

National and State Resource Concerns and Quality Criteria				
Natural Resource Concern	Description of Concern	National Quality Criteria	State Quality Criteria	Assessment Tools for Quality Criteria Evaluation
SOIL				
Soil Erosion - Sheet and Rill	Detachment and transport of soil particles caused by rainfall splash and runoff degrade soil quality.	Sheet and rill erosion does not exceed the Soil Loss Tolerance "T".	Sheet and rill erosion is at or below the Soil Loss Tolerance "T".	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual assessment (pedestals, rills) • Erosion-bridge method; erosion meters • Special inventory methods (e.g., Rangeland Health Evaluation Worksheet) • RUSLE2 • Current erosion prediction tool i. e., Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE or RUSLE2) • Guide to Pasture Condition Scoring: ftp://ftp.ftw.nrcs.usda.gov/pub/glti/PastCondScoreGuide.pdf • Guide to Pasture Condition Score Sheet: ftp://ftp.ftw.nrcs.usda.gov/pub/glti/PastCondScoreSheet.pdf
Soil Erosion - Wind	Detachment and transport of soil particles caused by wind degrade soil quality and/or damage plants.	Wind erosion does not exceed the Soil Loss Tolerance "T" or, for plant damage, does not exceed Crop Damage Tolerances.	Wind erosion is at or below the Soil Loss Tolerance "T" or, for plant damage, does not exceed Crop Damage Tolerances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual assessment (pedestals, blow-out areas) • Special inventory methods (e.g., Guide to Pasture Condition Scoring: ftp://ftp.ftw.nrcs.usda.gov/pub/glti/PastCondScoreGuide.pdf) • Erosion prediction tool, i.e., Wind Erosion Equation (WEQ)
Soil Erosion - Ephemeral Gully	Small channels caused by surface water runoff degrade soil quality and tend to increase in size. On cropland, they can be obscured by heavy tillage.	Surface water runoff is controlled sufficiently to stabilize the small channels and prevent reoccurrence of new channels.	Same as National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual assessment • Volume calculation

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Soil Erosion - Classic Gully	Deep, permanent channels caused by the convergence of surface runoff degrade soil quality. They enlarge progressively by headcutting and lateral widening.	Surface water runoff is controlled sufficiently to stop progression of headcutting and widening.	Head cutting is stopped. Channel bottom and side slopes are stabilized to the extent economically and technically feasible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual assessment • Volume calculation • Aerial photo trend analysis
Soil Erosion - Streambank	Accelerated loss of streambank soils restricts land and water use and management.	Accelerated streambank soil loss does not exceed a level commensurate with upstream land use and normal geomorphological processes on site.	Assessment tool shows condition of stream is healthy or as good as can be, given the conditions that exist upstream.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual assessment, e.g., Stream Visual Assessment Protocol, Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) • Aerial photo trend analysis • Engineering Field Handbook, Chapter 16
Soil Erosion - Scour	Channels caused by out of bank flow of streams or drainage channels.		Affected areas are stabilized considering flow velocity, depth, and probability of occurrence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volume calculation
Soil Erosion - Shoreline	Soil is eroded along shorelines by wind and wave action, causing physical damage to vegetation, limiting land use, or creating a safety hazard.	Shoreline erosion is stabilized to a level that does not restrict the use or management of adjacent land, water or structures.	Same as National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual assessment • Aerial photo trend analysis • Volume calculation • Erosion transects/pins
Soil Erosion – Irrigation-induced	Improper irrigation water application and equipment operation are causing soil erosion that degrades soil quality.	Irrigation-induced erosion does not exceed the Soil Loss Tolerance “T”.	Irrigation-induced erosion is at or below the Soil Loss Tolerance “T”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRFR (Surface Irrigation Model) • CPED (Center Pivot Evaluation and Design) • NRCS National and State Irrigation Guides
Soil Erosion - Mass Movement	Soil slippage, landslides, or slope failure, normally on hillsides, result in large volumes of soil movement	Shallow slumps, slides, or slips are prevented or minimized so that the mass movement of soil material does not exceed naturally occurring rates.	Same as National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual assessment • Aerial photo trend analysis • Volume calculation
Soil Erosion – Road, road sides and Construction Sites	Soil loss occurs on areas left unprotected during or after road building and/or construction activities.	Sites are adequately protected from soil loss during and after road building and construction activities.	Same as National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual assessment • Volume Calculation • Water and wind erosion prediction tools (RUSLE2 and WEQ)

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Soil Condition - Organic Matter Depletion	Soil organic matter has or will diminish to a level that degrades soil quality.	Soil Conditioning Index is positive.	Same as National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil Conditioning Index • Soil Quality Kit • Soil testing and analysis
Soil Condition - Compaction	Compressed soil particles and aggregates caused by mechanical compaction adversely affect plant-soil-moisture relationships.	Mechanically compacted soils are renovated sufficiently to restore plant root growth and/or water movement.	Management induced compacted zones that limit plant growth, soil tilth, and/or water movement are reduced or eliminated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual Observation • Assessment of plant root systems • Bulk density test-Soil Quality Kit • Dial penetrometer
Soil Condition - Subsidence	Loss of volume and depth of organic soils due to oxidation caused by above normal microbial activity resulting from excessive drainage or extended drought.	The timing and regime of soil moisture is managed to attain acceptable subsidence rates.	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual assessment • Inventory of volume and depth • Soil probes and witness poles
Soil Condition - Contaminants - Salts and Other Chemicals	Inorganic chemical elements and compounds such as salts, selenium, boron, and heavy metals restrict the desired use of the soil or exceed the soil buffering capacity	Salinity levels cause less than a 10% decrease in plant yield. Other contaminants do not exceed plant tolerances or are below toxic levels for plants or animals.	Same as National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil test • Soil Quality Kit- EC meter • Farm*A*Syst assessment
Soil Condition - Contaminants - Animal Waste and Other Organics	Nutrient levels from applied animal waste and other organics restrict desired use of the land.	Nutrient application levels do not exceed soil storage/plant uptake capacities based on soil test recommendations and risk analysis results.	Same as National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil test • Phosphorus assessment • Plant tissue test • Application records • Yield records/history
Soil Condition - Contaminants - Commercial Fertilizer	Over application of nutrients degrades plant health and vigor, or exceeds the soil capacity to retain nutrients.	Soil nutrient levels do not exceed crop needs based on realistic yield goals and appropriate pH levels are maintained.	Same as National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil Test • Phosphorus assessment • Soil Quality Kit-pH meter

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Soil Condition - Contaminants - Residual Pesticides	Residual pesticides in the soil have an adverse effect on non-target plants and animals.	Pesticides are applied, stored, handled, and disposed of so that residues in the soil do not adversely affect non-target plants and animals.	Soil contaminants are absent, or present at levels which do not adversely affect other water, air, plant, or animal resources or restrict use of the land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual assessment • WIN-PST • NAPRA • Soil test • Plant and animal tissue test
Soil Condition - Damage from Soil Deposition	Sediment deposition damages or restricts land use/management or adversely affects ecological processes.	Sediment deposition is sufficiently reduced to maintain desired land use/management and ecological processes.	Deposition does not alter the plant-soil relationship, damage property, cause physical damage to vegetation, limit flood conveyance or limit the intended land use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual assessment • Volume calculation • Current water and wind erosion prediction tools (RUSLE2 and WEQ) coupled with sediment delivery ratios • Plant and animal community assessment
Soil Condition - Soil Deposition Safety	Deposition on roads, in culverts or at other locations causing unsafe conditions, flooding or loss of access		Deposition does not create a safety hazard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual assessment
Soil Condition - pH	Soil pH is at a level that impairs plant growth, and/or desired pesticide efficacy or persistence.		<p>Soil pH is adjusted to desired range for plant growth, and pesticide activity.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Or</u></p> <p>Plant species are selected that are adapted to the existing soil pH.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil Test
Water Quantity - Excessive Seepage	Subsurface water oozing to the surface restricts land use and management.	Subsurface water is managed to limit periods of saturation that are unfavorable to the present or intended land use. Management complies with wetland policies.	Same as National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual Assessment (physical presence of water, prevalence of hydrophytic vegetation, etc.) • Client interview • Area measurements