

New Rangeland Plant Testing Site Implemented
Loren St. John, Aberdeen Plant Materials Center

The Aberdeen Plant Materials Center recently completed the planting of test plots at a new off-center test site in Skull Valley, Utah. The purpose of the test site is to evaluate the adaptability and performance of new conservation plant releases and potential releases in a low precipitation environment and compare the establishment, production and longevity against traditionally used plant releases.

The test site is located approximately 25 miles west of Tooele, Utah on land owned by the Ensign Ranch. The test planting is on a semi desert gravelly loam ecological site in the 8-12 inch annual precipitation zone. The planting trial has 72 accessions of 23 species of native and introduced grasses, forbs and shrubs. Each accession is replicated 3 times for a total of 216 plots. In addition to the adaptability and performance trial, the Plant Materials Center personnel also planted a trial of Anatone bluebunch wheatgrass and Nezpar Indian ricegrass seed that was treated with a recently patented seed amendment that absorbs and releases water to plants as needed. We will be evaluating the effectiveness of this amendment to establish new seedings over the next several years.

The Plant Materials Center personnel will begin evaluations of the test planting next spring and evaluations are planned through 2018 to determine long-term performance and survival of the test planting.



Loren St. John, Derek Tilley, Dan Ogle and Brent Cornforth during planting of the Skull Valley test site on November 14, 2007.