



United States Department of Agriculture

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Natural Resources Conservation Service

NRCS ASSISTANCE

NEVADA NATIVE SEED FORUM
MARCH 23, 2022



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Topics



- **NRCS History and Mission**
- **Resource Concerns and Conservation Practices**
- **NRCS Programs**
- **Great Basin Plant Materials Center**





NRCS History and Mission

A Recipe for Disaster

**Between 1925-1930,
land under cultivation
more than tripled.**



**Little to no conservation
practices were in place
to prevent erosion.**



A Recipe for Disaster

- **May 1934 –The drought is the worst in U.S. history, affecting more than 75 percent of the country.**
- **The soil of the Great Plains dries up and blows away.**
- **By December 1934, 100 million acres of cropland have lost all or most of its topsoil.**



A Recipe for Disaster



April 14, 1935 – Black Sunday, the worst “black blizzard” of the Dust Bowl.



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Black Sunday in Downtown Garden City, KS



Before the dust storm hits



Just 15 minutes later



The Father of Soil Conservation



Bennett served as the first SCS Chief

- During this time, Hugh Hammond Bennett, the son of a North Carolina farmer, spoke out about the problem of soil erosion.
- Despite the formation of the Soil Erosion Service and the Civilian Conservation Corps, Bennett knew it would take a broad, nationwide effort to have an impact on the extensive soil erosion problem facing U.S. farmland.



Bennett's Timing was Impeccable

- On March 11, 1935, Bennett addressed Congress on the need for a Federal Agency in charge of soil conservation.
- During his address, a dust storm struck, turning the skies of Washington, D.C. black.
- Congress decided action must be taken immediately.
- There was not a single dissenting vote in Congress to establish the SCS.
- One month later, on April 27, 1935, the Soil Conservation Service was established in the USDA to help landowners carry out soil conservation practices.



SCS to NRCS

- **October 20, 1994** – The Soil Conservation Service (SCS) changes its name to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to reflect its efforts to conserve all natural resources.

Our Mission: We deliver conservation solutions so agricultural producers can protect natural resources and feed a growing world.



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Resource Concerns and Conservation Practices

Resource Concerns (natural resource problems)

A resource concern is the resource condition that does not meet minimum acceptable condition levels as established by NRCS criteria. This implies an expected degradation of the soil, water, air, plant, animal or energy resource base to the extent that the sustainability or intended use of the resource is impaired. NRCS has 47 resource concerns.

A few resource concerns that could be addressed with native seed:

- *Soil Erosion*
- *Water – Nutrients Transported to Surface Water*
- *Water – Sediment Transported to Surface Water*
- *Plant Productivity and Health*
- *Plant Structure and Composition*
- *Animals – Feed and Forage Imbalance*
- *Animals – Inadequate Wildlife Habitat*



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Conservation Practices

- **A specific treatment, such as a structural or vegetative measure, or management technique, commonly used to meet specific needs in planning and implementing conservation, for which standards and practice specifications have been developed.**
- **Each practice has a conservation practice standard, which defines the practice and where it applies and prescribes the minimum level of application and quality of materials.**
 - These standards are available in Section 4 of the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG), available on nrcs.usda.gov
- **About 170+ conservation practices available**
- **Conservation practices often work in systems**
 - For example, fencing is often used in concert with prescribed grazing



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Conservation Practices

Which NRCS conservation practices are most likely to utilize native seed in Nevada? Let's look at a couple.

Range Planting (Code 550)

- Establishment of adapted perennial or self-sustaining vegetation such as grasses, forbs, legumes, shrubs and trees.
- Purposes include restoring plant communities, livestock forage, wildlife food and cover, reduce soil erosion, etc.

Practice Code	Program	Practice	Component	Unit	Unit Cost
550	EQIP	Range Planting	Native	Ac	\$123.02
550	EQIP	Range Planting	Non-Native	Ac	\$61.52

Other components and unit costs are available to fit certain situations



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Conservation Practices



Wildlife Habitat Planting (Code 420)

- Establishing wildlife habitat by planting herbaceous vegetation or shrubs.
- Purposes include improving degraded wildlife habitat and establishing habitat that resembles the historic, desired, and reference native plant community.

Practice Code	Program	Practice	Component	Unit	Unit Cost
420	EQIP	Wildlife Habitat Planting	Low Species Diversity on Non-Cropland	Ac	\$194.19
420	EQIP	Wildlife Habitat Planting	High Species Diversity on Cropland with Foregone Income	Ac	\$692.86

Other components and unit costs are available to fit certain situations



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NRCS Programs

Conservation Plans (Conservation Technical Assistance – CTA)

- **NRCS Flagship Technical Assistance Program**
- Identifies producers' objectives and analyzes the natural resources concerns on the land
- **Include tools and resources customized specifically for each customer, such as:**
 - Land use map
 - Soils information
 - Photos
 - Inventory of resources
 - Economic costs and benefits
 - Schedule of recommended practices
 - Maintenance schedules
 - Engineering notes
- **Are a voluntary collaboration between the NRCS conservation planner and the customer**



Agricultural Management Assistance

- The Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) helps agricultural producers manage financial risk through diversification, marketing or natural resource conservation practices.
- The Natural Resources Conservation Service oversees the conservation provisions of AMA. The Agricultural Marketing Service is responsible for an organic certification cost-share program, and the Risk Management Agency is responsible for mitigation of financial risk through an insurance cost-share program.
- NRCS accepts applications year-round
- In fiscal year 2021, NRCS Nevada invested \$394,154 to help producers implement conservation practices on 866 acres



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Conservation Stewardship Program

- Nation's largest conservation program in terms of numbers of acres
- Helps producers take their conservation activities to the next level
- NRCS accepts applications year-round
- In fiscal year 2021, NRCS Nevada invested \$546,566 to help producers implement conservation practices on 48,447 acres



Environmental Quality Incentives Program

- **NRCS' flagship financial assistance program for helping producers apply conservation practices on their land**
- **Provides financial assistance to address natural resource concerns**
- **Benefits include:**
 - Improving air, soil and water quality
 - Conserving water
 - Preventing soil erosion
 - Enhancing wildlife habitat
 - Mitigating impacts from climate change
- **NRCS accepts applications year-round**
- **In fiscal year 2021, NRCS Nevada invested \$7.893 million to help producers implement conservation practices on 150,830 acres**



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Regional Conservation Partnership Program

- **Partner-driven approach to voluntary conservation that funds solutions to natural resource challenges**
- **Leverages \$1 for every \$1 invested by USDA**
- **Eligible entities include private industry, non-government organizations, Indian tribes, state and local governments, water districts and universities**
- **RCPP stats:**
 - Currently, 375 active projects with nearly 2000 partners
 - \$330 million invested in 85 projects in fiscal year 2021
 - \$75 million to be invested in additional alternative funding arrangement projects in fiscal year 2021
- <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/programs/financial/rcpp/>



Other Programs



- **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)**
- **Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)**
- **Cooperative Soil Survey**
- **Snow Survey**
- **Watershed Program**
- **National Resources Inventory**





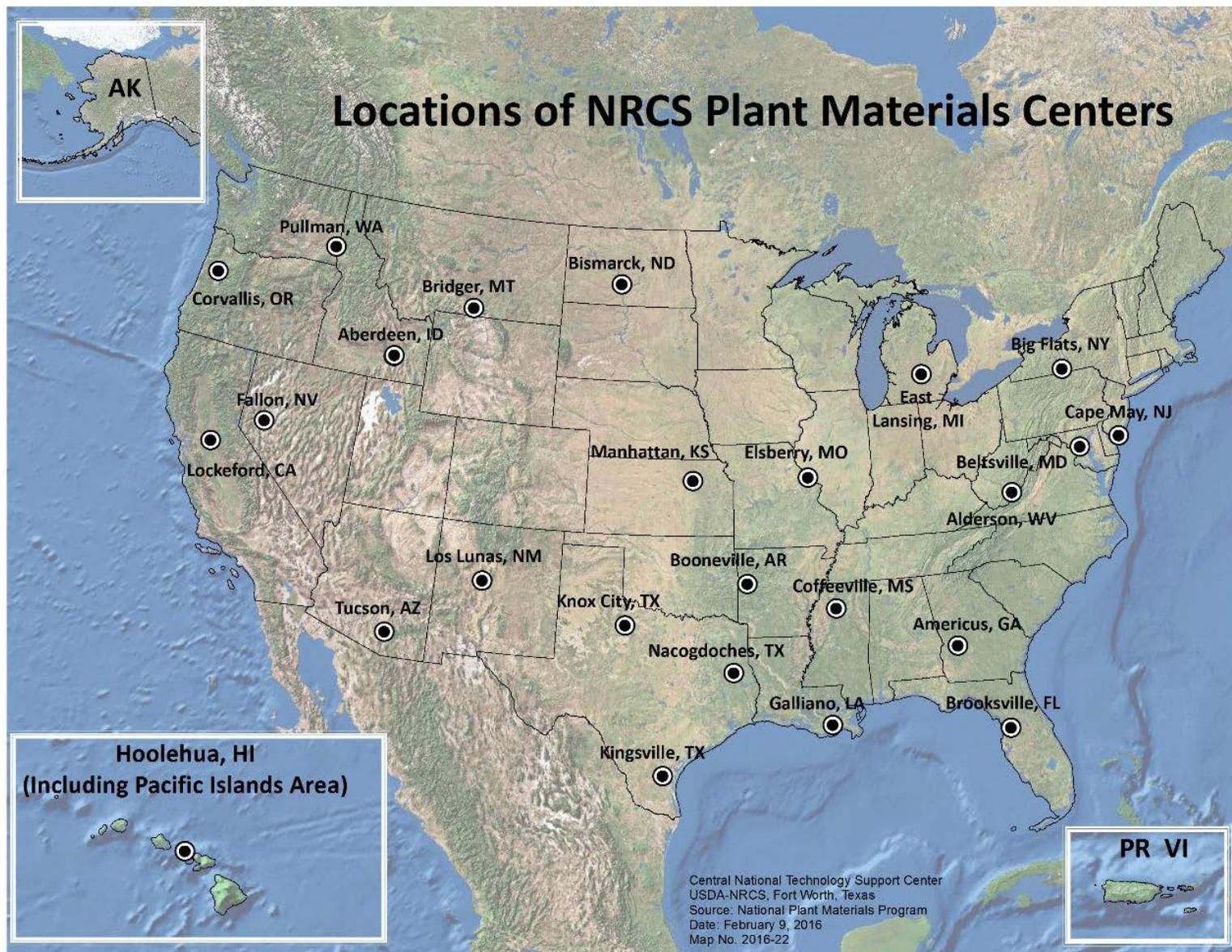
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NRCS Plant Materials Centers: Structure and Function



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<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov>

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Functions of Plant Materials Centers

- Evaluate plants for natural resource conservation
- Develop technology and tools for the establishment and management of plant materials for conservation practices
- Provide plant materials training and presentations to field staff, partners, farmers, and the public
- Produce technical documents to inform field staff, farmers and ranchers, and the public
- Release promising new plant selections to commercial growers
- Maintain breeder and foundation seed and plant stocks to ensure that high quality starter materials are available to commercial growers

<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov>



PMC Product Snapshot



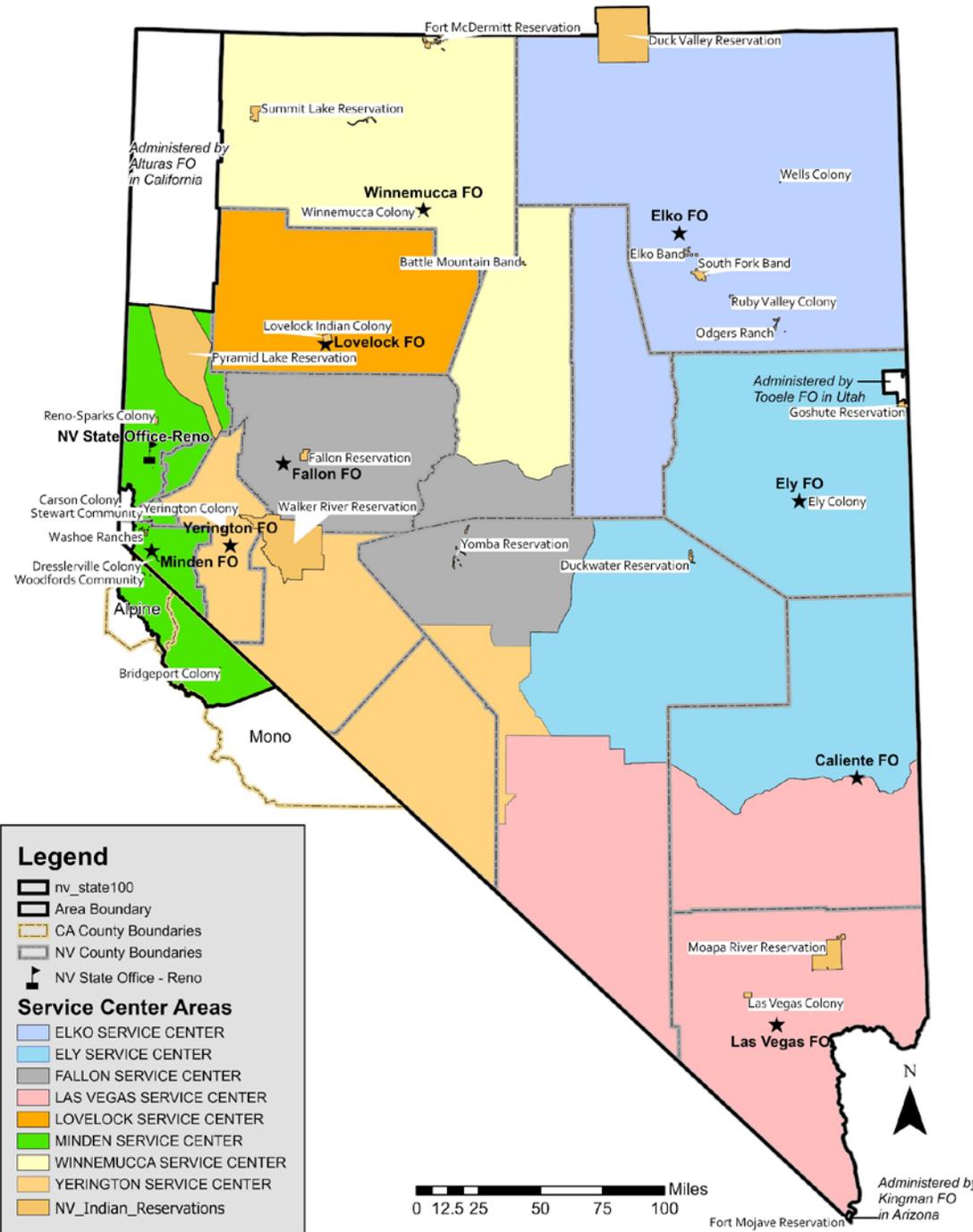
In the last three years:

- Over **450 written documents**, including fact sheets, planting guides, technical notes, study reports, newsletters, and conservation practice documents.
- Over **4,500 conservation planning participants trained** (NRCS and partner employees) to improve awareness and planner knowledge of new PMC information, tools, and plant technology.
- **290 presentations**, hosted **110 tours**, and held **30 field days** to a total of 3,600 NRCS participants and 11,600 partner agency, farmer, rancher, and other landowner participants.
- **Ten new conservation plants** released to commercial growers.



A photograph of a field of tall, thin grasses. The grasses are a mix of green and dry, yellowish-brown. The field is dense with these grasses, and there are some fallen twigs or branches scattered on the ground. In the center of the image, there is a black rectangular box with a white border containing white text.

NRCS Contacts and Information



NRCS Field Offices

USDA Service Center Locator



Elko Service Center

District Conservationist: Jaime Jasmine Jaime.jasmine@usda.gov - 775-738-8431 ext. 120

Ely Service Center

District Conservationist: Cory Lytle cory.lytle@usda.gov -775-289-4065 ext. 105

Fallon Service Center

District Conservationist: Albert Mulder albert.mulder@usda.gov- 775-423-5124 ext. 114

Las Vegas Service Center

District Conservationist: Jasmine Wilson jasmine.wilson@usda.gov - 725-201-6003

Lovelock Service Center

District Conservationist: Christie Scilacci christie.Scilacci@usda.gov - 775-273-2134 ext. 101

Minden Service Center

District Conservationist: Jessica Gwerder jessica.gwerder@usda.gov- 775-782-3661 ext. 3827

Winnemucca Service Center

District Conservationist: Brad Yothers bradley.yothers@usda.gov - 775-623-5025 ext. 101

Yerington Service Center

District Conservationist: Angela Mushrush angela.mushrush@usda.gov - 775-463-2265 ext. 3115

Great Basin PMC

PMC Manager: Chris Bernau chris.bernau@usda.gov – 775-423-7957 ext. 4



For More Information



National NRCS Website - www.nrcs.usda.gov

Nevada NRCS Website –
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/nv/home/>



Farmers.gov

- Not farmers.com
- Not farmerdates.com or farmersonly.com



Questions/Discussion





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