



CRP Required Management Practice: Exemption from Required Management

CRP CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is responsible for administering the rules of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). All questions related to CRP contract requirements, payment, or modifications should be directed to the FSA office where your contract originated.

CRP policy requires participants to do some type of “disturbance” to certain CRP vegetative cover during specific years of the contract. These required management practices are designed to enhance the wildlife habitat value of the cover. This job sheet provides the cover assessment process and specifications necessary to exempt a field from implementation of a required management practice.

SPECIFICATIONS

An in-field evaluation by NRCS must be conducted and documented for all sites where a waiver of the required management practice is recommended. All recommendations to waive a required management practice must be approved by the FSA County Committee.

- Evaluate each site to determine acceptable reasons to waive the required managements.
- Utilize the following guidance to evaluate non-typical site conditions that may restrict or prohibit implementation of required management practices.

Threatened and Endangered Species

If the presence of a Threatened or Endangered (T&E) species is documented, alternatives to allow the implementation of a required management practice shall be evaluated and documented.

Implementation of required management practices may be exempted (waived) if either of the following criteria are met:

- Implementation of any required management practice would physically harm the species, or
- The existing CRP cover is a recognized habitat for the T&E species which would not be improved by implementation of a required management practice.

Weeds and Invasive Plants

When a documented weed problem such as Canadian thistle, wild parsnip, musk thistle, crown vetch, or other invasive plants are located immediately adjacent to a CRP field, evaluate the feasibility and the risk of implementing each eligible required management practice.

Required Management shall only be waived if completing them jeopardizes an adequate existing cover.

When adequate existing cover does not exist, a required management practice shall be implemented. Refer to the “Considerations” section to develop an implementation strategy.

Adequate Existing Cover

Forbs listed in the Wisconsin NRCS Agronomy Technical Note 5 for natives or 6 for introduced are well distributed throughout the CRP field and a disturbance of the existing cover would have a negative impact on existing vegetation.

Prior Management of the Site

The required management practice may be waived if managed or emergency haying or grazing has been recently conducted on the field

and it is determined that those activities have served the same purpose as an eligible required management practice for the contracted cover type.

CONSIDERATIONS

Consider the following primary components when planning for exemptions:

- If soil erosion is a concern, consider implementing required management practices that minimize disturbance of the soil surface.
 - If adequate cover exists, consider developing a maintenance plan that complies with CRP rules that will preserve the condition of the cover.
- If weeds or invasive plant encroachment is a concern, consider:
 - ≡ selecting a required management practice that will minimize soil disturbance,
 - ≡ the use of additional weed control practices (herbicide, mowing) during the re-establishment period, or
 - ≡ plan the timing of the re-establishment within program requirements to reduce weed pressure (late summer or dormant seeding).

Required Management Cover Assessment Worksheet

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Client: _____ Date: _____

County: _____ Tract No.: _____ Field No.: _____

CRP Sign-up: _____ CRP Practice: _____ Acres: _____

Evaluators: _____

CRP Field Number(s)	Acres	Reason for Exemption from Required Management Practice

Site Description (check all that apply)
<input type="checkbox"/> Floodplain/Wetland/Riparian Upland Average Slope Range: <input type="checkbox"/> 0-6% <input type="checkbox"/> 6-12% <input type="checkbox"/> >12% (soil map slope class D, E, F) Are any of the following present? (if so, show location on map) <input type="checkbox"/> Active gully erosion <input type="checkbox"/> Excessive floodplain scouring <input type="checkbox"/> Non-contract woody vegetation <input type="checkbox"/> Invasive/aggressive annual/biennial weeds <input type="checkbox"/> Highly diverse grassland cover Are any of the following present? (if so, show location on map) <input type="checkbox"/> Grassed waterways <input type="checkbox"/> Concentrated flow areas <input type="checkbox"/> Critically eroding areas <input type="checkbox"/> Areas planted to trees or shrubs <input type="checkbox"/> Riparian forest buffers <input type="checkbox"/> Areas of wetland vegetation <input type="checkbox"/> Water resource being buffered: <input type="checkbox"/> Stream <input type="checkbox"/> Wetland <input type="checkbox"/> Lake <input type="checkbox"/> Pond

DOMINANT VEGETATION	
If known, what cover was originally on this field?	
Current Vegetation	
Grasses	Forbs
Is the stand predominately grasses (>60%)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

STAND DIVERSITY AND STRUCTURE	
On average, is the stand: 1 uniform height: height inches <i>OR</i> 2-3 heights: document height ranges	
Is the vegetation so thick as to be difficult to walk through? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is there bare ground present? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percent bare ground %	
Is there substantial thatch on the soil surface? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<input type="checkbox"/> Stand is acceptable as is: continue monitoring and management. Reason:	
Comments:	

WEED PRESSURE			
Weed Species (include noxious weeds, other understandable herbaceous species, woody vegetation)	Weed Pressure	Threat to Stand	Spots/Widespread (ID location on map)
	<input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> H	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> W
	<input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> H	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> W
	<input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> H	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> W
	<input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> H	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> W

DOCUMENTATION FOR NOT GRANTING AN EXEMPTION				
Problem	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of Species Diversity (not enough variety in forbs and grasses)	<input type="checkbox"/> Excessive Understandable Species (too much cover of trees, invasive plants, or species not beneficial to grassland wildlife)	<input type="checkbox"/> Stand Too Dense (grasses or other vegetation too thick, lack of bare ground)	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of Structural Diversity (most vegetation is only one height or form)
Assessment (extent, location, severity)				
Options (Note: option selected for CRP cover management must be authorized by program rules)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burn - Interseed • Disk - Interseed • Spray - Interseed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spot clip • Mow • Burn • Spray 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mow • Burn • Spray • Graze* • Hay* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burn - Interseed • Disk - Interseed • Spray - Interseed

**Haying or grazing must be approved by the FSA County Committee and will result in a reduction in CRP rental payment in the year haying or grazing occur.*

OTHER OBSERVATIONS		
<input type="checkbox"/> Excessive ATV or farm equipment use	<input type="checkbox"/> Excessive mowing	<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent structures
<input type="checkbox"/> Herbicide damage	<input type="checkbox"/> Encroachment (type:)	<input type="checkbox"/> Food plots
<input type="checkbox"/> Prohibited activity	<input type="checkbox"/> Unapproved grazing	<input type="checkbox"/> Unapproved haying
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:		

Printed Name

Signature

Date