

Community Conservation Assistance Program

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.
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.
- 4.5. The control of invasive species to reduce competition with desired plant species using appropriate methods is allowed. Appropriate methods can include physical, mechanical, targeted and licensed pesticides, and/or other accepted methods of control. The control of invasives should only take place where it will reduce the establishment and maturity of the desired species, not lead to erosion, and/or result in the proper establishment of the desired species. Pesticide application control measures must be made under the direction and guidance of the applicator with the proper pesticide license.
- 5.6. 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.
- 6.7. Soil amendments and/or compost may be required to increase organic matter or soil permeability for sites with poor soils.
8. 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.
- 7.9. The Operation and Maintenance Plan must be completed prior to contract approval

CRITICAL AREA PLANTING	
Lifespan	5 years single-family home, 10 years all other properties
BMP Units	SQUARE FEET
Required Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Soil loss reductions <p><i>Use RUSLE2 or NRCS soil loss reductions or volumetric calculation dependent upon severity of the issue.</i></p>
JAA	Commission issues JAA for critical area plantings or NRCS JAA for #342 - Critical Area Planting.
<u>Standards</u>	Section IV, Standard #342 (Critical Area Planting). N. C. NRCS Technical Guide, Section IV, Standard #472 (Access Control).
<u>CS2 Reference Materials</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NC-CSP-11 Signature Page • Map with BMP location • Critical area planting Operation & Maintenance Plan • Receipts for Actual Costs • Receipts Summary form
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Standards

N. C. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Technical Guide, Section IV,

https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/NC/342_Critical_Area_Planting_NC_Nov2017FINAL.pdf

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