



## Conservation Practice Overview

July 2022

### Hillside Ditch (Code 423)

A narrow channel with a supporting ridge on the lower side, constructed across the slope on steeply sloping land.

#### Practice Information

A hillside ditch usually has a small, shallow channel and is constructed by hand in most cases. In many cases multiple hillside ditches are applied as a system and are installed at controlled gradients at defined horizontal intervals. For instances where it is feasible to install a vegetative barrier as a supporting practice, apply it immediately upgradient of the hillside ditch in accordance with the criteria in NRCS Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) Vegetative Barrier (Code 601).



This practice applies to sites where—

- The topography is steeply sloping.
- Runoff is causing erosion.
- There is sufficient soil depth for construction.

Do not use a hillside ditch to provide protection to buildings, roads, or other improvements. Use NRCS CPS Diversion (Code 362) for that purpose.

A hillside ditch helps control erosion on steep cropland by diverting runoff to a stable outlet. The hillside ditches are installed at designed vertical intervals down the slope and with nonerosive channel grades. An adequate outlet for runoff is required before installing a hillside ditch. An outlet may be a grade control structure, a natural or constructed waterway, a stable watercourse, or a stable disposal area such as a well-established pasture.

A hillside ditch will require maintenance over the expected life of the practice.

#### Common Associated Practices

NRCS CPS Hillside Ditch (Code 423) is frequently associated with NRCS CPSs Grassed Waterway (Code 412), Lined Waterway or Outlet (Code 468), Underground Outlet (Code 620), Grade Stabilization Structure (Code 410), and Vegetative Barrier (Code 601).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.