



Natural Resources Conservation Service
P.O. Box 2890
Washington, D.C. 20013

March 18, 2010

**NATIONAL HANDBOOK OF CONSERVATION PRACTICES
450 – VI
NOTICE 149
Amendment 7**

Purpose. This notice transmits new or revised National Conservation Practice Standards, along with an updated Index, for insertion into the National Handbook of Conservation Practices (NHCP). In addition, notes are included to highlight key changes made to each document.

Effective Date. This amendment is effective upon receipt.

Explanation. New or revised National Conservation Practice Standards:

Aquaculture Ponds (Code 397) – The revised Conservation Practice Standards 397 has expanded Definition and Purpose sections. The Considerations and Specifications sections are more focused in their scope.

Contour Orchard and Other Perennial Crops (Code 331) – The revision includes several significant changes. This revision changes the practice name from “Contour Orchard and Other Fruit Areas” to “Contour Orchard and Other Perennial Crops,” and adds reduction in transport of sediment and other associated contaminant as a purpose. Also, this revision removes several statements in the criteria that are not applicable to this conservation practice, adds requirements in “Plans and Specifications,” includes the addition of vegetative ground cover and associated benefits as a consideration, and adds references.

Forage and Biomass Planting (Code 512) – The name was changed from Pasture and Hay Planting to Forage and Biomass Planting in recognition of similarities among plant species use for this purpose. Production of feedstock for biofuel production was added as a purpose. The practice remains applicable to all lands where appropriate, but does not include establishment of annually planted food, fiber, or oilseed crops. Additional Considerations have been incorporated. Plans and Specifications now identify specific elements that are to be addressed in the plan.

DIST: S, R, L, and National Center Directors



Forest Trails and Landings (Code 655) – The changes made to the document include the addition of an important Criteria on the re-use of trails in future management activities “designated skid trails” and additional clarification of environmental mitigation measures.

Heavy Use Area Protection (Code 561) – More detail was added to the purposes. The criteria were changed, eliminating specific reference to 4,000 lb. design load. The reference to Design Note 24 was made in lieu of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials publication. Minimum requirements for plan and specification content were added. Minimum requirements for operation and maintenance (O&M) plans were added. References were also added.

Herbaceous Wind Barriers (Code 603) – This revision adds considerations for: beneficial insects and pollinators; and sequestering of carbon, native plant materials, invasive species, and micro-environment for plant growth. Also, this revision moves “food and cover for wildlife” from the “Purpose” section to “Considerations,” adds “tolerance to soil deposition” as a criterion under “Vegetation,” expands “Conditions where Practice Applies” to include lands where forages are grown, removes instruction statements for preparation of State standards, adds requirements in “Plans and Specifications,” and updates barrier criteria to include the most current technology and references.

Integrated Pest Management (Code 595) – The practice was revised to include specific NRCS Integrated Pest Management (IPM) risk reduction techniques to address identified hazards related to cultural, biological, and chemical pest suppression strategies. A technical note has been developed to support the implementation of the NRCS IPM mitigation techniques. The name of the standard was changed to reflect the IPM approach to reduce the risks/hazards related to pest prevention, avoidance, monitoring, and suppression activities.

Obstruction Removal (Code 500) – The definition was edited to add “works of improvement” and “debris,” while “landscape features” was eliminated. To the conditions where practice applies, two statements were added: “public safety and infrastructure” and “does not apply to aquatic environments.” The Criteria section was completely re-written to add more detail, including safety and environmental concerns, and more detail for stabilization of the site after removal work. Considerations were added related to recycling, dust suppression, erosion and sediment control, working in environmentally sensitive areas, and safety and wildlife habitat. Minimum requirements for plan and specification content were added; minimum requirements for O&M plans were added; and additional references were added.

Pumping Plant (Code 533) – The definition was expanded to identify pumping plant components; purposes were expanded to address various resource concerns; new criteria was added for Variable Frequency Drives, Photovoltaic Panels, Windmills, and Hydraulic Rams; additional criteria was provided, corresponding to the newly expanded purposes.

Sediment Basin (Code 350) – The definition changed to better define the type of basin; the purpose changed to reflect the sediment capturing function of the basin; conditions where practice applies changed to define land uses where the practice applies and the physical conditions where the practice is applicable, which are the same as Pond (Code 378); criteria were

added for location, basin capacity, spillway design, basin shape, embankment and side slopes, vegetation, and safety while a drawing was added to better define the storage capacities; considerations were added related to improved functioning of the basin, visual concerns, and safety and wildlife habitat; minimum requirements for plan and specification content were added; minimum requirements for O&M plans were added; and additional references were added.

Spoil Spreading (Code 572) – The criteria was edited and a section specifically for spreading of spoil along channels was added; consideration was added for evaluating channels capacity; minimum requirements for plan and specification content were added; minimum requirements for O&M plans were added; and references were added.

Trails and Walkways (Code 568) - The title was changed from Recreation Trail and Walkway. The definition changed to include farm workers, construction/maintenance access, and small walk-behind equipment. The purpose changed to include agricultural and construction/maintenance purposes. Conditions where the practice applies was changed to cover recreational, agricultural, and non-agricultural installations. Criteria changed to include more detailed requirements for all land uses and information was added on accessibility of public access trails. Considerations were added on maximum grades, drainage issues, parking issues, scenic values, fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, and wind erosion. Minimum requirements for plan and specification content were added. Minimum requirements for O&M plans were added and additional references were added.

Vegetative Barrier (Code 601) – The primary revision included the addition to use the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation, Version 2 for the design and spacing of the vegetative barriers. Other revisions included edits to improve clarity.

Prescribed Forestry (Code 409) – Rescission of this practice will be effective October 1, 2009. This practice has been replaced by Forest Management Plan (Code 106).

Instructions. If a hard copy of the NHCP is maintained, replace the Content pages i through vi, dated November 2008, with the revised Contents pages found at:
http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/H_450_NHCP_Index_149.pdf.

Insert the new or revised standards, listed above in bold, in the NHCP in alphabetical order as designated on the revised Contents pages. Remove and archive, as appropriate, the existing practice standard for:

Aquaculture Ponds (Code 397) dated March 2003; Contour Orchard and Other Perennial Crops (Code 331) dated March 2003; Pasture and Hay Planting (Code 512) dated September 2003; Forest Trails and Landings (Code 655) dated January 2006; Heavy Use Area Protection (Code 561) dated October 2003; Herbaceous Wind Barriers (Code 603) dated October 2003; Integrated Pest Management (Code 595) dated March 2001; Obstruction Removal (Code 500) dated April 2002; Prescribed Forestry (Code 409) dated May 2006; Pumping Plant (Code 533) dated July 2002; Sediment Basin (Code 350) dated September 2003; Spoil Spreading (Code 572) dated

September 2003; Recreation Trail and Walkway (Code 568) dated November 2002; and Vegetative Barrier (Code 601) dated October 2003.

This notice, and each of the conservation practice standards included with this notice, can be accessed electronically. Access can be through either the NRCS homepage on the Internet at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/Standards/nhcp.html>; or from the FTP server at: <ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/NHQ/practice-standards/standards/>.

Federal Register Notices

NRCS published a notice of intent to revise or adopt these standards in the *Federal Register* on August 28, 2009. Comments from the public were accepted during the 30-day comment period.

Guidance to the States and the Pacific Islands and Caribbean Areas can be found in Title 450, Technology, General Manual, Section 401.19 for complying with the provisions of the 1996 Farm Bill that require advertising for public comment prior to revising NRCS State-level technical guides.

/s/

NOLLER P. HERBERT
Director
Conservation Engineering Division

/s/

MICHAEL D. HUBBS
Director
Ecological Sciences Division