



# FILTER STRIP

## Michigan CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM CRP – CP21

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

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Photo courtesy of USDA NRCS

### WHAT IS A FILTER STRIP?

A filter strip is a narrow band of grasses, legumes, and forbs used to limit sediment, nutrients, pesticides, and other contaminants from entering water bodies. In addition, filter strips can provide valuable winter cover, nest sites, nectar and pollen for pollinating insects, and food for wildlife.

Filter strips are typically located on cropland immediately adjacent and parallel to streams, lakes, ponds, ditches, sinkholes, wetlands, or groundwater recharge areas.

### ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for this practice for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the land must have a cropping history (4 out of 6 years from 1996 - 2001). Plus, there must be an existing resource concern present that can be addressed with a Filter Strip.

If wildlife habitat is the only resource concern, the site is not eligible for CRP. However, the site may be eligible for a Filter Strip through other USDA cost-share programs.

### CRP POLICY

CRP Filter Strips will be installed according to the Filter Strip Standard (393) in the local Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG).

CRP Filter Strips are only eligible on **Cropland** that is adjacent and parallel to streams, sinkholes and karst areas, wetlands, and permanent bodies of water such as lakes/ponds.

The minimum width of the filter strip depends upon the slope of the field, the soil type, and the pollutants contained in the runoff. **For the Conservation Reserve Program, Filter Strips will be a minimum of 20 feet from the edge of the eligible body of water, and a maximum of 120 feet from the edge of the eligible water body.** If the site already contains existing vegetation, these acres will be included in the calculation of maximum width and included in the CRP Plan, but will not be eligible for payments.

Vegetation for filter strips will generally have stiff, upright growth characteristics, and will be adapted to the site conditions and meet the standards in the local FOTG. Only viable, high quality seed will be used.

For CRP in Michigan, **Native Grasses & Wildflowers** (Big Bluestem, Little Bluestem, Indiangrass, Switchgrass, Canada Wild Rye, etc.) **&/or Non-Native grasses & legumes considered wildlife friendly** (timothy, redtop, orchard grass, clover, alfalfa, etc.) **will be encouraged.**

All construction and seeding must be completed within 12 months of contract approval to remain in compliance. If circumstances beyond the landowner's control prohibit completion within the first 12 months, the local FSA County Committee may approve an extension to the next construction and planting season.

### PLANTING

It is very important to plant the vegetation into a weed-free, firm seedbed. Weed control efforts should begin prior to planting. Use herbicides or tillage to eliminate competing vegetation. If necessary for erosion control, seed a temporary cover. Eliminate the temporary vegetation at planting time with tillage or herbicides.

Contact your local Michigan State University (MSU) Extension Agent for specific herbicides to use. **Apply all herbicides according to the label.**

Plant the vegetation according to the attached plan/design sheet. Apply lime and fertilizer according to needs determined by a soil test and MSU recommendations.

Use a drill designed for the seed to be planted, or the seed may be broadcast or aerial seeded. For aerial or broadcast seeding, the seedbed must be worked up and firmed with a cultipacker or similar equipment. A carrier such as potash may also be needed to spread the seed evenly. **After seeding, the site must be rolled or cultipacked to ensure proper seed to soil contact.** Regardless of the method, plant the seeds **no deeper than** 1/8 – 1/4 inch.

Mow, burn, or apply herbicides as needed to control unwanted vegetation until a **Final** Status Review is issued. Mow when competing weeds are taller than the planted vegetation, and at a height above the planted vegetation. **Native grasses will not be mowed lower than 12”, and non-native grasses lower than 4”.**

For additional information on establishment and maintenance of grasses, see the following NRCS – Michigan Conservation Sheets (available at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/efotg/> in Section IV): “Establishing Cool Season Grasses and Legumes for Conservation Cover”, “Establishing Prairie Grass Buffer Strips”, “Prescribed Burning”, &/or others.

For additional information on herbicide controls, contact your local MSU Extension Agent. **Always apply herbicides according to labeled directions.**

## OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Noxious weeds and other undesirable plants, insects, and pests shall be controlled, including such maintenance as necessary to avoid detrimental effects to the surrounding land.

**After** the Final Status Review, maintain the planting according to your CRP conservation plan. Maintenance activities are allowed only on a spot basis and only if necessary to maintain stand health, maintain stand diversity, or control pests that will damage the CRP cover or adjacent lands. Burning must be in accordance with a prescribed burn plan. See the Conservation Information Sheet "Prescribed Burning" for further information. **MOWING** is only authorized between Aug 1<sup>st</sup> and Aug 20<sup>th</sup> to protect ground-nesting wildlife and to allow re-growth for winter cover. Other maintenance activities or Mid-Contract Management will only be allowed outside the designated dates to protect ground-nesting wildlife. Designated dates are from May 1<sup>st</sup> to August 1<sup>st</sup>. If management or maintenance activities are needed within these dates, the FSA County Committee **must**

approve the management activity **prior to** the activity occurring.

## Mowing for generic weed control or for cosmetic purposes is prohibited.

Limited use of the filter strip as a turnrow or crossing area is authorized if this activity is conducted as part of the planting, cultivating, or harvesting of a crop in an adjoining field. Do not use filter strips as a travel way, cropland headland or a lane for livestock or farm equipment.

**Livestock must be excluded from the filter strip.**

## REQUIRED MANAGEMENT

All new CRP contracts must have mid-term contract management activities scheduled that are site specific and will ensure plant diversity, wildlife habitat, and protection of soil and water resources. Management activities that will ensure these benefits in filter strips include prescribed burning (according to an approved burn plan), disking, grass-specific herbicide applications, and interseeding of wildflowers or non-native legumes. All management activities must be performed according to NRCS Standards and Specifications as found in the FOTG, and CRP policy. Mid-Contract Management options will be selected by the participant.

## OTHER MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

For optimum wildlife habitat, plant a diversity of grasses, legumes, and wildflowers. These mixtures will provide winter and nesting cover and food for a variety of wildlife.

## DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The filter strip will be designed to encourage water to flow in a thin sheet. When water is concentrated, it will be spread across the width of the filter strip.

Filter strips are designed to fill with sediment! To maintain the function and value of filter strips:

1. Any channels or rills must be immediately repaired.
2. Terraces, dikes, berms, trenches, or vegetative barriers can be used to treat concentrated flow areas.
3. Sediment within the filter should be removed before it accumulates to a height higher than 6 inches. Level and re-establish sheet flow. Re-seed if necessary.

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# FILTER STRIP PLANTING DESIGN WORKSHEET CRP CP-21

**Landowner:**

**County:**

Farm                      Tract                      Field(s)                      Width/Acres                      ft /                      ac                      Date

## RECOMMENDED SPECIES and SEEDING RATE (PLS #/ac = Pure Live Seed Pounds per Acre)

|                          | NATIVE MIX<br>(see map for location) | RATE<br>PLS#/ac | TOTAL =<br>(RATE X Acres) |  | NON-NATIVE MIX<br>(see map for location) | RATE<br>PLS#/ac | TOTAL =<br>(RATE X Acres) |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|--|--|-----------------|---------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> |                                      |                 | 0.0 Lb.                   |  |  |                 | 0.0 Lb.                   |
|                          |                                      |                 | 0.0 Lb.                   |  |  |                 | 0.0 Lb.                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |                                      |                 | 0.0 Lb.                   |  |  |                 | 0.0 Lb.                   |
|                          |                                      |                 | 0.0 Lb.                   |  |  |                 | 0.0 Lb.                   |
|                          |                                      |                 | 0.0 Lb.                   |  |  |                 | 0.0 Lb.                   |
|                          | <b>WILDFLOWERS</b>                   |                 | 0.0 Lb.                   |  |  |                 | 0.0 Lb.                   |

**NOTES:**

**Recommended Wildflowers include:**

### BEFORE PLANTING in Year:

- Permanent Fence: \_\_\_\_\_ ft = (see attached design)
- Water Source: \_\_\_\_\_  Pipeline: \_\_\_\_\_ ft = (see design)
- Water Facilities(s): \_\_\_\_\_  Livestock Crossing: (see design)
- Herbicide<sub>1</sub> (per label): \_\_\_\_\_ Dates = \_\_\_\_\_
- Herbicide<sub>2</sub> (per label): \_\_\_\_\_ Dates = \_\_\_\_\_
- Tillage: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates = \_\_\_\_\_
- Temporary Seeding: \_\_\_\_\_
- Structures, Grading, Leveling, Filling – See the attached Design Sheet.
- Apply fertilizer and lime according to an approved soil test and MSU recommendations for “ESTABLISHING” Native or Non-Native grasses.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### PLANTING METHOD in Year:

**Planting Method:**

Dates = \_\_\_\_\_

(If unforeseen circumstances prohibit the planting of the grass by this date, please contact our office as soon as possible)

### POST-PLANTING MAINTENANCE for Pest Control

- Mowing: BEFORE FINAL STATUS REVIEW** = mow 12” high when the weeds are 12” taller than the planted grasses
  - Native Grass = AFTER FINAL STATUS REVIEW\* = 12” MINIMUM Mowing Height\*
  - Non-Native Grass = AFTER FINAL STATUS REVIEW\* = 4” MINIMUM Mowing Height\*
- Herbicide\* (per label): \_\_\_\_\_  Prescribed Burning\*: According to an approved plan
- Other:\*

**\*NOTE: after the Final Status Review has been issued, MOWING will be conducted between August 1 & 20. Other activities will be conducted outside the primary nesting season (May 1<sup>st</sup> – August 1<sup>st</sup>), and weeds will be treated on a “spot” basis only, unless prior approval is granted by the County Committee.**

**LOCATION AND LAYOUT SKETCH & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**