RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

INTRODUCTION

This section provides information for developing **Resource Management Systems (RMS)** to address resource concerns associated with soil, water, air, plant and animal (SWAPA) resources. An RMS will be achieved when the quality criteria for soil, water, air, plants, and animals are met. **Quality criteria** represent the standards of resource protection that must be achieved in order to meet the Resource Management Systems requirement.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (RMS)

The objective of conservation planning and application is to establish RMS that, when applied, will protect, restore or improve the resource base, including SWAPA resources.

An RMS is a combination of conservation practices and resource management, for the treatment of all identified resource concerns for soil, water, air, plants, and animals that meets or exceeds the quality criteria in the FOTG for resource sustainability. In addition, an RMS may include conservation practices that restore or improve the resource base by exceeding the minimum to enhance water quality, land productivity, wildlife habitat, and improve health, safety and environmental conditions.

When an individual is ready, willing, and able to make and implement some, but not all the decisions necessary to achieve an RMS level of management, the process is considered "progressive planning". NRCS will provide assistance to implement conservation treatments that achieve some resolution of the identified resource problems. The rate of progress in moving to an RMS level will depend on the client's desires and constraints.

Conservation planning and application, therefore, will be directed toward solving resource problems through the implementation of an RMS. An RMS should be developed for each Conservation Management Unit (CMU) and should be compatible with the decision-maker's objectives.

Impacts and effects of RMSs are important to monitor. Case studies that show the effects of various conservation practices should be filed in Section V of the Alaska Technical Guide.

Resource Management Systems (RMS) should not be confused with **Alternative Conservation Systems (ACS) or Basic Conservation Systems (BCS)**. Alternative Conservation Systems and Basic Conservation Systems apply only to the conservation plans and conservation systems developed to carry out the provisions of the Food Security Act (FSA) of 1985, as amended by the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, and the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act of 1996.

Additional guidance for ACS and BCS is provided in this section of the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG).

FORMULATING RMS OPTIONS USING THE EFFECTS CONCEPT

One of the first steps in formulating an RMS with a decision-maker is to identify potential resource problems on the planning area and how they relate to each of the five resources. The effects shown in the **Conservation Practice Physical Effects (CPPE)** in Section V 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 Management Unit (CMU) 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 in the Conservation Practice Physical Effects (CPPE) in Section V 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 National Planning Procedures Handbook). 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. An example of this is when a land use conversion from cropland to hayland occurs, sheet and rill erosion would 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.

Conservation practices shown in the CPPE are to be installed according to NRCS practice standards and specifications contained in Section IV of the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG). All RMSs utilize the same set of standards and specifications contained in Section IV of the FOTG.