United States Department of Agriculture

NRCS

Natural Resources Conservation Service
P.O. Box 2890
Washington, D.C. 20013

NATIONAL HANDBOOK OF CONSERVATION PRACTICES
450 – NHCP
NOTICE 159

Purpose. This notice transmits new or revised national Conservation Practice Standards (CPSs), along with an updated index, for insertion into the National Handbook of Conservation Practices (NHCP). In addition, notes are included to highlight key changes made to each document.

Effective Date. This notice is effective upon receipt.

Explanation of Changes. New or revised national CPSs are as follows:

Contour Farming (Code 330) – The agency revised the definition to emphasize proper alignments and revised the general criteria for maximum row grade to 4 percent based on RUSLE2 technology. We added the implementation requirement document to the specifications and plans.

Critical Area Planting (Code 342) – The agency deleted the purpose to rehabilitate and re-vegetate degraded sites that cannot be stabilized using normal establishment techniques as this purpose is implied in other purposes. We added the implementation requirement document to the specifications and plans.

Cross Wind Ridges (Code588) – The agency revised the definition to ridges formed by tillage, planting or other operations and aligned perpendicular to prevailing wind direction during critical wind erosion periods and revised the purpose to reduce soil particulate emissions to the air to reduce soil particulate emissions effecting air quality. We added the implementation requirement document to the specifications and plans.

Deep Tillage (Code 324) – The agency deleted the purpose to reduce concentration of soil contaminants that inhibit plant growth because there is no technology to describe the level of neither contamination nor a dilution factor. We added the implementation requirement document to the specifications and plans.

Field Border (Code 386) – The agency revised the condition where the practice applies to cover only existing cropland and pastureland and deleted the purpose to manage pest populations. We added the implementation requirement document to the specifications and plans.

Filter Strip (Code 393) – The agency added a few additional considerations for species selection for native plant communities and organic operation considerations. We added the implementation requirement document to the specifications and plans.

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Land Smoothing (Code 466) – The agency revised the Definition, added a cultural resource inventory and assessment to Considerations, added a plan for Operation and maintenance, and added references.

Livestock Shelter Structure (Code 576) – The agency created this new conservation practice standard that includes livestock shade structures and livestock wind structures

Mulching (Code 484) – The agency deleted the purposes to moderate soil temperature and suppress weeds as these do not address a resource concern and revised the "Condition where practice applies" to remove this practice from being used for weed control for production agriculture. We added the implementation requirement document to the specifications and plans.

Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (Code 329) – The agency changed the practice name to "Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till." No-till is inclusive of direct seed and strip till. In addition, added additional criteria clarification to not allow any full width tillage for this practice, reduced the maximum soil tillage intensity rating value for no till from 30 to 20, added implementation requirements to the specifications and plans, and changed the purpose "Reduce wind erosion and particulate matter less than 10 micrometers in diameter – PM 10" to "Reduce tillage-induced particulate emissions" to address all sizes of tillage particulate emissions.

Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till (Code 345) – The agency incorporated "346 Residue and Tillage Management, Ridge Till" into this standard; changed the name from Residue and Tillage Management, Mulch Till; added criteria to establish a maximum soil tillage intensity value of 80; clarified the air quality purpose to reduce tillage-induced particulate emissions vs. only PM-10 emissions; revised the criteria for energy savings to a 25-percent reduction from the current baseline; and added implementation requirements to the specifications and plans.

Residue and Tillage Management, Ridge Till (Code 346) – The agency deleted this practice and incorporated this standard into "Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till (Code 345)."

Residue Management, Seasonal (Code 344) – The agency deleted this practice.

Spring Development (Code 574) – The agency revised version is the result of a comprehensive review by NRCS biologists and hydrologists from differing arid and humid U.S. regions. The new Purpose statement no longer includes the wording "other agricultural uses." Readability and flow of material is enhanced by using multiple sections with headings as opposed to the old format of a lengthy running text.

Stripcropping (Code 585) – The agency revised the definition to stress alternating strips of erosion susceptible crops and revised the wind erosion purpose to reduce wind erosion and associated transport of sediment and other wind borne contaminants. We added the implementation requirement document to the specifications and plans.

Underground Outlet (Code 620) – The agency expanded the Criteria and revised the Considerations sections.

Filing Instructions. If a hardcopy of the NHCP is maintained, replace the "Contents" (pages i through vi, dated April 2013) with the revised pages found at
http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/viewerFS.aspx?hid=22299

Remove and archive, as appropriate, the following existing practice standards:

Contour Farming (Code 330), dated June 2007
Critical Area Planting (Code 342), dated September 2010
Cross Wind Ridges (Code588), dated September 2008
Deep Tillage (Code 324), dated November 2008
Field Border (Code 386), dated September 2010
Filter Strip (Code 393), dated September 2010
Land Smoothing (Code 466), dated July 2002
Mulching (Code 484), dated May 2011
Residue and Tillage Management, No Till/Strip Till/Direct Seed (Code 329), dated May 2011
Residue and Tillage Management, Mulch Till (Code 345), dated November 2011
Residue and Tillage Management, Ridge Till (Code 346), dated May 2011
Residue Management, Seasonal (Code 344), dated May 2011
Spring Development (Code 574), dated May 2006
Stripcropping (Code 585), dated September 2008
Underground Outlet (Code 620), dated September 2010

This notice, and each of the conservation practice standards included with this notice, can be accessed electronically through the NRCS Web site at http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/technical/cp/ncps/?cid=nrcs143_026849

Federal Register Notice.

NRCS published a notice to solicit public comments about how to improve specific agency conservation practice standards in the *Federal Register* on August 20, 2013, for a 30-day comment period. Comments from the public were accepted during the comment period.

Guidance to the States and the Pacific Islands and Caribbean Areas for complying with the provisions of the 1996 Farm Bill that require advertising for public comment prior to revising NRCS State-level technical guides can be found in Title 450, General Manual, Part 401, Subpart B, Section 401.19.

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