



May 16, 2014

**FIELD OFFICE TECHNICAL GUIDE (FOTG)  
450 - IV  
NORTH CAROLINA NOTICE 14-03**

**Purpose.** This notice transmits information regarding updates to the North Carolina electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG). In addition, notes are included to highlight key changes made to conservation practice standards.

**Effective Date.** This notice is effective when received.

**Filing Instructions.** Only FOTG Sections I and IV are required to be maintained in hardcopy format at field offices (NC supplement G.M. 120, Part 403). Any FOTG sections that are printed and maintained for office use must be kept up-to-date with the latest releases, versions, and supplements. Obtain any needed FOTG documents for printing from NRCS eFOTG website:  
[http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/efotg\\_locator.aspx?map](http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/efotg_locator.aspx?map) .

**Important:** New planning narratives for Conservation Crop Rotation (328), Residue and Tillage Management (No-Till) (329), Cover Crop (340), and Integrated Pest Management (595) have been developed and will be available for planning use upon reloading Toolkit domain data. Toolkit users must “Reload Domain Data” at this time to insure the Toolkit user has updated practices and narratives from Conservation Practice Standards. Complete the Reload Domain Data by clicking on the command located under “File” on the main toolbar in Customer Service Toolkit, on each computer running Toolkit.

**Notice of Changes:**

**SECTION I - General References**

In the Reference Lists folder under NC Tech References > Agronomy folder:

**Soil Conditioning Index** (*October 2002*) – This item was moved from Section III.

**Soil Conditioning Index Guide** (*October 2002*) – This item was moved from Section III.

In the Reference Lists folder under NC Tech References > Biology folder:

**Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Procedure** (*November 2009*) – This item was moved from Section III.

**SECTION II – Natural Resources Information**

In the Climate Data folder:

**AgACIS Link** – Updated link.

Removed other outdated and broken links in the Climate Data folder.

### **SECTION III – Conservation Management Systems**

In the Conservation Activity Plans (CAP) Technical Criteria folder:

**CAP 124 – Agricultural Energy Management Plan Criteria – Landscape** (*January 2014*) – Replaces criteria dated September 2013.

In the Resource Quality Criteria for RMS folder:

**Land Uses and Resource Concerns** (*May 2014*) – Updated information specific to North Carolina.

In the Resource Management Systems folder:

**RMS Planning Tool** (*February 2014*)

In the Resource Quality Criteria Legislated Programs folder:

**Conservation Systems for Compliance with Highly Erodible Land Provisions of the Food Security Act** (*March 2014*) – Replaces *Compliance with Highly Erodible Land Provisions of the 1985, 1990, and 1996 Farm Bills*. North Carolina Alternative Conservation System Guide Sheets (ACSs) were updated and published in March 2014. The purpose of the update was to add specifications where applicable to match the original ACS requirements, such as residue amount requirements and other management activities used for the original calculations when the ACSs were developed. Conservation Practice Standard name changes were also reflected in the update.

In the Legislative Programs, Job Approval Authority folder:

**Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Job Approval Authority Matrix** (*May 2014*)

The following items have been removed from Section III:

FY 2013 CAP criteria documents

CDSI Adopted Resource Concerns

All outdated quality criteria documents for soil, water, air, plant, and animal

Economic Considerations

Social Considerations

Guidance Documents

All Resource Management Systems documents and guidance

### **SECTION IV – Practice Standards**

Revised Conservation Practice Index: Remove existing Conservation Practice Index and Replace with the following revised index.

**NC Conservation Practice Index** (*April 2014*)

Revised Conservation Practice Standards: Remove existing North Carolina practice standards and replace with the following revised practice standards.

**Critical Area Planting (342)** (*April 2014*) – Revised in response to release of Dec 2013 NHCP 342 standard. Includes the CDSI-based resource concern addressed for each purpose. In plant notes, it is now noted that *Sericea Lespedeza* is recognized as a potentially invasive species that should be specified only where risk of spread is determined to be acceptable by the planner. Removed *Alnus Rugosa* (Tag Alder) from the Appendix D Plant Species in response to a national request due to appearance similarity with Speckled Alder, recognized as an invasive species.

**Farmstead Energy Improvement (374)** (*March 2014*) - Revised to include references to the North Carolina Audit Criteria and Job Sheet, Appendices A and B. Criteria in the standard was added to address permits, inspections, and installation certification requirements.

**Field Border (386)** (*April 2014*) – Revised in response to release of Dec 2013 NHCP 386 standard. Includes the CDSI-based resource concern addressed for each purpose. In section “Beneficial Organisms and Pollinators”, planners are instructed to follow Xerces Society Mid-Atlantic Regional Guidance for enhancing pollinator habitat. In section “Reducing Soil Compaction from Equipment Parking and Traffic”, emphasis placed on avoiding use of the field border area for equipment traffic of frequency and type that would cause vegetation survival and soil compaction issues.

**Filter Strip (393)** (*April 2014*) – Revised in response to release of Dec 2013 NHCP 393 standard. Includes the CDSI-based resource concern addressed for each purpose. New Water Quality Degradation resource concern noted for practice planning and implementation in section “Filter Strips installed to treat surface runoff from a concentrated livestock feeding or watering area”.

**Land Smoothing (466)** (*April 2014*) – The definition has been revised.

**Underground Outlet (620)** (*April 2014*) – Revised to include very minor changes in the criteria and considerations sections.

Revised Job Sheets/Implementation Requirements: The following existing job sheets/implementation requirements have been revised to align with the current associated conservation practice standard.

**Farmstead Energy Improvement (374)** (*March 2014*) - Revised to include references to the North Carolina Audit Criteria. Appendix A (Licensing Requirements for Installation) and Appendix B (Installation Certification Statement) were added to assist with installation of this practice. A preconstruction certification statement requiring signatures before installation was also added.

Additional Practice Guidance: The following guidance documents have been added.

**North Carolina Energy Audit Criteria** (*March 2014*) - Added under Farmstead Energy Improvement (374) practice standard. This criteria provides requirements for any audit, whether produced by a Technical Service Provider (TSP), non-TSP, as part of a CAP, or non-CAP.

**North Carolina Energy Audit Criteria Checklist** (*March 2014*) - Added under Farmstead Energy Improvement (374) practice standard. This checklist should be used to review all audits and replaces the FY14 CAP122 checklist that was issued with the FY14 CAP 122 criteria.

**SECTION V – Conservation Effects**

In the NC Conservation Practice Physical Effects folder, the existing NC CPPE documents were replaced with the following:

**North Carolina FY 2014 CPPE** (*April 2014*)

**National Conservation Practice Physical Effects** – Updated link.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew R. Flint". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'M' and 'F'.

Matthew R. Flint

Assistant State Conservationist for Technology