United States Department of Agriculture

Conservation Practice Standard Overview

Conservation Cover (327)

Conservation cover is establishing and maintaining perennial vegetative cover to protect soil and water resources on lands needing permanent protective cover that will not be used for forage production.

Practice Information

Conservation cover reduces soil erosion and sedimentation, enhances wildlife habitat, and improves water quality.

Conservation cover is applied on all lands needing permanent vegetative cover. It does not apply to plantings for forage production or to critical area plantings.

Operation and maintenance of the conservation cover includes mowing to control weeds and maintain vegetative cover. Additional measures may be necessary to control noxious weeds and other invasive species.

If wildlife habitat enhancement is a goal, maintenance practices and activities must not disturb cover during the reproductive period for the desired species. To benefit insect food sources for grassland nesting birds, spraying or other control of noxious weeds will be done on a “spot” basis to protect forbs and legumes

that benefit native pollinators and other wildlife.

Common Associated Practices

Conservation Cover (327) is commonly applied with practices such as Brush Management (314), Critical Area Planting (342), Tree and Shrub Establishment (612), and Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.