

NHCP Exhibit 2 Interim Conservation Practice Standards

Interim conservation practice standards are prepared by the States to address natural resource concerns for which there is no existing conservation practice standard, or to enable the use of new technology where existing standards cannot be revised to include this new technology. An interim conservation practice standard can also be used to field test new technologies.

Development of an interim conservation practice standard and the evaluation of that technology in the field will result in one of the following: 1.) a new national conservation practice standard, 2.) tested technology incorporated into an existing conservation practice standard, or 3.) a decision that the new technology is not considered useable or appropriate and to discard the interim conservation practice standard.

Interim Conservation Practice Standards are issued for a period not to exceed three (3) years. The three year policy allows for adequate time to review and evaluate a new technology or procedure. Extensions to the three year time limit should only be made when data are insufficient to make a final technical evaluation. The need for the extension is documented within the evaluation report.

The following method will be used to develop interim conservation practice standards (see 450 GM 401.17):

Step 1: The State discipline specialist is responsible for developing interim standards based on requests from the State University, Agricultural Research Service (ARS), a landowner, an industry representative, employees at the field office, or other such sources. The format of a State interim standard is the same as that used for National Conservation Practice Standards.

Step 2: After approval by the State Technical Guide Committee, the State Conservationist will submit a copy of the proposed interim conservation practice standard, prepared by the discipline specialist, to the Chair of the National Conservation Practice Standards Subcommittee (NCPSS) to request a practice code number and use approval. National level review consists of referring this interim conservation practice standard to the appropriate national discipline leader who will assure that the request cannot be addressed through an existing practice standard. If the request cannot be addressed through an existing conservation practice standard, a national practice code number (700 series) is assigned to the interim conservation practice standard.

Step 3: Once the practice code number is received, the State Conservationist will direct the State discipline specialist to oversee use and evaluation of the interim standard.

Step 4: The State discipline specialist will prepare an annual written evaluation of the interim conservation practice. At the end of the 3-year evaluation period, a final evaluation report is completed with specific disposition recommendations. The evaluation report should include the following as a minimum: name of the conservation practice, standard code, original justification for the interim standard, number of times practice was used, written evaluation of continuing need, discuss environmental impacts and if there is a better way to accomplish the practice, and recommended disposition (either a new national conservation practice standard; incorporation into existing standard; or discontinuation). The report is provided to the National Technical Guide Committee through the Chair of the NCPSS. If the interim conservation practice standard is recommended as a national standard, the State interim conservation practice standard may be used until the national conservation practice standard is issued. If there is no evaluation report or the interim technology is found unacceptable or unneeded as a national conservation practice standard, the interim conservation practice standard is to be removed from the FOTG and the Conservation Practice Standards (CPS) database.

All interim conservation practice standards are posted to the Conservation Practice web site (<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Technical/Standards/>) to allow States to view what new technology is being used throughout the country. The annual evaluation reviews are included with each State interim conservation practice standard to provide information to others on the progress of evaluating this new technology.

The interim standards web site is arranged into folders that house each interim practice code. The State interim conservation practice standards using that practice code are posted in the folder. The annual evaluation report for each State interim conservation practice standard is also posted in that folder.