Opportunities and Challenges of Small-Scale Native Seed Production

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Current Seed Production

- 150 plots, 3’ x 25’
- 1-2 species/plot
- 2 rows, 1’ spacing
- Turf between plots
- Flax straw mulch
- Clay-based soil, some beds amended with sand
- Beds amended with compost
- Layout takes advantage of microclimates
- ~150 species
Challenges – Labour Intensive

- Planting
- Mulching
- Watering
- Weeding
- Hand Harvesting
- Hand Cleaning
Challenges – Product Quality

- Seed Testing
- Limited Genetic Diversity
- Imperfect Cleaning
Challenges – Maximizing Production

Minimize Seed Loss:
• Predation
• Narrow window of harvest

Monitoring productivity and planning for replanting as needed
Opportunities

Labour intensive means:
• Meaningful employment
• Learning opportunities
• More people with native seed production knowledge/skills
• Volunteer opportunities
Opportunities

- Production of species not suited for mechanized harvest
- Use of marginal land/space
- Small amount of land needed
- Custom growing
- Creativity/Invention to improve efficiency
Benefits of Small Scale

• Diversity of species
• Habitat resources
• Minimal pest management required
Benefits of Small Scale

• High quality seed storage
• Flexibility in harvesting
• Options for predation management
• Simple equipment/tools
Considerations for Scaling Up

Pros
• Increased demand for seed
• Improve efficiency
• Investment in better seed cleaning equipment is justified
• Provide more employment
• Improve product quality
• Opportunity to try new things

Cons
• Higher predation losses?
• Learning curve
• More difficult to monitor plots
• Increased time/money investment