

ESTABLISHMENT OF RIPARIAN HERBACEOUS COVER FOR WRP

PURPOSE: Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) easement lands often contain public drainage systems and natural, historical drainageways that must be maintained periodically in order to allow for the proper functioning of multi-farm watershed drainage. It is necessary that open travelways be maintained parallel to these drainage ditches. The establishment of herbaceous vegetation along one side of the drainage ditch(s), rather than the establishment of trees or other woody vegetation can best accomplish this.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES: This practice applies on land parallel to drainage improvements located on WRP easement lands. Herbaceous cover is required only on one side of the drainage ditch, but may be established on both. Herbaceous vegetation begins at top-of-bank.

CRITERIA: The strip adjacent to and parallel with the drainage ditch will be shaped and smoothed to allow for equipment travel for maintenance purposes. Many sites may not require additional smoothing or shaping. Vegetative cover may exist on some sites. This cover is acceptable if the vegetative species is listed in Table 1. The existing cover must be of such density that slight to no erosion occurs and the cover inhibits germination and growth of woody species. When acceptable cover does not exist or cannot be enhanced, the vegetative cover will be planted. Table 2 contains a list of vegetative species approved for planting. Establishment requirements are listed in Table 2 and are taken from the Mississippi Planting Guide which is a general reference source of NRCS' Field Office Technical Guide. The minimum width of the strip of herbaceous cover will be 30 feet and a maximum of 75 feet is allowed. The width should not exceed the width of the drainage district easement.

During the establishment period additional seed, nutrients and/or rill and gully repair may be necessary to reach the level of cover needed. Thereafter, periodic maintenance, which may consist of clipping, burning or spraying, will be necessary to maintain the original cover conditions and to eliminate woody species. Burn permits should be obtained prior to any burning, while private or commercial applicators license will be necessary prior to use of any agricultural pesticides.

NOTE: This job/specification sheet shall become a part of the final Wetland Reserve Plan of Operations (WRPO) when the Practice- Riparian Herbaceous Cover is planned.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

