United States Department of Agriculture

CONSERVATION COVER
CODE 327

Maryland Conservation Practice Implementation Requirements and Certification

Cooperator Name	County	Planner	Date
Farm/Tract/Field(s)	**Program/Contract No. (if applicable)**		**Amount Planned**
			AC

Purpose

☐ To reduce soil erosion and sedimentation

☐ To improve water quality

☐ To create or enhance wildlife habitat

Habitat type:

Description of Work

Associated Practices (must be implemented in combination with this practice)

Management of this practice will be implemented using conservation practice**:**

☐ Early Successional Habitat Development and Management (Code 647)

☐ Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (Code 645) ☐ N/A ☐ Other:

Planting Type

☐ Native Warm Season Grasses

☐ Native Cool Season Grasses

☐ Native Wildflowers

☐ Introduced Cool Season Grasses

☐ Combination Native Warm and Cool Season Grasses

☐ Other:

Acceptable Uses

VEGETATION ESTABLISHMENT

Site Preparation (check all that apply)

☐ Site preparation not required (recently cropped, with no likelihood of aggressive weed problems).

☐ Plant a cover crop of oats, barley, or wheat to control erosion or suppress weed growth.

Cover crop planting dates: _____

☐ Mow or bush-hog and apply an herbicide with low persistence (e.g. glyphosate) to kill existing vegetation.

Extension or County Weed Control Recommendations:

Herbicide: _____

# of Treatments: _____ Timing: ☐ Late Summer/Early Fall ☐ Spring (prior to planting)

☐ Cultivate the site to remove all existing vegetation. Plant a cover crop of oats, barley, or wheat, if necessary, to control erosion and suppress weed growth.

☐ Other (describe):

Planting Date(s)					
Plant Hardiness Zone	Warm-Season Grasses (with/without forbs & legumes)		Warm-Season/Cool-Season Grass Mix	Cool-Season Grasses (with/without forbs & legumes)	
	Spring Planting◆	Dormant Planting✚	Spring Planting◆	Spring Planting	Fall Planting
5b, 6a	☐ Mar 15 – Jun 15 Jun 16 – Jun 30	☐ Nov 1 – Dec 1	☐ Mar 15 – May 31 Jun 1 to Jun 15	☐ Mar 15 – May 31	☐ Aug 1 – Sep 30
6b	☐ Mar 1 – Jun 15 Jun 16 – Jun 30	☐ Nov 15 – Dec 15	☐ Mar 1 – May 15 May 16 to Jun 15	☐ Mar 1 – May 15	☐ Aug 1 – Oct 15
7a, 7b, 8a	☐ Feb 15 – May 31 Jun 1 – Jun 30	☐ Dec 1 – Dec 31	☐ Feb 15 – Apr 30 May 1 to May 31	☐ Feb 15 – Apr 30	☐ Aug 15 – Oct 31 ☐ Nov 1 to Nov 30★

◆ In general, planting during the latter portion of this period allows more time for weed emergence and weed control prior to planting. The second set of planting dates is applicable when it has been a particularly wet spring, but **not** on excessively drained soils.

✚ Fall dormant season plantings of warm-season grasses, starting approximately 2 weeks after the first hard freeze.

★ Additional planting dates for the lower coastal plain, depending on moisture availability and temperature trends.

Seeding Depth

☐ Just below surface to ¼ inch ☐ ¼ to ½ inch ☐ Other:

Planting Method

☐ Native seed drill
☐ Small grain seed drill
☐ Broadcast seeder – For small or fluffy seed, mix a filler (e.g. sawdust) with the seed for even distribution.
☐ Any of the above

Planting Method

☐ No-till plant into residue or clean seed bed.
☐ No-till plant into a spring cover crop. If the cover crop is tall or thick, mow it prior to planting. The cover crop may also be "burned down" with an herbicide prior to planting.
☐ Broadcast seed onto a firm seedbed and incorporate using a cultipacker, rake, or drag.

Lime and Fertilizer

☐ If the pH is below 5.5, lime can be applied to achieve a pH of 6.0 to 6.5. Apply fertilizer if needed based on a soil test, and in compliance with Maryland nutrient management regulations.
☐ Do not apply lime or fertilizer. Typically, lime and fertilizer are not recommended for native plantings.

Weed Control Measures During Establishment

First Growing Season

In the first growing season after seed germination, it is very important to ensure that the seedlings do not get shaded out by weeds. Weeds can be controlled by mowing or herbicide treatment, as follows:

- Mow the planting as needed during the summer months to control weeds and keep them below 18 inches. Mow to a height of 6 to 8 inches or just above seedling height (do not mow seedlings). Discontinue mowing after early August unless you can set the mower high enough to stay above the seedlings. Nesting season restrictions on mowing do not apply during the establishment period.
- Selective herbicides can be used for controlling specific weeds, and are most effective when weeds are young and actively growing. If you have native wildflowers in your planting, mowing or specialized herbicides such as Plateau may be the best options, because most wildflowers are susceptible to herbicides that control broadleaf plants. Be sure to read and follow herbicide label instructions.

Second Growing Season

- If annual grasses or weeds comprise more than 25 percent of the stand, either treat with an appropriate herbicide or mow the planting at a height of 8 inches to inhibit seed production.
- If the planting consists primarily of warm-season grasses, non-selective herbicides (e.g., Roundup) can be used to control undesirable cool-season grasses when the warm-season grasses are dormant (i.e. early to mid spring), but will also kill most actively-growing legumes or wildflowers.

Additional Establishment Instructions

Notify the NRCS or SCD office when the planting is completed.

SEED MIXTURE				
Location(s)	**Species and Cultivar or Mix‡**	**Acres**	**Seeding Rate**	**Total Seed Quantity**

‡ If specifying only a mix, attach a copy of the mix.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Once the planting has become established, follow these prescriptions for maintaining the planting.

Time-of-Year Mowing/Disturbance Restrictions. Do **NOT** mow or disturb during the following periods: (check all that apply)

- ☐ **Primary Nesting Season – April 15 to August 15**. Mowing during the growing season in late summer or early fall (after August 15) may help to control woody vegetation better than dormant season mowing, because it prevents the plant from storing reserves in the root system.
- ☐ **Fall Migration and Flowering Period – August 15 to November 30**. Mowing is delayed in the fall to provide fall flowering for pollinators and habitat for migratory birds. Mow the planting between December 1 and April 15 to reduce encroachment by woody vegetation. This mowing timing may require additional measures, such as prescribed burning or targeted herbicide application to control woody vegetation.
- ☐ No time-of-year restrictions on mowing/disturbance.
- ☐ Other periods of disturbance/mowing restriction:

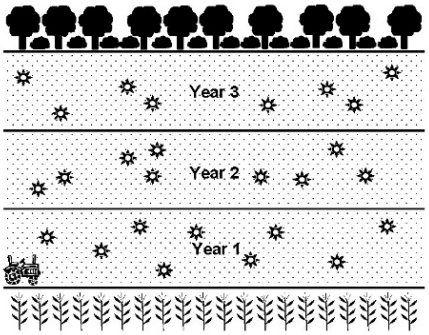
Mowing/Disturbance Frequency. Rotate mowing/disturbance on a cycle of

☐ 3 years ☐ 2 years ☐ 1 year ☐ N/A ☐ Other:

☐ The following fields may be mowed once per year outside the primary nesting season for the purpose of controlling woody growth due to a nearby aggressive species seed source:

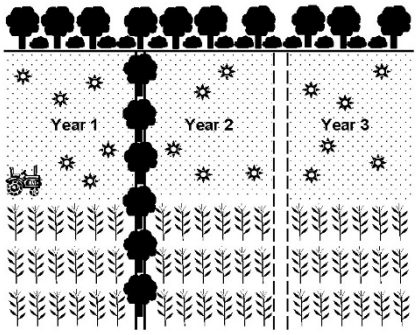
Mowing/Disturbance Rotation Location. Rotate mowing/disturbance by:

☐ Strips within fields ☐ Field-by-field ☐ N/A ☐ Other:



Strip mowing (left) on a rotation provides escape routes for wildlife, and increases the amount of edge habitat left standing.

Field-by-field mowing (right) provides less edge habitat, but can be easier to implement. Mowing back-and-forth rather than in a circle provides escape routes for wildlife.



General Operations and Maintenance Recommendations

- If undesirable woody vegetation starts to encroach on the planting, targeted herbicide applications or prescribed burning may be necessary for control. Refer to applicable Brush Management (Code 314) or Prescribed Burning (338) Implementation Requirements or contact your local University of Maryland Extension or Soil Conservation District office for more specific information.
- Control noxious weeds and other invasive plants by spot treatment using mechanical methods or approved herbicides. If it becomes necessary to control noxious weeds during the nesting season, contact your local weed control specialist for recommendations.
- Do not mow for cosmetic purposes.

Additional Operations and Maintenance

Management of the Established Cover

Refer to the separately provided Implementation Requirements sheet for the associated management practice identified in the *Associated Practices* box on page 1.

CERTIFICATION (FOR AGENCY USE ONLY)	
Supporting Documentation (for file) ☐ Map showing practice locations and widths	☐ Recommended seed mixture
Planning Certification This practice was planned according to NRCS standards and specifications. Job Class: _____ _____ _____ Signature by individual with appropriate JAA Date	**Implementation Certification** This practice was applied according to NRCS standards and specifications. Amount: _____ Date: _____ _____ _____ Signature by individual with appropriate JAA Date
Reporting Checklist ☐ CPA-06 Notes ☐ File copy of completed IR sheet ☐ Post-treatment photos (optional)	☐ Report in Toolkit ☐ Other reporting tools (optional)