

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

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

### Filter Strip



#### Definition

A filter strip is a buffer, or area of herbaceous (non-woody) vegetation, that removes contaminants from water flowing over the land towards adjacent areas.

#### Purposes

Select one or more of the following purposes to apply this practice as part of a conservation management system:

\_\_\_ To reduce suspended solids and associated contaminants in runoff (20 ft. minimum flow length)

\_\_\_ To reduce dissolved contaminant loading in runoff (30 ft. minimum flow length)

\_\_\_ To reduce sediment, particulate organics, and sediment adsorbed contaminant load in surface irrigation tailwater. (Not likely to be used in Georgia for this purpose.)

#### Conservation Management System

Rarely does one conservation practice provide the treatment needed to address all natural resource concerns. Filter strips are 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 energy, soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources while also meeting the objectives of the land user.

In addition to filter strips, practices such as reduced tillage, cover crop, upland wildlife habitat management, nutrient management, pest management and various structures are often needed.

#### General Specifications

- Use Technical Note No. 2 (Using RUSLE2 for the Design and Predicted Effectiveness of Vegetative Filter Strips (VFS) for Sediment) and the Excel spreadsheet (Filter Strip Lifespan Design for Sediment) to determine whether the filter strip meets the required 10 year minimum lifespan for reducing suspended soil. File a printout of spreadsheet with the plan.
- Proper selection of vegetation is essential. Plants will be selected on the basis of species characteristics, site and soil conditions, maintenance of the treated area, method of planting, time of the year to be planted, and the needs and desires of the land user. See the Critical Area Standard (Code 342) for additional details.
- Meet suggested NRCS or required Georgia minimum flow lengths when planning a filter strip at sites down the slope where manure has been applied. These requirements are described in the Nutrient Management

Standard (Code 590) and UGA’s Animal Waste Awareness in Research and Extension site at <http://aware.uga.edu/policies/>.

**Operation and Maintenance**

- Manage the area 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 Control (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.

- If prescribed burning is used to manage and maintain the filter strip, an approved burn plan must be developed.
  - Inspect the filter strip after storm events and repair any gullies that have formed, remove unevenly deposited sediment accumulation that will disrupt sheet flow, reseed disturbed areas.
  - Periodically re-grade and re-establish the filter strip area when sediment deposition at the filter strip-field interface jeopardizes its function. Reestablish the filter strip vegetation in these regraded areas, if needed.
  - Do not mow during the fawning and ground-nesting period for birds 1 April-31 August throughout the state.

**Practice Lifespan** 10 years

**For More Information** Contact your local NRCS Office or Soil & Water Conservation District

**Table 1. Filter Strip Establishment Notes**

Field	Dimensions of Filter Strip <sup>1</sup> (ft.)	Vegetation in the Filter Strip			10-Year Life <sup>3</sup>	Manure Applied to Field Up the Slope (ac.) <sup>4</sup>
		Date	PLS <sup>2</sup> /ac.	Fert.\Lime(lbs./ac.)		
					Yes/No	Yes/No
					Yes/No	Yes/No
					Yes/No	Yes/No
					Yes/No	Yes/No
					Yes/No	Yes/No

<sup>1</sup> Flow length and of the filter strip and the area of both the filter strip and the contributing field are used in the Excel Spreadsheet (Filter Strip Lifespan Design for Sediment)

<sup>2</sup> PLS – pure live seed, see Cover Crop Standard (Code 340) for a definition

<sup>3</sup> Determined using Excel Spreadsheet and Technology Note No. 2 (Using RUSLE2 for the Design and Predicted Effectiveness for Vegetative Filter Strips (VFS) for Sediment)

<sup>4</sup> If manure is applied to the field up the slope of the filter strip, see Nutrient Management Standard (Code 590) for suggested NRCS or required Georgia flow length through the filter strip

Date	Land Preparation and Operation and Management Notes

**Jobsheet Certifications**

Prepared by

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

Approved by

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

**Installation Meets NRCS Standards and Specifications**

Certified by

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