RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

A Resource Management System (RMS) is a combination of conservation practices (including management practices) used to treat all identified resource concerns for soil, water, air, plants, and animals that meet or exceed the quality criteria for resource sustainability.

Common Resource Areas (CRAs) are identified and delineated for the State. CRAs represent geographical regions where resource concerns and treatment needs are similar. CRA boundaries are determined by evaluating landscape conditions such as soils, climate, crops, human considerations, and other natural resource information. CRA boundaries fall within Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) delineations.

Conservation System Guides are developed for each land use in each CRA for field offices. Conservation System Guides describe the general ecological condition of the landscape listing the resource concerns and conservation practices commonly used to treat those concerns. This generalized description, along with the applicable resource concerns, serves as the baseline description for each landuse in the CRA. The baseline description provides data for measuring the impacts resource concerns have on the resources and for evaluating the impact treatments have on those concerns.

Conservation Systems are developed for each Conservation System Guide. The practices listed for each Conservation System include practices which can be used to achieve a RMS level of treatment. Naturally not all fields in the CRA have the same resource concerns. The planner will use the Conservation Systems to develop treatment alternatives for site-specific resource concerns during the planning process. When all identified resource concerns have been resolved to meet the quality criteria, a RMS is developed.

The NRCS objective in the conservation planning process is to help each client achieve a RMS level of treatment for each resource concern. However, there are a number of issues that may affect the client's decision not to implement treatment to the RMS level.

The planning process may be progressive when a client is ready to implement some, but not all, of the decisions necessary to achieve the level of treatment for a RMS. When this occurs and the client shows interest, planning and implementation of conservation practices should continue on a progressive basis following the planning process. Future assistance will be directed toward planning at a RMS level of treatment on the entire planning unit. The rate of progress in moving to the RMS level will depend on the client's objectives, desires, and constraints.

NRCS's responsibility is to provide the client with comparisons between resource impacts of RMS level treatments and non-RMS systems chosen by the decision-maker. This provides the decision-maker with a comparison of the difference in projected impacts between the RMS and the system chosen or in place.

The treatment of one resource with particular conservation practices may have a positive or negative effect on another resource. The "Conservation Practice Physical Effects", located in Section V-A of the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG), will be used as guidance in determining the effects of conservation practices on the resources.