**NRCS National Conservation Practice Standards**

Private landowners and operators who voluntarily participate in NRCS conservation programs must follow NRCS conservation practice standards that are funded for their land, and can receive technical and financial assistance to identify and implement the most appropriate practices. NRCS issues national standards, and states adapt the national standards for their state-specific conditions. Learn about NRCS’ 160+ [National Conservation Practice Standards](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/technical/alphabetical/ncps). Updated link: https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/technical/cp/ncps/?cid=nrcs143\_026849

* Nutrient-related practices
  + 590 – Nutrient Management 391 – Riparian forest buffer
  + 633 – Waste Recycling 634 – Waste Transfer
  + 340 - Cover Crops 592 – Feed Management
  + 393 – Filter Strip 355 – Groundwater Testing

**More Information on the NRCS 590 Nutrient Management Conservation Practice Standard**

| **Description** | **Potential Impact on Source Water Protection** |
| --- | --- |
| Private landowners and operators receiving funds for developing and implementing nutrient management plans or to install animal waste storage structures must comply with NRCS 590 conservation practice standard.  590 standard focuses on field-level nutrient application practices & establishes criteria that are intended to minimize nutrient entry into surface water/groundwater.  Requires that growers, enrolled in USDA programs, calculate application rates on crop nutrient requirements and on assessment of risk that nutrients will be transported off-site to local surface and ground water.  NRCS must get state water agencies’ concurrence on:  1) "specific conditions where nitrogen leaching is not a risk to water quality, including drinking water";  2) "specific conditions where the risk of phosphorus loss is low"; and  3) “adequate treatment level and specific conditions for winter application of manure". Otherwise manure applications to frozen/snow-covered and saturated soils are precluded (e.g., it could be argued that no well head protection area should fall into a low risk category for nitrogen contamination.) | Increase the use of conservation practices that minimize nutrient loadings to sources of drinking water |

**State Conservation Practice Standards**

* Note that each state has its own Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) with state-specific standards (<http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/efotg_locator.aspx>). Because state and local criteria may be more specific than the national criteria, only conservation practice standards developed by an individual state may be used to plan, design, or install a conservation practice in that state.
* Get a quick overview of conservation practices that can protect sources of drinking water. Visit <http://www.fieldtofaucet.org>. (link does not work)