



# MARGINAL PASTURELAND WETLAND BUFFER

## Michigan CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM CRP – CP30

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

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Photo courtesy of USDA NRCS

### WHAT IS A MARGINAL PASTURELAND WETLAND BUFFER?

A Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffer is a band of vegetation used to limit sediment, nutrients, pesticides, and other contaminants from entering water bodies. In addition, Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffers enhance and/or restore hydrology and plant communities associated with existing or degraded wetlands, and provide valuable wildlife habitat.

### ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for this practice for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the land must be considered Marginal Pastureland. Plus, there must be an existing resource concern present that can be addressed with a Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffer.

If wildlife habitat is the only resource concern, the site is not eligible for CP30. However, the site may be eligible for a Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffer through other USDA cost-share programs.

### CRP POLICY

CRP Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffers will be installed according to the Riparian Herbaceous Buffer (390) or Riparian Forest Buffer (391) Standard in the local Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG).

CRP Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffers are eligible on **Marginal Pastureland** that is adjacent to wetlands. They are also eligible adjacent and parallel to streams,

Sinkholes, karst areas, and permanent bodies of water such as lakes/ponds **IF** at least 51% of the soils in the CRP buffer area are considered **Hydric**.

The minimum width of the Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffer depends upon the slope of the field, the soil type, and the pollutants contained in the runoff. **For the Conservation Reserve Program, Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffers will be a minimum of 20 feet from the edge of the eligible body of water, and a maximum of 120 feet from the edge of the eligible water body.** If the site already contains existing vegetation that is not eligible for CP30, these acres will be included in the calculation of maximum width and included in the CRP Plan, but will not be eligible for payments.

Vegetation for Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffers will be adapted to the site conditions and meet the standards in the local FOTG. Only viable, high quality seed will be used. If existing vegetation meets NRCS Standards and Specifications to serve as a buffer, there is no requirement for re-seeding.

For CRP in Michigan, **Native Grasses & Wildflowers** (Big Bluestem, Little Bluestem, Indiangrass, Switchgrass, Canada Wild Rye, etc.) **&/or Non-Native grasses & legumes considered wildlife friendly** (timothy, redbud, orchard grass, clover, alfalfa, etc.) **will be encouraged.**

All construction and seeding must be completed within 12 months of contract effective date of CRP-1 to remain in compliance. If circumstances beyond the landowner's control prohibit completion within the first 12 months, the local FSA County Committee may approve an extension to the next construction and planting season.

### PLANTING

If the site is currently grazed, and existing vegetation will sufficiently address the resource concern once the cattle are excluded according to the FOTG, no planting will be required.

If planting is necessary or desired, it is very important to plant the vegetation into a weed-free, firm seedbed. Weed control efforts should begin prior to planting. Use herbicides or tillage to eliminate competing vegetation. If necessary for erosion control, seed a

temporary cover. Eliminate the temporary vegetation at planting time with tillage or herbicides.

Contact your local Michigan State University (MSU) Extension Agent for specific herbicides to use. **Apply all herbicides according to the label.**

Plant the vegetation according to the attached plan/design sheet. For grass planting, apply lime and fertilizer according to needs determined by a soil test and MSU recommendations.

For grasses, use a drill designed for the seed to be planted, or the seed may be broadcast or aerial seeded. For aerial or broadcast seeding, the seedbed must be worked up and firmed with a cultipacker or similar equipment. A carrier such as potash may also be needed to spread the seed evenly. **After seeding, the site must be rolled or cultipacked to ensure proper seed to soil contact.** Regardless of the method, plant the seeds **no deeper than** 1/8 – 1/4 inch.

For trees, plantings using bare-rooted stock and non-rooted cuttings should be completed in the spring after the ground thaws, but no later than June 1; or planted in the fall after October 1 until the ground freezes when soil moisture is adequate. Containerized and balled and burlap stock may be planted between October 1 and June 1 as local soil moisture and weather conditions permit. Direct seeding will be completed from October 1 through April 30 as local soil moisture and weather conditions permit.

For grasses, mow, burn, or apply herbicides as needed to control unwanted vegetation until a **Final** Status Review is issued. Mow when competing weeds are taller than the planted vegetation, and at a height above the planted vegetation. **Native grasses will not be mowed lower than 12", and non-native grasses lower than 4".**

For trees, until a **Final** Status Review is issued, 9 sq. ft. around each tree should remain weed-free to maximize tree growth. Fabric weed barriers are very effective at minimizing weed competition, and are eligible for limited cost-share. **Mowing is not recommended for weed control for trees.**

For additional information on establishment and maintenance of grasses and trees, see the following NRCS – Michigan Conservation Sheets (available at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/efotg/> in Section IV): "Tree/Shrub Planting for: Reforestation, Windbreaks, and Wildlife", "Weed Control for Tree and Shrub Establishment", "Establishing Cool Season Grasses and Legumes for Conservation Cover", "Establishing Prairie Grass Buffer Strips", "Prescribed Burning", &/or others.

**For additional information on herbicide controls, contact your local MSU Extension Agent.** Always apply herbicides according to labeled directions.

## OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Noxious weeds and other undesirable plants, insects, and pests shall be controlled, including such maintenance as necessary to avoid detrimental effects to the surrounding land. Some of the most common pests that need controlled on CRP acreage include Autumn Olive, Multiflora Rose, Spotted Knapweed, Quackgrass, etc

**After** the Final Status Review, maintain the planting according to your CRP conservation plan. Maintenance activities are allowed only on a spot basis and only if necessary to maintain stand health, maintain stand diversity, or control pests that will damage the CRP cover or adjacent lands. **MOWING** is only authorized between Aug 1<sup>st</sup> and Aug 20<sup>th</sup> to protect ground-nesting wildlife and to allow re-growth for winter cover. Other maintenance activities or Mid-Contract Management will only be allowed outside the designated dates to protect ground-nesting wildlife. Designated dates are from May 1<sup>st</sup> to August 1<sup>st</sup>. If management or maintenance activities are needed within these dates, the FSA County Committee **must** approve the management activity **prior to** the activity occurring.

For Trees, replacement of dead trees and shrubs will occur to ensure at least 80% of the trees are living. The landowner is responsible for replacement costs.

**Mowing for generic weed control or for cosmetic purposes is prohibited.**

Do not use Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffers as a travel way, cropland headland or a lane for livestock or farm equipment.

**Livestock must be excluded from the Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffer.**

## MID-CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

**If grasses will be planted,** all new CRP contracts must have mid-term contract management activities scheduled that are site specific and will ensure plant diversity, wildlife habitat, and protection of soil and water resources. Management activities that will ensure these benefits in filter strips include prescribed burning (according to an approved burn plan), disking, grass-specific herbicide applications, and interseeding of wildflowers or non-native legumes. All management activities must be performed according to NRCS Standards and Specifications as found in the FOTG, and CRP policy. Mid-Contract Management options will be selected by the participant.



**POST-PLANTING MAINTENANCE** for Pest Control

- Mowing: BEFORE FINAL STATUS REVIEW** = mow 12" high when the weeds are 12" taller than the planted grasses
  - Native Grass = AFTER FINAL STATUS REVIEW\*** = 12" MINIMUM Mowing Height\*
  - Non-Native Grass = AFTER FINAL STATUS REVIEW\*** = 4" MINIMUM Mowing Height\*
- Herbicide\* (per label):**  **Prescribed Burning\*:** According to an approved plan
- Other:\***

**\*\*\*NOTE:** after the Final Status Review has been issued, other maintenance activities will be conducted outside the primary nesting season (May 1<sup>st</sup> – August 1<sup>st</sup>), and weeds will be treated on a "spot" basis only, unless prior approval is granted by the County Committee.

**LOCATION AND LAYOUT SKETCH & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Reset Form

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