



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

NATIONAL HANDBOOK OF CONSERVATION PRACTICES
450 – VI
NOTICE 145
Amendment 3

June 25, 2008

Purpose. This notice transmits new or revised conservation practice standards, 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 when received.

Explanation. New or revised NCPS:

Filter Strip (Code 393): Significant changes have been made to this standard. The Purposes section has been revised, with the number of purposes reduced to three. The purposes for wildlife habitat have been removed as a primary purpose. In the Criteria section, the slope gradient along the leading edge of the filter strip has been revised from a maximum of 1 percent to not to exceed ½ of the upland slope immediately adjacent to the filter strip. A new design procedure, outlined in Agronomy Technical Note #2, is now mandated to design filter strips planned for sediment removal. The minimum flow length required for irrigation tail water situations has been increased to 20 feet.

Hillside Ditch (Code 423): Clarification was added to the section, “Condition Where Practice Applies,” to clearly state that the standard was not for use to protect buildings, roads, or other improvements. The Criteria section was changed to align design requirements with similar approaches in other standards. Ditch capacity requirements are now based on a storm-runoff peak flow, rather than the current criteria used that based design on a minimum cross sectional area. A maximum ditch spacing criteria was added.

Access Control (Code 472): Significant changes have been made to this standard. Access Control represents a practice name change (from Use Exclusion). Changes were made to update and add clarification to the Definition, Conditions Where the Practice Applies, and Criteria sections. This new practice name better reflects the actual usage of the technology.

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DIST: State Offices, Regional Assistant Chiefs, NHQ Division Directors and Above, and National Center Directors



The practice is critically important to private lands conservation as it will ultimately guide development of specifications on controlling access of animals, people, vehicles, and/or equipment to conservation management units.

Vegetated Treatment Area (formerly titled Wastewater Treatment Strip) (Code 635):

Conservation Practice Standard (635) Vegetated Treatment Area has been completely revised. The current standard is titled “Wastewater Treatment Strip.” The name change better reflects current technology and provides a clear separation from Conservation Practice Standard (393) Filter Strip. The existing practice standard design is based on the Environmental Protection Agency’s Technology Transfer Process Design Manual for Land Treatment of Municipal Wastewater. The practice Criteria section has been changed to reflect current technology for agricultural wastewater treatment developed and tested at several land grant universities. The vegetated treatment area is based on the soils capacity to infiltrate and retain runoff within the root zone and the vegetation’s agronomic nutrient requirements.

Constructed Wetland (Code 656): Changes were made to this standard to clarify its use and to help delineate the differences in function between this standard and Wetland Creation (Code 658). Constructed Wetland (Code 656) is a component of either a wastewater treatment system or system to improve the quality of non-point source runoff. Constructed Wetland (Code 656) would be appropriate for use as a type of storm water treatment basin at the edge of a development. Once the primary purpose of wastewater treatment and water quality improvement are accomplished the standard allows for enhancements to mimic natural wetland values and functions, as appropriate. This differs from Wetland Creation (Code 658) standard, which attempts to directly capture natural wetland functions and values without having to meet the more stringent wastewater treatment and water quality improvement criteria of Constructed Wetland (Code 656).

Instructions. If a hard copy of NHCP is maintained, replace the Contents pages i through vi, dated January 2008, in NHCP with the revised Contents pages found at:
http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/H_450_NHCP_Index_45.rtf.

Insert the new or revised standards in the NHCP in alphabetical order as designated on the revised Contents pages. Remove and archive, as appropriate, the existing practice standard for Filter Strip (Code 393) dated October 2003; Hillside Ditch (Code 423) dated July 2002; Use Exclusion (Code 472) dated April 2005; Wastewater Treatment Strip (Code 635) dated April 2002; Constructed Wetland (Code 656) dated August 2000.

This notice and each of the conservation practice standards included with this notice can be accessed electronically. Access can be through either the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) homepage on the Internet at:
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/Standards/nhcp.html>; or from the FTP server at: <ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/NHQ/practice-standards/standards/>.

Federal Register Notices.

The NRCS published a notice of intent to revise or adopt these standards in the *Federal Register* on January 23, 2008. Comments from the public were accepted for 30 days.

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

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/s/

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