



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

# Conservation Practice Standards (CPS) for Alaska

Understanding what CPS are, where to find them, how to read them,  
and how to apply them in conservation planning in Alaska

# Introduction

NRCS conservation practices are used to improve natural resources with respect to soil, water, air, plants, animals, and energy, with human considerations as a factor in every decision.

(SWAPAE+H)



## Purpose and Use

**A Conservation Practice Standard (CPS)** establishes the minimum acceptable level of quality required to plan, design, install, operate, and maintain a conservation practice.

# Purpose and Use

The CPSs are developed for the protection of the resources, landowners, conservation contractors, partner employees, and NRCS employees. When a conservation practice is installed according to the criteria specified in the CPS:

- 1) landowners receive a conservation product that addresses or mitigates the identified resource concern;
- 2) Technical Service Providers understand their responsibility to provide a quality product on the ground and are not required to warranty a product beyond the requirements of the standard;
- 3) and NRCS employees are assured they are working within the scope of their employment.

## Purpose and Use

In other words, when a conservation practice is installed according to the Conservation Practice Standard:

- 1) effective conservation is applied;
- 2) everyone can have confidence that the job was done correctly;
- 3) and involved technical staff are protected from liability if they work within the scope of their authority.

## Purpose and Use

Conservation practice plans and specifications are site-specific instructions that establish the technical details and workmanship required to install conservation practices in accordance with the requirements of the Conservation Practice Standard.

## Purpose and Use

Plans and specifications are provided to the client in the form of implementation requirements, construction plans, designs, drawings, or other instructions.

Examples include the details of site preparation and protection, instructions for use of materials described in the CPS, or guidance for performing installation.

Statements in the plans and specifications must not conflict with the requirements of the CPS.



## USDA Policy

Policy regarding practice standards is found in Title 450 - **National Handbook of Conservation Practices**, Part 620 and the exhibits under that part.





## USDA Policy

Knowledge, skill and ability to correctly apply conservation practice standards is also a requirement of NRCS certified planners per **409.9 - Criteria to Achieve an NRCS Conservation Planner Role Designation, Subpart C.**

# CPS Creation and Management

CPS are drafted by the National Technical Guide Committee (NTGC) which is comprised of various National Discipline Leads within NRCS.

The NTGC may recommend changes to the National Handbook of Conservation Practices (NHCP) to the Deputy Chief for Science and Technology.

The Deputy Chief for Science & Technology approves and publishes changes to the NHCP.

# CPS Creation and Management

The National Conservation Practice Standard Subcommittee (NCPSS) chairperson establishes the code given to each CPS.

The National Discipline Lead (NDL) assigned for a CPS establishes the unit of measure for that CPS (e.g.; linear feet, square feet, acres, each, etc.).

The NDL for each discipline leads a formal review of each assigned national CPS a minimum of every 5 years.

# CPS Creation and Management

CPSs evolve in response to advancements in agriculture techniques and technology as documented by research, field trials, and accumulated experience.

Each CPS, the conservation practice physical effects (CPPE), and other related documents are reviewed periodically to ensure:

- (1) timely incorporation of new technologies;
- (2) resource concerns are adequately addressed;
- (3) consistency in format and content;
- (4) interagency cooperation;
- (5) incorporation of varied conservation activities expected of NRCS in the future.



## CPS Format

Each CPS is presented according to a national template for consistency.



- 1) Practice name, code, and unit of measure – Each CPS has a unique code number.
- 2) Definition – Briefly describes the practice or technology being delivered.
- 3) Purpose – A single or multiple conservation reasons why the practice is applied.
- 4) Conditions where practice applies – Land uses and site-specific conditions where the practice applies as well as situations where and when the practice should not be applied.



**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**

**CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**NAME**

**Code xxx**

**(unit)**

**DEFINITION**

Briefly describe the conservation practice and/or the technology delivered by the conservation practice. Avoid including how the practice functions or is implemented in this section.

**PURPOSES**

Provide a bulleted list of the primary conservation reasons why the conservation practice is applied.

- Relate each purpose to one or more resource concerns that can be addressed by the technology in the conservation practice standard (CPS). Use the introductory phrase: "Use this practice to accomplish one or more of the following purposes:" For example:
  - Reduce sheet and rill erosion (nonfacilitating practice).
  - Facilitate the reduction of sheet and rill erosion (facilitating practice).
- Provide an example of a practice application, if needed for clarity.
- Do not include secondary purposes in this section.
- Do not describe how the practice will resolve the resource concern.

States may add a purpose by requesting a variance as outlined in Title 450, General Manual, Part 401, Subpart B, "Variances" (450-GM-401-B). States may delete any purpose that addresses a resource concern that has not been identified in that State.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

Describe the land uses where the practice can be applied and site-specific conditions that necessitate implementation of the practice. Describe site conditions that may affect practice suitability or function. If needed, include specific situations where the practice should not be applied.

NRCS reviews and periodically updates conservation practice standards. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact your Natural Resources Conservation Service [State office](#) or visit the [Field Office Technical Guide](#).  
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NRCS, [NHCP/State Name]  
Month Year

- 5) **Criteria – Requirements that guide the development of the plans and must be met/performed when implementing the practice.**
- 6) **Considerations – Issues/concerns that a planner should investigate and evaluate either during the planning process or during implementation. May also suggest other supporting practices.**
- 7) **Plans and specifications – Provided to the client in documents such as implementation requirements, construction plans, designs, drawings, or other document types.**
- 8) **Operation and maintenance – Actions required to ensure that the practice functions efficiently for the entire practice lifespan.**

**CRITERIA**

Support each purpose with appropriate criteria. A "General Criteria" section is used to address criteria common to all purposes. If there are requirements that apply only to a specific purpose or to a specific application of the practice, provide an "Additional Criteria" section. List the important requirements including any necessary minimum and maximum limits.

If there is a specific tool or procedure that must be used, provide a complete reference in the "References" section. Place long lists, such as seeding information, in supplementary guidance and reference that document here. If another CPS has applicable criteria, that CPS may be referenced in this section.

The initial reference to other CPSs will have the format: NRCS Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) [practice name] (Code [practice code number]). The acronym may be used for subsequent references.

Unless a State obtains a variance, the State may not delete any criteria or make criteria less restrictive than the national CPS. However, the State may delete any additional criteria associated with a deleted purpose.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

This section includes secondary purposes or additional details that could enhance application of a primary or secondary purpose. The "Considerations" section is the one section that contains optional information for use by the planner and designer. States may add, delete, or edit considerations based on identified needs.

**PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Provide a bulleted list of the information that is required to describe what is being implemented and how the work is to be done. The information must communicate the requirements for implementing the practice, (e.g., type, amount, or quality of materials, timing or sequence of implementation activities, or methods to be used) and may include construction plans, drawings, implementation requirements, specifications, or other similar documents.

List the required planning and design information that will be used to support the plans and specifications (e.g., calculations for size of pipe, quantities of seed, etc.) in the statement of work instead of in this document.

**OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

Provide a bulleted list of the required management and corrective actions that contribute to the longevity and function of the conservation practice in the operation and maintenance plan given to the landowner/client who will be managing the practice.

**REFERENCES**

List the technical references used to develop the CPS or that are cited in the CPS. States may not delete any of these references. States may add additional references.

References should be formatted as the example below. Inclusion of a hyperlink to a website is discouraged because website addresses can change after the CPS is published.

## 9) References – Lists supporting research, analysis or other technical and historical information that may assist a planner in their analysis and evaluation.

Reference examples (listed alphabetically):

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). 2017. AASHTO Load and Resistance Factor Rating Bridge Design Specifications, 8th Edition. Washington, D.C. (Note: Use AASHTO in additional listings.)

ASTM D5521/D5521M. 2018. Standard Guide for Development of Groundwater Monitoring Wells in Granular Aquifers. ASTM International, West Conshohocken, PA, D5521/D5521M-18, <http://www.astm.org>. (Note: ASTM is the designated name—no need to spell out).

ConWin, D., J. Rhoades, and J. Simunek. 2007. Leaching requirement for soil salinity control: Steady-state versus transient models. USDA Agricultural Research Service. Agricultural Water Management 90. Riverside, CA.

USDA NRCS. 2012. National Engineering Handbook (Title 210), Part 623, Chapter 4, Surface Irrigation. Washington, D.C. <https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/>.

USDA NRCS. 2011. Agronomy Technical Note No. 5 (Title 190), Pest Management. In the Conservation Planning Process. Washington, D.C. <https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/>.

Practice Name, Code, Unit, and Definition are established nationally and are not to be altered or supplemented by States.

Document changes made to the CPS according to the procedures in 450-NHCP, Chapter 1, Exhibit 5, "Documentation Files."

Do not include references to or requirements for financial assistance or easement programs in a CPS.





# State Adoption

Each state must adopt the Conservation Practice Standards needed in that State.

States must adopt new or updated CPSs included in their FOTG within 1-year of the release of the National CPS.

All CPSs are published in the **Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG)**, Section IV. <https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/>

# State Adoption

The National CPS can be used without modification, or the CPS may be supplemented to include additional requirements to meet state or local needs.

For example, a state may need to add content in the CPS to account for variations in soils, climate, and topography or to adhere to state, local, or tribal laws.

State CPSs must be equal to, or more rigorous than, the National CPS.

Title 450, General Manual, Part 401, Subpart B.

# Alaska-Specific CPS Guidance

Alaska NRCS typically adopts National Conservation Practice Standards “as-is” with no modification.

In the rare instances that Alaska NRCS has drafted a state-specific CPS, the variation from the National CPS typically includes information on state regulations, such as Alaska’s water rights statutes.

# Alaska-Specific CPS Guidance

While providing side-boards and requirements that must be met, Conservation Practice Standards are written in a manner that provides Conservation Planners the opportunity to be creative and innovative while addressing Alaska's unique and varied natural resource concerns.



# Accessing the Alaska Conservation Practice Standards

On the Alaska NRCS Homepage: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/ak/home/>

**USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Alaska**  
United States Department of Agriculture

About Us | National Centers | State Website

Topics | Programs | Newsroom | Contact Us

Technical Resources  
Soils  
Water  
Snow Survey  
Air  
Plants & Animals  
Energy  
People

properties. Interest has caught on as more farmers are excited to try more cover crop mixes!

3/5

**Popular Topics**

- People
- Financial Assistance
- Conservation Planning
- Soil Surveys
- Snow Survey

Sign up for email updates:  Go

**In the News** | **Events & Deadlines**

- NRCS field offices resuming in-person visits in some locations while taking precautionary measures for public health.

**Highlights**

- State Technical Committee
- Alaska Publications
- Field Office Technical Guide (EFOTG)**

**Conservation Client Gateway**



# Accessing the Alaska Conservation Practice Standards

The direct web address is: <https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/>

FIELD OFFICE TECHNICAL GUIDE

Welcome to NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG)

Select a state for documents.

State:

Select...

Alabama  
Alaska  
Arizona  
Arkansas  
California  
Caribbean Area  
Colorado  
Connecticut  
Delaware  
Florida  
Georgia  
Hawaii/Pacific Islands Area  
Idaho  
Illinois  
Indiana  
Iowa  
Kansas  
Kentucky  
Louisiana  
Maine  
Maryland/D.C. Area  
Massachusetts  
Michigan  
Minnesota  
Mississippi  
Missouri  
Montana  
Nebraska  
New York

SUBMIT

To access the Alaska FOTG, you must select the state from the drop-down menu, and click "SUBMIT"

FOTG Sections

Section I - General References

- General state maps.
- Descriptions of Major Land Resource Areas, watershed information, and links to NRCS reference manuals and handbooks.
- Links to researchers, universities, and agencies we work with.
- Conservation practice costs and agricultural laws and regulations.

Section II - Natural Resources Information

- Detailed information about soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources.
- Cultural resources and information about protected plant and animal species.
- NRCS Soil Surveys, Hydric Soils Interpretations, Ecological Site Descriptions, Forage Suitability Groups, Cropland Production Tables, Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guides, Water Quality Guides, and other related information can be found here as it becomes available.

Section III - Conservation Management Systems

- NRCS Quality Criteria, which establish standards for resource conditions that help provide sustained use.

Section IV - Practice Standards and Specifications

- NRCS Conservation Practice Standards that define the practice and where it applies. Practice specifications are detailed requirements for installing the practice in the state.

Section V - Conservation Effects

- Background information on how Conservation Practices affect each identified resource concerns in the state.

NRCS Home | USDA.gov | Site Map | Civil Rights | FOIA | Accessibility Statement | Support (Help Desk)

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USDA United States Department of Agriculture



# Accessing the Alaska Conservation Practice Standards

**FIELD OFFICE TECHNICAL GUIDE**

Welcome to NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG)  
Select a state for documents.

State:  
Alaska

**Document Tree** Document Search Recently Changed

[Keyboard navigation instructions](#)

- Section I
- Section II
- Section III
- Section IV
- Section V

Documents (0)

Document Title
No documents to show.

The opening page of the Alaska FOTG will exhibit a menu tree showing each of the five main sections.



# Accessing the Alaska Conservation Practice Standards

Section IV ▲

Conservation Practice Standards & Support Documents ▲

Access Control (472)

Access Road (560)

Agrichemical Handling Facility (309)

Alley Cropping (311)

Anaerobic Digester (366)

Aquatic Organism Passage (396)

Brush Management (314)

Building Envelope Improvement (672)

**All CPS are in Section IV (4).**

**There are 124 practices in the FOTG that are approved for implementation in Alaska.**



# Accessing the Alaska Conservation Practice Standards

Within each practice subfolder, there are documents that indicate when, where, how and to what extent a conservation practice should be applied.





**CPS – Conservation Practice Standard.**

**SOW – Statement of Work**

**IR – Implementation Requirements**

**PS – Practice Specification**

**There may be other supporting documents as well (OTH)**

Document Title	Type	Pub Date
612 AK CPS Tree-Shrub Establishment 2016		2016-5-2
612 AK SOW Tree Shrub Establishment 2016		2016-7-1
612 AK IR Tree Shrub Establishment 2011		2011-7-1
612 AK PS Tree Shrub Establishment 2011		2011-7-1

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