



Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District

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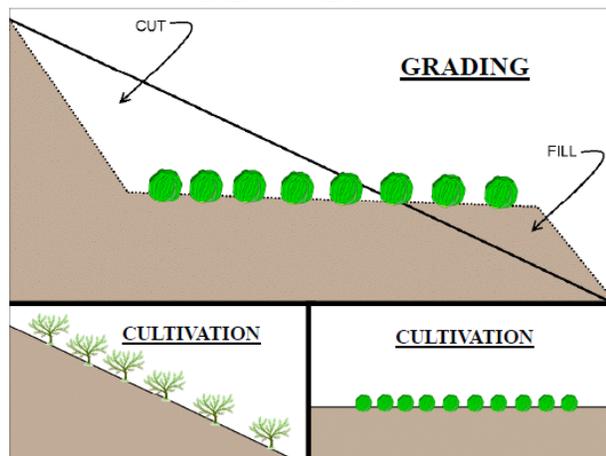
ALTERNATIVE REVIEW PROGRAM (ARP)

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Alternative Review Program (ARP)? Alternative Review is a unique agricultural grading review program where the Coastal San Luis RCD and the Upper Salinas Las-Tablas RCD have partnered with the County to provide landowners an alternative process in lieu of the County's standard grading permit.

2. What projects are exempt from ARP and a County grading permit?

- Grading for ongoing crop production or grazing purposes
- Clearance of vegetation for fire safety
- Routine maintenance of existing legally permitted facilities, such as roads, equestrian facilities, ponds, etc
- Development or maintenance of water supplies



3. Why would I elect to go through the ARP instead of the County's standard grading permit? The ARP was created with the County to provide a lower cost, time saving permitting process geared for agricultural projects. This Program encompasses seven approved practices (see question 6) allowing the RCD to expedite the completion of these specific projects. Therefore, the AR Program is designed to reduce permitting costs and time to landowners.

4. If I qualify for ARP, do I have to go through the RCD? No, you always have the option to apply for a County Grading Permit.

5. How does the County determine if a grading permit is required?

The County defines grading as all new earthwork that involves any of the following:

- Amount of material exceeds 50 cubic yards (cumulative for cut and fill)
- Amount of material exceeds 20 cubic yards (cumulative) for projects in a watercourse
- 1 acre of vegetation removal

If a project does not meet or exceed these thresholds, it is not considered “grading” and is exempt from County grading ordinance requirements.

6. What projects are eligible for ARP?

- Grading for new orchards/vineyards on slopes of 30% or more
- Grading or vegetation removal for new rangeland on slopes of 30% or more
- Ag roads
- Ponds, dams and reservoirs
- Streambank restoration or conservation projects
- Recreational trails
- Waste management systems

7. How much does ARP cost? An initial site visit to establish if the project falls under ARP is FREE. Once it has been determined that your project is eligible for ARP a scope of work will be developed. The landowner will be responsible for completing an ARP application form and submitting a \$2,000 retainer. Hours charged will be worked off from the retainer fee. If the project cost is estimated above \$2,000 or there are unforeseen changes to the project, the landowner will be notified in writing that the existing ARP budget will need additional funding to complete the project review.

8. Will all ARP project’s require engineered plans? No. Engineered plans may be required depending on the complexity of the project.

9. Will the RCD design engineered plans for ARP projects? Project design is not part of the Alternative Review Process. If project requires engineered plans, it is the owner’s responsibility to hire an engineer to design plans. The RCD can provide a list of recommended engineers including the RCD engineer.

10. If my project requires additional regulatory agency permits can the RCD assist in obtaining those Permits? Yes, the RCD has two other fee based programs, Technical Assistance and Partners In Restoration Permit Coordination, that you may want to use. Contact your local RCD for more information.

11. How long will it take to obtain an ARP permit? The duration of the permitting process will depend on the difficulty of the project. In general, if a project is straightforward and does **NOT** require any agency permits, the time of year does not impact critical wildlife habitat, nesting or migration and all of the material is provided and approved by the RCD review engineer a project can take 2 - 3 months. More complex project may take up to 6 months.

12. How long is the ARP permit good for? Once the permit has been issued the landowner has two years from the date of issuance to complete work as stated in the approved plan. If a project cannot be completed within the two years the landowner can request for a one year extension.