

NATIVE SEED MIX DESIGN FOR ROADSIDES: A MANUAL FOR DESIGNING SITE SPECIFIC MIXES FOR ROADSIDES, CONSERVATION, AND RESTORATION

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Abstract: Native grasslands are highly compatible with roadsides and other applications such as storm water facilities, conservation projects, etc. Their diversity is an asset for ecosystem function but this complexity can be a stumbling block for those who lack experience with native plants. The use of natives becomes even more intimidating when attempting to create a mix to match individual site conditions. To address this problem a group of ecological restoration practitioners in Minnesota collaborated to develop a system to facilitate seed mix design. The result is a step-by-step manual that allows users with very little restoration experience to design diverse, functional, and ecologically appropriate seed mixes that are matched to specific site conditions. This presentation will discuss how to use the method, what makes the method scientifically sound yet easy to use, and how the method could be adapted for use in other states. An electronic version of the manual is available at www.mndot.gov.