

## CRP CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is responsible for administering the rules of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). All questions related to CRP contract requirements, payment, or modifications should be directed to the FSA office where your contract originated.

CRP policy requires participants to do some type of “disturbance” to certain CRP vegetative cover during specific years of the contract. These required management practices are designed to enhance the wildlife habitat value of the cover. This job sheet provides the cover assessment process and specifications necessary to exempt a field from implementation of a required management practice.

Normally, required contract management activities are conducted in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of contract. If the contracted field is 40 acres or more, or if excessive steepness could cause erosion concerns, the required management practice will be applied over the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> year for ten-year contracts. If the contract is 15 years in length, this required management will be repeated again in the 11<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> year of contract. For contracts that are being renewed, this practice is also required in the first year (or year 1 and 2 if greater than 40 acres).

## SPECIFICATIONS

An in-field evaluation by NRCS must be conducted and documented for all sites where a waiver of the required management practice is recommended. All recommendations to waive a required management practice must be approved by the FSA County Committee.

- Evaluate each site to determine which of the eligible required management practice(s) would be feasible and most effective.
- Utilize the following guidance to evaluate non-typical site conditions that may restrict or prohibit implementation of required management practices.

### Soil Erosion Risk

If soil erosion is a concern and a field is comprised of greater than 50% soil map slope class D, E, or F soils, a non-tillage required management shall be utilized.

### Threatened and Endangered Species

If the presence of a Threatened or Endangered (T&E) species is documented, alternatives to allow the implementation of a required management practice shall be evaluated and documented. Implementation of required management practices may be exempted (waived) if either of the following criteria are met:

- implementation of any required management practices would physically harm the species, or
- the existing CRP cover is a recognized habitat for the T&E species which would not be improved by implementation of a required management practice.

### Weeds and Invasive Plants

Where a documented weed problem such as Canadian thistle, wild parsnip, musk thistle, crown vetch or other invasive plants are located immediately adjacent to this field, evaluate the feasibility and the risk of implementing each eligible required management practice.

**Required Management shall only be waived if completing them jeopardizes an adequate existing cover.**

Where adequate existing cover does not exist, a required management practice shall be implemented. Refer to the “Considerations” section to develop an implementation strategy.

### Adequate Existing Cover

Forbs listed in the Wisconsin NRCS Agronomy Technical Note 5 or 6 are well distributed throughout the CRP field and a disturbance of the existing cover would have a negative impact on existing vegetation.

### Prior Management of the Site

The required management practice may be waived if managed or emergency haying or grazing has been recently conducted on the field and it is determined that those activities have served the same purpose as an eligible required management practice for the contracted cover type.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

Consider the following primary components when planning for exemptions:

- If soil erosion is a concern, consider implementing required management practices that minimize disturbance of the soil surface.
- If adequate cover exists, consider developing a maintenance plan that complies with CRP rules that will preserve the condition of the cover.
- If weeds or invasive plant encroachment is a concern, consider:
  - ▲ selecting a required management practice that will minimize soil disturbance,
  - ▲ the use of additional weed control practices (herbicide, mowing) during the re-establishment period, or
  - ▲ plan the timing of the re-establishment within program requirements to reduce weed pressure (late summer or dormant seeding).

CRP Field Number	Summary of the Condition of Existing Cover	Document the Reason for Exemption

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certified Conservation Planner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## REQUIRED MANAGEMENT COVER ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

### CRP Required Management Practice – Exemption from Required Management

Client:	Date:	
County:	Tract No:	Field No.:
CRP Signup:	CRP Practice:	Acres:
Evaluators:		

SITE DESCRIPTION (check all that apply)			
Floodplain/Wetland/Riparian	Upland		
Average Slope Range	0-6%	6-12%	>12% (soil map slope class D, E, F)
Are any of the following present? (If so, show location on map.)			
Active gully erosion	Excessive floodplain scouring	Non-contract woody vegetation	
Invasive/aggressive annual/biennial weeds	Highly diverse grassland cover		
Are any of the following present? (If so, show location on map.)			
Grassed waterways	Concentrated flow areas	Critically eroding areas	
Areas planted to trees or shrubs	Riparian forest buffers	Areas of wetland vegetation	
Water resource being buffered: stream, wetland, lake, pond (check all that apply)			

DOMINANT VEGETATION	
If known, what cover was originally planted in this field?	
Current Vegetation	
Grasses	Forbs
Is the stand predominately grasses (>60%)?      Yes    No	

STAND DIVERSITY AND STRUCTURE			
On average, is the stand:			
1 uniform height:	Height	inches OR	2-3 heights: Document height ranges
Is the vegetation so thick as to be difficult to walk through?      Yes    No			
Is there bare ground present?		Yes    No	Percent bare ground      %
Is there substantial thatch on the soil surface?      Yes    No			

Stand is acceptable as is: continue monitoring and management. Reason:
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WEED PRESSURE			
Weed Species (include noxious weeds, other undesirable herbaceous species, woody vegetation)	Weed Pressure	Threat To Stand	Spots/Widespread (ID location on map)
	L M <input type="checkbox"/> H	Yes No	S W
	L M <input type="checkbox"/> H	Yes No	S W
	L M <input type="checkbox"/> H	Yes No	S W
	L M <input type="checkbox"/> H	Yes No	S W

INADEQUATE EXISTING MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS				
<b>PROBLEM</b>	<b>Lack of Species Diversity</b>  (Not enough variety in forbs and grasses)	<b>Excessive Undesirable Species</b>  (Too much cover of trees, invasive plants, or species not beneficial to grassland wildlife)	<b>Stand Too Dense</b>  (Grasses or other vegetation too thick, lack of bare ground)	<b>Lack of Structural Diversity</b>  (Most vegetation is only one height or form)
<b>ASSESSMENT</b> (extent, location, severity)				
<b>OPTIONS</b> (Note: Option selected for CRP cover management must be authorized by program rules.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burn - Interseed</li> <li>• Disk - Interseed</li> <li>• Spray - Interseed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spot clip</li> <li>• Mow</li> <li>• Burn</li> <li>• Spray</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mow</li> <li>• Burn</li> <li>• Spray</li> <li>• Graze*</li> <li>• Hay*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burn - Interseed</li> <li>• Disk - Interseed</li> <li>• Spray - Interseed</li> </ul>

\*Haying or Grazing must be approved by the FSA County Committee and will result in a reduction in CRP rental payment in the year haying or grazing occurs.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS		
Excessive ATV or farm equipment use Herbicide damage Prohibited activity Other:	Excessive mowing Encroachment (type: ) Unapproved grazing	Permanent structures Food plots Unapproved haying

OTHER INFORMATION