



NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

United States Department of Agriculture

MID-CONTRACT CRP COVER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES JOB SHEET

CRP PARTICIPANT

CONTRACT NUMBER TRACT NUMBER

FIELD(S) CONTRACT AC.

Mid-Contract Management practices for your Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract acres have been approved. The management practices:

- * are intended to maintain stand vigor and diversity, and thus sustain wildlife, erosion and water and air quality benefits
- * will be scheduled mid-term in the contract, but prior to year 6 of the contract.
- * may be scheduled more than once during the contract period
- * Should generally be scheduled outside the primary nesting season. The primary nesting season in Washington is April 1 through August 1, except burning, which is prohibited April 1 – August 15. The CRP contract generally prohibits activity on established CRP stands during this period. The management practices contained in this plan modification may not be conducted during the primary nesting season. Requests to conduct a management practice during the nesting season will only be authorized if they are determined to be the best method and time to improve the stand, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) concurs with the proposed action, and the FSA County Committee approves the action in advance in accordance with spot treatment criteria.

Conservation Cover (327) – STAND MAINTENANCE – The following maintenance activities are available as components of the cover management activities:

Fertilizing - Use on stands that are thinning or where the perennial grass species still dominate the stand (compared to annual grasses and broadleaf weeds) but appear to be declining in vigor. No more than 30 pounds of nitrogen per acre will be allowed and no more than twice during the life of the CRP contract. In areas with 14 inches or less of annual precipitation, nitrogen should only be fall applied. In areas with more than 14 inches of annual precipitation, nitrogen application could occur in fall or spring, with spring application likely achieving more desirable results.

Mowing - Use on stands with excess residue and without shrub species. On stands with shrubs, mowing may be used only in areas without the presence of shrubs. If shrubs are destroyed by mowing, participants may be required to replant. Mowing should generally be

done after grasses have gone to seed and shall not be done until after August 1. Do not mow later than October 15 to allow for fall growth to provide winter and spring cover for wildlife.

The mower height shall be high enough (generally 3" to 4" inches) to provide protection to the plant crowns while still providing exposure to sunlight. The primary purpose of rotary mowing is to break residue into small pieces allowing it to come in contact with the soil, speeding deterioration, and allow sunlight to the crowns of the desired perennials.

Mowing/swathing with residue removal may be approved. Contact FSA for approval and requirements.

Harrowing – Spring Tooth or Heavy Harrowing - Use on grass stands where there is excessive residue accumulation. The harrow is primarily to knock down excess residues exposing the grass crowns to sunlight and placing the residues in contact with the soil surface to speed deterioration. Harrowing shall not be done April 1 to August 1.

Light Chiseling - Use on stands where there is excessive residue accumulation, or stands are root bound. Chisels or field cultivators with points (do not use sweeps) may be used. Spacing of the shanks must be such that shrub roots and crowns are not severely disturbed (typically 24" to 30"). The points should penetrate the soil 3" to 5" to disturb the root system but not uproot the plants. The speed of travel should be such that depth control is maintained and the desirable woody species are more likely to be pushed out of the way than uprooted. The primary purpose of chiseling/field cultivating is to breakup residue and get it down on the soil surface to increase the rate of breakdown and to disturb the root mass of the grasses to reinvigorate their growth. In determining if light chiseling/field cultivation should be utilized, consideration should be given to the likelihood that these activities may increase germination of weed seeds and create weed problems. Light chiseling shall not be done April 1 to August 1.

Light Discing - Use on stands where there is excessive residue accumulation, or stands are root bound. Disks shall be set so that they do not turn over sod or excessively cut roots. The primary purpose of discing is to breakup residue and place it on the soil surface to increase the rate of breakdown and to slice the root mass of the grasses to reinvigorate its growth. Discing should not be utilized in areas with shrubs. In determining if light discing should be utilized, consideration should be given to the likelihood that these activities may increase germination of weed seeds and create weed problems. Light discing shall not be done April 1 to August 1.

Herbicide Application - Use on stands where competition from weeds is threatening the survival of native perennials. Herbicides must be applied in accordance with the label directions. Check state and local regulations and consult with the Cooperative Extension Specialist or a licensed pesticide consultant to be sure the intended use is registered. (Note: According to Washington State law, specific kinds and rates of chemical pesticides can only be recommended by a licensed consultant.) Consideration must be given to avoid the destruction of shrubs, legumes and forbs in the mix. If shrubs, legumes or forbs are destroyed by

herbicides, participants may be required to replant.

Interseeding - Use on stands where one or more species has become depleted or overall stand density is no longer adequate. Disturbance of the existing cover, such as by mowing or light tillage, may be necessary to achieve good soil/seed contact. Interseeding should be done in the fall after soil temperatures drop below 40° Fahrenheit. Species to be interseeded and seeding rates will be based on recommendations from the Natural Resources Conservation Service or Technical Service Provider. Interseeding and any required cover disturbance shall not be done April 1 to August 1.

Reseeding - Use on stands that have been depleted to the extent that they no longer have the stand density to provide wildlife habitat, erosion control and water and air quality benefits. Seedbed preparation, seeding mixes and seeding rates will generally be the same as the original conservation plan but may be revised if recommended by the Natural Resources Conservation Service or Technical Service Provider.

Reseeding may be done on just the affected acres or strips or blocks that are at least as wide or wider than the available tillage and planting equipment. This is not interseeding using equipment that scalps a narrow area and then plants a single row into the scalped area. The seedbed should be prepared as it would be for a new seeding with a firm, weed free seedbed. On sloping fields this practice should be applied cross-slope or on contour. Other management practices may be used on the strips that are not tilled. Reseeding and any seedbed preparation shall not be done April 1 to August 1.

All tree and shrub plantings, wildlife food plots and watering facilities must be protected from any damage due to management activities.