

TECHNICAL NOTES

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE – WYOMING

PLANT MATERIALS NO. 2

OCTOBER 9, 1999

SUBJECT: RIPARIAN FOREST BUFFER ESTABLISHMENT

This Technical Note transmits information on the establishment of woody species on Riparian Forest Buffers and is in response to recent changes in the Riparian Forest Buffer Standard (391) and prior to issuing a Wyoming Riparian Forest Buffer standard. In addition this provides information to be used in the implementation of the Continuous CRP – Wyoming Game and Fish Department incentive-based program (see attached proposal).

Please contact Cheryl Grapes, Dick Rintamaki or Paul Shelton if you have questions.

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The new Riparian Forest Buffer standard (391) has removed the requirement to establish a 50% canopy in zones 1 and 2, therefore the following guidance is being provided:

As per 2-CRP ((Rev. 3) Amendment 14, Exhibit 9 – Conservation Reserve Program Handbook of the Farm Services Agency dated 6-3-99), the minimum acceptable combined width of zones 1 and 2 is the lesser of 100 feet or 30 percent of the geomorphic floodplain. A riparian forest buffer shall not be less than 35 feet in width (zone 1 = 15 feet; zone 2 = 20 feet).

Zone 1 (first 15 feet from the streambank) canopy cover shall be a minimum of 50% at maturity, which will be established based on the recommended species planting densities in Table 1.

Zone 2 (the 20 feet upslope from the end of Zone 1) canopy cover shall be a minimum of 25% if the hydrology will support the establishment of any of the species listed in Table 1. If the hydrology has been altered to the extent that the establishment of riparian vegetation is not possible, planners should use their professional judgement in determining if the current canopy in zone 2 is precluding herbaceous vegetation. If species such as Basin Big Sage (*Artemisia tridentata*), greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*), or rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus* spp.) have canopy cover percentages that are excluding herbaceous vegetation (generally canopies of >20%), site-specific management practices will be included in the Conservation Plan of Operations and the Contract Support Document to allow for the establishment of more desirable herbaceous vegetation.

Zone 3 canopy cover is only herbaceous, but zone 3 can only be included if an erosion problem is being addressed. In all instances, zone 3 will be established to a stiff-stemmed herbaceous species.

Amendment 14 to 2-CRP (Exhibit 9) includes language that specifically allows for the use of natural regeneration under CP-22 (Riparian Forest Buffer). In addition, 2-CRP allows 24 months for establishment of permanent vegetation. Therefore, planners should use their professional judgement in determining if existing stock will provide for adequate canopy at maturity. Planners should consider scheduling any tree planting practices for the second year of the contract and make a determination of the extent of natural regeneration within 18 months of CRP-1 contract effective date. Contracts could then be modified to remove naturally regenerated areas from tree planting practices.

Be aware that if the initial contract does not require tree planting practices, and natural regeneration does not provide adequate canopy cover, the approved cover must be established at no cost to the Farm Services Agency or the Commodity Credit Corporation according to a revised conservation plan within 2 years of CRP-1 effective date. Please refer to Exhibit 9 in 2-CRP for further detail.

TABLE 1 – SELECTED WOODY SPECIES FOR RIPARIAN FOREST BUFFERS

Species	Mature Crown Spread (feet)	Planting Rate to achieve 50% canopy at maturity (trees/acre)¹
Aspen	30	30
Boxelder	60	15
Buffaloberry, silver	14	140
Chokecherry	20	70
Cottonwood, Narrowleaf	40	20
Cottonwood, Plains	75	10
Green Ash	40	20
Hybrid Poplar	35	25
Hawthorne	20	70
Mountain Maple	25	20
Plum	10	275
Redosier Dogwood	15	125
Shrubby cinquefoil	5	1,090
Silverberry	6	775
Snowberry	6	775
Water Birch	40	20
Wild Rose	6	775
Willow (tree forms)	45	25
Willow (shrub forms)	10	275

¹ Analyze site limitations and determine need to increase planting density to compensate for anticipated mortality.