LOWER PLATTE NORTH
Natural Resources District

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Program Information and Application Process

The Lower Platte North NRD is excited to roll out a new small-scale habitat program, *Native Nook*. The goals of this program aim to educate on the importance of using native plant species for building healthy soils; conserving and protecting our ground and surface water; and providing a habitat for pollinators and other wildlife. Each program participant will receive seed to cover a 100 square foot area (10 foot by 10 foot), after the ground has been properly prepared. Removal **of current ground cover is mandatory** before the seed will be delivered to the participant. If you are looking for guidance on ground preparation, please indicate this on the form below, and staff from the LPNNRD will help. Participants will choose between two seed mix options available. Indicate which one you would prefer on the form below; please note this is contingent on your place in line and seed mix availability. We will start a list of applications, and the first 20 people to meet the ground preparation stipulations will receive seed. Those that do not meet the stipulations in time, will start at the top of the list for the following year if ground preparation is approved. We are excited to see these Native Nooks across our Lower Platte North district! And hopefully, in a city near you!

1. Name, address, phone number, email.

2. Seed Preference - Option A____ or Option B____
    a. Option A: Big 12 Wildflower Mix – Star Seed
        i. (Maximilian sunflower, blackeyed susan, lanceleaf coreopsis, illinois bundleflower, partridge pea, plains coreopsis, butterfly milkweed, wild bergamot, purple prairie clover blanketflower, purple coneflower, clasping coneflower, and upright prairie coneflower)
    b. Option B: Pretty Prairie Shortgrass Mix – Star Seed
        i. (Little Bluestem, plains coreopsis, purple prairie clover, illinois bundleflower, partridge pea, maximilian sunflower, clasping coneflower, butterfly milkweed, purple coneflower, blanketflower, lanceleaf coreopsis, upright prairie coneflower, blackeyed susan)

Stipulations

a. Ground preparation is the applicant's responsibility.
    i. In accordance with your local city ordinances (i.e. distance from street, height of vegetation, species present) ground will be prepared as follows.
        1. Current vegetation has been cleared and bare dirt is present.
            a. Do you need help devising a management plan for ground preparation? Yes__ or No__
b. An educational sign will be provided when the seed is delivered. This sign has two sides; one for the planting in progress and the other for when the plants are in bloom. Please display this sign as a way to inform others of this program in progress and then to educate them on the importance of using native species.
c. Future management of the planting will be up to you. You will receive a document outlining management options when you receive your seed. Should you need any assistance in the future, please contact the NRD.

Timelines

- Native plants grow below ground before they grow above ground. Expect the first 2-3 years to be 'weedy' and not a lot of the intended species' growth. Remember, you are starting from seed–be patient! For this reason, it has been said that native plantings "sleep" in their first year, "creep" in their second year, and then "leap" in their third year.
- For this planting to be successful, **bare dirt is required.** On the next page are some examples of this.

Option 1:

1. Ground cover is manually removed in the fall of 2026 with light tillage utilized for seed to soil contact.
    a. Seed will be delivered and participants broadcast it in the late fall or early winter (on or after November 15th), with light packing of the seed into the ground. Seeding can also take place in the spring of 2027 (on or before April 20th).

Option 2:

1. Ground cover is sprayed out in the fall of 2026 using an herbicide such as glyphosate. Ground cover is sprayed out again in the spring of 2027. If a final spraying is needed in the fall of 2027, do so. Follow this with a light tillage. Seed can be broadcasted in late fall or early winter or in the spring of 2028 (see dates above in option 1). ***Be sure to check the residual time of the product you are using, and plant seeds accordingly.***

Option 3*:

1. Solarization is an option for removing ground cover. A clear tarp put down in Mid-September and left until April 1st, 2027, would be effective in removing plant material. Tillage should be utilized after removal of tarp, with broadcasting of seed and light packing of soil to follow on or before April 20th, 2027. If a tarp is put down in the summer of 2027 for at least 6 weeks, a similar rotation of tillage, broadcasting seed and light packing should occur on or after November 15th, 2027. More information on solarization can be found **here** and should be further investigated on your own before you decide to utilize this option.

Managing Weeds

Below are some examples (the guided documents linked will address this further).

1. Inevitably, weeds will come. There are multiple options you can choose to manage these weeds.
    a. Option 1: Using a weedwhacker, cut the weeds when they are roughly 16-18 inches tall, down to 6-8 inches tall. A lawn mower will not allow you to achieve the desired height and may reduce establishment of intended species.
    b. Option 2: Hand pulling the weeds as they come up is effective in these smaller planting areas. **Caution**—unless you are absolutely certain of what you are pulling out—this option should not be utilized. We don't want to pull out our intented species!
    c. Option 3: Used as a pre-emergent or after seedlings have sprouted, **Plateau** is considered safe for prairie plants, including flowers. Low application rates are best suited. If you use a different type of herbicide, **be sure to read the label**, as it may be harmful to your growing plants. Timing is important—read the label.

Watering Schedule

Watering the seeds and future seedlings is dependent on the amount of rain and temperatures present. Overwatering can reduce success by enabling weed growth. Water sparingly during extended periods of hot, dry spells, in the summer. Eventually, the roots of these plants will reach over 6 feet in depth and will thrive on their own.

Mulching
While not necessarily a requirement, a loose application of clean straw may help conserve soil moisture; reduce the impacts of heavy rains on the seedings emerging; and help alleviate weed pressure. The percentage of straw cover should be in the range of 20-30%.

I understand that by signing this form, I agree to the stipulations outlined above. I understand that I may not receive seed this year if I am not 1 of the first 20 individuals to have the ground prepared as is required. I recognize I will be at the top of the list for the next year and will receive seed then, provided my ground is ready for planting.

Signature Date