

ACSP Items SWCC Meeting

July 29, 2026
Raleigh, NC



Consideration of 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

- Consulted with federal agency partners, including the FSA and NRCS compliance leads
- 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



Wetland Compliance Guidance

- Cooperators receiving USDA benefits submit Form AD-1026 with any new activity that **improves or creates drainage** to certify compliance with wetland conservation provisions
- In most cases, drainage systems and other conversions that existed prior to December 23, 1985, can be maintained to the extent they existed at that time



Wetland Compliance Guidance

- A new wetland (or HEL) determination is not needed in every case
- If necessary, FSA will notify NRCS and NRCS will then provide highly erodible land or wetland technical determinations



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



Revised Wetland Guidance

GWW policy 5. c. was revised to clarify how the provision applies to USDA vs. non-USDA participants.

“Subsurface drainage systems may not be used to drain or convert wetlands. USDA program participants must comply with all applicable provisions of the Food Security Act (FSA) and non-USDA participants must comply with all other applicable wetland regulations, such as the Clean Water Act. It is the responsibility of the participant to ensure compliance with applicable regulations prior to beginning any subsurface drainage work.”



FY2027 ACSP Detailed Implementation Plan



Detailed Implementation Plan

The DIP includes:

- Annual program goals
- Funding – BMP and Technical Assistance – Allocation Rules
- BMPs Eligible for Cost Share
- Minimum BMP life expectancy
- BMP minimum technical competency requirements – for JAA

Required to be published annually by Administrative Rule [02 NCAC 59D - Cost Share Programs Rules](#)



FY 2027 Detailed Implementation Plan Updates

1. Added TRC maintenance period recommendations for the Critical Area Planting, Cropland Conversion to Grass/Wildlife Plantings, Field Border, and Filter Strip BMPs
2. Attached the current BMP Technical Competency Requirements
 - ✓ added Use Exclusion Fencing



FY 2027 Detailed Implementation Plan Updates

- Background on maintenance period changes was presented at the May 12 SWCC Work Session
- An additional TRC Meeting was held May 26th to finalize recommendations
 - Potential outcomes and risks for reducing the maintenance to 5-years for Critical area planting Cropland conversion, Diversion, Field border, Filter strip, Grassed waterway
 - Final recommendation is to offer two maintenance period options for the four vegetation based BMPs at a 60% cost share rate



FY 2027 DIP Maintenance Period Updates

Description of NEW maintenance period tiers:

- Two maintenance period length options shall be available for the Critical Area Planting, Cropland Conversion to Grass/Wildlife Plantings, Field Border, and Filter Strip BMPs.
- Participants may elect a ten-year maintenance period at the existing ACSP cost share rates of 75% standard and 90% enhanced (beginning farmers, limited resource farmers, or a farm residing in an enhanced voluntary agricultural district) or a five-year maintenance period at cost share rates of 60% standard and 75% enhanced.
- Any BMP enrolled under the five-year maintenance option shall not be eligible for reimplementation for a period of ten years from the implementation date.



FY 2027 DIP Maintenance Period Updates

Statement on district authority to choose BMPs offered

- District Boards of Supervisors may develop and adopt local policies specifying which Best Management Practices (BMPs) the district will or will not offer for cost share assistance.
- Any such district-level BMP policy must be clearly documented in the district's Annual Strategic Plan for the applicable fiscal year.
- Local policies must remain consistent with all ACSP rules, program purposes, and requirements.



FY 2027 DIP Maintenance Period Updates

Table 2. Best management practices eligible for cost sharing, the minimum life expectancy of each practice and the practice type.

PRACTICE	MINIMUM LIFE EXPECTANCY (years)	PRACTICE TYPE
Critical Area Planting	5 or 10	AGRONOMIC
Cropland Conversion	5 or 10	AGRONOMIC
Field Border	5 or 10	AGRONOMIC
Filter Strip	5 or 10	AGRONOMIC



Contracting tiered rate BMPs

- Five-year maintenance period BMPs will be created in CS2

Parcel Number	Contract Reference	Tract	Field	Category	
	View Contract	0	356	11	EROSION/NUTRIENT REDUCTION

BMP	Critical Area Planting (5-year)
Component	10-year  Critical Area Planting Critical Area Planting (5-year) Cropland Conversion - Grass



Contracting tiered rate BMPs

- No new components are needed
- Staff will input the CS% accordingly

Parcel Number	Contract Reference	Tract	Field	Category
	View Contract	0	356	11
EROSION/NUTRIENT REDUCTION				

BMP: Critical Area Planting (5-year)

Component: vegetation Search

VEGETATION-bag lime, seed and fertilizer 1122.00 / ACRE 1110079

Program	Qty Planned	Unit Type	Unit Cost	CS%	Total	Planned Cost	Available
CS	0.5	ACRE	1122.00	60	337	337	542

Add Component



FY 2027 Detailed Implementation Plan

Action: Approve the Fiscal Year 2027 Detailed Implementation Plan



FY2027 ACSP Cost List Recommendations



Average Cost List Updates

NEW Annotations

HUAP- fine grading, geotextile, stone (does not include grading/excavation) ^{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6}
HUAP-fine grading, concrete (does not include grading/excavation) ^{1, 2, 3, 4}
HUAP-for tanks and troughs: fine grading (does not include grading/excavation), geotextile, stone, 44.4 SqYd (400 SqFt) ^{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6}
HUAP- for tanks and troughs: fine grading (does not include grading/excavation), concrete, 44.4 SqYd (400 SqFt) ^{1, 2, 3, 4}

Footnotes

1- Planners may use this components instead of itemizing the individual costs separately. This item was created following the NRCS standard and represents the average livestock watering system used in ACSP. Only the items listed are included in the average cost. Any additional items should be contracted separately.

2- The sized HUAP components are based on the minimum size of 20' x 20'. For larger areas planners may add the SqYd component to cover the excess area. For example, for a 25' x 25' gravel HUAP, the components would be: 1 unit (EACH) HUAP-for tanks and troughs: fine grading (does not include excavation), geotextile, stone, 44.4 SqYd (400 SqFt) and 25 units (SqYd) HUAP- fine grading, geotextile, stone (does not include excavation).

3- Fine grading or finish grading includes the smoothing of the pad and area around the pad equal to ½ the pad size.

4- Excavation and grading are site dependent. The planner should determine what type to use based on the site characteristics, such as topography and soil type.

5- The amount of stone included is to fill the stated volume 8" deep and compact to 6".

6- Geotextile costs include overlap.

7- The cost for a watering tank concrete pad is based on a pad size of 7' x 7'.



Average Cost List Updates

- ✓ One component name edit
 - Remove confusion since adding the Use Exclusion Fencing BMP

~~USE~~ **SITE** EXCLUSION FENCE - includes gates and sign



FY 2027 Cost List

Action: Approve the Fiscal Year 2027 Agriculture Cost Share Program Cost List.

