KARST SINKHOLE TREATMENT - Practice Overview

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service—Conservation Practice Code 527

Karst sinkhole treatment is the management of sinkholes to reduce contamination of groundwater resources and improve farm safety through the establishment of vegetative buffers, fencing, and control of surface waters. Filtering the water entering the sinkhole or plugging the sinkhole are also activities used in the management of sinkholes.

PRACTICE INFORMATION

This practice is applied on any land where the soils and geologic conditions have led to the development of karst sinkholes. The primary purpose of sinkhole and sinkhole area treatment is to improve ground and surface water quality, conserve soil and surface water resources, and/or improve farm safety. A geologic investigation of the potential impacts of the treatment on groundwater, surface water, and the karst features is required and must be conducted by a qualified geologist.

This practice will include removing trash and other materials from the sinkhole, establishing vegetative buffers, fencing the sinkhole and buffer area, developing nutrient and pest management plans for the drainage area, and may include installing a filter or plug in the sinkhole when an open sinkhole poses a safety hazard.

Other considerations are the diversion of excess surface waters, use of appropriate erosion and sedimentation control measures, and changes to the volume of surface water, which may disturb underground hydrology.

COMMON ASSOCIATED PRACTICES

Karst Sinkhole Treatment (527) is commonly applied with conservation practices such as, Fence (382), Use Exclusion (472), Diversion (362), and Filter Strip (393).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.