

Name of Practice: VOLUNTARY AFFORESTATION OF CROP, HAY AND PASTURE LAND

VACS Program Specifications for No. VFR-1

This document specifies terms and conditions for the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program's Voluntary Afforestation of Crop, Hay and Pasture Lands best management practice, which are applicable to all contracts entered into with respect to that practice.

A. Description and Purpose

This practice documents trees planted (hardwoods and/or conifers) on land used as cropland, hayland, or pastureland in order to make a permanent land use conversion to forest within the last 15 years.

The purpose of this practice is to document voluntary tree establishment that will change land use to one that will more effectively control the soil and nutrient loss from surface runoff, thus improving water quality. This practice will also provide forest areas for the benefit of wildlife.

B. Policies and Specifications

1. Crop, hay, and pastureland must have been in production for at least two out of the past five years before the planting of the trees. Forestland being replanted following timber harvest is not eligible.
2. Gullied or eroded areas shall be stabilized with a temporary or suitably durable grass cover until trees are established. Pure stands of fescue are discouraged due to tree establishment competition.
3. Grazing of livestock is not permitted for the lifespan of the practice.
4. The practice must not be in lifespan from any other conservation program.
5. Christmas tree production is not eligible.
6. Filter efficiency may also be improved by the addition of low growing or ground cover vegetation. Herbaceous plantings/shrubs are encouraged to provide soil stabilization and to provide long-term benefits for wildlife. Department of Forestry can recommend appropriate species.
7. All practice components implemented should be maintained for a minimum of five years. The lifespan begins on Jan. 1 of the calendar year following the year of certification of completion. Control of noxious and invasive plants to ensure the survival of the stand is the responsibility of the participant. This practice is subject

to spot check by the District throughout the lifespan of the practice.

C. 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.

Revised April 2023