

**OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE PLAN
FOR
CRITICAL AREA PLANTING (342)**

Landowner/user:

Date:

Address:

A properly developed and maintained **Critical Area Planting Practice** is an asset to your farm operation and to the environment. Implementation of Critical Area Planting consists of establishing 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. These sites may include construction sites with seeding areas specified on construction drawings. This practice may provide many benefits including: stabilizing stream and channel banks, pond and other shorelines; stabilize areas with existing or expected high rates of soil erosion by wind or water; stabilize areas, such as sand dunes and riparian areas.

This practice will require you to perform periodic operation and maintenance to maintain satisfactory performance. Operation and maintenance is comprised of the following activities:

Operation and Maintenance

- Check new seedings and plantings every few days during the first month to assess progress and apply the needed care (irrigation, reseeding, re-mulching, etc.). Water sod establishments as needed for the first 30 days after placement.
- After the first month, inspect the planting at least twice in the establishment year and then at least annually. Evaluate the site within several months of seeding. If the stand is uniform but too thin (50 to 80% ground cover), apply additional seed during the next optimum seeding period with a no-till drill, grain drill, or hydro-seeder as site conditions dictate. Sites with an establishment rate of less than fifty percent (50%) should be reseeded in accordance with the original planting plan. Determine the reasons for planting failure and corrective measures should be incorporated into the remedial planting.
- The planting must be protected from adverse impacts such as vehicular and pedestrian traffic, pest infestations, pesticide use on adjacent lands, livestock damage and fire.
- Vegetation damaged by machinery, herbicides, or erosion should be repaired promptly.
- The area must be protected from livestock grazing until the vegetation is well established and the site is stabilized.

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- If soil moisture becomes critically deficient, irrigate the site if practical and feasible.
- Weed competition must be controlled by mowing or with herbicides. Use caution when spraying chemicals on lands that are adjacent to the site.
- Replacement of failed vegetation should be continued until the area progresses to a fully functional condition. For forage, manage and maintain according to the standard and specifications for (528) Prescribed Grazing or (511) Forage Harvest Management. Occasional grazing and/or haying may benefit the stand.
- Soil amendments should be applied as required to maintain ground cover density at the desired level (usually 90% or greater). Application of soil amendments will be based upon soil testing laboratory recommendations. At a minimum, test the soil at least once every five years or more often if indicated by periodic inspections of the practice.
- Maintenance practices and activities are not to disturb cover during the primary nesting period from May 1 to July 15 for grassland species. Activities may occur during this period only in the establishment year.
- To benefit insect food sources for grassland nesting birds, spraying or other control of noxious weeds should be done on a "spot" basis to protect forbs and legumes that benefit native pollinators and other wildlife.
- Remove temporary diversions, silt fences, etc. after the area is stabilized.

Additional operation and maintenance requirements may be required to be developed on a site-specific basis to assure performance of the practice as intended.

Specific Additional Requirements for Your Practice: