**Native Prairie Establishment and Maintenance**

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| **Establishment-First Year** | **Schedule** | **Responsible Persons** |
| Method 1 - Existing vegetation must be dead before seeding. Remove existing vegetation and all pieces of roots with sod cutter. Seed as soon as possible after preparing the bed. Seed with a native grass drill. Broadcast seeding is sufficient if seed can be worked into the soil with a harrow or similar tool that ultimately establishes good seed-to-soil contact. It is very important that seed is placed at the proper depth to encourage quick germination/emergence (1/4” or less). | April-June  or  Nov 15-freeze up for dormant seeding |  |
| Method 2 - Existing vegetation must be dead before seeding. Smother vegetation with cardboard or other material for a growing season. The earliest time to seed is a dormant seeding in the fall or wait until following spring or next fall. Seed with a native grass drill. Broadcast seeding is sufficient if seed can be worked into the soil with a harrow or similar tool that ultimately establishes good seed-to-soil contact. It is very important that seed is placed at the proper depth to encourage quick germination/emergence (1/4” or less). | April-Oct for smothering  Nov 15-freeze up for dormant seeding  or  Seed following spring April-June |  |
| Method 3 - Existing vegetation must be dead before seeding. Chemical applications may be used to kill sod or other vegetation. Apply in the fall for the next growing season **and** in the spring prior to planting. Follow all label directions. Seed with a no-till drill. It is very important that seed is placed at the proper depth to encourage quick germination/emergence (1/4” or less). | Sept-Oct 15 **AND** following May for chemical spraying  May-June seeding |  |
| Method 4 - Existing vegetation must be dead before seeding. Remove existing vegetation with multiple tillage passes. (new weed seed will germinate with tillage) Prepare a good firm seedbed. When you walk on the surface, you don’t want to sink. You barely want to see your foot print. Seed with a native grass drill. Broadcast seeding is sufficient if seed can be worked into the soil with a harrow or similar tool that ultimately establishes good seed-to-soil contact. It is very important that seed is placed at the proper depth to encourage quick germination/emergence (1/4” or less). | April-June  or  Nov 15-freeze up for dormant seeding |  |
| If there are erosion concerns, install erosion control blanket or place straw over seeding. | Immediately after seeding |  |
| If it doesn’t rain, water seed. Water enough to moisten surrounding soil, but water lightly so seedlings are not dislodged. As seedlings emerge and develop, irrigate less frequently but enough to prevent drought stress. | Spring until established |  |
| Persistent attention to weed control is required. Keep weeds cut back to a height of 6 inches when they reach a height of 12 inches. The first mowing if done early enough can be to a height of 3-4 inches. Flat type mowers work best because they chop weeds and prevent clippings from smothering small seedings. Weed-trimmers are excellent for smaller areas. Rotary or bar-sickle mowers may be used but can smother seedlings because they do not chop weeds. Hand weeding may also be necessary.  Do not mow the first year’s growth after August 1. This will protect young plants over winter. | One to two times per month depending on rainfall, not after Aug 1 |  |
| If a cover crop was used, it should also be cut during the first season. Mow cover crop when weeds reach 6 inches tall. | 1 time per month depending on rainfall |  |
| Do not spray any broadleaf chemicals in the first year. Broadleaf chemicals will kill forbs and damage or kill grasses. | First year |  |
| Evaluate the prairie stand. | Fall |  |

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| **Second Year Activities** | **Schedule** | **Responsible Persons** |
| Persistent attention to weed control is required. Keep weeds cut back. Mow seedlings at a height of 6 inches when vegetation has a height of 12 inches. Flat type mowers work best because they chop weeds and prevent clippings from smothering small seedings. Weed-trimmers are excellent for smaller areas. Rotary or bar-sickle mowers may be used but can smother seedlings because they do not chop weeds. Hand weeding may also be necessary. | One time per month depending on rainfall |  |
| Water only enough to maintain growth and prevent dormancy. Be careful not to overwater, as this can increase competition with weeds and may increase incidence of disease. | As needed |  |
| Overseed bare patches. Keep overseeded areas moist for first few weeks. | April-July 1st |  |
| Do not spot treat with chemicals until year 3. | After year 2 |  |

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| **Year 3 and After Activities** | **Schedule** | **Responsible Persons** |
| Evaluate the stand. Continue controlling weeds with spot treating or mowing. Cut and stump treat woody species. Utilize prescribed burning to stimulate native growth and control woody species, but check with local jurisdiction on burning regulations. | April - Nov |  |

Additional information:

* Marestail will often show up in the second year. It looks worse than it is, but its growth pattern still allows light through the canopy. Marestail will naturally decline as the prairie establishes.
* Mow Canada thistle patches at bud stage (late June to early July). The prairie will often out-compete thistles with timely mowing.
* Do not mow after weeds are 4-6 feet high. At that point you are better off **not** to mow. Doing so will put a mat of material on the new emerging seedlings.
* Spot mowing may be needed in areas where weed pressure is still prevalent in year two. Giant Ragweed can be very persistent. Musk thistles may still be prevalent, but will be out-competed by the prairie long-term.

I certify the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ commits to the specific work elements in this plan for the duration of 10 years from date of the practice certified as completed.

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Signature Title Date