USDA United States Department of Agriculture

Fix it, Don't Disc it

Stop Ephemeral Gully Erosion with Conservation Systems

Got a Gully?

Runoff water flowing from uneven landscapes tends to concentrate in natural, depressional channels. These channels, called ephemeral gullies, can be reshaped and farmed across, but continued, concentrated flow takes away the soil. Ephemeral gullies sometimes are described as silent erosion because they can be easily smoothed over, hidden and planted to crops. Discing an ephemeral gully leaves nutrient-rich topsoil vulnerable to erosion. Fixing ephemeral gullies through conservation practices protects productivity and water quality and allows farmers with highly erodible land to continue receiving USDA benefits.

Ephemeral Gully

Fix it, Don't Disc It.

Below are examples of just a few of the natural resources conservation practices and management options available to help farmers voluntarily fix ephemeral gullies in their fields. Additional practices to consider include: conservation crop rotation, contour buffer strips, contour farming, stripcropping, terrace and water and sediment control basin. Contact your local NRCS office for help deciding which options are best for you and your farm, and to learn about financial assistance options.

No Till

Cover Crops

Grassed Waterway

Terraces

Conservation Compliance

The 1985 Farm Bill required Conservation Compliance for all USDA program participants if they farm highly erodible land (HEL). **ANY** tillage not accounted for in your conservation plan may put you out of compliance.

Should you be concerned? If you have highly erodible land, and you have small gullies forming in your fields you should check with NRCS. Discing or smoothing the gullies will not fix the problem. And you risk losing your USDA benefits.

When in doubt, visit your local NRCS office before performing any tillage that is not part of your conservation plan on HEL land.

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