

# Grassed Waterway BMP Policy Revisions



# Grassed Waterway

## ACSP Definition

A Grassed Waterway means a natural or constructed channel that is shaped or graded to required dimensions and established in suitable vegetation for the stable conveyance of runoff to improve water quality.

Benefits may include reduced soil erosion, sedimentation and pollution from dissolved and sediment-attached substances.



# Grassed Waterway Policy

- Current SWCC and NRCS JAA provide authority to design the conveyance
- Problem statement: In certain situations, appurtenant structures are needed, including subsurface drains, but ACSP lacks policy guidance and JAA for drainage.
  - This causes confusion and misunderstanding of requirements
  - Currently handled using NRCS JAA or Engineered



# Grassed Waterway Policy

## New policy item #5

Subsurface drains (NRCS Practice Code 606) may be incorporated into Grassed Waterway designs when necessary to address prolonged low flows, high water tables, or seepage conditions that hinder vegetation establishment or maintenance.

Additional conditions apply...



# Grassed Waterway Policy

- a) Subsurface drains must be designed and installed with applicable job approval authority and in accordance with NRCS standards outlined in the National Engineering Handbook (210-650-H).
- b) Location of existing drain tile should be identified and assessed to determine the impact on field and ditch drainage.
- d) Animal guards are required on all subsurface drain outlets.



# Wetland Compliance Guidance Background

- Wetland drainage guidance was presented at the December meeting
- Clarification of wetland compliance requirements was requested to ensure ACSP practices do not impact cooperator federal conservation compliance
- Wetland related guidance – specific conditions, processes, delays and impacts on non-USDA participants – was discussed at the February and March meetings



# Wetland Compliance Guidance

- Food Security Act/NRCS wetland compliance requires agricultural producers to avoid planting on converted wetlands (after December 23, 1985) or converting wetlands for crop production to maintain USDA program eligibility
- Cooperators receiving USDA benefits should submit an AD-1026 to certify compliance with wetland conservation provisions



# Policy considerations

- Certification of compliance is the responsibility of the cooperator
  - All parties receive a letter, map and determination from the soil scientist – this could result in delays before installation
- Current ACSP policies place regulatory compliance responsibility on cooperators
  - Ex. Agricultural Pond Repair/Retrofit Policy 7. Cooperators are responsible for obtaining and complying with all required permits.
- Specific form names and requirements may change – generalized guidance requires fewer updates



# Final Wetland Guidance

- States the programmatic restriction on draining or converting wetlands
- Specifies actions for USDA participants to maintain wetland compliance through federal agencies

## GWW policy 5. c.

“Subsurface drainage systems may not be used to drain or convert wetlands and must comply with all applicable provisions of the Food Security Act (FSA). USDA participants are responsible for coordinating certification of compliance with the local Farm Service Agency to ensure all FSA wetland related requirements are met before beginning any subsurface drainage work.”



## Grassed Waterways

### Definition/Purpose

A Grassed Waterway means a natural or constructed channel that is shaped or graded to required dimensions and established in suitable vegetation for the stable conveyance of runoff to improve water quality. Benefits may include reduced soil erosion, sedimentation and pollution from dissolved and sediment-attached substances. (DIP)

### Policies

1. This is a sediment control practice and must not be used if the primary purpose is to drain wet areas in a field.
2. As a condition for cost sharing, the field or treatment unit draining into the waterway must have installed, or the farmer must agree to install as part of the agreement, erosion control measures necessary to prevent damage from washout or excessive sedimentation in the waterway.
3. Precision H and forming and smoothing for grassed waterways is intended to be used only where existing terraces, diversions or other minor landscape features must be removed prior to initiating a grassed waterway system.
4. All NRCS standards and NC Agriculture Cost Share Program policies relative to vegetation must be followed.
5. Subsurface drains (NRCS Practice Code 606) may be incorporated into Grassed Waterway designs when necessary to address prolonged low flows, high water tables, or seepage conditions that hinder vegetation establishment or maintenance. The following conditions apply:
  - a. Subsurface drains must be designed and installed with applicable job approval authority and in accordance with NRCS standards outlined in the National Engineering Handbook (210-650-H).
  - b. Location of existing drain tile should be identified and assessed to determine the impact on field and ditch drainage.
  - c. Subsurface drainage systems may not be used to drain or convert wetlands and must comply with all applicable provisions of the Food Security Act (FSA). USDA participants are responsible for coordinating certification of compliance with the local Farm Service Agency to ensure all FSA wetland related requirements are met before beginning any subsurface drainage work.
  - d. Animal guards are required for all subsurface drain outlets.

## Agriculture Cost Share Program

<b>GRASSED WATERWAYS</b>	
<b>Maintenance Period</b>	10 YEARS
<b>BMP Units</b>	ACRES
<b>Required Effects</b>	ACRES_AFFECTED – (planted acreage and drainage area) SOIL_SAVED NITROGEN_SAVED PHOSPHORUS_SAVED
<b>JAA/<del>NRCS Standard unless otherwise noted</del></b>	<u>SWCC – Grassed Waterway</u> <u>OR</u> <u>NRCS – ENG – 412 – Grassed Waterway</u> <u>NRCS – ENG – 606 – Subsurface Drains</u>
<b><u>NRCS Standard</u></b>	<u>NRCS – ENG – 412 – Grassed Waterway</u> <u>NRCS – ENG – 606 – Subsurface Drains</u> <u>National Engineering Handbook (210-650-H)</u>
<b>CS2 Reference Materials</b>	NC-ACSP-11 Signature Page Map with BMP location, fields, and roads