United States Department of Agriculture

Conservation Practice Standard Overview

Irrigation System, Tailwater Recovery (447)

An irrigation tailwater recovery system is an irrigation system in which all facilities utilized for the collection, storage, and transportation of irrigation tailwater for reuse have been installed.

Practice Information

Tailwater recovery involves the collection of recoverable irrigation runoff flows and is applied to conserve irrigation water supplies and/or improve offsite water quality. It applies to systems where recoverable irrigation runoff flows can be anticipated under current or expected management practices.

Facilities are needed to store the collected water and to convey water from the storage facility to a point of entry back into the irrigation system. Additional storage may be required to provide adequate retention time for the breakdown of chemicals in the runoff waters or to provide for sediment deposition. Allowable retention times are specific to the particular chemical used. Seepage from a storage facility is controlled through natural soil or commercial liners, soil additives, or other approved methods when chemical-laden waters are stored. Protection of system components from storm events and excessive sedimentation are also considered in the planning and design of a system.

The irrigation tailwater recovery systems will require maintenance over the expected life of the practice.

Common Associated Practices

Irrigation System, Tailwater Recovery (447) is commonly applied with conservation practices such as Pumping Plant (533), Irrigation Ditch Lining (428), Pond Sealing or Lining (521), and Irrigation Water Management (449).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.