



Definition

Crops including grasses, legumes, and forbs for seasonal cover and other conservation purposes.

Purposes

- Reduce erosion from wind and water
- Increase soil organic matter
- Capture and recycle or redistribute nutrients in the soil profile.
- Promote biological nitrogen fixation
- Increase biodiversity
- Weed suppression
- Provide supplemental forage
- Soil moisture management
- Reduce particulate emissions into the atmosphere.
- Minimize and reduce soil compaction

Where Used

On cropland, recreation land, wildlife areas, orchards, vineyards, and groves where vegetative cover is needed for natural resource protection and or improvement.

Resource Management System

Cover crop is normally established concurrently with other conservation practices as part of a resource management system. These practices may include conservation crop rotation, nutrient and pest management, residue management, and waste utilization.

Plans and Specifications

Plans and specifications for cover crop are prepared in accordance with the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide and are designed to meet the resource needs and the producer's objectives. The following components shall be included:

- Proper selection of vegetation is essential. See Table 1 in the Florida Conservation Practice Standard 340 Guidance for a list of common plants used for cover crops. Follow recommended planting rates, dates, and depths, as well as regions of the state for species selected. 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 client. Plants that benefit wildlife species are recommended. Inoculate all legume seed with the proper strain of bacteria.
- Minimum or conventional tillage methods may be used. The seedbed must be firmed when small seed are planted. The amount of lime and fertilizer used will be based on a soil test recommendation and a nutrient management plan.

Operation and Maintenance

Operation and maintenance activities address the following:

- Incorporate the cover crop into the soil by minimum tillage or by conventional tillage. When using minimum tillage the cover crop may be killed with an herbicide.
- Control growth of the cover crop to reduce competition from volunteer plants and shading.
- Use mowing or herbicide applications to control weeds. Timing of mowing or herbicide applications should be based on wildlife considerations.

Certification

This practice can be certified by completing the applied column in the site specific sheet or the FL-CPA-1 form.

COVER CROP SITE SPECIFIC SHEET

Land User:	County:	Date:
------------	---------	-------

Farm #:	Tract #:	Field # (s):
---------	----------	--------------

Purpose (check all that apply)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce erosion from wind and water	<input type="checkbox"/> Weed suppression
<input type="checkbox"/> Increase soil organic matter	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide supplemental forage
<input type="checkbox"/> Manage excess nutrients	<input type="checkbox"/> Soil moisture management
<input type="checkbox"/> Promote biological fixation	<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce emissions to the atmosphere
<input type="checkbox"/> Increase biodiversity	

Layout	Planned	Applied
Species/Cultivars		
Seeding rate (lbs/acre of pure live seed)		
Planting date		
Termination date		

Soil Amend. and Fertilization	Planned	Applied
N Fertilizer per Soil Test – (lbs/acre)		
P ₂ O ₅ Fertilizer per Soil Test – (lbs/acre)		
K ₂ O Fertilizer per Soil Test – (lbs/acre)		

Seedbed Preparation (Include date(s) and methods)

Planting Methods

Operation and Maintenance

As applied does this practice meet NRCS specifications? Yes No

Certified By:	Date:
----------------------	--------------