



# Contour Buffer (Grass) Strips CP15A

(ver 2/07)

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Landowner \_\_\_\_\_

## Definition

Contour buffer strips are narrow strips of perennial vegetation established around the hill and alternated down the slope with wider cropped strips that are farmed on the contour..

## Purpose

Contour buffer strips reduce sheet and rill erosion and remove sediment, nutrients, pesticides, and other materials from runoff as it passes through the strip. Contour buffers are most effective when used in combination with other conservation practices, such as crop residue management and nutrient management.

## Where Used

On cropland where sheet and rill erosion are problems including between terraces.

Where contouring is practical. Contour buffer strips are unsuitable in fields with irregular, rolling topography.

## Specifications

Your site-specific design is listed on the specifications sheet and if necessary job sketch sheet. The design was developed using Minnesota NRCS conservation practice standards Contour Buffer Strips (332) and Conservation Cover (327).

## Management Considerations

Management activities will be scheduled during the contract period according to the specifications in the Grassland Management Fact Sheet.

## Operation and maintenance

- Conduct all farming operations parallel to the strip boundaries, except on headlands or end rows with gradients less than the criteria in the standard.
- Control weeds the year of establishment with timely applications of herbicides or with early clipping before seed heads appear.
- Prevent disturbance of cover during the primary nesting season for wildlife as established by FSA.



- Control all noxious weeds as identified by state and local laws, by: (1) treating with chemicals per label directions, or (2) spot mowing before seed heads form. When possible delay use of control measures until after August 1<sup>st</sup> to protect nesting wildlife. Spot treatment on problem areas may be authorized by FSA during the primary nesting season.
- Protect the acres from haying or grazing unless authorized in your contract. Refer to the haying and grazing management plan for specifications.
- Reseed any areas that do not have adequate cover.
- Fertilize buffer strips as needed to maintain stand density.
- Limit use of the contract area for field borders, field roads or other uses that will damage or destroy the cover.
- Do not apply manure or other organic materials to the contract area unless authorized in your Conservation Plan of Operations.

- Periodic light disking may be necessary as directed by the technical agency to improve plant vigor and maintain cover.
- Control rodent infestations that adversely affect the perennial ground cover.
- Use all chemicals according to label instructions.
- Redistribute sediment accumulations as needed to maintain uniform sheet flow along the crop/buffer boundary.
- Perform all farming operations on the contour.

Landowner \_\_\_\_\_ Tract \_\_\_\_\_ Field \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Buffer Strip Layout</b>	<b>Strip 1</b>	<b>Strip 2</b>	<b>Strip 3</b>	<b>Strip 4</b>
Cultivated width (ft.)				
Buffer strip width (ft.)				
Buffer strip length				
Acres in buffer strip				
Species #1, variety and seeding rate in lb./acre pure live seed (PLS)*				
Species #2, variety and seeding rate in lb./acre pure live seed				
Species #3, variety and seeding rate in lb./acre pure live seed				
Species #4, variety and seeding rate in lb./acre pure live seed.				
Companion crop and seeding rate (lb./ac. PLS)				
Seeding dates				
Lime (tons/acre)				
N (lb./acre)				
P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub> (lb./acre)				
K <sub>2</sub> O (lb./acre)				

\*Note: Pure live seed (PLS) is lbs. of bulk seed x %germination x % purity. To obtain pounds of bulk seed needed per acre, use the following: (lbs./acre PLS) divided by (%germination x % purity).

**Site Preparation**

Grade, smooth or fill buffer strip area prior to seeding to eliminate rills and ephemeral gullies. Prepare a firm seedbed. For conventional seeding the seedbed should be worked to a depth of 3 inches and also rolled or cultipacked prior to broadcast seeding operations. Lime and fertilize according to above recommendations.

**Seeding Methods**

Drill grass and legumes to a depth of 1/8 to 1/4 inches for conventional seeding and 1/4 to 1/2 inches for no-till plantings. Broadcast seedings should be rolled or cultipacked immediately after seeding. If necessary, mulch seeded area with \_\_\_\_\_ tons per acre of mulch material.

**Additional Specifications and Operation and Maintenance Instructions**

Construct waterways or diversions where runoff concentrates and causes an erosion problem.  
 Establish the buffer and cropped strips on the approximate contour.  
 A ratio of cropped to buffer strip width of between 9:1 and 4:1 is desirable.

An aerial view, or if needed an aerial photo of the area can be shown below. Other relevant information, such as complementary practices, and adjacent field or tract conditions including structures and crop type, and additional specifications may be included.


Additional Notes

**Landowner** \_\_\_\_\_ **FSA Contract Number** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Prepared By** \_\_\_\_\_ **Planned Application Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Tract Number(s)** \_\_\_\_\_ **Field Number(s)** \_\_\_\_\_ **Total Acres** \_\_\_\_\_

Total Acres \_\_\_\_\_ x cost/acre \_\_\_\_\_ = Project Cost Estimate x Cost Share Rate \_\_\_\_\_ = Estimated Cost Share Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

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