



AGRICULTURE COST SHARE PROGRAM

Technical Review Committee

December 17, 2025 - 1:30 PM

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AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Review and Approval of August Meeting Minutes
3. ACSP Updates
4. Grassed Waterway Policy Update
 - A. Inclusion of Subsurface Drain
5. Member Items

FY2026 TRC Meeting Schedule

Wednesdays, 1:30 – 3:30 PM

February 18, 2026

April 22, 2026

May 20, 2026 (tentative)

June 24, 2026

ACSP Technical Review Committee

August 20, 2025



Technical Review Committee Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Approval of August Meeting Minutes
3. Program Updates?
4. Grassed Waterway Policy Update
5. Member Items



TRC Membership

John Beck, Chair	Division of Soil and Water Conservation
Erin Rivers	Cooperative Extension Service/ NC State University
Abubakarr Mansaray	School of Agriculture, NC A & T State University
Alex Jones	N. C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Starla Harwood	Farm Service Agency
Anne Coan	N. C. Farm Bureau Federation
Dewitt Hardee	N. C. State Grange
Brandon King	State Resource Conservationist, NRCS
Jim Kjelgaard	State Conservation Engineer, NRCS
Rachel Smith	Division of Soil and Water Conservation
Rick McSwain	Division of Soil and Water Conservation
Charlie Deaton	Division of Marine Fisheries
Benjy Strobe	Wildlife Resources Commission
Rodney Wright	Rockingham Soil and Water Conservation District Employee
David Harris	Durham Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor



August Meeting Minutes

- Review and approve the August 20, 2025 TRC meeting minutes



ACSP Updates

- ☐ Waste Management Plan Guidance and remaining waste & nutrient management BMPs
 - ☐ Feeding/Waste Storage Structure, Livestock Mortality Management System
- ☐ Maintenance Period Reduction Study
- ☐ Spot Check Contract Selection Tool



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

- Practice 412 – Grassed Waterway design is applied at the surface level
- “A shaped or graded channel that is established with suitable vegetation to convey surface water at a non-erosive velocity using a broad and shallow cross section to a stable outlet.” (NRCS-412-CPS-1)
- Used where added water conveyance capacity and vegetative protection from concentrated flow are needed to:
 - convey runoff without causing erosion or flooding
 - prevent gully formation
 - protect/improve water quality



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

- Use of subsurface drainage is supported in NRCS guidance

Conservation Practice Standard 412

Drainage:

- When needed to establish or maintain vegetation on sites having prolonged flows, high water tables, or seepage problems, use Subsurface Drain (606), Underground Outlet (620), or other suitable measures in waterway designs.



Grassed Waterway Policy

NRCS Engineering Field Handbook, Chapter 7 - Grassed Waterways

650.0705 Layout and Construction

- F. Appurtenant Structures
 - (1) Effective vegetated waterways are not subjected to low flows of long duration nor kept wet for long periods. Subsurface drains, underground outlets, stone center drains, or other means of providing drainage and protecting the center of the waterway should be considered where low flows or wet conditions are prolonged.

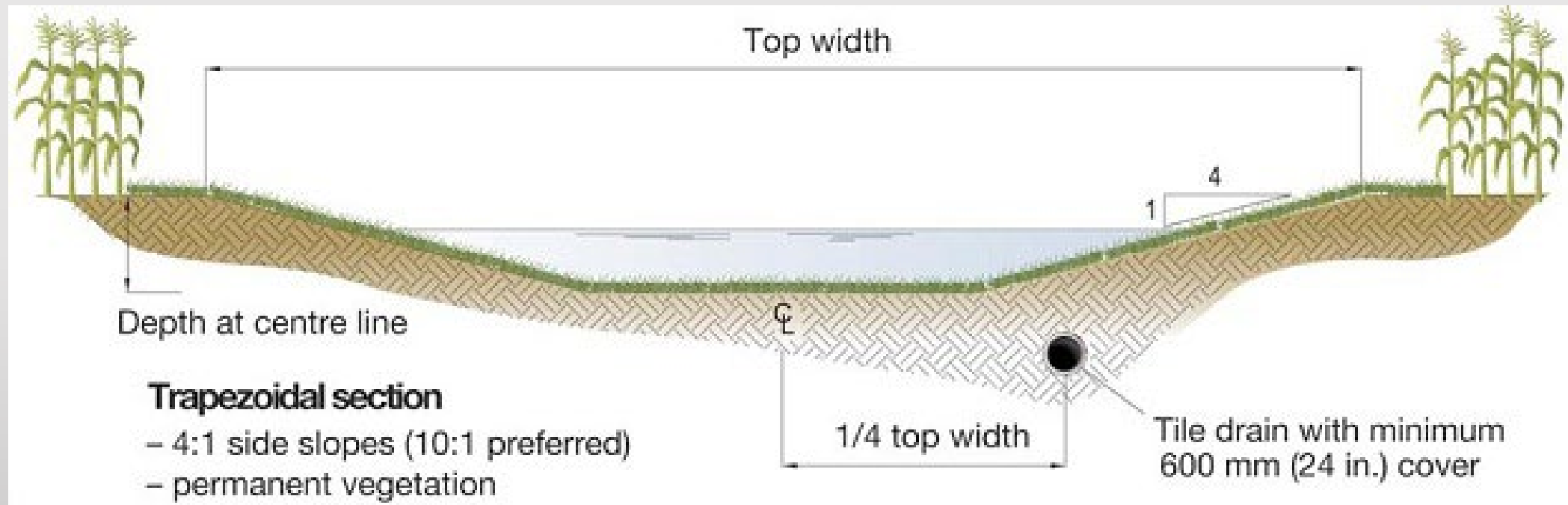


Grassed Waterway Policy

- (2) Subsurface Drains
 - Subsurface drains should parallel the center of the vegetated waterway but be offset from the centerline at least a fourth of the top width of the waterway. Two drains may be required in some cases, one on each side of the center. The principles outlined in 210-NEH-650-14 should be followed in designing and installing the subsurface drains. The subsurface drains may be outletted through a drop structure at the end of the waterway or through a standard pipe outlet.



Example with drain



Grassed Waterway Policy

- Other suitable practices are listed in the documentation:
 - Underground Outlet (620)
 - not used in ACSP
 - Stone Center Drains
 - engineered if needed
 - Lined Waterway or Outlet (468)
 - use ACSP Grade Stabilization Structure or Rock-lined outlet



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

- 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).
- Drains should be offset from the centerline of the waterway by at least one-fourth of the top width. In some cases, dual drains may be required.
- Location of existing drain tile should be identified and assessed to determine the impact on field and ditch drainage.
- Subsurface drains may not be used to drain wetlands.



Grassed Waterway Policy

NEW ITEM 12/17

- Animal guards are required on all subsurface drain outlets.
- This is supported by ACSP Sediment/Nutrient Management Measures general policy #3. “Animal guards are required for all practices which have a subsurface drain outlet (grassed waterway, diversion, rock-lined waterway, etc.). These guards are needed to satisfy the subsurface drain standard.”



Grassed Waterway Policy JAA

- Adding subsurface drains to the policy and offering SWCC JAA will provide clarity and guidance to district staff.
- Proposing to add subsurface drain under the existing SWCC Grassed Waterway
- This approach has been used with ACSP Trough and Tank JAA
 - NRCS uses two separate practices – Watering Facility and Irrigation Pipeline – for planning livestock watering tanks.

Vs.

- SWCC JAA nests Irrigation Pipeline under the Trough and Tank BMP



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. Land 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. Drains should be offset from the centerline of the waterway by at least one-fourth of the top width. In some cases, dual drains may be required.
 - c. Location of existing drain tile should be identified and assessed to determine the impact on field and ditch drainage.
 - d. Subsurface drains may not be used to drain wetlands.

GRASSED WATERWAYS	
Maintenance Period	10 YEARS
BMP Units	ACRES
Required Effects	ACRES_AFFECTED – (planted acreage and drainage area) SOIL_SAVED NITROGEN_SAVED PHOSPHORUS_SAVED

Agriculture Cost Share Program

JAA/NRCS Standard unless otherwise noted	<u>SWCC – Grassed Waterway</u> <u>OR</u> <u>NRCS – ENG – 412 – Grassed Waterway</u> <u>NRCS – ENG – 606 – Subsurface Drains</u>
<u>NRCS Standard</u>	<u>NRCS – ENG – 412 – Grassed Waterway</u> <u>NRCS – ENG – 606 – Subsurface Drains</u> <u>National Engineering Handbook (210-650-H)</u>
CS2 Reference Materials	NC-ACSP-11 Signature Page Map with BMP location, fields, and roads

Member Items

Open Discussion



TRC Meeting Schedule

Next Meeting:

- February 18, 2026

Future Meetings:

- April 22, 2026
- May 20, 2026 (tentative)
- June 24, 2026

- 3rd/4th Wednesday of the month
- 1:30 – 3:30 PM

