NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

RECREATION LAND GRADING AND SHAPING

(ac.)
CODE 566

DEFINITION

Reshaping the surface of the land to support recreation land use.

PURPOSE

This practice may be applied as part of a resource management system to support one or more of the following purposes:

Establish or improve effective use of the land area for recreation.

Minimize onsite and offsite damage to resources from recreation land use.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On land areas where surface irregularities, slopes, obstructions, or surface drainage interfere with planned recreational use or where such use requires designed land surfaces.

CRITERIA

Laws and Regulations. This practice must comply with all federal, state, local and tribal laws and regulations. Laws and regulations of particular concern include those involving water and drainage rights, zoning, land use, land disturbance by construction, pollution control, property easements, wetlands, Waters of the United States, preservation of cultural resources, and endangered species.

General. Grading or shaping must compliment the overall recreation area and aesthetically blend with the landscape and surroundings.

Grading or shaping must minimize adverse on-site and off-site impacts such as accelerated erosion, riparian zone degradation, streambank and channel damage, hydrology modification or water resource damage, or damage to wildlife habitat, fragmentation, or restriction of wildlife movement.

Grading and Shaping. If only shaping is required, the cuts and fills may be estimated using a minimum amount of surveying. If grading to uniform surfaces is required, the design shall be based on a complete topographic or grid survey. Grading and shaping for specific uses, such as athletic fields shall be according to the requirements of the use.

Cuts and fills shall be balanced as appropriate.

In areas to be vegetated, soil compaction and displacement shall be kept to a minimum.

Surface drainage. Plans shall include measures for managing excess surface water.

Erosion control. Designs shall include erosion control. Erosion must be controlled as soon as practicable after construction. If use, soil or climatic conditions preclude the use of vegetation, and protection is needed, non-vegetative means, such as mulches or gravel, may be used. Seedbed preparation, seeding, fertilizing, and mulching shall be according to South Dakota (SD) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) practice standard Critical Area Treatment (342). Use vegetation adapted to the site that will accomplish the purpose. Preference shall be given to native plant species.

CONSIDERATIONS

Consider saving and maintaining key trees and other vegetation that have scenic value, provide shade, reduce erosion, and runoff, provide habitat for wildlife, and/or add to the visual quality of the area. Equipment travel or parking should not be allowed within an imaginary circle on the ground defined by the dripline of the crown of key trees.

Consider maintaining or improving habitat for fish and wildlife where applicable.

Where feasible and appropriate, soil material suited for plant growth should be salvaged, stockpiled, and protected for use as final cover material.

Consider adjoining land uses and the proximity of residences, utilities, cultural resources, threatened and endangered species, wetlands, environmentally sensitive areas, areas of special scenic value, and farm/business operations.

Consider the effects of increased activities on the quality of both surface and ground water quality.

Consider requirements of Americans with Disabilities Act, where appropriate.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications for recreation land grading and shaping must meet this standard and include requirements needed to achieve the purpose. Plans and specifications shall include construction plans, drawings, job sheets, or other similar documents. These documents shall specify the requirements for installing the practice, including the kind, amount, and quality of materials to be used.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE (O&M)

An O&M plan shall be prepared for and reviewed with the landowner or operator. The plan shall specify that the treated areas and associated practices are inspected annually and after significant storm events to identify repair and maintenance needs.