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CALIFORNIA TECHNICAL GUIDE 450-VI

TECHNICAL GUIDE NOTICE NO. 115

SUBJECT: Issue New and Revised Documents to the Field Office Technical Guide Sections I & IV.

Purposes:

1. To issue the State NRCS Fish and Wildlife Plan
2. To issue revised California conservation practice standards

Effective Date: When contents are received.

Explanation:

Section I: NRCS State Fish and Wildlife Plan will be posted to Reference Lists, Biology References. The plan identifies highest priority habitats and fish & wildlife species targeted for program funds to help facilitate creation, restoration and enhancement of these habitats and species.

Section IV: The following California Approved and Interim Conservation Practice Standards and Specifications have been revised, added, or removed in Section IV of eFOTG:

Code	Practice Name	Std	Spec	PR	O&M	SOW
734	Fish and Wildlife Structure (Interim) – <i>Nest Structures, Complex</i>		JS			
734	Fish and Wildlife Structure (Interim) – <i>Nesting/Loafing Levees and Islands</i>		JS			
595	Integrated Pest Management		Remove	Remove		•
344	Residue Management, Seasonal – <i>344A-Rice Residue Management</i>		JS	Remove		
490	Tree/Shrub Site Preparation – <i>490B-Forestland</i>		•	•		
644	Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management		JS			

590	Nutrient Management	•	•	Remove		•
590	<i>Nutrient Loss Risk Assessment Supplement (Reference added to Practice Folder)</i>					

Narrative Summary of Changes to Standards

Fish and Wildlife Structure (Interim Practice) (Code 734) – Revised the Nesting/Loafing Levees and Islands Job Sheet and added a new Job Sheet for Nest Structures Complex. A Job Sheet includes an overview of the Practice, Specifications for constructions, References, and a blank Practice Requirements form for site specific decisions.

Integrated Pest Management (Code 595) – Updated the Statement of Work. Remove the old Specifications and Practice Requirements; these no longer apply to the new Practice Standard. Specifications and Practice Requirements will be developed in consultation with the State Agronomist.

Residue Management, Seasonal (Code 344) – Added a new Job Sheet for Rice Residue Management.

Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (Code 490) – Revised the Specifications Sheet for 490B-Tree/Shrub Site Preparation - Forestland

Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (Code 644) – Added a new Job Sheet.

Nutrient Management (Code 590) – Changes as per the NHCP Notice 157 include:

- 1) Minimum national implementation requirements and guidance for nutrient management are delivered by means of the following NRCS documents:
 - a. NRCS National Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) Code 590, Nutrient Management,
 - b. NRCS Title 190, General Manual (GM), Part 402, National Nutrient Management Policy,
 - c. NRCS Title 190, National Instruction (NI), Part 302, Nutrient Management Policy Implementation.

All NRCS nutrient management policy and guidance documents (a, b, and c above) have been revised effective December 2011.

- 2) The previous version precluded applications to frozen, snow-covered, or saturated soils. With these activities comes a high probability that local water quality will be degraded. It precludes these applications, but allows for an exemption under certain conditions. It states, “Nutrients must not be surface-applied if nutrient losses offsite are likely. This precludes spreading on:

- frozen and/or snow-covered soils, and
- when the top 2 inches of soil are saturated from rainfall or snow melt.

Exceptions for the above criteria can be made for surface-applied manure when specified conditions are met and adequate conservation measures are installed to prevent the offsite delivery of nutrients. The adequate treatment level and specified conditions for winter applications of manure shall be defined by NRCS in concurrence with the water quality control authority in the State.”

- 3) The previous standard included controlling water erosion to a quality criteria level (T) as a consideration. The updated standard states that sheet, rill, and wind erosion must be managed to protect water quality, or if erosion rates are greater than “T,” that an additional site assessment for nutrient and soil loss be conducted to determine if mitigation practices are needed to protect water quality. With this policy revision, erosion control requirements are covered in 190-GM, Part 402.
- 4) The previous standard required phosphorus risk assessments by means of a State-approved phosphorus risk assessment. The States were allowed to utilize a threshold, soil test phosphorus, or P-Index approach to phosphorus loss risk assessments. The revised policy requires that all phosphorus risk assessment tools be based on the P-Index approach. States can use risk assessment prescreening tools to reduce the workload associated with the assessments. Requirements for States’ P-Index tools and information about standardization of States’ risk categories, and interpretation of assessment results are contained in NI 190-302.
- 5) The previous standard required phosphorus risk assessments in accordance with land-grant university guidelines. Guidance for limiting the application of phosphorus to fields was somewhat vague and States could impose application restrictions as they wanted. With the release of the new policy, acceptable phosphorus application rates will be determined based on phosphorus risk assessment results. **Low** risk will allow phosphorus applications at rates greater than crop removal; **moderate** risk will require that phosphorus be applied not to exceed the crop removal rate; and **high** risk will require that phosphorus be applied not to exceed the crop removal rate, that a drawdown strategy be in place, and that a site assessment for nutrients and soil loss be conducted to determine if mitigation practices are required to protect local water quality. Phosphorus applications to meet multiple-year crop-phosphorus needs are still allowed by the updated standard.
- 6) The previous standard did not include emerging strategies or technologies like adaptive nutrient management, organic crop production, precision agriculture, or enhanced-efficiency fertilizer products. The updated standard includes criteria and considerations for these topics. This enables States to consider their potential use tied to USDA program funding. CPS Code 590 provides an NRCS definition and describes the NRCS role in the delivery and implementation of the adaptive nutrient management strategy at the State level.
- 7) The updated CPS Code 590 underscores the importance of the 4Rs concept of site-specific nutrient management planning (i.e., right amount, right source, right placement, and right timing). This approach promotes the coordination of a system of conservation practices that will prevent, control, or trap nutrients before they are delivered to surface or ground water.
- 8) The previous standard omitted biosolids as a potential source of plant nutrients. The updated CPS Code 590 corrects this oversight
- 9) The previous standard criteria requiring adherence to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations, 40 CFR Parts 403 (pretreatment) and 503 (biosolids), has been removed from the updated CPS Code 590 per EPA’s request.

Location of Documents

The California eFOTG, located on the web at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/efotg/> and in my.nrcs at <https://my.nrcs.usda.gov/default.aspx>, is being updated to reflect these changes to Sections I and IV. Previous document versions will be moved to the Archived folders.

The Log of Technical Guide Notices (Section I) and Index of Conservation Practice, both numerical and alphabetical, (Section IV) have been updated.



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Attachments: (electronic)

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