

Name of Practice: VEGETATIVE STABILIZATION OF MARSH FRINGE AREAS
VACS Program Specifications for SE-1

This document specifies terms and conditions for the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program's Vegetative Stabilization for Marsh Fringe Areas practice which are applicable to all contracts entered into with respect to that practice.

A. Description and Purpose

This practice provides a protection method for eroding tidal shoreline by establishing a fringe marsh buffer area for shoreline stabilization.

The purpose of this practice is to improve water quality by establishing a natural and environmentally acceptable fringe buffer of selected marsh grasses to provide toe stabilization on tidal waters.

B. Policies and Specifications

1. Cost-share and tax credit are authorized for:
 - i. The cost of recommended marsh grass plant species used for shoreline protection (purchase).
 - ii. The cost of transplanting existing recommended marsh grass plant species to a site covered under cost-share application. Donor site must be approved in planting plan by DCR.
 - iii. Labor, fertilizer, and on-site preparation (other than structural work) needed to establish plants.
2. Cost-share is not authorized for general maintenance such as fertilizing, debris removal, or other necessary practices required to maintain an existing marsh.
3. All appropriate local, state, and federal permits must be obtained before cost-share is authorized.
4. All sites receiving cost-share assistance must be on tidal areas and have a written report prepared by DCR.
5. All marsh grass species must be planted/transplanted following the guidelines (spacing, depth, etc.) provided by DCR. New vegetation must maintain a cover of 85% or more. Spot treat invasive species to maintain density to less than 5% cover.
6. All maintenance operations as outlined and required in the written planting plan will be at the applicant's expense.

7. All practice components implemented must be maintained for a minimum of five years following the calendar year of installation. The lifespan begins on Jan. 1 of the calendar year following the 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 District 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)

1. The VACS payment rate will be 50% of the approved estimated cost or eligible actual cost, whichever is less, for all necessary components needed to establish the marsh fringe. This is a one-time incentive payment with no designated life span and not eligible for reapplication if damaged and destroyed.
2. As set forth by Virginia Code, the Commonwealth currently provides a tax credit for implementation of certain agricultural best management practices as discussed in the Tax Credit Guidelines of the VACS Manual.
3. If a participant receives cost-share, only the participant's eligible out-of-pocket share of the project cost is used to determine the tax credit.

D. Technical Responsibility

Technical and administrative responsibility is assigned to qualified technical DCR and District 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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