

INTRODUCTION

Conservation Management Systems

This section provides information for developing Resource Management Systems (RMS) to address resource concerns associated with soil, water, air, plants, and animals. An RMS will be achieved when the quality criteria are met. Quality criteria represent the standards of resource protection which must be achieved in order to meet the Resource Management Systems requirement. Only those concerns that are identified during conservation planning assistance will be directed toward achieving the quality criteria established for each of the five resources and their considerations.

Quality Criteria

National Quality Criteria (NQC) establishes the minimum treatment level necessary to adequately address the resource concerns that are identified during the planning process for development of an RMS.

Arkansas has developed quality criteria within the limits established by the NQC. They are stated in either qualitative or quantitative terms for each of the resource concerns likely to be encountered in Arkansas. The RMS criteria are considered met when treatment has been planned that, when applied, will resolve all of the identified resource problems according to the quality criteria. The RMS will be considered applied when all of the conservation practices that make up the system have been installed according to conservation Practice Standards in Section IV, FOTG. All actions must conform to state, federal, or local laws, programs, or regulations.

Formulating CMS Options Using the Effects Concept

One of the first steps in formulating a CMS with a decisionmaker is to identify all potential resource problems on the planning area and how they relate to each of the five resources. The effects shown on the Conservation Practice Physical Effects (CPPE) in Section V-A-1 are based on the condition that the practice being evaluated is not presently applied. The user should understand that problems identified on a field or Conservation Treatment Unit (CTU) occur under present management and conditions. Although the physical action or change caused by a practice may be similar between different land uses, the problems of the resource and the effect of the practice on the problem will vary greatly.

The effects shown on the CPPE in Section V-A-1 will need to be adjusted for site specific effects to address the problems identified in the planning process. The Site Specific Practice Effects Worksheet is used for this. (Refer to Section III Guidance Documents.)

When a land use change is considered as an option, the effects of practices that cause the land use change are evaluated against present conditions. The effects of the other practices necessary to manage the new land use are also evaluated based on the new land use and the relative change to present management of the land.

Example: When a land use conversion from cropland to hayland occurs, sheet and rill erosion will be eliminated but other problems could arise that require treatment. The effects of hay planting should be evaluated for the problems identified on cropland. Practices associated with hayland should be evaluated for problems that may occur on hayland.

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Formulating CMS Options Using the Effects Concept – Continued:

The conservation practices shown in the CPPE are to be installed according to NRCS practice standards and specifications contained in Section IV of the FOTG. All CMS utilize the same set of standards and specifications.

Guidance Document

RMS guidance documents are to be developed by major land uses in each field office area and placed in Section III.

Example: Resource Management Systems guidance documents should present a reasonable number of options with alternative combinations of practices and management that will meet the quality criteria for solving resource problems common to that land use.

Information contained in guidance documents will help evaluate the effect of applying conservation practices affecting soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources. Guidance documents are to be developed based on a soil map unit. This will provide a process to consistently achieve quality resource treatment recommendations on similar soils with similar management and climatic conditions. The degree of treatment attained on a Conservation Treatment Unit (CTU) will be determined by the decisionmaker's choice of practices and systems.