

Land User	County
Farm #	Date
Tract #	Assisted by

Critical Area Planting



Definition

Critical areas are areas where severe soil erosion is occurring, or is expected, as a result of exposing soil to air or water. Examples of critical areas in inland areas are dams, dikes, diversions, grassed waterways, mine spoil, levees, cuts, fills, borrow pits, reclaimed surface mines, road banks and denuded or gullied areas. Perennial vegetation, such as pasture grasses, may be difficult to establish in some of these area by usual planting methods.

Purposes

This practice is applied as part of a conservation management system to support one or more of the following purposes:

- Stabilize areas with existing or expected high rates of soil erosion by water (or, in some cases, wind)
- Stabilize soil of stream and channel banks and other shorelines. However, this jobsheet is primarily for land-based conservation systems
- Stabilize sand dunes and riparian areas

Conservation Management System

Rarely does one conservation practice provide the treatment needed for all of our natural resources. Critical area planting is a component of conservation management systems. A conservation management system is a combination of conservation practices and management that achieves a level of treatment for our soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources while also meeting the objectives of the land user. In addition to critical area planting, additional conservation practices are often needed.

General Specifications

Remove obstructions prior to planting. Apply lime, fertilizer and/or compost, seed, mulch or a nurse crop and other relevant components of the standard. Grass species and other information are described in the standard, appendices and the statement of work. Do not burn,

disk or mow the permanent grass vegetation April 1 - August 31 because nesting birds and fawns may be there during this period.

Practice Lifetime 10 years

Table 2. Planned Critical Area Management Specifications

Purpose or Activity	Technical Description
Purpose and current conditions	
Location	
Mulch/mat specifications	
Site and seedbed preparation	
Percent cover of soil or rate	
Anchoring	
Fertilizer source, rate and application method	
pH, lime rate and application method	
Annual vegetation	
Perennial vegetation	
Additional protection applied	
Supplemental water added	
Successful establishment	See O&M below

Table 1 – Critical are species planting information for all purposes.

Field/Locati on/Acres	Planned/Alternative Species	Source	Planting Date	PLS ¹ Seeding Rate (lbs./ac.) or Plant Spacing	Depth (in.)

¹PLS represents Pure Live Seed. To calculate PLS, multiply the purity % times the germination %. Then divide the recommended seeding rate by the PLS to get the actual seeding rate.

For example: Rye seed has a purity of 90% and germination of 85%.

Step 1: The PLS = 0.90 X 0.85 = 0.77. (Only 77% of the material in the sack of seed is seed that will germinate.)

Step 2: Divide the recommended seeding rate (60 lb. in this example) by 0.77 to get the actual seeding rate of 78 pounds per acre that is needed in order to be planting 60 pounds of good seed.

Note: The use of seed with a low PLS usually has low vigor and will not grow satisfactorily

Operation and Maintenance

Use of the area shall be managed as long as necessary to ensure the site remains stable.

Plantings shall be protected from pests (e.g. weeds, insects, diseases, livestock, or wildlife) as necessary to ensure long-term survival.

Inspections, reseeding or replanting, and fertilization may be needed to ensure that this practice functions as intended throughout its expected life. Observation of establishment progress and success should be performed at regular intervals until the practice has met the criteria for successful establishment and implementation.

Use of the area shall be managed as long as necessary to stabilize the site and achieve the intended purpose. Maintain the perennial grass to a height no less than 6 inches (Georgia NRCS Access (Code 472) and Prescribed Grazing (Code 528) Standards. Control weeds and woody vegetation by annual mowing (Forage and Biomass Pasture and Hay Planting (Code 512), Brush Management (314) or Herbaceous Weed Control (315). Apply fertilizer and lime for the maintenance of perennial grasses and other cover species according to the results of a current soil test. Control or exclude pests that will interfere with the timely establishment of vegetation.

Inspections, reseeding or replanting, fertilization, and pest control may be needed to insure that this practice functions as intended throughout its expected life. Observation of establishment progress and success should be performed at regular intervals until the practice has met the criteria for successful establishment and implementation.

As mentioned above, do not burn, disk or mow permanent vegetation during the fawning and nesting season April 1-August 31 throughout the state (Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division, Nongame-Endangered Wildlife Program. 1996).

Exclude grazing permanently on cut banks, areas of seepage or other potential unstable areas.

For More Information

Contact your local NRCS Office and Soil or Water Conservation District.

Jobsheet Certifications

Prepared by

_____ Title _____ Date _____

Approved by

_____ Title _____ Date _____

Installation Meets NRCS Standards and Specifications

Certified by

_____ Title _____ Date _____

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.