

PART 397 – Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Conservation Plan Documents

3rd Edition April 2024

397.0 Purpose

To provide instructions on completing and revising Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) conservation plans and supporting documents.

397.1 Special Instructions

- A. This instruction provides guidance for conservation planners to develop conservation plans and maps in Conservation Desktop (CD), evaluate plans in the Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART), complete Implementation Requirements (IR), provides information on the component codes form, and provides guidance for conservation plan revisions. This information expands on Part 11 of the 2-CRP Handbook, which contains information about conservation plans and contract support documents. The continuous CRP signup process is described in Part 7, Paragraph 171 of 2-CRP. This instruction focuses on Step 14 of Paragraph 171C. The general CRP signup process is described in Part 10, Paragraph 286 of 2-CRP. This instruction focuses on Step 20 of Paragraph 286B. These steps are to be completed after a field visit has been made and the CRP offer has been accepted. The conservation planner will discuss with the client their goals and objectives, seeding options or requirements, establishment methods and requirements, management, and management activities before developing the conservation plan.
- B. The CPA-52 or Environmental Evaluation (EE) must be completed to document the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed CRP offer and associated conservation practices. For CRP, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will complete the CPA-52 through section O, the Cultural Resources Flowchart and Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Species assessment(s) and will provide copies to the Farm Service Agency (FSA). FSA is the responsible federal official and will complete the rest of the CPA-52. **It is NRCS's responsibility to notify FSA if the planned practices may have a potential impact to a special environmental concern.**
- C. Preferably, Conservation Plans and supporting documents will be completed in the county where the ground is physically located. However, a common-sense approach may be used to complete the planning documents where the CRP offer is administered. Example: an offer is located just over the border of an adjacent county and the client mostly works with the administrative county.

Communication between offices is critical to determine which NRCS office will complete the planning documents.

397.2 Conservation Desktop (CD)

A. Conservation planners will follow current Iowa policy for electronic business tools management.

1. FSA will provide NRCS with a legible map, CRP-2 or CRP-2C, and CRP-1 for NRCS to complete the CRP conservation plan, plan map, and supporting documents. All CRP fields will be planned as separate planning land units (PLUs) using the appropriate field number(s) as provided by FSA on the CRP-1. The CRP PLUs must follow the common land unit (CLU) and/or match the TERRA shapefile(s).
2. FSA will provide TERRA shapefiles which will be saved to F:\geodata\conservation\NRCS_Toolkit on the local field office F:drive or other locally agreed to location.
 - a. Instructions on importing TERRA shapefiles are on the Ecological Sciences SharePoint in the Business Tools folder: [HOW TO Zip and Import TERRA Shapefiles into Conservation Desktop](#).
 - b. Instructions on creating and editing PLUs are in Section 3.2.8 of the Conservation Desktop Comprehensive User's Manual. Section 5.5 has information on the PLU edit tools toolbar. Instructions on importing shapefiles are also available: [HOW TO Import a Shapefile in Conservation Desktop and Create a Practice](#).
3. [Conservation Desktop/CART Workflows](#) for CRP are posted on the Ecological Sciences SharePoint in the Business Tools folder. Additional CD and CART resources are under the Business Tools folder, in the [Conservation Desktop](#) folder.
4. **PLUs and practices will be planned to the hundredth of an acre to match the CRP-1.**
5. Land use modifiers are not required.
6. Be aware of easements that are adjacent to CRP contracts. Make sure a CRP contract is not overlapping an easement boundary. Easements that are closed will have a reconciled or locked boundary.
7. All participants listed on the CRP-1 will be added to the case file. Instructions on managing client associations are in Section 3.2.1 of the CD Comprehensive User's Manual.

B. Practice Schedule

1. Starting in FY24 planners must use the CRP practice schedule when planning CRP in CD.
2. The schedule will be named CRP<SU###>. If the participant has more than one CRP contract, the schedule name may be more specific to the CRP practice,

CRP<SU##CP##>. Examples: CRP SU61 or CRP SU61CP21. Refer to [Iowa Instruction 180-398 Electronic Field Office Business Tools Management](#).

3. Practice schedules should only contain PLUs and practices that are part of the CRP contract. **Note:** All PLUs from the tract can be added to the practice schedule to display the entire tract for reference. Planning should only occur on the CRP PLUs.
4. All participants listed on the CRP-1 will be added to the practice schedule. Instructions on managing client associations are in Section 3.3.3 of the CD Comprehensive User's Manual.
5. All CRP practices will be planned under the CRP program code in CD.
6. Refer to the current [Iowa CRP Practice Matrix](#) for practices to include in the practice schedule. An asterisk (*) indicates the practices required to be in the plan. Optional practices are listed in the matrix and may be included in the schedule when needed.
7. Refer to the current Iowa CRP Practice Matrix for the appropriate practice narratives. CRP reenrollments with no vegetative and structural changes and that meet practice standards and CRP requirements will use 00N-CRP-R on the appropriate practices.
8. The planned practices will stay in alternative status until a plan approval date has been entered for the practice schedule. A Schedule Approval date must be entered into CD, which will record planning progress. **The plan approval date may be entered at the time of plan entry.**

The client's signature on the CRP-1 indicates their acceptance of the offer and the associated conservation plan. When the practice schedule is approved, the status of the practices is set to planned. Instructions are in Section 3.3.5 of the CD Comprehensive User's Manual.

9. The month and year recorded in the plan will represent when the practice is planned to be applied. This month and year will coincide with the timeframe prescribed on the seeding plan or appropriate practice IR (e.g., conservation cover, tree planting, etc.).
 - a. Example: If the seeding is planned for May 2024, Conservation Cover (327) will be listed as being planned in month 5 in year 2024.
 - b. When Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645) is planned: if the component is Conservation Cover (327), then plan 645 to coincide with Conservation Cover (327). If the component is a food plot, then plan 645 for the appropriate timeframe.
 - c. Practices can have a date range of proper application. For example, conservation cover has a range of planting dates that are listed in IA-CPA-4 Seeding Plan. If the planting takes place during the listed timeframe, it will meet NRCS technical requirements and will not require modification of the plan.

10. Access Control (472) and Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315) will be planned for the contract start date.
11. Early Successional Habitat Development and Management (647), where required, will be planned to reflect the management activities.
12. Example: the Conservation Plan for CP-21 Filter Strip with a contract start date of November 1, 2024, would have the following planned dates:

Figure 397.2 (1)

315 - Herbaceous Weed Treatment	Contract Start Date – 11/2024
327 - Conservation Cover	Planned Seeding Date – 5/2025
393 – Filter Strip	Planned Seeding Date – 5/2025
472 - Access Control	Contract Start Date – 11/2024
647 - Early Successional Habitat Development/Management	Dates according to management activity schedule

C. Reenrolling CRP where CRP requires activities to be completed on currently established practices, such as conservation cover (e.g., new seeding or interseeding).

1. Practices will be scheduled when they are planned to be applied.
2. Practices that will not be enhanced or improved, and that meet practice standards and CRP practice requirements will be scheduled for the start of the contract. Select practice narrative 00N-CRP-R for vegetative and structural practices where applicable.
3. Early Successional Habitat Development and Management (647), where required, will be planned to reflect the management activities.
4. Example: An existing CP-1, Introduced Grasses is being re-offered as a CP-2, Native Grasses and the seeding needs to be converted with a contract start date of 10/1/2024. The Conservation Plan would have the following planned dates:

Figure 397.2 (2)

315 - Herbaceous Weed Treatment	Contract Start Date – 10/2024
327 - Conservation Cover	Planned Seeding Date – 5/2025
472 - Access Control	Contract Start Date – 10/2024
647 - Early Successional Habitat Development/Management	Dates according to management activity schedule

D. Reenrolling CRP where NO additional activities are required, other than management activity:

1. Practices will be scheduled for the start of the contract. Select practice narrative 00N-CRP-R for vegetative and structural practices that will not be enhanced or improved, and that meet practice standards and CRP practice requirements.
2. Early Successional Habitat Development and Management (647), where

required, will be planned to reflect the new management activities.

3. Example: an existing CP-21, Filter Strip is being reenrolled and the existing seeding is adequate with a contract start date of October 1, 2024. The Conservation Plan would have the following planned dates:

Figure 397.2 (3)

315 – Herbaceous Weed Treatment	Contract Start Date – 10/2024
327 – Conservation Cover	Contract Start Date - 10/2024, 00N-CRP-R narrative
393 – Filter Strip	Contract Start Date - 10/2024, 00N-CRP-R narrative
472 – Access Control	Contract Start Date – 10/2024
647 - Early Successional Habitat Development/Management	Dates according to management activity schedule

397.3 Conservation Plan/Record of Decision

- A. The Conservation Plan acres default to hundredths when utilizing the CRP practice schedule, including converting from a Conservation schedule. Enter the client objectives.

Optional: CRP contract information (e.g., Contract Number, Sign-up Number, Sign-Up Type, Acres for Enrollment, & Contract Period) is available to be added to the Conservation Plan.
- B. The Conservation Plan will have a signature block for all participants listed on the CRP-1, NRCS Designated Conservationist, County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), and FSA. In the Additional Signatures Section, check and enter: Agency 1: FSA; Signed By: County Committee (COC) or County Executive Director (CED). Instructions on managing client associations are in Section 3.2.1 and 3.3.3 of the CD Comprehensive User’s Manual. The plan is first signed by an NRCS-designated Level III or IV conservation planner certifying the plan meets client objectives and all NRCS policy, procedures, and standards.
- C. NRCS will obtain participant signatures. FSA allows spouses to sign for each other on the CRP-1, so spouses can sign for each other on the Conservation Plan. This is **only** for CRP.
- D. The plan may be signed by the conservation district, per NRCS and conservation district policy as specified under mutual, cooperative working, operational, and contribution agreements and in accordance with the confidentiality provisions of section 1619 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008. Refer to the current [joint memo](#) regarding SWCD signatures on CRP conservation plans. Signature requirements are in Title 180, General Manual (GM), Part 409, Section 409.5 F.
- E. Electronic signatures are acceptable, including eAuthenticated digital signatures, uploaded “wet” signatures (e.g., Farmers.gov), OneSpan signatures, faxed signatures, and scanned or photo of original signatures.

397.4 Conservation Plan Map

- A. The conservation plan map will have CRP fields mapped and labeled in CD. The labels, at minimum, will include PLU number, program acres, and land use. Planners have the option to enter “CRP” or the CRP CP practice as the land unit name and display on the plan map.
- B. Planners may show the entire tract with the CRP fields, which is recommended. The case PLU boundaries can be displayed by clicking the “Change View” button and turning on the case PLUs. The case PLUs will have a magenta boundary. Instructions are in Section 5.2.9 of the CD Comprehensive User’s Guide.
- C. The location of conservation practices that are less than the full footprint of the PLU must be included in the conservation plan map using national NRCS map symbols. Full field practices are not required to be displayed on the conservation plan map but may be used to draw attention to the CRP. When used, symbology will need to be filtered* to display the practice symbology for the following practices:

Figure 397.4 (1)

CRP Practice	Symbology/Practice Code
CP1, CP2, CP4D, CP9 (buffer), CP23 (buffer), CP25, CP28, CP33, CP37, CP38E-4D, CP39 (buffer), CP41 (buffer), CP42, CP43, CP90	327 (ac)
CP3/3A, CP31, CP38C-3A	612 (ac)
CP38E-4D (Quail SAFE-Early Successional Habitat Area (ESHA))	647 (ac)
CP12, CP38E-12	645 (ac)
CP5A, CP16A, CP17A	380 (ft)
CP8A	412 (ac)
CP9 (Shallow Water Area)	646 (ac)
CP15A	332 (ac)
CP21/CP21B/CP21S, CP29, CP30	393 (ac)
CP22/CP22B/CP22S	391 (ac)
CP23/23A, CP27, CP41 (Wetland Area)	657 (ac) / 659 (ac)
CP39 (Wetland Area)	656 (ac)
CP88 – Haying	511 (ac)
CP88 – Grazing	528 (ac)
CP88 – Idle or Wildlife	512 (ac)

* Instructions for filtering are in section 5.1.3 of the CD Comprehensive User’s Manual.

** All supporting technical and/or structural practices must be shown on the CRP plan map (fencing, pipeline, tank, crossing, etc.) to support CRP practices and plans.

- D. At a minimum, maps will include the following: Title of Map (e.g., Conservation Plan Map or CRP Conservation Plan Map), client's name, state, and county where the land is located, date the plan was prepared, and information needed to locate the planning area (e.g., Tier, Range, Township, Section, etc.). The preferred scale is 1" = 660 (or 1:7,290). Map acres default to hundredths when using the CRP practice schedule.

Optional: the conservation plan map can show practices in a map table. CRP contract information (e.g., Contract Number, Sign-up Number, Sign-Up Type, Acres for Enrollment, & Contract Period) is available to be added to the map.

- E. Supplemental maps may be needed to show greater detail of practices. Example: An additional map can be made to show different seeding types (e.g., zone seedings, SAFE seedings) to clarify seeding recommendations or requirements.

397.5 Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART)

- A. All CRP plans will be completed in CD and evaluated in CART. Refer to Title 440, GM, Part 402, Section 402.5.
1. The CART "Assessment Name" will default to the "Schedule Name."
 2. Identification of a single primary resource concern (RC) will be sufficient for a complete assessment. Additional primary or secondary RCs may be identified based upon producer objectives, site-specific conditions, and planner discretion.
Note: if additional fields are included in the practice schedule, do not assess the additional PLUs. Only assess the CRP PLUs.
 3. For CRP, all required practices will be marked as "Primary."
 4. It is not required to add observed practices.
 5. When the assessment is complete, change the assessment status to "Assessed." This will lock the schedule and PLUs. If changes need to be made to the PLUs, the assessment status can be changed to "In Assessment." The lock will be released during the fiscal year rollover.

B. New CRP contract or a CRP reenrollment with cover change or enhancement:

1. Select the appropriate resource concern that is being addressed by the new CRP practice.
2. Evaluate continuous CRP practices by using at least one of the primary resource concerns identified on the Suitability and Feasibility Worksheet.
3. General CRP practices CP1, CP2 and CP3A will be evaluated with "Wind and Water Erosion - Sheet and Rill Erosion."
4. General CRP practices CP4D, CP12, CP25, and CP42 will be evaluated with "Terrestrial Habitat - Terrestrial Habitat for Wildlife and Invertebrates."
5. When "Terrestrial Habitat" is the selected resource concern, the Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG) must be completed.

6. Resource concerns are included in the Iowa CRP Practice Matrix for each CRP practice as a suggestion to planners on which to assess.
7. CRP reenrollments with cover change: any existing practices that were implemented for the existing CRP practice should be marked “Non-Functional.”

C. CRP Reenrollments with NO cover change or enhancement:

1. “Long Term Protection of Land” resource concern category will be selected.
2. Loss of Functions and Values – loss of forestland functions and values will be used for these CRP Practices: CP3, CP3A, CP22, CP31.
3. Loss of Functions and Values – loss of wetland functions and values will be used for these CRP Practices: CP9, CP23, CP23A, CP27, CP28, CP37, CP39, CP41.
4. Threat of Conversion – Grassland conversion to non-grassland uses will be used for all other CRP Practices.
5. Leave existing practices that were implemented and applied for the existing CRP enrollment as “Functional.”

397.6 Implementation Requirements (IR)

- A. On October 1, 2020, the National NRCS office removed the ability for states to create localized practices narratives. Key information that was in the practice narratives was transferred to IRs. IRs provide site-specific information and instructions necessary to install a conservation practice, help our customers understand practice requirements, and are required with Conservation Plans. IRs must be fully completed. IRs are in the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG), Section IV, under the respective conservation practice standard. IRs specific to CRP are on the Ecological Sciences SharePoint in the [CRP Document Library](#) folder.
 1. Include [CRP Program Technical Implementation Requirements](#) for all CRP plans, except CP88 and CP90.
 2. Refer to the current Iowa CRP Practice Matrix for conservation practice IRs to include. **Note:** IRs and practice designs are optional for vegetative practices (e.g., 327 Conservation Cover) or structural practices (e.g., 412 Grassed Waterway) that will not be enhanced or improved, meet practice standards and CRP practice requirements.
 3. **Exception:** While Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315) is scheduled as part of the conservation plan, the 315 IR should **not** be used with the initial conservation plan documents. The 315 IR will only be completed after a weed problem has been identified.
 4. Seeding Plans: it is critical that participants understand the seeding requirements for CRP. Discuss and review the seeding requirements with the

participant. The seeding plan supplement is required to accompany all native seeding plans and must be signed by the client when reviewing the seeding plan. Refer to Iowa Handbook of Conservation Practices Notice 334. The seeding plan supplement is used to provide details of the native seeding requirements, as well as increase communication between the participant, seed dealer, and conservation planner. Instructions on completing the supplement are embedded in the “Native Seeding Calculator, Supplement to Seed Plan” tab.

397.7 Component Codes Form (CCF)

- A. Conservation plan documents for FSA include a cost estimate for conservation practice installation. FSA establishes cost share rates to be used with all approved CRP contracts. The Component Codes Form (CCF) is used to give an estimate of cost, by component code, to install conservation practices.
- B. Refer to FSA’s 2-CRP Revision 6, Iowa Exhibit 2, Amendment 4 for information on the [Component Codes Form \(CCF\)](#). Exhibit 2, Amendment 4 shows the authorized components by CP practice and the maximum allowable cost share, which are the not to exceed (NTE) rates. CCF information is on the Ecological Sciences SharePoint in the CRP Document Library.

397.8 Conservation Plan Documents

NRCS will provide FSA with the CRP Conservation Plan and all supporting documentation. This includes, but is not limited to: Conservation Plan, Conservation Plan Map, Seeding Plan, CRP Technical Implementation Requirements, Implementation Requirements, Component Codes Form, NRCS-CPA-52 completed through section O, Cultural Resources Flowchart, Threatened and Endangered Species assessments, and other documents as needed.

397.9 Conservation Plan Revisions

- A. **Date Changes:** When conservation practices need to be rescheduled later than the original timeframe, NRCS will pen and ink changes in the Conservation Plan. Dates should be included in the plan and associated NRCS forms (e.g., IRs). NRCS will notify FSA of any changes to the dates. FSA County Committee approval may be needed for extensions. Check with your local FSA office.
- B. **Entire Tract:** When new owners obtain all land associated with the CRP contract and the Conservation Plan will not change, the new owners will sign the original signature page and indicate a successor-in-interest. The plan does not need to be reprinted. NRCS should discuss the contents of the CRP plan with new owners to promote understanding of what is required and expected to meet planning requirements.
- C. **Tract Splits:** When the CRP contract is split between new owners, NRCS will produce new conservation plans using the mandatory business tools and obtain

required signatures. NRCS should discuss the contents of the CRP plan with new owners to promote understanding of what is required and expected to meet planning requirements.

397.10 References and Resources

[Ecological Sciences - CRP](#)

[Document Library Iowa CRP](#)

[Practice Matrix](#)

[CRP Program Technical Implementation](#)

[Requirement Component Codes Form \(CCF\)](#)

[Ecological Sciences - Conservation Desktop](#)

[HOW TO Zip and Import TERRA Shapefiles into](#)

[Conservation Desktop HOW TO Import a Shapefile in](#)

[Conservation Desktop and Create a Practice Conservation](#)

[Desktop/CART Workflows](#)

Conservation Desktop Comprehensive User's Manual – access through CD > Help >

Help Documentation

[National 2CRP Handbook](#)

[Iowa Handbook of Conservation Practices 450 –](#)

[IAHCP Notice 334 Title 180, GM, Part 409, Section](#)

[409.5, F](#)

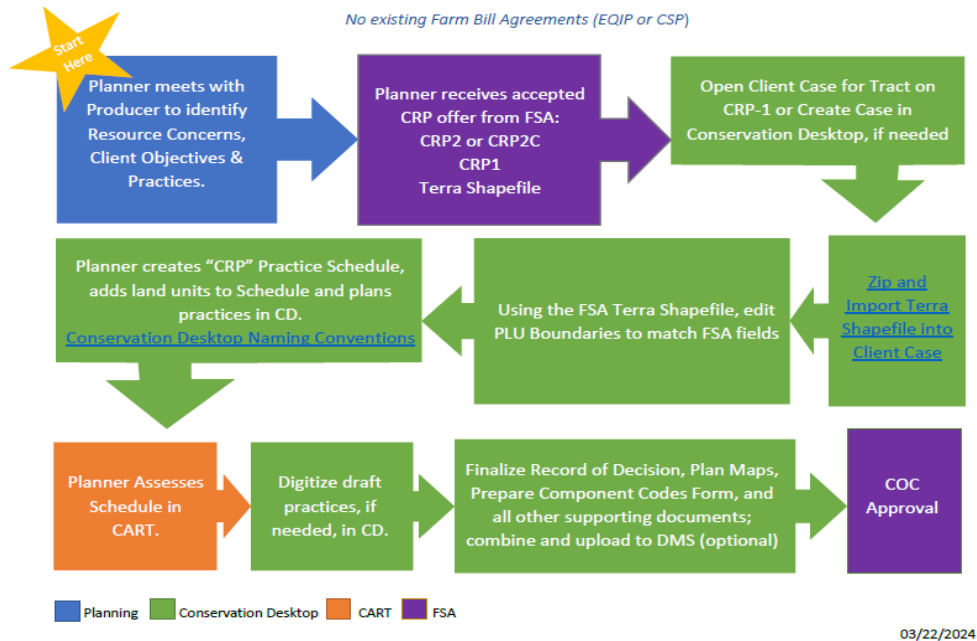
[Title 440, GM, Part 402, Section 402.5](#)

[National Planning and Procedures Handbook \(NPPH\) Amendment 9](#)

397.11 Exhibits

Exhibit 1 - CD CART Application Workflow – CRP Iowa

A. No existing Farm Bill Agreements (EQIP or CSP)



B. With existing Farm Bill Agreements (EQIP or CSP)

