

Part 180 – Conservation Planning and Application

Subpart 397 – Conservation Plan Deliverables

397.0 Purpose

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

397.1 Special Instructions

A. This instruction summarizes policy and provides guidance to help conservation planners develop conservation plans and maps in Conservation Desktop (CD), evaluate plans in Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART), complete implementation requirements (IR), and provides information on the component codes form. 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 contract and associated conservation practices. For CRP, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will complete the CPA-52 through section O and provide a copy to the Farm Service Agency (FSA), along with the Cultural Resources Flowchart and Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Species assessment. 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.

397.2 Conservation Desktop (CD)

A. Conservation planners will follow interim guidance for [Conservation Desktop Naming Conventions](#).

(1) FSA will provide NRCS with a 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 or numbers as provided by FSA on the CRP-1.

- (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.
 - (i) 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.](#)
 - (ii) 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) The schedule will be named CRP<SU##>. If the participant has more than one CRP contract, the planner may use a schedule name more specific to the CRP practice, CRP<SU##CP##>.
- (2) 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.
- (3) 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.
- (4) All CRP practices will be planned under the CRP program code in CD.
- (5) 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.
- (6) Refer to the current Iowa CRP Practice Matrix for the appropriate practice narratives. CRP reenrollments with no vegetative and structural changes will use 00N-CRP-R on the appropriate practices listed in the CRP Practice Matrix.

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(7) The planned practices will stay in alternative status until a plan approval date has been entered for the practice schedule. **Progress reporting for this planning will not be recorded until the practice schedule has been approved.** 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.

(8) 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.).

(i) Example: If the seeding is planned for May 2022, conservation cover will be listed as being planned in month 5 in year 2022.

(ii) 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.

(9) Access Control (472) and Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315) will be planned for the contract start date.

(10) Early Successional Habitat Development and Management (647), where required, will be planned to reflect the management activities.

(11) Example: a new CP-21 Filter Strip with a contract start date of November 1, 2021 would have the following planned dates:

| | |
|---|---|
| 315 - Herbaceous Weed Treatment | Contract Start Date – 11/2021 |
| 327 - Conservation Cover | Planned Seeding Date – 5/2022 |
| 393 – Filter Strip | Planned Seeding Date – 5/2022 |
| 472 - Access Control | Contract Start Date – 11/2021 |
| 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, 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.

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(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 10/1/2021. The new CRP plan would have the following planned dates:

| | |
|---|---|
| 315 - Herbaceous Weed Treatment | Contract Start Date – 10/2021 |
| 327 - Conservation Cover | Planned Seeding Date – 5/2022 |
| 472 - Access Control | Contract Start Date – 10/2021 |
| 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 where applicable.
- (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 re-enrolled and the existing seeding is adequate with a contract start date of October 1, 2021. The new CRP plan would have the following planned dates:

| | |
|---|--|
| 315 – Herbaceous Weed Treatment | Contract Start Date – 10/2021 |
| 327 – Conservation Cover | Contract Start Date - 10/2021, 00N-CRP-R narrative |
| 393 – Filter Strip | Contract Start Date - 10/2021, 00N-CRP-R narrative |
| 472 – Access Control | Contract Start Date – 10/2021 |
| 647 - Early Successional Habitat Development/Management | Dates according to management activity schedule |

397.3 Conservation Plan/Record of Decision

- A. The planner will need to **uncheck “Round Acres to Tenths”** in other options when preparing the conservation plan and record of decision. Enter the client objectives.
- 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.
- C. The plan is first signed by an NRCS-certified conservation planner indicating the plan meets client objectives and all NRCS policies, procedures, and standards.

D. 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.

E. 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. Signature requirements are in Title 180, General Manual (GM), Part 409, Section 409.5 F.

F. 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 have the option to 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. National practice symbology will be applied to all CRP fields. Symbology will need to be filtered* to display the practice symbology for the following practices:

| CRP Practice | Symbology/Practice Code |
|--|-------------------------|
| CP1, CP2, CP4B, CP4D, CP9 (buffer), CP23 (buffer), CP25, CP28, CP33, CP37, CP38E-2, CP38E-4D, CP38E-25, CP39 (buffer), CP41 (buffer), CP42, CP43, CP90 | 327 (ac) |
| CP3/3A, CP31, CP38C-3A | 612 (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) |

* Instructions on 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 CP 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). Optional: the conservation plan map can show practices in a map table. If the table is used, planners will need to uncheck "Round Acres to Tenths."

E. Supplemental maps can be used 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 402.0 and 402.5.

- (1) The CART "Assessment Name" will default to the "Schedule Name".
- (2) A minimum of one resource concern will be evaluated.
- (3) For CRP planning, all required practices will be marked as "Primary".
- (4) It is not required to add observed practices if there are no existing 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".

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 one of the 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, CP38C, CP38E and CP42 will be evaluated with "Terrestrial Habitat - Terrestrial Habitat for Wildlife and Invertebrates."
- (5) Resource concerns are included in the Iowa CRP Practice Matrix for each CRP practice as a suggestion to planners on which to assess.
- (6) 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 will be used for these CRP Practices: CP3, CP3A, CP9, CP23, CP23A, CP27, CP28, CP31, CP37, CP39, CP41.
- (3) "Threat of Conversion" will be used for all other CRP Practices.
- (4) Leave existing practices that were implemented and applied for the existing CRP enrollment as "Functional".

397.7 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 filled out. 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.
- (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 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.

397.8 Component Codes Form (CCF)

A. Conservation plan deliverables to 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 Amendment 2, Exhibit 2 for information on the [Component Codes Form \(CCF\)](#). Amendment 2, Exhibit 2 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.

397.9 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](#)

[Conservation Desktop Naming Conventions](#)

[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

[2-CRP Handbook](#)

[FOTG](#)

[Iowa Handbook of Conservation Practices 450 – IAHCP Notice 334](#)

[Title 180, GM, Part 409, Section 409.5, F](#)

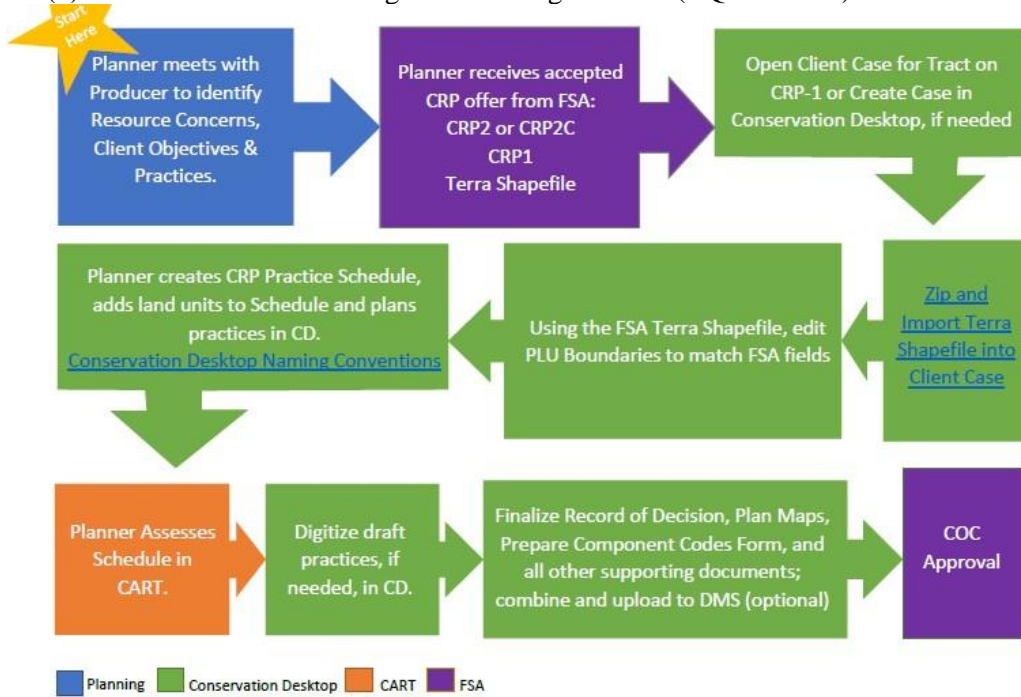
[Title 440, GM, Part 402, Section 402.0 and 402.5](#)

[National Planning and Procedures Handbook \(NPPH\) Amendment 8](#)

397.10 Exhibits

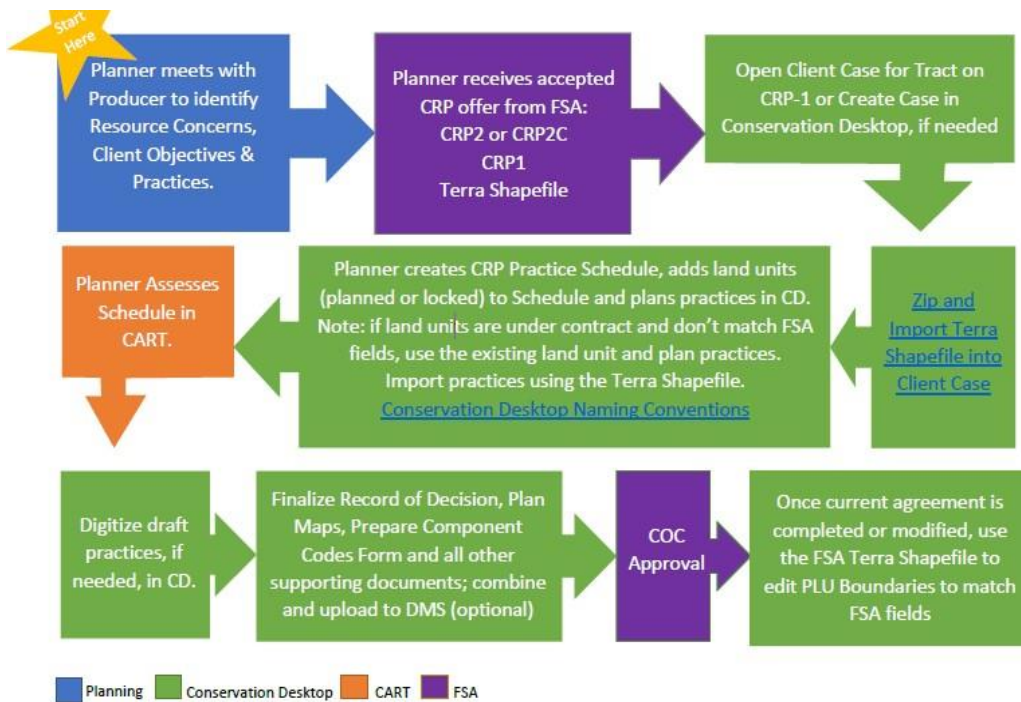
A. CD CART Application Workflow – CRP Iowa

(1) First Exhibit – No existing Farm Bill Agreements (EQIP or CSP)



02/25/2021

(2) Second Exhibit – With existing Farm Bill Agreements (EQIP or CSP)



02/25/2021