

# Field Border

Georgia  
**Conservation Practice Job Sheet – 386** (10/15)

Land User \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Farm # \_\_\_\_\_ Tract # \_\_\_\_\_ Assisted By \_\_\_\_\_

## Field Border



### Definition

A field border is a strip of permanent vegetation established along the inside perimeter or inside edge of a field.

### Where Used

Field borders are used at the edges of cropland fields and pastures and to connect other buffer practices within the field. They may also apply to recreation land or other land uses where agronomic crops are grown.

### Purposes

This practice is frequently applied as part of a conservation management system. Although there are several purposes of this practice, the objective of implementing the practice usually involves primarily the first three purposes below with an emphasis on establishing native plants to enhance wildlife. Select a purpose in Table 1 and provide the species and seeding information in the other tables in this jobsheet and/or other standards.

### Conservation Management System

Rarely does one conservation practice provide the treatment needed for all of our natural resources. Field borders are a component of conservation management systems which is a combination of conservation practices and management that achieves a level of treatment for our soil, water, air, energy, plant, and animal resources while also meeting the objectives of the land user. In addition to field borders, additional practices such as residue management, nutrient management, pest management, critical area planting, tree/shrub establishment, and various structures are often needed.

### General Specifications

- Field borders are at least 15 feet wide and will be wide enough to allow the turning of farm equipment.
- Proper selection of vegetation is essential. Plants will be selected on the basis of species characteristics, site and soil conditions, method of planting, time of the year to be planted, and the needs and desires of the land user. Plants that benefit wildlife species are recommended. Native plants may be used.
- Lime and fertilizer will be applied according to soil test recommendations and a nutrient management plan.
- Good seed and/or vegetative material is needed. Follow recommended planting rates and planting dates. Inoculate all legume seed with the proper strain of bacteria.

## **Plans and Specifications Applicable to All Purposes**

Prepare plans and specifications for each field or treatment unit according to the Criteria included in this Standard.

Specifications shall describe the requirements for applying this practice to meet the intended purpose(s). The following components shall be included for recording this specification:

- Field Border widths and lengths based on local design criteria.
- Field Border location(s) within the field(s) or farm boundary.
- Species to be used and the location and planting density of the species used.
- Site preparation requirements.
- Timing of planting and planting method.
- Liming or fertilizer requirements.
- Operation and maintenance requirements.

## **Operation and Maintenance**

- Follow nutrient management guidelines for lime and fertilizer needs.
- Control competitive plants and noxious weeds.
- Repair storm damage.
- Remove sediment from above, within and along the leading edge of the field border when accumulated sediment either alters the function of the field border or threatens the degradation of the planted species.
- Shut off sprayers and raise tillage equipment to avoid damage to field borders.
- Shape and reseed border areas damaged by animals, chemicals, tillage, or equipment traffic.
- Do not use the field border as a hay yard or machinery parking lot for any extended period of time, especially if doing so will damage or impair the function of the field border.

- Maintain desired vegetative communities and plant vigor by liming, fertilizing, mowing, disking, or burning and controlling noxious and invasive weeds to sustain effectiveness of the border.
- Repair and reseed ephemeral gullies and rills that develop in the border.
- Minimally invasive vertical tillage (e.g. paraplowing) may be performed in rare cases where compaction and vehicle traffic have degraded the field border function. The purpose of the tillage is strictly to relieve soil compaction and increase infiltration rates so as to provide a better media for reestablishment of vegetation and field border function.
- When managing for wildlife, maintenance activities that result in disturbance of vegetation should not be conducted during the primary nesting, fawning and calving seasons April 1-August 31 throughout the state. Activities should be timed to allow for regrowth before the growing season ends whenever possible.
- Periodic removal of some products such as medicinal herbs, nuts, and fruits is permitted provided the conservation purpose is not compromised by the loss of vegetation or harvesting disturbance.
- Avoid vehicle traffic when soil moisture conditions are saturated.
- Maintain records of the field border maintenance as needed by the land user.

**Practice Lifespan** 10 years

## **Additional Guidelines**

Use low maintenance plants on most sites to ensure long lasting erosion reduction. Field borders can enhance wildlife objectives. The benefits depend on the vegetative species used and the management practiced.

**Reference**

Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division, Nongame-Endangered Wildlife Program. 1996.

Georgia breeding bird atlas handbook. Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Forsyth, Georgia. p. 52-65.

**Table 1. Seeding/Planting rates for field border by purpose**

Purpose and Minimum Width	Species and Seeding Rates
Wildlife (30 ft.)	<p>The following tools for evaluating wildlife habitat within cropland are located in FOTG and can be accessed using this link <a href="http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/toc.aspx?CatID=2918">http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/toc.aspx?CatID=2918</a>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wildlife Habitat Suitability Index (for general wildlife habitat evaluation and planning)</li> <li>• 327 Conservation Cover Pollinator Job Sheet</li> <li>• Native Bee Pollinator Habitat Assessment Form and Guide – Farms and Agricultural Landscapes</li> <li>• Beneficial Insect Habitat Assessment Form and Guide.</li> </ul>
Reduce erosion (15 ft.)	Use current water and wind erosion software to determine the required surface or canopy cover. See the Critical Area Planting (342) or Pasture, Hay Planting (512) standards or the native warm season grass options for erosion control and wildlife in the Conservation Cover (327) jobsheet.
Protect soil and water quality (30 ft.)	See Critical Area Planting (342) or Pasture or Hay Planting (512) standards. Also, see the native warm season grass options for erosion control and wildlife in the Conservation Cover (327) jobsheet.
Increase carbon storage or improve air quality (20 ft.)	Seed gamma grass or a mixture of big bluestem, Indian grass and switchgrass at 10-12 lbs./ac. PLS

Table 2. Record field operations and the amount of residue (dry lbs./acre, Appendix I) for each crop for the entire rotation needed for RUSLE2, or other software, if the purpose is to reduce erosion. Attach software printout or provide soil loss (t./ac.) compared to tolerable level.

Date	Notes

**Table 3. Field border specifications**

<b>Field</b>	<b>Width (feet)</b>	<b>Length (feet)</b>	<b>Area (ac.)</b>	<b>Plants</b>	<b>PLS<sup>1/</sup> Planting Rates (acre)</b>	<b>Inoculant</b>	<b>Planting Dates</b>
<b>Planting Method:</b> _____ Conventional or _____ Residue Management (no-till, strip-till, etc.)							
<b>Site Preparation including lime and fertilizer:</b>							
<b>Additional Inputs:</b> _____							

<sup>1/</sup> PLS represents Pure Live Seed and is a measure of seed quality. To determine the PLS, multiply the % purity of the seed times the % germination. Then divide this value into the recommended seeding rate to calculate the actual seeding rate. This will tell you the amount of that seed to be planted per acre.

**Table 4. Notes regarding establishment and management of field borders**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Date/Operation and Management Notes</b>

**Jobsheet Certifications**

**Prepared by**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Title** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Approved by**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Title** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Installation Meets NRCS Standards and Specifications**

**Certified by**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Title** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

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