NATIONAL CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD REVIEW PROCESS

Conservation Practice Standards (CPS) are developed for the protection of the natural resources and land stewards. CPS provide the minimum critera for the design and installation of practices. The flowchart below illustrates the CPS development process.

NATIONAL REVIEW

BY

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT

The national subject matter expert is responsible for reviewing current literature on the practice, reviewing any requests for changes suggested by states, and reviewing the practice with other subject matter experts. The national subject matter expert needs to consider the conservation practice's impact on resource concerns such as water quality, greenhouse gas emissions, wildlife, etc. As well as consider impacts to human cultural issues such as small or disadvantaged producers, urban or rural considerations, as well as technological advances.



DRAFT REVISION

OR

NEW STANDARD

If a change is needed, the national subject matter expert or their designee will draft a revised national standard.

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INTERNAL

NRCS REVIEW

The new or revised national CPS then goes through an NRCS internal review process and is modified based on comments.



4

FEDERAL REGISTER

REVIEW

The new or revised national standard then goes through an external Federal Register review process and, if warranted, is modified based on public comments.



PUBLISH

NEW/REVISED STANDARD

The new or revised national CPS is published with other CPS and support documents (practice specifications, operation and maintenance plans, etc.) ready for publishing once or twice a year.



National CPS are reviewed and updated every five years, but may be updated more frequent if changes in technology or other factors warrant.

NRCS uses Interim Conservation Practice Standards (ICPS) as a method to field test new technology or innovations. ICPS are based on requests from a University, Agricultural Research Service (ARS), an industry representative, members of the State Technical Committees (state-level technical leads that assist in the development and maintenance of the FOTG), employees at the field office, or other such sources. The technology or innovation must have a scientific basis and have been previously evaluated. If the practice or innovation is from a vendor of the technology, the practice or innovation must have had the benefits of the practice verified by a third party.

Requests for an ICPS are reviewed and approved for development by the State Technical Guide Committee for the state which is submitting the ICPS and then forwarded for national level review by the national subject matter expert for the discipline responsible for the practice. For example, the National Forester would review a forestry ICPS, the National Water Management Engineer would review a new irrigation ICPS, etc.

Upon approval, the NRCS state is granted permission to use the ICPS over a 3-year evaluation period. At the end of a 3-year evaluation period, a final evaluation report is completed with specific disposition recommendations (either a new national conservation practice standard; incorporation into existing standard; or discontinuation). States can, and often do, request an extension for the evaluation if there has not been sufficient time to evaluate the practice or if there have been limited installations of the practice to evaluate.

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MODIFY & REPUBLISH

WITHIN 1-YEAR

States have 1 year to revise and publish.
State CPS are available through the <u>Field</u>
Office Technical Guide (FOTG). If no state
CPS is available in the FOTG, you should
contact the appropriate State Office or your
local USDA Service Center.

- States revise to meet state law, state climatic conditions, and state specific concerns.
- States typically notify local stakeholders for comment.

