Guidance on Accessing National Conservation Practices and Notices in the Federal Register

What is a Conservation Practice Standard?

The conservation practice standard contains information on why and where the practice is applied, and it sets forth the minimum quality criteria that must be met during the application of that practice in order for it to achieve its intended purpose(s).

State conservation practice standards are available through the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG). If no state conservation practice standard is available in the FOTG, you should contact the appropriate State Office or your local USDA Service Center.

NOTICE - National Conservation Practice standards should not be used to plan, design or install a conservation practice. You must have the conservation practice standard developed by the state in which you are working to insure that you meet all state and local criteria, which may be more restrictive than national criteria.

Where are the NATIONAL Conservation Practice Standards located?


Figure 1 NRCS Technical Resources website
2. Then select National Conservation Practice Standards links from the Highlights on the right, which will take you to


Figure 2 NRCS National Conservation Practice Standards website:
3. To see the **National** Conservation Practice Standards, click on the blue bold text, which will take you to http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/?ss=16&navtype=SUBNAVIGATION&cid=nrcs143_026849&navid=1201603400000000&pnavid=1201600000000000&position=Not%20Yet%20Determined.Html&tttype=detailfull&pname=Conservation%20Practices%20|%20NRCS and a table will be displayed.

**Figure 3 Table of NATIONAL Conservation Practice Standards**
Does the public have a chance to review and comment on the NRCS National Conservation Practice Standards?
Yes, prior to final adoption, national conservation practice standards must be published in the federal register for review and comment.

How do I find the notices for the National Conservation Practice Standards?

Option A:
To search for recent notices, go to the Federal Register site at: http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/
In the search box enter: “NRCS” AND “Conservation Practice Standard” and then click the submit button
The search results will look like this:

![Image of search results]

Search Database:
Federal Register, Volume 78 (2011)

For: 
"nrsc" AND "conservation practice standard"

Total Hits: 4

[1] fr23au11N Notice of Proposed Changes to the National Handbook of
Size: 7001, Score: 1000, HTML, PDF, SUMMARY

[2] fr11ap11N Notice of Proposed Changes to the National Handbook of
Size: 13197, Score: 915, HTML, PDF, SUMMARY

[3] fr11ja11N Notice of Proposed Changes to the National Handbook of
Size: 6916, Score: 739, HTML, PDF, SUMMARY

Size: 3173, Score: 1, TEXT

Option B:
Alternatively, one can view all Federal Register notices for the NRCS at:
http://www.federalregister.gov/agencies/natural-resources-conservation-service

What will the notice say or look like?
Appendix A contains a recent notice that was published on August 23, 2011 in the Federal Register for National Conservation Practices.
APPENDIX A

Federal Register—Notice of Proposed Changes to the National Handbook of Conservation Practices for the Natural Resources Conservation Service

Example from August 23, 2011

[Federal Register: August 23, 2011 (Volume 76, Number 163)]
Notices
Page 52635-52636
From the Federal Register Online via GPO Access [wais.access.gpo.gov]
[DOCID:fr23au11-37]

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

[Docket No. NRCS-2011-0018]

Notice of Proposed Changes to the National Handbook of Conservation Practices for the Natural Resources Conservation Service

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

ACTION: Notice of availability of proposed changes in the NRCS National Handbook of Conservation Practices for public review and comment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given of the intention of NRCS to issue a series of revised conservation practice standards in the National Handbook of Conservation Practices. These standards include: Dam or Pond Removal (Code 403), Dry Hydrant (Code 432), Feed Management (Code 592), Fishpond Management (Code 399), Land Clearing (Code 460), Livestock Pipeline (Code 516), Pond Sealing or Lining, Flexible Membrane (Code 521A), Fuel Break (Code 383), Stream Crossing (Code 578), and Subsurface Drain (Code 606).

NRCS State Conservationists who choose to adopt these practices for use within their States will incorporate them into section IV of their respective electronic Field Office Technical Guide. These practices may be used in conservation systems that treat highly erodible land (HEL) or on land determined to be a wetland. Section 343 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 requires NRCS to make available for public review and comment all proposed revisions to conservation practice standards used to carry out HEL and wetland provisions of the law.

DATES: Effective Date: This is effective August 23, 2011.
Comment Date: Submit comments on or before September 22, 2011.
Final versions of these new or revised conservation practice standards will be adopted after the close of the 30-day period, and after consideration of all comments.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be submitted, identified by Docket Number NRCS-2011-0018, using any of the following methods:
Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Wayne Bogovich, National Agricultural Engineer, Conservation Engineering Division, Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Room 6136 South Building, Washington, DC 20250.

Electronic copies of these standards can be downloaded or printed from the following Web site: ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/NHQ/practice-standards/federal-register/. Requests for paper versions or inquiries may be directed to Wayne Bogovich, National Agricultural Engineer, Conservation Engineering Division, Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Room 6136 South Building, Washington, DC 20250.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The amount of the proposed changes varies considerably for each of the Conservation Practice Standards addressed in this notice. To fully understand the proposed changes, individuals are encouraged to compare these changes with each standard's current version as shown at: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/Standards/nhcp.html. To aid in this comparison, following are highlights of the proposed revisions to each standard:

- **Dam or Pond Removal (Code 403)**—This is a new conservation practice standard for the purpose of removing existing dams or ponds.
- **Dry Hydrant (Code 432)**—The Criteria section was clarified, Plans and Specification section added a list of items to include, and references were added.
- **Feed Management (Code 592)**—The units changed from Animal Units (AUs) or Number to only AUs. The Purpose changed to include pathogen, odor, particulate matter, and greenhouse gas mitigation. Additions to Conditions Where Practice Applies, Criteria, Considerations, Operations and Maintenance, and References were made to support the change in Purpose.

Fishpond Management (Code 399)—The Definition was changed. Two issues previously included under "Considerations'" have been moved to the "Criteria" section and additional action was added to the "Operation and Maintenance" section.

- **Fuel Break (Code 383)**—Only minor edits are being proposed.
- **Land Clearing (Code 460)**—The purpose was rewritten. Criteria was added for soil quality and water quality.

Livestock Pipeline (Code 516)—The title changed from ``Pipeline" to `Livestock Pipeline.'" Revised Criteria and removed material specifications; expanded Considerations; revised Plans and Specifications; and revised Operation and Maintenance.

Pond Sealing or Lining, Flexible Membrane (Code 521A)—The material requirements have been revised to conform to industry-wide practice and to the most current versions of accepted generic standards, such as ASTM and other industry standards.
Stream Crossing (Code 578)--Criteria include more details related to passage of aquatic organisms and hydraulic criteria.

Subsurface Drain (Code 606)--Revised Purposes; expanded Conditions Where Practice Applies; revised Criteria; expanded Considerations; added Operation and Maintenance; and added References

Signed this 28th day of July, 2011, in Washington, DC.

Dave White,
Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service.

[FR Doc. 2011-21467 Filed 8-22-11; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 3410-16-P