



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

West Virginia Riparian Forest Buffer Management/Maintenance Supplement

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Definition

This job sheet provides management and maintenance requirements for a riparian forest buffer under a CRP or CREP contract. Program rules include specific guidance regarding how vegetative cover should be managed both during and after the establishment period. The following outlines this guidance:

Management During the Establishment Period

For CRP or CREP, the Riparian Forest Buffer Conservation Practice Job Sheet and other applicable job sheets/plans should be referenced for information on proper practice establishment.

The establishment period begins immediately following planting or the onset of natural regeneration and continues until NRCS signs the "final" status review indicating successful practice implementation. This period should normally extend one to three growing seasons beyond the planting date or upon initiation of natural regeneration.

Areas within the riparian forest buffer that were planted may require removal of weedy competition as needed until the practice is determined to be fully established.

Spot chemical control can be used to control competition during the establishment period. All herbicides must be used according to label recommendations.

Spot mowing around trees and shrubs may also be done as needed until the stand is determined to be fully established.

Herbicide applications must be according to West Virginia Division of Forestry (WVDFOF) or WVU Cooperative Extension Service (WVU-CES) recommendations.

Consult with a WVDFOF forester or a WVU-CES extension agent for recommendations prior to applying herbicide on woody vegetation established under a program contract.



Cost-shares will only be paid for practices approved by FSA and included in the conservation plan. Approved practices must be implemented within 12 months of the effective date of the contract unless other authority is provided. Extensions for performance, up to an additional 12 months, are possible, but must be requested before the approved practice expires. Requests for extensions are made at the local FSA office.



Requirements to reestablish vegetation on areas where establishment was unsuccessful will be determined through annual status reviews and will be based on whether the practice is functioning properly.

When using natural regeneration appropriate cover must be established within two years of the starting date of the contract or the landowner will be required to plant the area at his/her own cost.

Haying and/or grazing operations are not permitted except during emergency situations as authorized by the Farm Service Agency.

Management After the Establishment Period:

The guidance below applies on contract acreage after the planned cover is determined to be fully established. Refer to the NRCS "final" status review to determine when NRCS has rendered this determination.

When the planned cover is determined to be fully established, the following guidance applies:

1. The participant should make periodic checks of the enrolled acreage to assure that all practices are functioning properly.
2. Harvesting timber on contract acreage is not allowed during the contract period, however, Timber Stand Improvement practices, such as thinning, are permissible if they are part of the approved conservation plan.
3. The participant is responsible for maintaining the riparian forest buffer according to the conservation plan throughout the contract period. This responsibility includes livestock exclusion and controlling soil erosion along with controlling diseases and pests to a level that does not adversely affect the long-term sustainability of the desired species.

4. Control of noxious or invasive plants (such as thistle, multiflora rose, autumn olive, tartarian honeysuckle, Johnsongrass, kudzu, etc), insects, and other pests to a level that prevents adverse impacts to the intent of the practice. Mowing and/or herbicide applications are not required as long as an approved cover is maintained. These maintenance activities must be completed outside the primary ground nesting period of **March 15-July 15**
5. Areas devoted to trees and/or shrubs should be checked periodically to determine survival, predation and vigor of desired species.
6. Tree protection devices and competition control methods should be checked to ensure they are functioning properly.
7. See **Riparian Forest Buffer - WV Supplement – Tree/Shrub Planting Maintenance Supplement.**



Additional Assistance

CREP is a voluntary program implemented through the combined efforts of various state and federal agencies. If you require further guidance please contact your local Farm Service Agency.