

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE PLAN FOR  
GRASSED WATERWAY**

**CODE 412**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Ident. No. \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Desc. \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

A properly operated and maintained grassed waterway is an asset to your farm. It was designed and installed to support one or more of the following purposes:

- To convey runoff from terraces, diversions, or other water concentrations without causing erosion or flooding.
- To reduce gully erosion.
- To protect or improve water quality.

The estimated life span of this installation is at least 10 years. The life of this installation can be ensured and usually increased by developing and carrying out a good operation and maintenance program.

This practice will require you to perform periodic operation and maintenance for satisfactory performance. Here are some recommendations to help you develop a good operation and maintenance program.

**General Recommendations**

- During vegetation establishment, protect the waterway from concentrated flow by diverting runoff using means such as silt fences, mulching, or hay bale barriers.
- Maintain vigorous growth of vegetation. This includes reseeding, fertilizing, and applying herbicides as needed. Apply fertilizer as needed to maintain desired species composition and density. Apply herbicides that control noxious weeds but avoid any that would be harmful to vegetation in and adjacent to the waterway.
- Periodically mow or use grazing to control height. Avoid mowing during peak nesting

seasons and when there is reduced cover in the winter. Limit grazing to growth periods when root systems will not be damaged and when soil will not be excessively compacted. Exclude livestock during wet periods if possible.

- Inspect grassed waterways regularly, especially after heavy rains. Regrade eroded areas. Remove excessive sediment and restore the original shape and grade of the waterway. Reseed disturbed areas.
- Avoid using the waterway as a travel lane for vehicles and farm machinery such as a turning area during tillage and cultivation of adjacent cropland. Avoid crossing with heavy equipment when wet.
- Check any rock riprap and erosion control matting sections for accelerated weathering and displacement of materials. Replace to the original shape and grade as needed.
- Remove all foreign debris that hinders the system's operation.
- Inspect for damage by rodents or burrowing animals. Immediately repair any damage and take appropriate corrective actions to avoid further damage.
- Immediately repair any damage due to vandalism, vehicles, or livestock.
- Maintain fences to prevent unauthorized human access or uncontrolled grazing.
- Repair any damaged subsurface drain pipes and outlet works.
- Consult with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for assistance with wet conditions that impair grass or mowing.

(more)

- When the vegetation is established, remove any temporary berms that were constructed alongside the waterway. Blend the soil into the field to ensure free drainage. Consult with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for assistance to distinguish temporary berms from permanent berms.

### **Specific Recommendations**

**If you need additional technical assistance to implement the operation and maintenance plan for this structure, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) at your local USDA Service Center (listed in the telephone book under United States Government).**