



CRP NOTE #99
February 7, 2000

The following information is provided to assist field staff in identifying when CRP cost share is allowable for tree shelters and tree mats.

Tree shelters

For purposes of CRP, "Tree Shelters" are devices used to control damage on newly planted tree seedlings by wildlife browsing. Tree shelters may be composed of biodegradable materials including plastic mesh, netting devices, or tree tubes. Tree shelters are eligible only with the following practices:

- 1) CP-22, Riparian Buffer, and CP-23, Wetland Restoration (when planting hardwood trees on the associated upland acres).

The amount of cost share is limited to 50% of the actual cost of the device not to exceed \$1 per device. The not to exceed rate includes the cost of the shelter, all installation costs, and the cost of securing the device to the ground. Tree shelters are authorized only for hardwood tree species.

- 2) CP-25 Red and White pine Restoration and Oak Savanna Restorations.
The amount of cost share is limited to 50% of the actual cost not to exceed \$2 per device. This rate includes the shelter, stake and installation. For hardwood tree species a minimum 4-foot shelter will be used. For conifers a minimum 2-foot shelter will be used. The total amount of shelters will be limited to 150 per acre.

Tree mats

In the CRP tree mats are referred to as plastic mulch (see 2-CRP Exhibit 9). Plastic mulch tree mats are geo-textile fabrics made from polypropylene. Acceptable tree mats must allow for water infiltration and air movement through the mat material. Solid plastic sheeting material does not meet these criteria.

The plastic mulch tree mat component is eligible only in areas that receive less than 25 inches of annual precipitation. This restriction limits the use of tree mats to arid areas where the lack of precipitation limits tree survival and growth rates. Tree mats help newly planted seedlings compensate for a soil moisture deficit by lowering soil temperatures, reducing evaporation, and controlling competing vegetation. CRP does not recognize the use of treemats solely for weed control purposes. The Minnesota annual precipitation map is attached to this note and can be used to identify locations eligible for this component.



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In eligible locations the following CRP practices can have plastic mulch tree mats as a cost shared component:

- CP-5A, Field Windbreak Establishment
- CP-16A, Shelterbelt Establishment
- CP-17A – Living Snow Fences
- CP-22 – Riparian Buffer
- CP-25 – Red and White Pine Restoration
- CP-25 – Oak Savanna Restoration

The existing cost share rate for plastic mulch tree mats in the CRP docket is 50% of eligible costs not to exceed \$20 per hundred feet for rolls of tree mats and \$0.50 each for 3 foot by 3 foot squares of tree mats. These cost share rates include the cost of mat materials, anchoring devices and installation.

CRP cost share is not allowed for tree mats composed of organic materials such as wood chips, cardboard sheets, corncobs, straw, and other similar materials. CRP does have mechanical and chemical weed control options for the se agroforestry plantings.

Direct questions on this information to Paul Flynn, State Forester.

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State Conservationist

Attachment

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