

Best Management Farming Practices for Water Quality Protection

Grassed Waterway (412) Fact Sheet

BMP: Protect ditches and banks from concentrated flow from runoff; divert water to a stable outlet; and/or establish vegetation to filter sediment from a slope.

NRCS Practice Standard: Grassed Waterway (412)

Grassed waterways are natural or constructed channels, typically broad and shallow in shape, that are planted and continuously maintained with low-growing grassy cover to convey storm water runoff.



Grassed Waterway (NRCS Conservation Practice Code 412)

Definition: A shaped or graded channel that is established with suitable vegetation to carry surface water at a non-erosive velocity to a stable outlet. Grassed waterways are used to control gullying or soil erosion from concentrated water flow, where storm water runoff can be conveyed at velocities less than five feet per second.

Purpose

- Provide a more natural, lower velocity alternative to other means of storm water conveyance.
- To convey runoff from terraces, diversions, or other water concentrations without causing erosion or flooding.
- To reduce gully erosion.
- To protect/improve water quality.
- To maintain or enhance watershed function and value.
- May enhance wildlife habitat.

For more information contact your local NRCS office or visit our website at <http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/treemenuFS.aspx>

CONSIDER THIS:

Where grading is used to construct waterways, establish an effective sod, preferably comprised of permanent grasses, applying mulch and irrigation prior to the beginning of the fall rainy season. Establish vegetation before allowing water to flow in the waterway.

Use mulch, anchoring, a nurse crop, rock, hay-bale dikes, filter fences, or runoff diversions as necessary to protect the vegetation until established.

Where conditions warrant additional erosion protection, stone-lined channel bottoms, or periodic rock checks finished at channel-bottom grade may be used.

Select species that have the capacity to achieve adequate density, stiffness and vigor within an appropriate time frame to stabilize the site sufficiently.

When applying straw mulch apply at 1500 lbs/acre at planting, distributed uniformly over seeded area within 48 hours after seeding. Anchor straw using hand tools, rollers, crimpers, disks or similar equipment.

After establishment maintain dense vegetation, reseeding and irrigating when necessary.

Control undesirable weed species; mow after rainy season.

Inspect and repair after storm events, reseed disturbed areas.

Do not use fertilizer when using for water quality.