

Conservation Practice Standard Overview

Wetland Restoration (657)

Wetland restoration is a way to return a former or degraded wetland to a condition that is a close approximation of its original condition.

Practice Information

Wetlands are a valuable part of the natural landscape because they provide habitat for wildlife, reduce flooding, improve water quality, and increase groundwater recharge.

There are three major characteristics of a wetland; hydric soils, hydrology, and hydrophytic (water-loving) vegetation. The most common reason that a wetland has been lost or degraded is that the hydrology of the site has been changed. This causes the hydrophytic vegetation to disappear. Restoration of the hydrology of the site usually causes a natural return of the hydrophytic plants.

When a wetland restoration is planned, consider the effects on the adjacent surface and groundwater hydrology. Water temperature and flow volumes and direction may be affected. Also consider the effects on the aquatic species, including fish and amphibians.

This practice has a minimum expected life of 15 years. The operation and maintenance plan will include an inspection schedule, a list of items to inspect, recommended repairs,



and procedures for documentation. A list of management and monitoring activities will also be included. One major component of this practice is maintenance of the vegetation once it is established.

Common Associated Practices

Wetland Restoration (657) is commonly applied with conservation practices such as Dike (356) and Structure for Water Control (587) to restore the wetland's hydrology. Other practices such as Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (644), Riparian Herbaceous Cover (390), and Riparian Forest Buffer (391) are used to provide additional habitat around the wetland.

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.