

Landowner Guide to Constructing Conservation Practices



This guide will help you understand your responsibility in all phases of conservation practice installation, from planning and design, through construction and maintenance.

By understanding your role, and providing adequate time for each phase of the project, you can avoid inconvenient and costly delays.

“Landowner” in this guide is the person responsible for making decisions for the property. In most cases, that is the owner, but may also be an operator or farm manager.

Planning and Design



Working with Consultants

If the project is to be designed by a consultant or Technical Service Provider (TSP) instead of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), it is very important to communicate early in the process so that the final design will meet NRCS requirements. The landowner is responsible for coordinating this effort. Make sure that everyone involved understands the NRCS requirements for practice design and checkout. You may want to schedule a pre-design meeting with NRCS and your consultant or TSP.



Select Alternative

NRCS (or your consultant) will work with you to develop alternatives for your site. Preliminary cost estimates will be provided. Use this information to decide what will work best for your operation. After you make your decision, the final design can begin.



Cost Estimates

The estimated cost is yours to use for comparison purposes and should not be shown or given to the contractor. The estimated cost is based on quantities calculated for your specific design. Actual construction quantities may vary if the project is changed during construction or differing site conditions are encountered (i.e., bedrock, excessive moisture, etc.).

It is the landowner's responsibility to contact one or more contractors and obtain bids. Prices may vary from contractor to contractor. It is best to obtain bids from several qualified contractors before selecting someone to construct the practice. Make sure the contractor has the knowledge and skill to build your project. NRCS does not guarantee the estimated cost will be the final cost of the project.



Construction Plans

The construction plans will include drawings and specifications. The drawings are a visual representation of the project which show the location and describe the work to be done. The drawings may include plan views, sections, profile details and notes which are necessary to supplement the construction specifications for a site specific installation. The construction specifications describe the quality of work which is to be done and the kinds of materials to be used.

If the project is designed by a consultant or TSP, allow time for NRCS to review and approve the design before construction begins. Take time to review the plans yourself to make sure you agree with the final design. Ask NRCS for help in reviewing the plans with you, if they are hard to understand.

Construction



Permits

All permits or approvals that are applicable for the construction and/or operation of this practice are the responsibility of the landowner and must be obtained prior to the start of construction. NRCS (or your consultant) can help with preparing the permit application.



During Construction

The landowner is responsible for making sure the project is being built correctly. NRCS may visit the site occasionally but will not be able to provide full time construction inspection.

Keep NRCS informed of progress and take pictures to help document how the project was built.



Public and Private Utilities

If you know about underground utilities, including tile lines, in the vicinity of the proposed work area, make sure to notify NRCS so the design will take the utilities into account. It is the excavating contractor's responsibility to contact **JULIE** prior to start of construction. Make sure to provide the JULIE dig number to NRCS. NRCS will not be responsible for tile or utilities damaged during construction. NRCS (or your consultant) can help prepare necessary documents.



Acceptance of Construction

If your project is designed by a consultant or TSP, make sure that they provide documentation of the completed project and certification that it meets NRCS standards and specifications.

The final step will be an inspection and review by NRCS to ensure that the project meets site specific drawings and construction specifications.



Pre-Construction Meeting

Hold a thorough pre-construction meeting between the owner/operator, contractor, engineering provider and the NRCS representative to go over the plans, specifications and other details of the project before any construction begins. This is your way to ensure that everyone understands what is to be built and how the process will work.



Operation and Maintenance

An operation and maintenance plan will be provided by NRCS (or your consultant). Make sure to follow this plan so your project will continue to function as intended in your system.

The landowner is ultimately responsible for the construction of the project in accordance with NRCS standards and specifications, complying with any permit requirements and the maintenance of the conservation system.

For more information contact your local USDA Service Center, NRCS field office or go to www.il.nrcs.usda.gov