

**Larry Holzworth  
USDA-NRCS  
Federal Building, 10 East Babcock Street, Bozeman, MT 59715  
(406) 587-6838, FAX (406) 587-6761, lholzworth@mt.nrcs.usda.gov**

## **Upland Buffer Species Overview**

**Agriculture has been identified as one source of water and air pollution across the United States. Sediment from soil erosion and nutrients from fertilizers, livestock manure, and pesticides are among the farm field and livestock pollutants. Agriculture must become more proactive in applying available technologies to abate these pollutants. Conservation buffers are viable tools to help farmers and ranchers eliminate water pollution and related environmental problems. Wildlife habitat is an added benefit.**

**In Montana, landowners are fortunate to have a multitude of plant materials available for establishing various types of buffers. Most of the buffer species have been released by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Plant Materials Centers (PMC). Montana uses plant releases from Washington, Idaho and North Dakota as well as from its own PMC near Bridger, MT. Most of the cultivars recommended for Montana have been performance and adaptation tested and can be recommended and used with confidence.**

**Several major points should be considered when selecting species: 1) intended use, 2) precipitation/hydrology, 3) soils, and 4) environmental adaptation. Certified seed of a proven cultivar should be used when possible. Seeding technique can influence stand establishment much more than inherent differences among species.**

**Conservation buffers can be an effective vegetative deterrent to soil erosion and water pollution. With good planning, site preparation, proper species selection and precision seed placement, creative-thinking farmers and ranchers can successfully establish an array of plant species to protect our natural resources.**

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