

COORDINATING THE Permitting Process

Sixteen commonly used
conservation measures
are now eligible for
pre-approved permits.

Landowners have been discouraged from voluntarily installing conservation management practices by the lengthy and costly process of acquiring the necessary permits. In order to reduce this barrier, the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County (RCD), Sustainable Conservation, and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary's Water Quality Protection Program have worked with eight federal, state and county regulatory agencies to pre-approve permits for sixteen commonly used conservation practices.

The regulatory agencies that have signed onto this one-stop regulatory shopping are the County of Monterey, the California Coastal Commission, the California Department of Fish and Game, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

SALINAS VALLEY

The Salinas Valley watershed includes approximately 2,500 square miles of Monterey County, including some of the most productive agricultural lands in the world. The rich soils of the broad flat lands along the Salinas River are the "Salad Bowl of the Nation", producing the majority of the country's lettuce and a diverse mix of vegetables, including broccoli, artichokes, celery, and cauliflower. The surrounding hills support extensive cattle grazing and vineyards.

WATERSHED PROTECTION

The creeks and rivers in this watershed eventually drain into the Sanctuary, home to thousands of diverse species of plants and wildlife. Local farmers and ranchers are working to prevent polluted runoff, or "nonpoint source pollution", (i.e. nutrients, sediments, and pesticides) from ending up in the waterways that flow to the ocean.

Reducing erosion from agricultural lands can also prevent the movement of persistent pesticides, such as remnant DDT, into sensitive ecosystems. Through the use of conservation practices, such as erosion control, irrigation improvements and streambank protection, the agricultural community can protect water quality and retain valuable top soil on their properties.

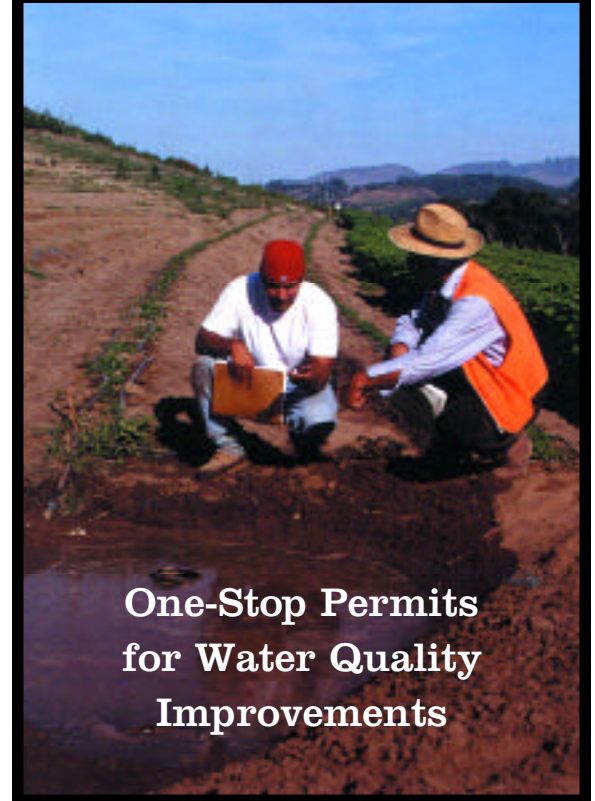
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SALINAS VALLEY — WATERSHED — Permit Coordination — PROGRAM —



One-Stop Permits
for Water Quality
Improvements

One-Stop Permits for the Salinas Valley

These sixteen conservation practices were authorized by the agencies in advance through watershed-based permits issued to the NRCS and the RCD of Monterey County. Authorization of these practices includes certain installation and maintenance conditions developed by the agencies. Activities that involve grading of more than 100 cubic yards of soil or any work within a stream channel or riparian area ordinarily require one or more permits. Land managers that work with the NRCS and the RCD can implement the practices without the need to seek project-specific permits from each agency or to pay permit fees. NRCS and the RCD may also be able to provide financial assistance for conservation practices.

THE FOLLOWING PRACTICES HAVE BEEN PRE-APPROVED WHEN YOU ARE WORKING WITH THE NRCS OR RCD.

- (1) **ACCESS ROADS** Modifications to farm roads to reduce runoff and erosion as part of a conservation plan.
- (2) **CRITICAL AREA PLANTING** Minor slope grading and planting vegetation such as trees, shrubs, vines, grasses or legumes, on highly erodible or critically eroding areas.
- (3) **DIVERSION** An earth channel constructed to direct runoff water across the slope and carry it to a stable outlet.
- (4) **FENCE** A constructed barrier to control livestock access to waterways.
- (5) **FILTER STRIP** Minor slope grading and planting of vegetation for capturing



Sediment Basins capture soil and slow storm and irrigation runoff.

sediment, organic matter, and other pollutants from runoff and wastewater.

- (6) **GRADE STABILIZATION STRUCTURE** A structure built into the creek bed or channel bottom to control the grade and prevent head cutting in natural or artificial channels.
- (7) **GRASSED WATERWAYS** A natural or constructed channel that is shaped or graded to required dimensions and velocities, and established with suitable vegetation for the stable conveyance of runoff.
- (8) **IRRIGATION REGULATING RESERVOIR** A small storage reservoir constructed to regulate or store a supply of water for irrigation.

(9) **PIPELINE** Pipeline installed for conveying water for livestock or for recreation.

(10) **SEDIMENT BASINS** Basins constructed to collect and store debris or sediment.

(11) **SPRING DEVELOPMENT** Improving springs and seeps by fencing out livestock and providing watering sources away from sensitive habitats.

(12) **STREAMBANK PROTECTION** Using vegetation or rock to stabilize and protect banks of streams, lakes, estuaries, or excavated channels against scour and erosion.

(13) **STREAM CHANNEL STABILIZATION** Stabilizing the channel of a stream with suitable structures.



Streambank protection project using willow cribwall, willow matress, and critical area planting.



(top) View of gully formed in 1997 following El Niño storms. Upper end of gully was threatening to undermine oak trees on hill above.



(bottom) Same location following installation of pipe drop and recompaction of soil to fill former gully. Pipe inlet is located behind berm at edge of trees and carries runoff to outlet in foreground. Rock at outlet serves as energy dissipator. The slopes have been seeded with an erosion control mix.

(14) **TANK OR TROUGH** A trough or tank installed to provide drinking water for livestock.

(15) **UNDERGROUND OUTLETS** A conduit installed beneath the surface of the ground to collect surface water and convey it to a suitable outlet.

(16) **WATER AND SEDIMENT CONTROL BASIN** An earthen embankment to form a sediment trap and water detention basin.

HOW TO APPLY FOR THE WATERSHED PERMIT

Before you begin your own conservation project permitting process, contact the local NRCS office or the RCD of Monterey County to find out if your projects can be covered by the Salinas Valley watershed permit. The NRCS and/or RCD can insure that your project meets the conditions of the regulatory agencies and is covered by the permit. In addition to simplifying the permit application process, assistance is available for project design, construction guidance, and information on applicable cost sharing programs.