

NATIONAL SEED STRATEGY for REHABILITATION and RESTORATION 2015-2020  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Considering the serious drought conditions and altered fire regimes in the West, the fast spread of invasive species nationwide and unusual weather events in the East such as Hurricane Sandy, land managers are facing an urgent national need to be able to respond quickly to landscape-scale ecological changes with appropriate restoration resources for all land ownerships across the United States.

The National Seed Strategy for Rehabilitation and Restoration 2015-2020 (Strategy) addresses these challenges. It will help coordinate the efforts of tribal, state, federal, local and private entities to restore plant communities that have been altered by natural or human caused events.

Success on a national scale will be achieved through the establishment of a nationwide network of native seed collectors, a network of farmers and growers working to develop seed, a network of nurseries and seed storage facilities to supply adequate quantities of appropriate seed, and a network of restoration ecologists who know how to put the right seed in the right place at the right time.

Achieving this will require additional investments, research, improved decision tools and enhanced communication. Most importantly however, successful implementation will require the active participation of a diverse set of public and private partners. Increased coordination is vital to accelerate the pace and scale of restoration and provide native plant materials when and where they are needed.

This Strategy recognizes the importance of healthy native plant communities as an essential foundation for ecosystem integrity and diversity. It also recognizes that the effects of climate change, spread of invasive plant species, altered wildfire regimes and habitat modification have negatively affected many native plant communities.

The Strategy outlines a plan that will help coordinate and focus diverse partner efforts toward achieving four major goals: (1) Identify seed needs and ensure the reliable availability of genetically appropriate seed reserves, (2) Identify research needs and conduct research to provide genetically appropriate seed reserves and to improve technology for seed production and ecological restoration (3) Develop tools that enable managers to make timely and informed seeding decisions for ecological restoration, and (4) Develop strategies for internal and external communication.

This Strategy is national in scope and engages both private sector and public partners working toward restoration on public, tribal, state, municipal and private lands over the next 50 years. Products and collaborations developed through the Strategy will help land managers select appropriate plant materials to use in public and private ecological restoration efforts at all scales.

Under the Strategy, participants will assess the plant production needs and capacity of tribes, states, federal agencies, private sector seed producers, nurseries, and other partners. Identifying research needs is also a critical component. Seed zone delineation, the creation of seed transfer

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guidelines, and a deeper understanding of plant establishment, species interactions, and production protocols will inform restoration practitioners. Partners will also develop tools that enable managers to make timely, informed decisions, including training programs and access to seed, assessment and disturbance data.

This Strategy does not preclude the use of non-native plant materials in the instances where and when they are appropriate. However, this Strategy strongly encourages use of genetically appropriate plant materials.

This Strategy provides guidance for and implements the Presidential Memorandum -- Creating a Federal Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators (Office of the White House June 20, 2014). In addition, the Strategy implements Section 7b (ix) of Interior Secretarial Order 3336 on Rangeland Fire Prevention, Management and Restoration, signed January 5, 2015. The Department of the Interior initiated Tribal Consultation on both the Secretarial Order and the draft National Seed Strategy through its Tribal Consultation process on April 7, 2015.

The Strategy envisions continuous consultation and communications with all of those interested and involved in plant restoration activities. Ultimately, success will depend on strong public/private partnerships, enhanced funding and an increased leadership commitment to native plant restoration.