

# ESTABLISHING COOL SEASON GRASSES AND LEGUMES FOR CONSERVATION COVER

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT SHEET

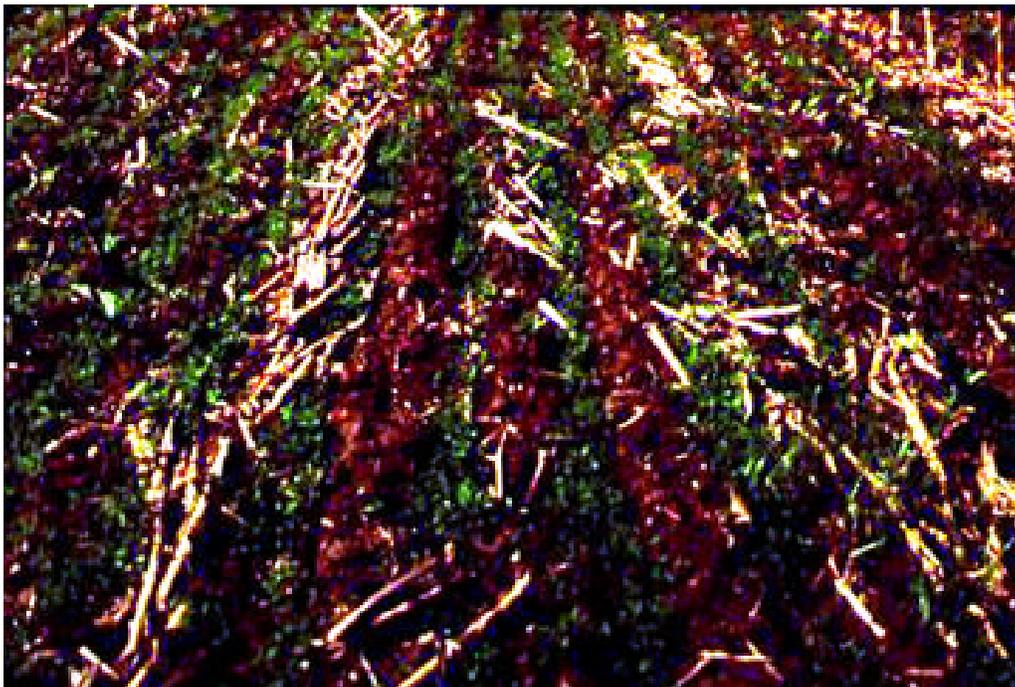
327

February 1999



Natural Resources Conservation Service

Michigan



*No till CRP Seeding Into Corn Stalks*

## What is Conservation Cover

Conservation cover is establishing and maintaining permanent vegetative cover to protect soil and water resources on land retired from agricultural production.

## Purposes of Cool Season Grasses and Legumes

Conservation cover reduces sheet, rill, and wind erosion on retired cropland. It also creates and enhances wildlife habitat by providing nesting and winter cover. Cover improves water quality by reducing sediment from ephemeral gullies and other erosion processes.

## Where Conservation Cover Applies

On land retired from agricultural crop production including land entered into USDA Reserve Programs like CRP and EQIP. This practice does not apply to land planted for forage production or to critical area plantings.

## Where to Get More Assistance

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**Specifications** Date \_\_\_\_\_

Assisted by: \_\_\_\_\_

**Project location and information**

Client name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 County: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Township \_\_\_\_\_  
 Section: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Farm Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Field Number (s): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Acres \_\_\_\_\_

**SPECIFICATIONS Seeding Rates**

GRASSES+	lbs. / ac	Total
Canada Wild Rye*		
Canada Brome*		
Intermediate Wheatgrass		
Junegrass*		
Kentucky Bluegrass		
Orchard grass		
Red top		
Smooth Bromegrass		
Timothy		
Other _____		
<b>TOTAL LBS. NEEDED</b>		
*native species		
Legumes	lbs. / ac	Total
Alfalfa		
Alsike Clover		
Birdsfoot Trefoil		
Ladino clover		
Red clover		
other _____		
<b>TOTAL LBS. NEEDED</b>		

+See the FOTG, Section IV, 327 Standard and Specification and select one or a combination of species for the site.

**Vegetative Cover Establishment**

*Seeds of grasses and legumes are very small and can emerge only from shallow depth, generally less than 1/2 inch. Therefore, take extreme care to ensure correct planting depth. A smooth level seedbed is a must to get a good stand.* Cultipacker seeders and band seeders followed by press wheels or a cultipacker help ensure shallow seed placement. Check direct seed drills carefully for seed depth.

**Prior Herbicide Use:**

Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: Carryover herbicide damage to a new vegetative seeding is possible. Soil pH differences may occur in a field and increase the amount of activity for herbicide carryover compared to other soils in the field area.*

**Site Preparation Recommendations:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: If heavy sods such as quackgrass are present, a good seedbed preparation method on level sites is summer fallow (till) with repeated tillage to eliminate weed competition.*

**Herbicide Recommendations:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: Chemicals must be federally, state, and locally registered and applied according to label directions.*

**Grasses & Legume Seeding Dates for Seeding Without Irrigation or Mulch**

**Upper Peninsula**

May 1 - June 15 or July 15 to August 1

**North 1/2 of lower Michigan (north of US 10)**

May 1 to June 10 or July 15 to August 1

**South 1/2 of lower Michigan (south of US 10)**

April 20- May 20 or July 20-to August 15

*Note: September seedings of alfalfa are too likely to be failures and are not recommended anywhere in Michigan*

**Nutrient Management**

A representative soil test should be taken from the field in the fall before seeding. If lime is needed, it should be applied as soon as the soil test analysis are returned. Follow the advice of the local MSU Extension Agent or Certified Crop Adviser and apply fertilizer or manure prior to seed bed secondary tillage. Apply enough lime to raise the pH to 6.0. Liming can also activate tied-up chemicals such as atrazine and injure new seedlings if atrazine is used ahead of legumes. In low pH soil situations a bioassay with planted oats, or delaying cover seeding a year and fall seeding a rye cover crop is a good way to prevent a failed legume seeding from occurring.

## Other Considerations

A number of effects to environmental conditions will occur from cultural operations used on fields where conservation cover is established. Consideration of these effects will allow for incorporation of additional planning elements to achieve an ecosystem-wide conservation plan for the area in which cover is established. Effects which may be considered include: Sheet and Rill Erosion - RUSLE: Wind Erosion - WEQ, Ephemeral Gully (Tons/ac/yr.), Tillth, Crusting, Infiltration., Organic Matter maintenance, Soil Compaction, Plant Productivity, Plant Health and vigor, Wildlife habitat, Air Quality, Public health and Safety etc.

Natural Resource area(s) expected to be addressed by the use/application of this conservation sheet:

[x] Soil, [x] Water, [x] Air, [x] Plants,  
[ ] Animals, [x] Human Socio-economics.

## CRP OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE PLAN

**1. "CRP" Cover Purposes:** Reduce and control soil erosion; Improve water quality; Provide cover for wildlife

### 2. Seeding Year Operation and Maintenance:

#### 2a. Spring Seedings:

(1) CRP cover may be mowed, clipped, or sprayed anytime during the growing season to control weeds, insects, and other undesirable species.

(2) Do not mow shorter than 4 inches.

(3) Do not mow more than once per month

. Avoid shading by grasses or weeds during the seeding year as this may kill seedling legumes. If needed, clip twice during the summer. Mow weeds before they are 1 foot tall. *Seeding establishment takes top priority the first year of establishment.*

#### 2b. Summer Seeding:

(1) Do not mow seedings made in August/September until the following year.

(2) The following year:

(a) Do not mow shorter than 64 inches

(b) Do not mow more than once per month

(c) Use approved pesticides to control weeds/insects per label directions

### 3. OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE After the Seeding Establishment Year.

**3a. COSMETIC MOWING/CLIPPING** of CRP acreage is prohibited. Mowing to maintain the planned cover can be performed annually on fields between August 1 and August 20. Not more than 1/3 of the field will mowed annually. Do not harvest or graze vegetation with domestic livestock. Control noxious weeds with herbicides or by spot mowing.

**3b.** CRP acreage **SHALL NOT** be mowed or clipped during the "Primary Nesting Season" (April 1 and July 31) except as noted below to control noxious weeds or severe weed infestations:

### **TO CONTROL NOXIOUS WEEDS or SEVERE WEED INFESTATIONS**

Permission must be obtained from the Farm Service Agency - County Committee in consultation with NRCS to spot treat affected areas during the primary nesting season. Spot treatment will only be considered and approved if :

- The area left untreated (the weeds, insects, or undesirable species) would adversely impact the approved cover, and
- The treatment (mowing, clipping, or spraying) is limited to the affected area, and
- Approval is granted by FSA

**3c.** Maintain the stand/cover by applying the necessary lime and fertilizer. Manure or sludge can only be applied on CP1, CP2, and CP10 using an approved "Waste Utilization Plan" prepared by NRCS only during the Sept.1 thru April 1 time period.

**3d.** DO NOT use CRP land for travel lanes or roads under any circumstances. CRP land can be used as turn rows or crossing areas as part of planting, cultivating, or harvesting of a crop in an adjoining field.

This O & M plan applies to CRP contracts CP1, CP2,CP4A,CP4B,CP4D,CP8,CP8A, CP10,CP13,CP13A, CP15,CP15A, CP21.

NRCS Technical Representative
Date _____
Signature _____

I understand and concur with this plan:
Date _____
Signature _____

**More Information** Additional information about conservation cover or related topics can be found on the World Wide Web ([www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov)).

**This Conservation Information Sheet**

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Reference/File Indexes		
Topic Application:	Resource Series:	References:USDA-NRCS Field Office Technical Guide
<input type="checkbox"/> Construction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agronomy	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Design	<input type="checkbox"/> Biology	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fact	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	USDA NRCS (MI) Conservation Practice Associations:
<input type="checkbox"/> Information	<input type="checkbox"/> Forestry	# 327 Conservation Cover
<input type="checkbox"/> Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Hayland	#MI interim Wildlife Food Plots
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Livestock	#
	<input type="checkbox"/> Pastureland	#
	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation	USDA NRCS (MI) Associated Conservation Sheets:
FOCS (MI) Reference Number:	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	Wildlife Food Plots
CS _____		

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