

Continuing Conservation Initiative
LONG TERM HIGH RESIDUE MINIMUM SOIL DISTURBANCE SYSTEMS
DCR Specifications for No. CCI - CNT

This document specifies terms and conditions for the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's continuous conservation initiative high residue minimum soil disturbance systems best management practice, which are applicable to all contracts, entered into with respect to that practice.

A. Description and Purpose

This practice will implement a high residue minimum soil disturbance system and nutrient management planning technologies that result in the reduction of non-point source pollution to state waters from nutrients and sediments. To increase biomass/soil quality and manage the residue to reduce the movement of nitrogen, phosphorus, sediments and runoff with the use of no-till planting systems.

This long term high residue minimum soil disturbance system reporting practice is designed to provide a financial incentive to assure that lands being managed under high residue minimum soil disturbance systems are reported to DCR. These no till systems are required to be effective and functioning as designed after the VACS program lifespan has expired and throughout the life span of this practice.

B. Policies and Specifications

1. Eligibility

- i. Eligible land must be managed under a high residue minimum soil disturbance high residue minimum soil disturbance system that results in a **minimum of 60% residue cover** on all of the enrolled acres and must be maintained for the lifespan of the practice. Prior to practice authorization, SWCDs must verify that no till planting methods have been utilized on site and that 60% cover exists on the land. Land enrolled in an active (SL-15A) practice **is not eligible for CCI-CNT**.
- ii. All eligible fields must have a cropping history two out of the past five years. Only multi-year multi crop rotations on cropland that include at least two crops of small grain or cover crop in five years are eligible. All required small grain crops may be harvested for grain only. Straw must remain on the field. Permanent grass or hay land is not considered cropland
- iii. Participants may not receive CCI-CNT payments and Nutrient Offset Credits on the same acres simultaneously.
- iv. Producers must be fully implementing a current nutrient management plan prepared and signed by a certified nutrient management planner. The plan must include all agricultural production acreage contained within the tract that this BMP will be implemented on and must be on file with the local SWCD. Payments for long term high residue minimum soil disturbance implementation shall not be made until a current nutrient management plan is on file with the SWCD. SWCD staff should utilize the NMP maps, nutrient balance sheets, and summary sheets to confirm conservation practice implementation. A comparison between crop recommendations and in field conditions shall be used when certifying conservation practice compliance.

2. The practice must not be in lifespan from any other conservation program.

3. Practice Development
 - i. If the planting of a cover crop is needed to maintain biomass, producer is eligible to plant cover under SL-8B or WQ-4.
 - ii. The system must be maintained for a minimum of five years
 - iii All crops must be planted using no-till methods.

4. In order to be eligible for cost-share or tax credit, nutrient management plans must be prepared by a certified planner who holds a current Nutrient Management Planner Certificate issued by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. Nutrient Management Plans must be written to comply with all requirements set forth in the Nutrient Management Training and Certification Regulations, (4 VAC 50-85-10 et seq.) and the criteria set forth in the Virginia Nutrient Management Standards and Criteria, revised July 2014

5. Practice Implementation
 - i. Biomass requirements for cash grain, oilseed, cotton and small grain rotations must maintain a minimum of 60% residue cover on the enrolled acres must be maintained for the lifespan of the practice.
 - ii. This practice is subject to **annual** spot checks by SWCD staff throughout its lifespan.
 - iii. This practice is subject to NRCS Standards 340 Cover Crop, 328 Conservation Crop Rotation, and 595 Pest Management.

6. All practice components implemented must be maintained for a minimum of 5 years following the calendar year of installation. The lifespan begins on Jan. 1 of the calendar year following the calendar year of certification of completion. By accepting either a cost-share payment or a state tax credit for this practice the participant agrees to maintain all practice components for the specified lifespan. This practice is subject to spot check by the SWCD throughout the lifespan of the practice and failure to maintain the practice may result in reimbursement of cost share and/or tax credits.

C. Rate(s)

The long term implementation rate is an incentive payment of \$5 per acre for the life of the practice. Payment for the five year contract will be made the first year of the contract and will be calculated at \$5/acre x number of acres in the contract x 5 years.

D. Technical Responsibility

Technical and administrative responsibility is assigned to qualified technical DCR and SWCD staff in consultation, where appropriate and based on the controlling standard, with DCR, Virginia Certified Nutrient Management Planner(s), NRCS, DOF, and VCE. Individuals certifying technical need and technical practice installation shall have appropriate certifications as identified above, and/or Engineering Job Approval Authority (EJAA), for the designed and installed component(s). All practices are subject to spot check procedures and any other quality control measures.

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