United States Department of Agriculture

NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

Filter Strip

Conservation Practice Job Sheet FL-393-JS

Natural Resources Conservation Service, Florida **September 2011**

Filter Strip between Stream and Cropland

A filter strip is an area of grass or other permanent vegetation used to reduce sediment, organics, nutrients, pesticides, and other contaminants from runoff and to maintain or improve water quality. The purpose of a filter strip is to intercept undesirable contaminates from runoff before they enter a waterbody. They provide a buffer between the contaminant source, such as crop fields, and waterbodies, such as streams and ponds. Filter strips slow the velocity of the water, allowing for the settling out of suspended soil particles, infiltration of runoff and soluble pollutants, adsorption of pollutants on soil and plant surfaces, and uptake of soluble pollutants by plants. Secondary benefits of filter strips are forage, both on farm use or as a cash crop, field borders, turnrows and headlands, access, and aesthetics.

Filter strips can be used at the lower edge of crop fields; on fields that border streams, ponds, lakes, and drainageways; as part of a riparian forest buffer system; where there is sheet or uniform shallow flow; part of an agricultural waste management system; installed on the contour; on slopes less than 10 percent.

Filter strips can enhance wildlife objectives depending on the vegetative species that is used and the management that is practiced. Consider using native or adapted species that provide food and cover for wildlife. Delay mowing of the filter area until after the nesting season.

Operation and maintenance will be to mow (and harvest if possible) the filter strip grasses several times a year to encourage dense vegetative growth. Control undesirable weed species. Inspect and repair after storm events to fill in gullies, remove flow disrupting sediment accumulation, reseed disturbed areas, and take other measures to prevent concentrated flow in the filter strip. Lime and fertilize to soil test recommendations. Exclude livestock and vehicular traffic from filter strip during wet periods of the year since filter strips rely on infiltration for reducing contaminants. It is recommended that this type of traffic be excluded at all times to the extent that is practical. Restoration is required once the filter strip has accumulated so much sediment that it is no longer effective.

Certification of this practice can be done by completing the applied columns.

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Natural Resources Conservation Service, Florida **September 2011**

Filter Strip
SITE SPECIFIC SHEET

Client:		County:	Date:
Farm #:	Tract #:	Field # (s):	Contract #:

Purpose\Needs (check all that apply)

- ☐ Reduce suspended solids and associated contaminants in runoff
- ☐ Reduce dissolved contaminant loadings in runoff
- ☐ Reduce suspended solids and associated contaminants in irrigation tailwater
- ☐ Other

Layout	**Strip 1**		**Strip 2**		**Strip 3**	
	Planned	Applied	Planned	Applied	Planned	Applied
Strip width (ft)						
Strip length (ft)						
Area of filter strip (ac)						
Slope (%)						
Species #1						
Species #2						
Species #3						
Seeding rate (PLS) (lb./acre)						
Sprigging rate						
Planting Date						

Site Preparation

e.g., Prepare firm seedbed. Apply lime and fertilizer according to recommendations

Planting Method(s)

e.g., Drill grass and legume seed _____ inches deep uniformly over area. Establish stand of vegetation according to recommended seeding rate. If necessary, mulch newly seeded area with _____ tons per acre of mulch material. May seed small grain as a companion crop at the rate of _____ pounds per acre, but clip or harvest before it heads out

Maintenance

e.g., Maintain original width and depth of the grass area. Regularly remove debris and sediment from filter area. Harvest, mow, reseed, and fertilize to maintain good vegetation. Inspect after major storms, remove trapped sediment, and repair any eroding areas. Shut off pesticide sprayers when turning on a field border

Additional Notes:

The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.

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Natural Resources Conservation Service, Florida September 2011

Filter Strip
SITE SPECIFIC SHEET

Planner/Technical Service Provider:

_____ _____

Designed by Date

_____ _____

Approved by Date

Certification

This practice(s) as applied **meets** Florida NRCS standards and specifications for Filter Strip Code 393.

_____ _____

Planner/Technical Service Provider Date

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