

A TOOL FOR SELECTING APPROPRIATE VEGETATION FOR RESTORING DISTURBED SITES IN EASTERN MONTANA AND ADJACENT AREAS¹

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Abstract: The recently published *Classification and management of upland, riparian, and wetland sites of USDI Bureau of Land Management's Miles City Field Office, eastern Montana USA* has great utility in the planning of ecologically successful revegetation projects on disturbed sites in eastern Montana and adjacent areas. It covers the eastern third of Montana with detailed plant species composition of vegetation communities on every kind of natural site: upland, riparian, wetland, grassland, shrubland, and forest. In planning revegetation on sites that have had their natural vegetation either severely impacted or removed by human activities, there is always the question of what plant species are appropriate to use, and in what proportions. It is no longer acceptable to simply "green-up" a site with some generic cultivar developed for its quick cover and tolerance of harsh growing conditions. Land managers and private landowners now recognize that remediation and restoration efforts need to provide as great a "jump start" to the natural integrity and ecological function on a site, as is economically feasible and practical. This document has a dichotomous key for naming the type (habitat type or community type) at a site. For each of the 92 types summarized in the document, there is a description of physical and vegetation characteristics, a species composition table, community successional information, and site management information on several topics, such as livestock grazing, timber harvest, wildlife management, rehabilitation/restoration considerations, etc. With the name of the type at the site and the corresponding information provided in this document, a restoration planner can confidently prescribe a pallet of species that will establish the foundation of an appropriate natural community on a disturbed site. This will set the recently disturbed site well on its way to becoming ecologically functional with the greatest chance for long term success.

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