

Conservation Practice Standard Overview

Critical Area Planting (342)

Critical area planting establishes permanent vegetation on sites that have, or are expected to have, high erosion rates, and on sites that have physical, chemical or biological conditions that prevent the establishment of vegetation with normal practices.

Practice Information

Erosion control is the primary consideration for plant material selection. Selected species will have the capacity to achieve adequate density and vigor to stabilize the site. Wildlife and beautification are additional considerations that influence planning decisions on a site needing this practice.

Conservation benefits may include, but are not limited to:

- reduced soil erosion by wind or water
- reduced transport of sediment
- stabilized slopes, road banks, stream banks, shorelines, sand dunes

When planning this practice, the following elements shall be addressed, as applicable, to meet the intended purpose:

- species of plants to establish
- methods and rates of planting
- fertilizer and soil amendments necessary for establishment and growth
- mulching requirements



- planting site preparation
- irrigation requirement
- site management following establishment of the vegetation

Common Associated Practices

Installation of practices such as Diversion (362), Obstruction Removal (500), Subsurface Drain (606), or Underground Outlet (620) may be necessary to prepare the area or ensure vegetative establishment.

Critical Area Planting (342) is commonly applied with practices such as Mulching (484), Nutrient Management (590), and Herbaceous Weed Control (315).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.