



GRASSED WATERWAYS

Michigan CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

CRP – CP8A

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

October 2006



Photo Courtesy of USDA NRCS

WHAT IS A GRASSED WATERWAY?

A grassed waterway is a natural or constructed channel that is shaped or graded to required dimensions and established with suitable vegetation.

Grassed waterways are used to convey runoff from concentrated flow without causing soil erosion, to control gully erosion, and/or to protect and improve water quality. Depending on the type of vegetation established, grassed waterways may also provide wildlife habitat for a variety of "farmland" wildlife such as quail, pheasants, and rabbits.

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), and a grassed waterway must be able to address the resource concern.

CRP POLICY

Grassed waterways will be designed and installed according to Grassed Waterway Standard (412) in the local Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG).

The width of the grassed waterway depends upon several factors including the slope of the field, the soil type, and the conservation practices used in the field.

For the Conservation Reserve Program, grassed waterways will be installed to meet the minimum design criteria needed to convey water from a field, according to the FOTG, regardless of the purpose of

the grassed waterway. If requested by the producer, the width may be up to 2 times the minimum design standard, not to exceed a maximum width of 100 feet. CRP grassed waterways will not exceed a maximum width of 100 feet for any purpose.

If needed to provide a stable outlet, no more than 10% of the length of the CRP waterway may be on non-cropland and still be eligible for payments. **Any other necessary components for the grassed waterway (such as grading, outlets, tile, etc.) beyond this 10% allowance will be at the producer's expense.**

Subsurface drains are eligible for cost-share if necessary for the proper functioning of the waterway. **Maintenance to existing subsurface drains that serve as mains to laterals elsewhere in the field are the responsibility of the producer.**

Vegetation selected for the grassed waterway will be adapted to the site conditions and meet the standards in the local FOTG. Vegetation will be established according to the Critical Area Planting Standard (342) in the local FOTG. Only viable, high quality seed will be used.

Apply lime and fertilizer according to needs determined by a soil test. Competing vegetation should be controlled prior to and during establishment. Contact your local Michigan State University (MSU) Extension Office for specific herbicide recommendations. **All herbicides will be applied according to the label.**

Use mulch anchoring, a nurse crop, temporary seeding, and/or a runoff diversion to protect the vegetation until it is established.

For CRP, do not use grassed waterways as a travel way, cropland headland, or a lane for livestock or farm equipment.

The grassed waterway will not be harvested for hay or grazed by domestic livestock for the life of the CRP contract, unless authorized. Cost-share is not authorized for fencing.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The plan should contain the practices necessary for maintenance of a vigorous sod and brush control. At a minimum, maintenance should occur at least every other year to maintain a vigorous sod and to control brush.

For CRP, after NRCS determines the waterway vegetation is fully established (i.e. – after the ***Final*** Status Review), **MOWING** is only authorized between Aug 1st and Aug 20th to protect ground-nesting wildlife and to allow re-growth for winter cover. Other maintenance activities will only be allowed outside the designated dates to protect ground-nesting wildlife. Designated dates are from May 1st to August 1st. If management or maintenance activities are needed within these dates, the FSA County Committee **must** approve the maintenance activity **prior to** the activity occurring.

The grassed waterway should be inspected on a seasonal basis and following major storm and runoff events. Any damages or sediment accumulation that would adversely impair the function of the waterway must be corrected immediately.

The drainage area above the grassed waterway must be protected against erosion to the extent that expected sedimentation will not shorten the planned effective life of

the grassed waterway. Consider such practices as Residue Management (No-Till, Mulch Till, etc.), Conservation Crop Rotation, Contour Farming, etc.

CONSIDERATIONS

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

For optimum wildlife habitat, consider establishing grasses such as big bluestem, little bluestem, Indian grass, and/or switchgrass; wildlife-friendly non-native grasses and legumes such as timothy, redtop, orchardgrass, clovers, and/or alfalfa; and/or shrubs on the periphery of the grassed waterway. The portions of the waterway conveying the majority of the water can be seeded to faster-growing sod-type grasses which are typically considered good for erosion control but poor for wildlife habitat (tall fescue, smooth brome, Reed Canarygrass, etc.).

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LOCATION AND LAYOUT SKETCH & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

GRASSED WATERWAY DESIGN WORKSHEET CRP CP-8A

Name: _____ Farm: _____ Tract: _____ Field: _____ Date: _____

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS in year

Design Considerations:

Shaping (see attached Engineering Designs)

Subsurface Drains – NOTE: subsurface drains that serve as mains to laterals elsewhere in the field are NOT eligible for cost-share. (see attached Engineering Designs)

Outlets (see attached Engineering Designs)

Other

Average Width of all Reaches: _____ **Total Length:** _____ **TOTAL ACRES:** _____

Species to be Planted	#/ac	Total # needed	Recommended Temporary Erosion Control:
		0.0	<input type="checkbox"/> MULCH: Amount: - Anchoring Method: -
		0.0	<input type="checkbox"/> RUNOFF DIVERSION:
		0.0	<input type="checkbox"/> Temporary Cover or Nurse Crop: Seeding Dates:
		0.0	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

Planting Method in year

Acceptable Seeding Dates:

Use _____ equipment designed to handle the seed outlined above. Control competing vegetation prior to seeding and during establishment (see below).

Other:

Recommended Weed Control and Maintenance

MOWING = anytime before/during establishment;
AFTER ESTABLISHMENT* = Only between August 1 & 20.

HERBICIDE* (apply according to label): before planting = _____
 : after planting = _____

TILLAGE (before establishment):

PRESCRIBED BURNING* according to NRCS Standards and Specifications and local ordinances.

Other:

***NOTE: after the Final Status Review has been issued, other maintenance activities will be conducted outside the primary nesting season (May 1st – August 1st), and weeds will be treated on a "spot" basis only, unless prior approval is granted by the County Committee.