

## **Moving from the Use of Introduced to Native Plants on Western Public Lands**

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Changing societal values and the impacts of wildfires and weed invasion on public lands in the western United States has shifted the emphasis from the use of non-native grasses to native plants to rehabilitate burned areas and restore diversity on other degraded rangelands. The largest land manager in the western United States, the Bureau of Land Management, is emphasizing the use of native plants for rehabilitation and restoration given the direction provided in a 1999 Presidential Executive Order (No. 13112), Congressional budget appropriations and internal policy (e.g. standards for rangeland health and the National Fire Plan). This shift from the exclusive use of introduced grasses in the 1950's to emphasizing the use of native plants today has been incremental. The first native shrubs used to rehabilitate burned rangelands were fourwing saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*) and antelope bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*), both of which were adapted to arid rangelands and were palatable to both wildlife and livestock. In the mid-1980's big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) was first included in large-scale rehabilitation projects in response to the accelerating loss of sagebrush steppe rangelands after wildfires. The use of native wheatgrasses also increased during this same time period. The emphasis is now on the selection and increase of native forbs and grasses to improve diversity and meet wildlife needs on public lands. BLM is funding a collaborative partnership that includes research entities and producers to meet the increasing demand for native plant materials.