

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. All NRCS standards and N.C. Community Conservation Assistance Program policies relative to vegetation must be followed (see Section V for guidance).
2. If concentrated surface water is identified as a cause of the degradation in the critical area, it shall be (a) temporarily or permanently diverted from the site during the establishment period, or (b) adequately handled through the use of erosion control mats, netting or other means.
3. If vehicular, human or animal traffic is identified as a cause of the critical area, then appropriate practices or measures shall be installed to mitigate these factors prior to planting.
4. Existing established vegetation should not be removed, unless its presence interferes with establishing desired vegetation for stabilizing the area.
5. Special caution must be used on vegetation selection for steep slope areas. Trees are allowed, but must be planted to not cause shading and increase erosion. Alternatives include: sod, compost socks, shrubs and native grasses/wildflowers.
6. Soil amendments and/or compost may be required to increase organic matter or soil permeability for sites with poor soils.
7. 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.

Specifications

N. C. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Technical Guide, Section IV, Specification #342 (Critical Area Planting).

http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/NC/NC342_CriticalArea_04-2014.pdf

N. C. NRCS Technical Guide, Section IV, Specification #472 (Access Control).

http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/NC/NC472AccessCntrl_10.2011.pdf