

# USDA CONTOUR BUFFER STRIP

Conservation Practice Jobsheet

332

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

August 2009

Landowner \_\_\_\_\_



## WHAT IS CONTOUR BUFFER STRIP

Contour buffer strips are strips of perennial vegetation alternated down the slope with wider cultivated strips that are farmed on the contour. Contour buffer strips are usually narrower than the cultivated strips. Vegetation in strips consists of adapted species of grasses or a mixture of grasses and legumes.

## PURPOSE

This practice may be applied to accomplish one or more of the following:

- Reduce sheet and rill erosion.
- Slow runoff.
- Trap sediment.
- Trap nutrients, pesticides, and other contaminants
- Enhance wildlife habitat.
- Improve soil quality.
- Manage plant pests

## CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

Contour buffer strips are used on cropland subject to sheet and rill erosion. They are most

suitable on uniform slopes ranging from 2 to 8 percent. These narrow strips of permanent vegetation are not part of the normal crop rotation. Contour buffer strips are also an excellent filter for runoff and will help improve surface water quality. The practice is more difficult to establish on undulating to rolling topography because of the difficulty of maintaining parallel strip boundaries across the hill slope or staying within row grade limits.

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Contour buffer strips are normally established along with other conservation practices as part of a resource management system. Other conservation practices may include nutrient and pest management, residue management, wildlife habitat improvement, irrigation water management, field borders, mulching, grass waterways, filter strips, diversions, and grade stabilization structures

**PRACTICE SPECIFICATIONS**

Practice specifications are provided to assure that contour buffer strip meets the resource needs and producer's objectives.

Specifications for the establishment of this practice shall be prepared for each field or treatment unit according to the Criteria and Considerations described in the standard.

# CONTOUR BUFFER STRIP – SPECIFICATIONS SHEET

Landowner/Cooperator \_\_\_\_\_

Field Office \_\_\_\_\_

Plan Number \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

Field Area (ac) \_\_\_\_\_ Treatment Area (ac) \_\_\_\_\_ Precipitation (inches) \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose/Objective of the Practice (Check all that apply)	
	Reduce sheet and rill erosion
	Slow runoff
	Trap sediment
	Trap nutrients, pesticides, and other contaminants
	Enhance wildlife habitat
	Improve soil quality
	Manage plant pests
	Other _____

Site Conditions				
Plant Materials – Cultivar and Species (see note below)	Full Seeding Rate (lb/ac PLS)	Planned % of Seeding Mix	Planned Acres	Treatment Area Total lbs. of PLS Needed
<b>Totals</b>				

Note – Planner may attach copy of “Louisiana Seed Mixture Worksheet” if used to figure seed mixture.

Contour Buffer Strip Site Preparation and Establishment	
Site Preparation Activities:	
Planting/Seeding Method:	
Nutrient and Pest Management Planned:	

**Soil Amendments and Fertilization**

Soil Test Taken		Soil pH from Soil Test	
Other Important Factors (i.e., salinity, iron, etc.)			
	Low	Medium	High
Phosphorus			
Nitrogen			
Potassium			

**Site Conditions for Planning Contour Buffer Strip Establishment**

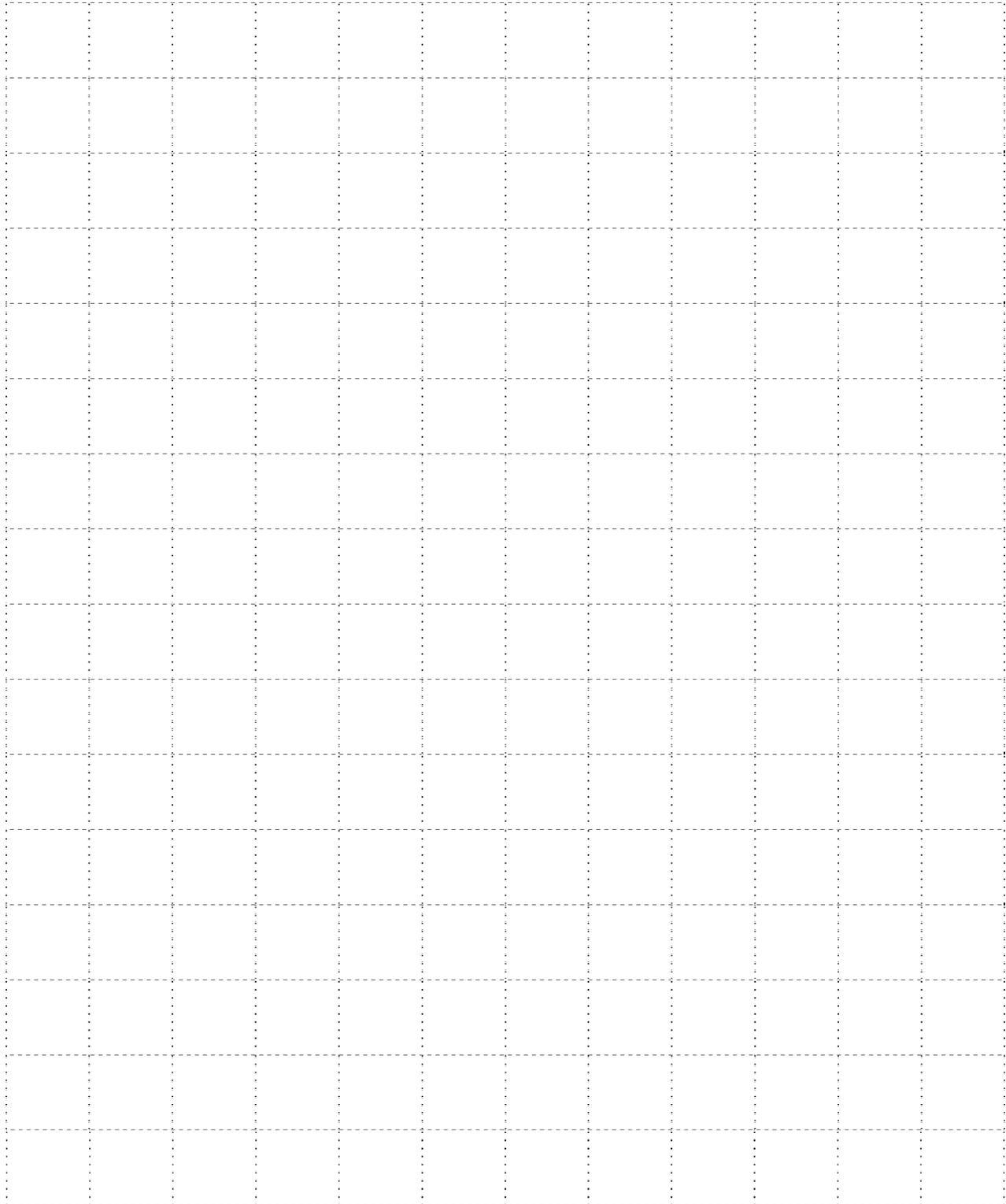
	Strip One	Strip Two
Dominant Soil Series		
Representative Slope %		
Cultivated Strip Width (feet)		
Buffer Strip Width (feet)		
Buffer Strip Length (feet)		
Fertility Requirements		

**Operation and Maintenance**

Item	Year 1 – Area Treated	Year 2 – Area Treated	Year 3 – Area Treated	Year 4 – Area Treated
Maintain appropriate vegetative density and height – mowing				
Fertilize – as needed to maintain stand density and health				
Weed Control – chemical, mechanical				
Renovation – sediment removal, reseed, re-establish				

If applicable, provide a site view of the practice design and application in area below or as an attached diagram. Location of other relevant information and complimentary practices may be included.

Scale 1"= \_\_\_\_\_ ft. (NA indicates sketch not to scale: grid size=1/2" by 1/2")



### Additional Specifications and Notes

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### Practice Design Certification (To be completed after jobsheet is complete and before practice installation)

By signing below, I certify that:

- the site specific requirements for the installation, operation, and maintenance of the practice on the client's treatment unit, as recorded in this jobsheet, have been prepared in accordance with the 332 Contour Buffer Strip Standard and the guidance in the 332 Contour Buffer Strip Practice Specification.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Practice Installation Certification (To be completed after practice installation and check out)

By signing below, I certify that:

- The practice has been installed according to the site specific installation requirements

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**This practice requires a current Louisiana One Call Dottie Confirmation Number.**

**Call before you dig**, wait 48 hours for the site to be marked, observe the marks and dig with care. The service is free. It's the law! Civil Penalties range up to \$25,000 for violations of the "Dig" law



### **Failure to notify Louisiana One Call before installing this practice may delay or terminate NRCS assistance.**

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**NRCS, LA  
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