

## Critical Area Planting

### Definition/Purpose

A Critical Area Planting means an area of highly erodible land that cannot be stabilized by ordinary conservation treatment on which permanent perennial vegetative cover is established and protected to improve water quality. Benefits may include reduced soil erosion and sedimentation.

### Policies

1. Critical Area Treatment for Pasture:
  - a. All critical area plantings in pasture must be temporarily fenced to exclude livestock for at least two (2) years (no cost share on temporary fence).
  - b. Any contiguous area greater than one-half (1/2) acre must be permanently fenced to exclude livestock for ten (10) years.
  - c. Any area with slopes greater than 30 percent must be permanently fenced to exclude livestock for ten (10) years and must be planted to trees or permanent wildlife cover.
  - d. Cost Share Program funding may be used for permanent fence.
  - e. If significantly less fencing than planned in the CPO is cancelled, expires or is not installed, a statement signed by the technician must be submitted to the Division explaining why the fencing was not installed, why significantly less fencing was installed, or indicating that fencing was installed at the cooperators expense. The statement should indicate that a site visit was performed, along with the date of the site visit to establish the status of the required fencing. Failure to install required fencing constitutes non-compliance and procedure relative to non-compliance must be followed.
2. All NRCS standards and NC Agriculture Cost Share Program policies relative to vegetation must be followed. (See Section V for guidance.)
3. Vegetation shall be established using the NRCS critical area planting standard (NC-FOTG 342), including the shaping of the site as needed to eliminate gullies, seedbed preparation, liming and fertilization according to a soil test, the selection of plant species adapted to the site and intended use, and mulching.
4. Soil amendments and/or compost are encouraged to increase soil fertility, organic matter or soil permeability.
5. Existing established vegetation should not be removed, unless its presence interferes with establishing desired vegetation for stabilizing the area.

## Agriculture Cost Share Program

6. BMP soil and phosphorus impacts are required on the contract. Include the planted acreage as well. Refer to the Minimum NCACSP Effects Requirements table later in this section for the correct methods of calculation.
7. Minimum life of BMP is ten (10) years.

### Standards

N. C. NRCS Technical Guide, Section IV, Standard #342 (Critical Area Planting) and #382 (Fence).

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