

The Conservation Reserve Program now cost-shares 50% (no longer 40% additional incentive) for grassed waterways based on flat rates for waterway components. If you are interested in a CRP grassed waterway, here are the steps to follow:

- Contact Farm Service Agency with location to determine eligibility for the water pattern(s) of concern. Cropping history requires 4 years out of 2012-2017 (until a new Farm Bill is passed). If eligible on the FSA maps, record on the map where want waterway(s). Please indicate crop rotation and when you would like to construct. If your pattern is not eligible for CRP, you can sign up for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) with NRCS. SWCD will still design a plan for you even without cost-share programs.
- FSA will bring your request to the SWCD office for SWCD/NRCS staff to visit the site to verify erosion in the field. If there is no erosion present, a waterway can't move forward at this time.
- Once erosion is verified, SWCD staff will survey and start design on the waterway(s). This may involve several visits, especially if underground utilities are present.
- FSA will request an archeological study which takes 30 days. Typically this involves looking at a map that shows historical archeological findings. If the work area is near such an area, it may need a visual, more detailed inspection.
- Upon finishing the waterway design plan, SWCD will send two copies to the landowner to start the bid process if needed. Additional copies may be purchased. SWCD will give NRCS a list of components designed for the waterway so that NRCS can begin writing the conservation plan/contract. You chose your contractor, if you can't find one, SWCD has a contractor list on their website at www.fairfieldswcd.org. You are not required to use one of them, nor do we make recommendations.
- NRCS will give FSA the written contract and conservation plan.
- FSA will contact the landowner to schedule an appointment to have it signed.
- Once the contract is signed and results from the archaeological study allows, construction can begin. SWCD can meet with the contractor/landowner to review the plan. Your contract will have a deadline for completion, usually one year. Tile can be installed any time of year; most opt to do it over the winter in advance of any grading to allow tile trenches to settle. Seeding dates are March 15 to May 31 and August 1 to September 15. If seeding is completed outside of these dates (unless there was an extension by USDA), payment will be held until the next seeding date opening. If grass is established at that time, payment can be made. If not, the waterway will need to be reseeded at the landowner's cost.
- Contractor or landowner will need to contact SWCD a few days prior to construction to request layout. SWCD will stake/flag what is needed.
- SWCD will follow construction through and approve the waterway(s) to be seeded when all specs. have been met from the as-built. After completion, the appropriate NRCS, ODA, or SWCD engineer or technician will sign off on construction.
- Landowner submits bills to FSA and signs request for payment.
- FSA and SWCD review bills.
- SWCD submits list of approved components installed to NRCS and FSA for final payment.
- FSA makes payment.
- Landowner maintains the waterway(s) for the contracted life of 10 years with annual rental payments with the potential to renew at expiration depending on program changes and the waterway condition.

Contacts:

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