



Conservation Cover

Conservation Practice Job Sheet FL-327-JS

Natural Resources Conservation Service, Florida

March 2004

Land User:		County:	Date:
Farm #:	Tract #:	Assisted By:	



Definition

Conservation cover is establishing and maintaining permanent vegetative cover to protect soil and water resources.

Purposes

This practice is applied as part of a conservation management system to support one or more of the following:

- To reduce soil erosion and sedimentation
- To improve water quality
- Enhance wildlife habitat

Where Used

This practice is applied on land to be retired from agricultural production or on other lands needing permanent protective cover. This practice does not apply to plantings for forage production or to critical area plantings

Conservation Management System

Conservation Cover is a component of a conservation management system for land being retired from agricultural production. Conservation Cover is used to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation, improve water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat. Other facilitating and accelerating practices may be utilized in the system to address natural resource concerns identified during the conservation planning process and to insure the success of the overall system.

Plans and Specifications

Plans and specifications for conservation cover shall be in keeping with the requirements of this standard. The following components shall be included:

- Proper selection of vegetation is essential. Plants will be selected on the basis of species characteristics, site and soil conditions, planned use, maintenance of the treated area, method of planting, time of the year to be planted, and the needs and desires of the land user. Plants that benefit wildlife species are recommended. Inoculate all legume seed with the proper strain of bacteria.
- Good seed and/or vegetative material is essential for establishment success. Follow recommended planting rates, planting dates, and planting depths. Seed, individual plants (shrubs, vines, and sprigs), pine seedlings, and nursery stock plants may be used.
- Crop residue management and conventional planting systems may be used. The seedbed will be firmed where small seed are planted. The amount of lime and fertilizer used will be based on a soil test recommendation, a nutrient management plan, or fertilizer recommendations for practices in a conservation program (i.e. CRP).

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Operation and Maintenance

Operation and maintenance activities address the following:

- Follow nutrient management guidelines for lime and fertilizer needs.
- Control competitive plants, noxious weeds, and non-native invasive species.
- Avoid mowing, burning or brush management during the bird-nesting season, March 1 through July 15.
- Install and maintain firebreaks.

Certification

Certification of this practice can be done by completing Table 2 or completing the FL-CPA-1 form.

Table 1 – Conservation Cover Specifications

Field(s)	Area (ac)	Plant(s)	Planting Rates / Method	Inoculant	Planting Dates

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Table 2 – Certification of Conservation Cover

Field #	Grass (seeded)	Grass (vegetative)	Legume	Other
Type				
Planting Rate				
Acres Planted				
Date Applied				
Measured By				
Application Method				
Fertilization (lbs/ac)	N			
	P ₂ O ₅			
	K ₂ O			
Lime (lbs/ac)				

Does this practice meet NRCS specifications? Yes No

Certified By:	Signature:	Date:
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