



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

NATIONAL HANDBOOK OF CONSERVATION PRACTICES **August 27, 2008**
450 – VI
NOTICE 146
Amendment 4

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 National Conservation Practice Standards:

Residue Management, Seasonal (Code 344): Substantial changes have been made to this standard. One new purpose was added to address soil condition. Under the “General Criteria” (1) the option to burn residue was removed, as burning residue is not compatible with the purposes of the practice and (2) tillage operations permitted during the residue management period is limited to under cutting tools. The tillage criteria were removed from the “Criteria to Reduce Sheet and Rill and Erosion from Wind” and “Criteria to Provide Food and Escape Cover for Wildlife” sections of the standard. Criteria were added to the “Additional Criteria to Improve Soil Condition”. Under the “Criteria to Manage Snow to Increase Plant-Available Moisture”: (1) the criteria for harvesting equipment stubble height was removed since this is covered in the trapping snow criteria and (2) the tillage and field operations criteria was revised to be done perpendicular to the direction of the prevailing winds. The “Considerations” section was revised to include PM-10, soil organisms, and cover crops.

Grassed Waterway (Code 412): Only one significant change was made to this standard. The “Criteria” section, under the Stability subsection, was changed to require stability analysis based on tractive stress, rather than the velocity approach previously required.

Mulching (Code 484): Significant changes were made to this standard. The “Purpose” section was revised by, (1) adding a purpose for reduction of airborne particulates; and (2) removing increased

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soil fertility from the “improve soil condition” purpose. Under the “General Criteria” section, (1) animal manure was removed as an acceptable mulching material; (2) added criteria to the use of manufactured mulches, and that the rate specified by the manufacturer is the “minimum amount” that is acceptable; and (3) added that the mulch material must also be free from pesticides and chemicals that may impede the planned use of the mulch. Under “Criteria for Soil Moisture” removed the criteria requiring the mulch be applied prior to soil moisture loss. Under the “Criteria for Erosion Control” removed the criteria that the mulch cover shall not exceed 80 percent for wood products and 90 percent for gravel/inorganic mulches. Under “Criteria to Establish Vegetative Cover” the minimum cover was changed from 50 percent to 70 percent, and under “Criteria for Soil Condition” all the criteria for animal manure and fertility were removed.

Drainage Water Management (Code 554): Changes were made to this standard, to better address key issues/concerns in assisting landowners with drainage water management. More emphasis was placed on timing associated with water table management, primarily by adding criteria for allowable management time frames linked to crop planting and harvest. Purposes were edited to reflect more specific impacts of the practice.

Stripcropping (Code 585): Only minor changes were made to this standard. The “General Criteria” section has been revised to require: (1) equal strip widths for erosion susceptible strips and erosion resistant strips; (2) that at least 50 percent of the rotation shall consist of erosion resistant crops or sediment trapping cover; and (3) that the same rotation shall be followed in each adjacent strip while the year of the rotation is staggered to maintain alternating strips in an erosion resistant crop or cover. Under the “Additional Criteria for Soil Erosion by Water ...” section, criteria for maximum row grade has been modified to be the same as the Contouring Standard (330), and criteria was added for cover conditions on the field headlands/end rows. The “Considerations” section of the standard was revised to remove the specific considerations for each of the practice purposes. The “Operations and Maintenance” section of the standard was revised to remove the specific operation and maintenance for each purpose and combined into one common list of activities for operation and maintenance.

Cross Wind Ridges (Code 588): Substantial changes were made to this standard. The practice code is being changed from 589A. The “Purposes” section has been expanded to include providing protection to crops from wind-bourne soil particles, and to reduce soil particulate emissions to air. The criteria for design of ridge height and spacing has been changed to reflect changing prediction technologies and additional criteria has been added to address directional placement and minimum spacing. The “Considerations” section has been greatly expanded to optimize use of the standard.

Terrace (Code 600): Significant editing has been performed on this standard, but no changes of significance were made to its content. Design information that is contained in other agency technical references, such as the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE) parameters and equations for computing ridge heights has been removed. Otherwise, the “Criteria” section of standard has not been substantially altered.

Underground Outlet (Code 620): Significant editing has been performed on this standard, but no changes of significance were made to its content. To add clarity and readability, every section

of the standard was rewritten. However, the underlying design requirements contained in the “Criteria” section have not been significantly modified from the current version of the standard.

Water and Sediment Control Basin (Code 638): Significant editing has been performed on this standard. Every section of the standard was rewritten to add clarity and readability. However, the underlying design requirements contained in the “Criteria” section have not been significantly modified from the current version of the standard. The “Considerations”, “Plans and Specifications”, and “Operations and Maintenance” sections have been significantly expanded.

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_46.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 Residue Management, Seasonal (Code 344) dated November 2002; Grassed Waterway (Code 412) dated February 2000; Mulching (Code 484) dated July 2002; Drainage Water Management (Code 554) dated September 2001; Stripcropping (Code 585) dated July 2002; Cross Wind Ridges (Code 589A) dated July 2002; Terrace (Code 600) dated July 2002; Underground Outlet (Code 620) dated March 2001; and, Water and Sediment Control Basin (Code 638) dated April 2002.

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.

/s/ Doug Toews for

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