

Conservation Practice Standard Overview

Mole Drain (482)

A mole drain is an underground conduit constructed by pulling a bullet-shaped cylinder through the soil.

Practice Information

The purpose of a mole drain is to establish a system of subsurface earthen channels for removal of trapped surface and subsurface water.

This practice applies where the use of buried drains is physically or economically impractical to complete the drainage required. Mole drains may be used in fields with highly cohesive or fibrous soils that are free of stones, gravel, or sand lenses if the area served is small and if an outlet is available or can be constructed to provide continuously free outfall from the drains. They may also be used as a supplement to other drains.

When planning this practice, consider the possible effects:

- on runoff, infiltration, deep percolation, and potential ground water recharge,
- on existing wetland hydrology,
- of increased drainage waters on downstream base flow,
- of an increase in dissolved substances that may be discharged to streams or aquifers,



- on reduction in the yields of sediment or sediment-attached substances,
- on downstream water quality, water use, and water temperature.

A mole drain will require maintenance over the expected life of the practice.

Common Associated Practices

Access Control (472) is commonly applied with conservation practices such as Prescribed Grazing (528), Tree/Shrub Establishment (612), Vegetative Treatment Area (635), and Wetland Creation (658).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.