

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

CONSTRUCTION SPECIFICATIONS

CONTOUR BUFFER STRIPS

1. General Specifications

Procedures, technical details, and other information listed below provide additional guidance for carrying out selected components of the practice. This material is referenced from the conservation practice standard and supplements the requirements and considerations listed therein. Additionally, Kansas Agronomy Technical Notes KS-34 and 42 provide information and guidance for carrying out the named practice components.

Required components of this practice including seedbed preparation, seeding dates, mixtures and necessary methods for establishment will be discussed with the cooperators and recorded in the case file using Form KS-ECS-4, Grass Seeding.

2. Establishment of Permanent Vegetation

The Kansas electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG), Section IV, Conservation Practice 342, Critical Area Planting, shall be used as guidance for planting rates, planting dates, and adaptation and establishment of grasses, forbs, and legumes on contour buffer strips. For plant species, varieties, and adaptation information, refer to Kansas Plant Materials Technical Note 1.

Plant species which maintain stiff, upright, and dense stems throughout the year are preferred in contour buffer strips to induce sediment deposition.

3. Wildlife Habitat Enhancement

Enhancing this practice to include wildlife habitat considerations is compatible with soil erosion and water quality concerns. Native grass mixtures including forbs and legumes shall be used for contour buffer strips when wildlife enhancement is a consideration. Plantings best suited for target wildlife species should be determined in consultation with the area biologist.

4. Contouring Critical Slope Length

The practice standard provides maximum hill-slope length for contour buffer strips in Table 1.

5. Management of Contour Buffer Strips

Mowing or haying of contour buffer strips shall meet the height requirements of the Kansas eFOTG, Section IV, Conservation Practice 511, Forage Harvest Management.

Grazing on fields with contour buffer strips shall not be done during wet periods when hoof action will be detrimental to the buffer strips. Maintenance of vegetative density and height during critical water erosion periods must be accomplished for buffers to function properly. The grazing height requirements for water quality listed in the Kansas eFOTG, Section IV, Conservation Practice 528, Prescribed Grazing, shall be used.

Contour buffer strips, with the exception of native grass/forb/legume mixes, may be fertilized to maintain plant vigor. Applications of fertilizer will follow the guidance of the Kansas FOTG, Section IV, Conservation Practice 590, Nutrient Management.

Protect against the use of pesticides which may damage grass, forbs, and legumes established in the contour buffer strip. The Kansas FOTG, Section IV, Conservation Practice 595, Pest Management, shall be used as guidance when pesticides are used.