulls, cracked corn, oats); filler should be mixed with the large fluffy seed. Do not mix filler with the small seed
    - Large seed goes in the middle box on the drill
    - Small seed goes in the forb box on the drill
    - Set drill to most reduced settings
    - Set drill to shallowest depth settings – you should be able to see some seed on top of the ground during seeding

Ground Freeze – Late February (Preferred Method)

- Use an Airflow Seeder, Broadcast Seeder, Fertilizer Spreader
  - ✓ Mix all seed with 100 - 150 lbs/acre of Potash
  - ✓ Must be mostly bare ground for seed-to-soil contact
  - ✓ Best times: Frozen morning with surface thaw in afternoon
    - Frozen morning prior to light rain or snow
    - Fluffy snow that will melt within 24 – 48 hours
    - AVOID Seeding when:
      - Forecasted temperature not warm enough to thaw topsoil
      - Breezy days
      - Winter storm in forecast

April – June 5<sup>th</sup>

- No-till Native Seed Drill (Truax or Great Plains)
  - ✓ Refer to drilled seeding directions on Page 1
- Use an Airflow Seeder, Broadcast Seeder, Fertilizer Spreader
  - ✓ Mix all seed with 100 - 150 lbs/acre of Potash
  - ✓ Roll / cultipack / harrow field after broadcasting
  - ✓ Must be mostly bare ground for seed-to-soil contact
  - ✓ Avoid Seeding on breezy days
- Late spring seedings (May or June) should be sprayed with glyphosate prior to seeding
  - ✓ 5% glyphosate mix – 2 quarts glyphosate per 10 gallons water per acre

## **Step 3: Management**

Year 1

- Don't expect your native grass seeding to look great in Year 1. During this time, native seedlings put most of their energy into root development and will most likely not grow more than a few inches. Some seed sits in the ground for a year before germinating
- Warm season grass seed won't germinate until ground temperature is 65 – 70 degrees (June)
- During the first growing season, you may mow once or twice to suppress weed pressure
  - ✓ Mowing once in late June and once in late July is most optimal
  - ✓ MOW AS HIGH AS POSSIBLE (12" – 16" - mowing short will hurt native seedlings)
  - ✓ Do not mow after the mid-August
  - ✓ ONLY MOW IN YEAR 1

#### Year 2

- Spot mowing after Year 1 may only be done outside of nesting season (after August 1)
- NRCS / SWCD / PF Biologist must evaluate field and approve this optional mowing
- Warm season grasses, such as big bluestem and switchgrass, should be nearly established

#### Year 3

- Prescribed burning is the BEST management option. Talk to NRCS / SWCD / PF biologist for requirements on burning. Burn March 15 – April 15 or September 15 – November 15

YEAR 1



YEAR 2



YEAR 3



YEAR 10



Joe Pyszka  
Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist  
(815) 915-5821  
jpyszka@pheasantsforever.org

**DELAY ROADSIDE  
MOWING UNTIL AUGUST 1**



**SCAG  
POWER EQUIPMENT**