

Conservation Plant Materials Tested at Trout Creek, Nevada
Loren St. John, Aberdeen Plant Materials Center

In 1987, an off-center advanced upland plant test site in an 8 to 12 inch annual precipitation zone was established at Trout Creek, approximately 20 miles southeast of Jackpot, Nevada. The PMC is cooperating with the Bureau of Land Management, San Jacinto Ranch, Salmon River Grazing Association and the Northeast Elko Conservation District at this test site. The PMC is also evaluating riparian plants and bioengineering practices along the creek that runs through the test site.

The upland grass and shrub plots were planted in November, 1988. There were 51 accessions of grasses, 7 accessions of fourwing saltbush and 6 accessions of winterfat planted in complete randomized block designs with 4 replications. A bottomland grass performance trial included 5 accessions of wildrye species and an upland display nursery including 64 accessions of grasses, forbs and shrubs was also planted.

In September, 2002 Dan Ogle and myself evaluated the plots. It was quite interesting to observe how the planted accessions had performed since they were planted in November, 1988 - fifteen years of some good conditions as well as some pretty tough conditions in terms of annual precipitation. We evaluated percent stand, plant vigor, ability to spread and also estimated forage production.

As a group the crested wheatgrass accessions had the best stands 15 years after the site was planted. The native wildrye group had the next best stands followed by the Russian wildrye accessions. Accessions of fourwing saltbush also performed well. Indian ricegrass accessions had disappeared from the test site.

Forage production significantly declined from data collected in 1992 to the data collected in 2002. The decline in stands and forage yields is primarily attributed to a series of 3 years of poor winter and spring precipitation before the evaluation that was conducted in 2002. The buildup of excess plant residues because the plants are not grazed or harvested periodically has also resulted in lower plant vigor and productivity.

A detailed summary of the data from the upland test plots and a project report have been completed and is available. To obtain a copy, contact Loren St. John at the PMC or Dan Ogle, Plant Materials Specialist in Boise, Idaho.

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