



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

Landowner Guide to Constructing Conservation Practices



This guide will help you understand your responsibility in all phases of conservation practice construction, from planning and design, through construction and maintenance.

By understanding your role, and providing adequate time for each phase of the project, you can avoid inconvenient and costly delays.

“Landowner” as used here is the person responsible for making decisions for the property. In most cases, that is the owner, but it may also be an operator or farm manager.

	Landowner
During Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain an Engineering Provider for all phases of the project and agree on timeline. • Set up a pre-design meeting with NRCS and your Engineering Provider. • Select from alternatives. • Check utility locations. • Consider costs and maintenance requirements. • Identify needed local, state, and federal permits. • Provide excavator for soil investigations. • Investigate/apply for program financial assistance, if desired.
During Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be sure design meets your objectives. • Be available for consultation. • Obtain necessary permits/approvals. • Identify utility locations. • Review and agree to the final design.
Before Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may serve as the General Contractor. • Follow all federal/state/local laws, zoning regulations. • Be available for consultations. • Host site showing/pre-construction meeting. • Hire competent contractors. • Verify the contractor has contacted Diggers Hotline.
During Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorize the contractor to start work. • Keep NRCS informed of progress • Protect cultural & historical resources. • Verify plans & specifications are met. (Approve changes proposed by the Engineering Provider\Consultant and check with the funding agency(ies). • Comply with permit conditions. • Shut down job for safety reasons. • Stop work of contractor, when justified. • Pay bills. • Complete items in construction plan not completed by a contractor (seeding, fencing). • Submit “as-built” plans and construction verification documentation to NRCS for acceptance.
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the Operation and Maintenance Plan. • Make repairs as needed. • Contact NRCS for additional assistance, if needed.
	The landowner is ultimately responsible for the construction of the project in accordance with NRCS standards and specifications, complying with any permit requirements and the maintenance of the conservation system.

The "Engineering Provider" may be the staff from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the County Land Conservation Department, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, or the engineering consultant hired by the landowner.

	Engineering Provider/Consultant	Contractor
During Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend the pre-design meeting with the landowner and NRCS. Develop alternatives that solve the landowner's resource concerns, and are compatible with their operation. Discuss alternatives with the landowner. Conduct foundation investigations. Alert owner to potential wetland, utilities, archaeological sites, and needed permits. Prepare planning cost estimates. 	
During Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey the site. Develop construction plans based on the landowner's objectives and decisions. Design the system based on the planning and site conditions. Review the design and specifications with the landowner. Develop an Operation and Maintenance Plan. Develop a Quality Assurance Plan. Prepare a construction cost estimate. 	
During Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist the landowner with the site showing/pre-construction meeting. Inform the owner of safety responsibility. Follow the construction Quality Assurance Plan. Observe and inspect construction and perform tests in order to determine the work meets requirements of the construction plan and specifications. (No changes without prior approval by the landowner). Keep a daily diary of construction activities. Inform the landowner if the contractor is not following the construction plan. Prepare as-built drawings. Certify components and the entire system as meeting standards and specifications. Submit "as-built" plans and construction verification documentation to the landowner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Diggers Hotline. Follow OSHA requirements and practice safety. Provide adequate notice to NRCS before starting job. Attend the site showing/pre-construction meeting. Read and follow the construction plans and specifications. Have a foreman on site. Have all required materials and equipment on site. Use materials specified in construction plan (no substitutions without PRIOR approval by the landowner and engineering provider). Use dimensions in construction plan (no alterations without PRIOR approval by the landowner and the engineering provider). Keep NRCS informed of progress. Document materials used. Comply with plans and specifications. Repair improper construction.
Maintenance		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides various warranties, written and verbal that installations meet plans & specifications and will perform for length of design requirements.
	The engineering provider is responsible for attesting that project construction plans, specifications, and the constructed project meet NRCS standard and specifications.	The contractor is responsible for constructing the project according to the construction plans and specifications, for quality control and safety.

Construction Plans

Drawings

The drawings are a visual representation of the project which show the location and describe the work to be done. The drawings include plan views, sections, profile details and notes which are necessary to supplement the construction specifications for a site specific installation.

Specifications

The construction specifications describe quality of work which is to be done. The specifications may also reference a commercial standard such as the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) which is identifiable for all products or procedures where referenced. If a conflict arises between the drawings and specifications, the specification governs the work or product.

Cost Estimates

The estimated cost is for comparison purposes and should not be shown or given to the contractor. The estimated cost is based on quantities calculated for this specific design. Actual construction quantities may vary if the practice is changed during construction or differing site conditions are encountered (i.e., bedrock, excessive moisture, etc.).

It is the landowner's responsibility to contact one or more contractors and obtain a contractor's bid. Prices may vary from contractor to contractor. It is best to obtain bids from several qualified contractors before selecting someone to construct the practice. The Natural Resources Conservation Service does not guarantee that the estimated cost will be final cost of the project.

Permits

All permits or approvals that are applicable for the construction and/or operation of this practice are the responsibility of the landowner and shall be obtained prior to the start of construction.

Public and Private Utilities

If the existence of underground utilities in the vicinity of the proposed work area is known, it is your responsibility to notify the NRCS so that appropriate action can be implemented. It is the excavating contractor's responsibility to contact Diggers Hotline prior to start of construction.

Pre-Construction Meeting

Construction of the practice or practices shall NOT start before a thorough pre-construction meeting is held between the Owner/Operator, Contractor, engineering provider and the NRCS representative to go over the plans, specifications and other details of the project.

Acceptance of Construction

The final step will be an inspection and review by NRCS to ensure project meets site specific drawings and construction specifications for this practice.

Failure to install a practice according to the plans and specifications, or provide adequate supporting documentation of the construction could warrant forfeiture of any financial assistance, assessment of liquidated damages, or result in a violation of permits granted.

For more information www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov

The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Wisconsin
April 2015