

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

OBSTRUCTION REMOVAL

(Acre)
CODE 500

DEFINITION

Removal and disposal of unwanted, unsightly or hazardous buildings, structures, vegetation, landscape features, and other materials.

PURPOSES

To safely remove and dispose of unwanted obstructions and materials in order to apply conservation practices or facilitate planned use of abandoned mine lands, farms, ranches, construction sites, and recreation areas.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On land where existing obstructions interfere with planned use and development.

CRITERIA

Obstruction removal shall be planned, designed, and carried out to meet all federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Rock piles, boulders, stones, fences, hedgerows, abandoned buildings and structures, trash, and similar obstructions that would interfere with planned use and development shall be removed. All debris such as broken concrete and masonry, structural steel and wood, stones, stumps, slash, and sterile or toxic soil shall be disposed of so that they will not impede subsequent work or cause damage to offsite or other areas.

Disposal shall be by burning, burying, or removing to an approved landfill in an environmentally acceptable manner.

All required gully shaping shall be performed to specified dimensions and grades. Fills shall be compacted as appropriate. The cover over buried materials shall be designed to be adequate for the planned use, treatment, and vegetation.

Appropriate erosion control practices shall be applied on disturbed areas.

CONSIDERATIONS

Cultural Resources Considerations

NRCS's objective is to avoid any effect to cultural resources and protect them in their original location. Determine if installation of this practice will have any effect on any cultural resources.

Document any specific considerations for cultural resources in the design docket and the Practice Requirements worksheet.

GM 420, Part 401, the California Environmental Handbook and the California Environmental Assessment Worksheet provide guidance on how the NRCS must account for cultural resources. The Field Office Technical Guide, Section II contains general information, with Web sites for additional information.

Endangered Species Considerations

Determine if installation of this practice, along with any others proposed, will have an effect on any federal or state listed Rare, Threatened or Endangered species or their habitat. NRCS's objective is to benefit these species and others of concern, or at least not have any adverse effect on a listed species. If the Environmental Evaluation indicates that the action may adversely affect a listed species or result in adverse modification of habitat of listed species which has been determined to be critical habitat, NRCS will advise the land user of the requirements of the Endangered Species Act and recommend alternative conservation treatments that avoid the adverse effects. Further assistance will be provided only if the landowner selects one of the alternative conservation treatments for installation; or at the request of the landowners, NRCS may initiate consultation with

the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service and/or California Department of Fish and Game. If the Environmental Evaluation indicates the action will not affect a listed species or result in adverse modification of critical habitat, consultation generally will not apply and usually would not be initiated. Document any special considerations for endangered species in the Practice Requirements Worksheet.

Water Quantity

1. Effects upon components of the water budget, especially effects on volume and rate of runoff, infiltration, evaporation, transpiration, deep percolation, and ground water recharge.

Water Quality

1. Effects on the visual quality or downstream water resources;
2. Short-term and construction-related effects on the quality of water resources;
3. Potential uncovering or redistributing toxic materials such as saline soils.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications shall be prepared in accordance with the criteria of this standard and shall describe the requirements for applying the practice to achieve its intended use.

REFERENCES

California NRCS Environmental Handbook,
October 2001,
<http://www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov/rts/ENVHNB/environehandbook1.html>