

**Wildfire. Drought. Invasive Species.  
Water and Air Quality. Productive Range and Pasturelands.**

**The Aberdeen Plant Materials Center  
finds plant solutions for critical  
natural resource concerns in the Intermountain West.**





The PMC releases conservation plants for wildlife habitat.

## Plant Solutions

Since 1939, the Aberdeen Plant Materials Center (PMC) has tested plants and new conservation technology in real-world situations and found solutions for a large variety of natural resource challenges.

To date, the PMC has cooperatively released 43 conservation plants. The PMC also has developed a wide variety of new conservation technologies including strategies for battling invasive species, especially during times of drought and potential wildfire, bioengineering techniques for riparian areas, and planting techniques and equipment for constructed wetland systems.

## Serving the Intermountain West

The PMC, part of the National Plant Materials Program operated by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), serves an area of about 83 million acres with a wide range of climate and soil conditions in Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Wyoming.

## Real-World Conservation at Work

The PMC staff is headquartered at the University of Idaho, Experiment Station campus northeast of Aberdeen. The staff manage three farms nearby.

The farms serve as showplaces for the farming, conservation, agroforestry, upland and wetland plant selection, bioengineering and constructed wetland system technologies that NRCS recommends to farmers, ranchers and other landusers. Landscaping and display nurseries provide visitors with examples of plants for a variety of conservation uses.

The Aberdeen PMC utilizes the farm acreage to test conservation plants and new technologies. Staff also cooperate with farmers and ranchers, and others, in locations throughout the service area to conduct real-world trials on pastureland, rangeland, forestland, windbreaks, riparian bioengineering and constructed wetland systems.



Aberdeen PMC service area (above).

The home farm (right) at the Aberdeen PMC is leased from the South Bingham Soil Conservation District (SCD) and includes 45 acres of foundation seed production and plant testing fields as well as buildings for seed cleaning, packaging and storage. NRCS leases another 67 acres from Idaho Fish & Game for PMC use. Also, the South Bingham SCD recently purchased another nearby farm with 39 acres to help NRCS expand plant materials work.

The waterjet stinger (far right), developed by PMC staff, makes wetland planting easier.



# Priorities

The Aberdeen PMC cooperates with a variety of federal, state and local partners to reach its mission. Workload priorities include:

## Plant Releases

- Releasing conservation plants. To date, the PMC has cooperatively released 43 plants to help solve a variety natural resource concerns.
- Maintaining quality breeder and foundation seed of plant releases which are available for commercial production.

## Range, Pasture & Forestlands

- Developing performance-tested range, pasture and forestland grasses, forbs and shrubs and the technology for their successful establishment. Many of these plants are drought-tolerant, and help restore areas affected by wildfires and provide habitat for many wildlife species.
- Developing integrated pest management strategies for invasive plants such as cheatgrass, medusahead, yellow starthistle, rush skeletonweed, leafy spurge and knapweed species.

## Wetland & Riparian Areas

- Developing native, performance-tested riparian and wetland plants and their associated planting technology. These plants enhance wetlands and stabilize streambanks, protect water quality and improve wildlife habitat.
- Developing and disseminating streambank bioengineering techniques for riparian areas and adapted plant management techniques for constructed wetland systems.

## Agroforestry

- Demonstrating installation of agroforestry practices including poplar plantation techniques and possible alternative fuels production.
- Maintaining windbreak and living snow fences for display.



Cleaning foundation seed of a released conservation plant.



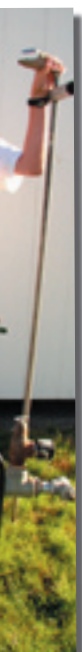
PMC plant releases stabilize the soil after a wildfire.



Collecting native seed. (above)

The PMC tests grasses and forbs for conservation uses and has released several drought-hardy forage grasses for use in range and pasture plantings. (far left)

The PMC provides recommendations and has released plant materials useful for native landscaping. (left)





## A Team Effort

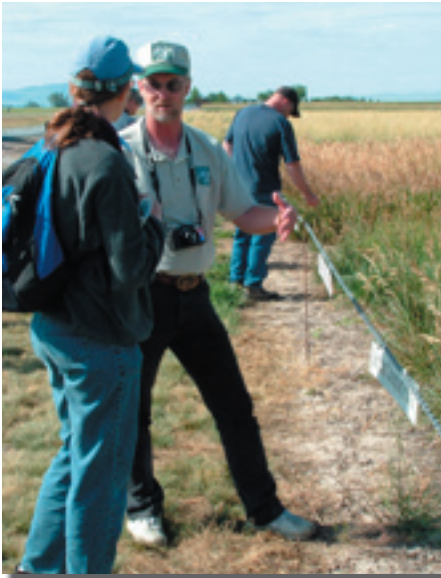
The Aberdeen PMC accomplishes its mission through a team of dedicated staff and a variety of conservation partners.

Permanent PMC staff includes a PMC manager, wetland plant ecologist, plant scientist, farm manager, two biological technicians and an administrative assistant. A plant materials specialist (PMS) is headquartered at the NRCS State Office in Boise.

In addition, the South Bingham SCD and the University of Idaho help support summer workers every year. An advisory committee made up of NRCS state conservationists from Idaho, Nevada, Oregon and Utah reviews and directs PMC operations.

Loren St. John, Aberdeen PMC manager, leads a tour.

Soil Conservation Districts are critical to the success of the Plant Materials Program. They identify and define conservation problems in the communities they serve. Their recommendations help form the backbone for PMC priorities.



Dan Ogle, plant materials specialist, visits with a NRCS employee about how NRCS field offices use PMC plant releases and technologies in their work with farmers and ranchers.

## For More Information

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NRCS Idaho Home Page (Plants): [www.id.usda.gov/programs/plants.html](http://www.id.usda.gov/programs/plants.html)

NRCS Plant Materials Program: [plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov](http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov)

NRCS Plants Data Center: [plants.usda.gov](http://plants.usda.gov)

NRCS Riparian and Wetlands Tools:

[plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/idpmc/riparian.html](http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/idpmc/riparian.html)

NRCS Idaho October 2005



The PMC provides technical training on streambank bioengineering techniques.



'Appar' blue flax is a release from the Aberdeen PMC.

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