

Stabilize Highly Erodible Land

According to the Food Security Act of 1985, USDA program participants who farm fields that are designed as Highly Erodible Land (HEL) are required to control sheet, rill, and wind erosion, control all ephemeral gullies and maintain wetlands. If farmers do not control this erosion, they can risk losing USDA farm program benefits and crop insurance eligibility. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) randomly selects HEL fields to perform compliance reviews to verify that erosion is sufficiently controlled (USDA Iowa NRCS 2018). Ephemeral gullies are eroded channels cutting into the soil that form in natural concentrated flow areas due to the erosive nature of flowing water. There are many different types of conservation practices (BMPs) that can aid in reducing this type of erosion on HEL: Grassed Waterways, Terraces, Water and Sediment Control Basins (WASCOBs), Critical Area Planting, Cover Crops, and No-Till.

USDA, NRCS. Ephemeral gullies and rill erosion.



NRCS Ohio



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When deciding on which conservation practice to enlist for stabilizing HEL and preventing ephemeral gullies, a primary factor to consider is the size and slope of the watershed. The steeper the slope and the larger the watershed results in the need for a more efficient conservation practice.

Grassed Waterway, Code 412



Critical Area Planting
Code 342

NRCS New Hampshire



Water and Sediment Control
Basin, Code 638

USDA NRCS



Terrace, Code 600

NRCS Iowa



Cover Crop, Code 340

NRCS Iowa



NRCS New Hampshire

No-Till
Code 345

