

NPS and SCS Cooperate On Native Plant Materials Program

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The National Park System of the United States comprises 356 areas covering almost 80 million acres in 49 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, Saipan, and the Virgin Islands. The diversity of the System is reflected in the variety of the park unit titles.

The National Park Service's mandate to preserve resources while providing for public enjoyment, faces park administrators with a delicate balancing act. Revegetation and reclamation activities present special problems for those trying to maintain native plant populations in areas impacted by visitor facilities.

To the extent possible, plantings in park units consist of species that are native to the park or are historically appropriate for the event commemorated. To this end, a cooperative agreement between the NPS and the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) was developed in 1989. This Plant Materials Program seeks to draw upon the strengths of the two federal agencies in the development, testing, and establishment of native species for disturbed sites within NPS units (see *Park Science*, 11:3, p.7).

Program Development

The plant materials program between the two agencies initially focused on development of native plants for the revegetation of areas disturbed by road construction. The park roads program is the ideal starting point for the plant material program. Since advanced scheduling and funding appropriations are critical to the success of this program, the park roads program assures that all plant materials projects can be funded adequately and that sufficient lead time will be available to complete plant production schedules.

The SCS maintains 26 plant material centers throughout the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii. Each center is located to take advantage of common characteristics of climate, topography, and soils in parts of two or more states. They are at Pullman, WA; Corvallis, OR; Lockeford, CA; Aberdeen, ID; Tucson, AZ; Meeker, CO; Los Lomas, NM; Bridger, MT; Bismarck, ND; Manhattan, KS; Knox City, Nacogdoches, and Kingsville, TX; Elsberry, MO; Boonesville, AR; Golden Meadow, LA; Jackson, MS; Quicksand, KY; Rose Lake, MI; Americus, GA; Brooksville, FL; Big Flats, NY; Cape May, NJ; Palmer, AK; and Hoolehua, HI. The National Plant Materials Center is in Beltsville, MD.

Current Programs

Presently, the NPS and SCS have developed plant materials agreements for 20 park road projects. In addition, a parkwide plant materials program is under development within the Rocky Mountain Region of the NPS and will be implemented in selected parks before the end of the year. Within the next 5 years, the plant materials program can be expected to grow, addressing needs in over 40 parks. The plant program and information generated over the coming years will add to the information base and help develop park indigenous species that are locally adaptive. This program also will provide the needed reclamation technologies to develop successful revegetation techniques in reestablishing these native park species.

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