

GRASSED WATERWAY

PRACTICE INTRODUCTION

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service - practice code 412



GRASSED WATERWAY

A grassed waterway is a natural or constructed channel established to suitable vegetation for safe water disposal.

PRACTICE INFORMATION

Waterways are constructed to convey runoff from terraces, diversions, or other concentrated flow areas where erosion control is needed.

The most critical time for successful installation of a grassed waterway is immediately following construction when the channel is bare and unprotected from runoff. Waterways are generally planted to perennial grass. It is critical during the vegetative establishment period to restrict outside water from flowing through the channel. Therefore, it may be necessary delay construction of terraces and/or diversions until the waterway is well established. Another critical consideration is the outlet at the lower end. If water

quality or protection of riparian vegetation (streambank) is an issue, the outlet end may need to widen significantly or another buffer or filtering type practice may be necessary. In addition, the waterway installation must assure that the runoff from the waterway does not cause gullies and/or overfalls to develop. Grassed waterways are multipurpose and provide one or more of the following benefits:

1. Safe disposal of runoff water
2. Erosion control in concentrated flow areas of a field
3. Improved water quality
4. Improved wildlife habitat
5. Reduced sediment damage
6. Improved landscape aesthetics

Additional information including standards and specifications are on file in the local NRCS Field Office Technical Guides