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USDA SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON REVISED CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARDS

WASHINGTON, March 8, 2021 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is seeking public comment on proposed revisions to 23 national conservation practice standards through a posting in the Federal Register. The proposed revisions will publish March 9 with comments due April 8.

“NRCS wants to ensure that the standards used to carry out the conservation practices are relevant to local agricultural, forestry and natural resource needs,” Acting NRCS Chief Terry Cosby said. “We are revising conservation practice standards to make sure they are the best technology and address the needs of producers and the natural resources on their land.”

Proposed revisions to the national conservation practice standards include:

- Stream Crossing- modification to allow vented fords as an alternative.
- Waste Treatment - Milk House- inclusion as a new conservation practice for the treatment of greywater from the cleaning of milking equipment.
- Energy Efficient Agricultural Operation- formerly known as Farmstead Energy Improvement, rewritten to focus on energy efficiency criteria, fire and electrical safety, flexibility, and manufacturer’s requirements.
- Dry Hydrant- adding flexibility intended to encourage more landowners to install dry hydrants to meet fire suppression needs.

The 2018 Farm Bill required NRCS to review all 169 existing national conservation practices to seek opportunities to increase flexibility and incorporate new technologies to help the nation’s farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners better protect natural resources on their working lands. In 2020, 57 conservation practice standards were updated after public review and are available on the NRCS website. NRCS’s conservation practices offer guidelines for planning, installing, operating and maintaining conservation practices nationwide.

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Submitting Comments

NRCS is encouraging agricultural producers, landowners, organizations, Tribes and others that use its conservation practices to comment on these revised conservation practice standards. NRCS will use public comments to further enhance its conservation practice standards.

The proposed revisions to the 23 conservation practice standards are available on the Federal Register. Comments can be made through [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) or by mail or hand delivery. See notice for additional information.

More Information

NRCS offers a variety of conservation practices through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Learn more on the [NRCS Conservation Practices webpage](#) or by viewing the [Conservation at Work video series](#).

COVID-19 Guidance

USDA is open for business but operating with COVID-19 related limitations. Our employees are limited in the amount of direct contact we can have with customers both for your safety and ours. This does not mean field offices are closed, but most offices are servicing customers by appointment only.

You can also [learn about updates](#) to <https://www.farmers.gov> that make working online with the USDA a little easier. There you'll also find the contact information for your [local USDA Service Center](#) for when need to speak to someone directly.

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