



Conservation Practice Overview

Open Channel (Code 582)

An open channel is a natural or artificial channel in which water flows with a free surface.

Practice Information

Constructing, improving, or restoring an open channel can convey water required for flood prevention, drainage, wildlife habitat protection or enhancement, or other authorized water management purpose.



This practice applies to the construction of open channels or modifications of existing streams or ditches with drainage areas exceeding one (1) mi² (1.6 km²).

Construction or modification of an open channel has the potential to impact water quality and quantity. It could also affect the fish and wildlife habitat in the stream and the adjoining riparian areas. In addition, both upstream and downstream channel reaches could change as a result of the construction or modification of a stream segment. Careful planning will reduce the potential effects of this work.

This practice has a minimum expected life of 15 years. Maintenance activities could include reconstruction of damaged areas and revegetation of eroded areas.

Common Associated Practices

Open Channel (582) is commonly applied with conservation practices such as Streambank and Shoreline Protection (580), Critical Area Planting (342), Clearing and Snagging (326), Channel Bed Stabilization (584), Riparian Forest Buffer (391), and Riparian Herbaceous Cover (390).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.