



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E340A

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Cover crop to reduce soil erosion

Conservation Practice 340: Cover Crop

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Crop (Annual & Mixed); Crop (Perennial)

RESOURCE CONCERN: Soil

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 1 Year

Enhancement Description

Cover crop added to current crop rotation to reduce soil erosion from water and wind to below soil tolerance (T) level. Cover crops grown during critical erosion period(s). Species are selected that will have physical characteristics to provide adequate erosion protection.

Criteria

- Plant species, seedbed preparation, seeding rates, seeding dates, seeding depths, fertility requirements, and planting methods will be consistent with applicable local criteria and soil/site conditions (**REFER TO STATE SPECIFIC LISTS**). Determine method and timing of termination to meet grower's objective and current NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines.
- Select species that are compatible with other components of the cropping system.
- Ensure herbicides used with crops are compatible with cover crop selections.
- Cover crops may be established between successive production crops, or companion-planted or relay-planted into production crops. Select species and planting dates that will not compete with production crop yield or harvest.
- Do not burn cover crop residue.
- Do not harvest or graze cover crop.



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- If specific rhizobium bacteria for selected legumes are not present in the soil, treat seed with appropriate inoculum at time of planting.
- Time cover crop establishment in conjunction with other practices to adequately protect soil during critical erosion period(s).
- Select cover crops that will have the physical characteristics necessary to provide adequate erosion protection.
- Use NRCS erosion prediction technology to determine amount of surface and/or canopy cover needed from cover crop to achieve the erosion objective (average annual soil loss below T).
- Crops planted following the cover crop must be no-tilled.



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Documentation and Implementation Requirements

Participant will:

- ☐ Prior to implementation, provide NRCS with the current planned crop rotation, cover crop information, and field operation(s) used for each crop.

Current Management Rotation Including Cover Crop

Field	Planned Crops/Cover Crop (in sequence)	Planting Date	Harvest/Termination Date

Current Field Operations for each crop

Field	Crop	Field Operation	Timing of Field Operation (month/year)

Planned Management Rotation Including Cover Crop

Field	Planned Crops/Cover Crop (in sequence)	Planting Date	Harvest/Termination Date



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Planned Field Operations for each crop

Field	Crop	Field Operation	Timing of Field Operation (month/year)

Cover Crop Mix and Seeding Rate

Species	Variety	Seed Size	Typical Seeding Depth	Seeding Rate (PLS lbs/acre)	Percent of Mix (%)

Establishment and Management Considerations:

Task	Provide information and details
Seedbed Preparation	
Seeding Date	
Seeding Depth	
Seeding Method	
Fertilizer, as needed	
Weed Management, as needed	
Termination Date (window)	
Termination Method	

- ☐ Prior to implementation, read and follow current [NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines](#).
- ☐ During implementation, cover crops must not be burned, grazed or harvested.
- ☐ During implementation, the crop following the cover crop must be no till seeded.



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- ☐ During implementation, notify NRCS of any planned changes in crops, crop rotation, or unharvested areas to verify the planned system meets the enhancement criteria.
- ☐ After implementation, if changes to the cover crop and crop rotation were made, complete the tables above to document the applied Cover Crop for the contract period and provide to NRCS.

NRCS will:

- ☐ As needed, provide technical assistance in selecting cover crop mixes for the crop rotations or substitute species that would meet the criteria of the enhancement.
- ☐ As needed, provide additional assistance to the participant as requested.
- ☐ Prior to implementation, provide and explain the current [NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines](#).
- ☐ Prior to implementation, use information provided from the participant to calculate the management sheet and rill erosion from water and wind erosion value for each field using current NRCS water erosion prediction technologies.

Benchmark Management Soil Loss = _____ tons/acre/year

Planned Management Soil Loss = _____ tons/acre/year

- ☐ During implementation, evaluate any planned changes to cover crop mix, timing in crop rotation, management, or field operations to verify the new system meets the enhancement criteria.
- ☐ After implementation, evaluate the applied cover crop in the crop rotation or management using information provided from the participant, if any variation to planned evaluation, then calculate erosion values to document that the applied rotation met the enhancement criteria.

Applied Management Soil Loss = _____ tons/acre/year



NRCS Documentation Review:

I have reviewed all required participant documentation and have determined the participant has implemented the enhancement and met all criteria and requirements.

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Participant Name _____ Contract Number _____

Total Amount Applied _____ Fiscal Year Completed _____

NRCS Technical Adequacy Signature

Date



IDAHO SUPPLEMENT TO CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT

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Additional Criteria for Idaho

- Plant species, seedbed preparation, seeding rates, seeding dates, seeding depths, fertility requirements, and planting methods will be consistent with applicable local criteria and soil/site conditions. For an Idaho state specific cover crop list and local establishment/management details <See Idaho Plant Materials Technical Note #67 and #24>. TN #67 and #24 can be found in section 1 of the the Idaho Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG).
- A cover crop selection tool was developed by the NRCS (West National Technology and Support Center) WNTSC. The cover crop selection tool was developed to assist conservation planners in determining what cover crops will meet the client's resource management objectives, and are adapted and suited to the site. This cover crop selection tool may be used to assist you in choosing appropriate cover crops that will meet the intended use and practice purpose. The cover crop selection tool can be found in NRCS WNTSC Technical Note #2 and can be found at: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/plant-materials/pacific-northwest-cover-crop-selection-tool>
- Implementation of this enhancement must meet all "general criteria" and "additional criteria related to the applicable practice purpose" listed in the NRCS conservation practice standard for the cover crop (340) practice.

Additional Documentation Requirements for Idaho

- Planning and Certification of this enhancement will be documented using the Idaho Cover Crop Design Worksheet. This worksheet can be found in section IV of the Field Office Technical Guide along with the conservation practice standard for Cover Crop (340).