

# Water & Wildlife: Choosing the Best Vegetation for Saturated Buffers

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# Vegetation Requirements

- Per NRCS, saturated buffers have certain vegetative requirements
  - Minimum PLS #/ac must be met
  - Native vs Introduced species



# Example Mixes

- Recommended NRCS mixes

Native Species Mixtures	PLS #/ac
Switchgrass	5
Switchgrass	5.5
Indiangrass	2.5
Big Bluestem	3.5
Western Wheatgrass	16
Introduced Species Mixtures (include a companion legume)	PLS #/ac
Redtop	4
Redtop	2.5
Timothy	2.5
Smooth Bromegrass	16
Smooth Bromegrass	9.6
Timothy	2.5



# Seasonality of Vegetation

- Warm vs. Cool Season
  - Warm Season species – actively growing from May-September
    - Includes most of the native grasses
  - Cool Season species – actively growing March – May and September - October
    - Includes most of the introduced grasses





# Introduced Cool Season Grasses

- Smooth Brome, Redtop, Timothy etc.
  - Non-native grasses
  - Shallow root systems
  - Invasive nature
  - Sod-forming grasses



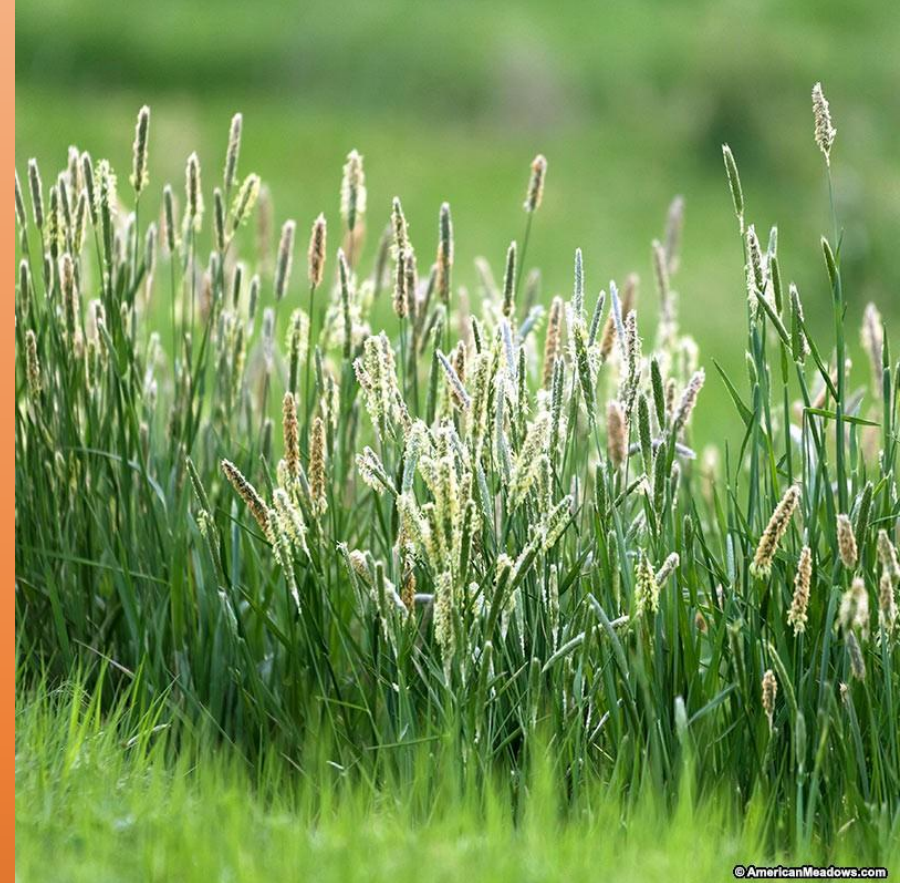


Smooth Brome grass

Redtop



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Timothy





# Native Warm Season Grasses

- Big Bluestem, Indiangrass, Switchgrass, etc.
  - Native to Illinois grass species
  - Very deep root systems
  - Bunch forming grasses
    - Much better for wildlife







Indiangrass



Switchgrass



Big Bluestem

Little Bluestem



# Other Native Grasses

- Cool season native grasses
  - Canada Wildrye
  - Virginia Wildrye
  - Western Wheatgrass



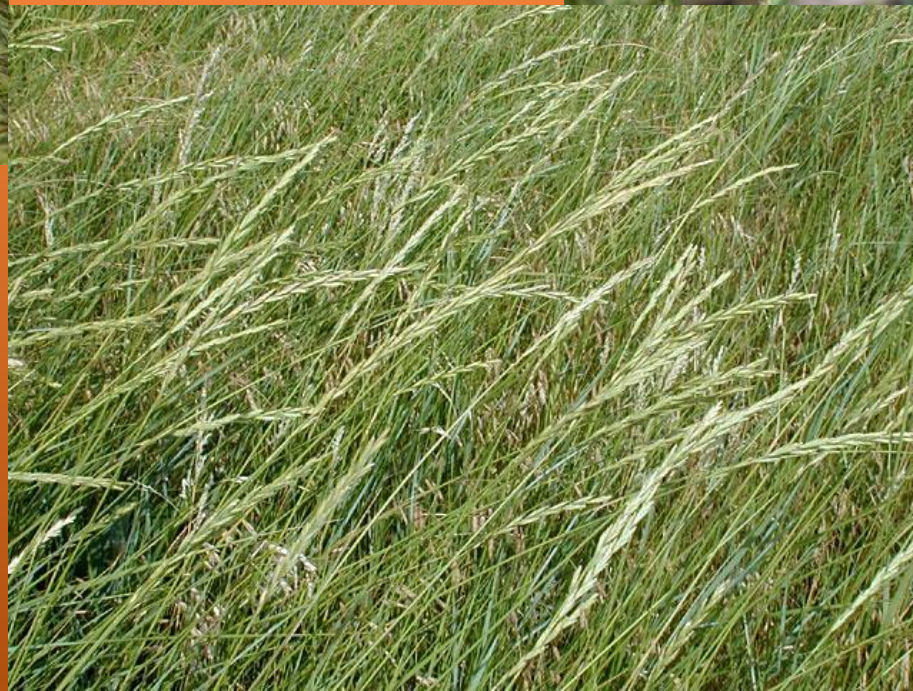




Canada Wild Rye



Virginia Wild Rye

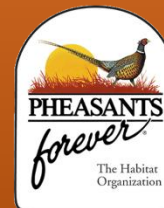


Western Wheatgrass





# How to choose the best mix?





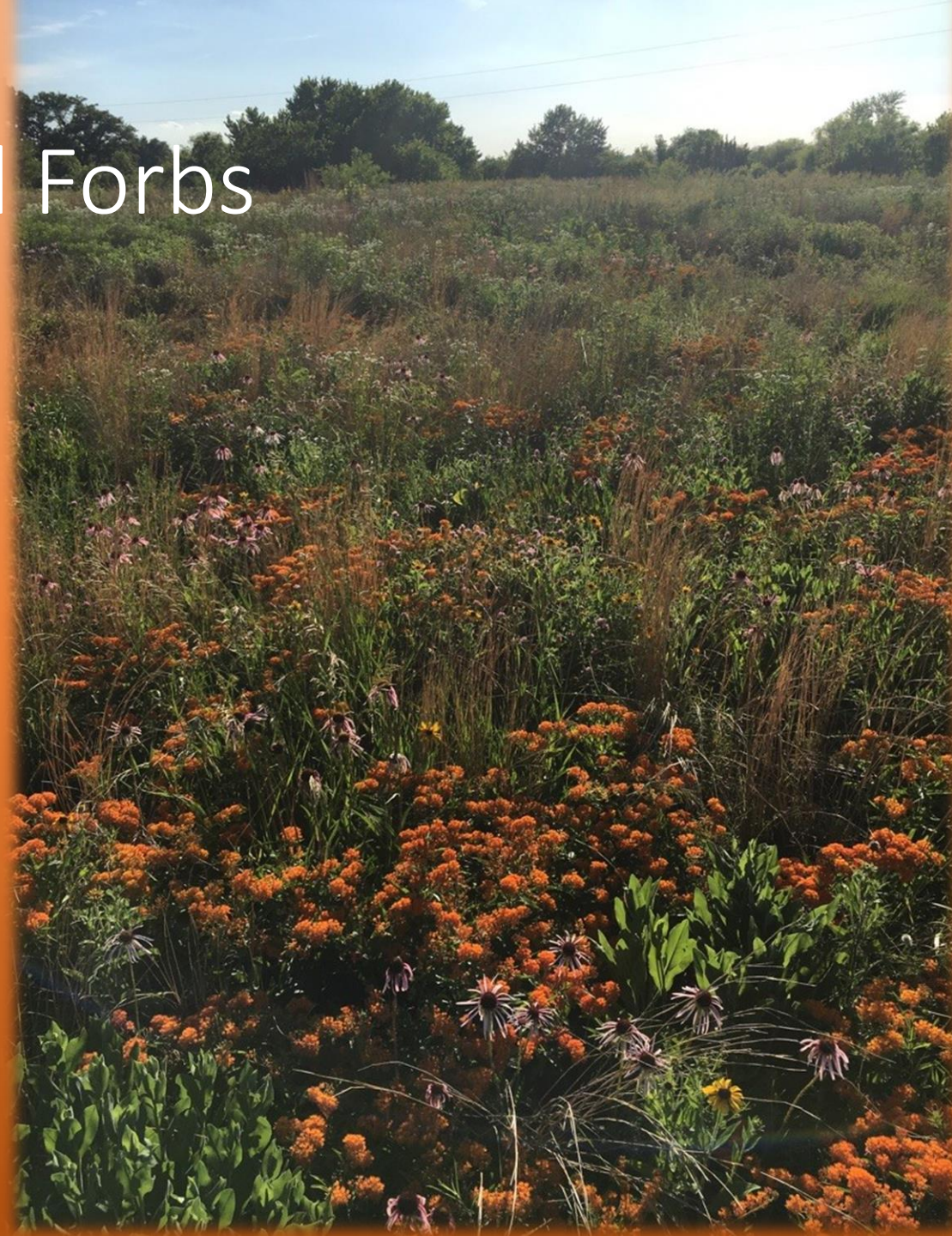
# Native Grasses and Forbs

- In regards to wildlife, water, and bank stabilization, native warm season grasses and forbs are best
  - Deep root systems
  - Provide better cover for wildlife



# Native Grasses and Forbs

- Diverse seed mixes
  - Offer most wildlife benefit
  - Pollinator benefits





# Habitat Establishment

- Many options for establishing native stands
  - Seeding methods
  - Seeding timing
- Bare ground is needed
  - Site prep is key for the stand











# Brome/cool season conversion





# Winter Broadcast



# Spring Drilled





# Spring Broadcast w/ oats as companion crop





# No-Till Drills





# Airflow Seeders



# Fertilizer Spreaders







# Management Options for Native Grasses & Forbs





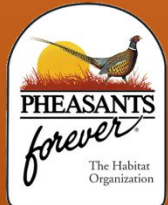
# 1<sup>st</sup> Year Mowing

- When NOT to mow





# When TO Mow





# Prescribed Fire





# Burn Timing

- Depends on objective of burn
  - Spring burn: March 15 – April 15
  - Fall Burn: September 15 – October





# Spring Burn Needed





# Fall Burn Needed





# Firebreaks





10 Years with  
management



10 Years without  
management





# Questions?



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