

## FIELD OFFICE TECHNICAL GUIDE

### SECTION III – RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND QUALITY CRITERIA INTRODUCTION

Section III provides information for developing Resource Management Systems (RMS) to address concerns associated with soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources. The guidelines contained in this section establish the treatment level (i.e. minimum quality criteria) necessary to adequately address the resource concerns and the human considerations that are identified during the planning process.

#### **Definitions**

A Resource Management System (RMS) is a combination of conservation practices and resource management, identified by land or water uses, for the treatment of all resource concerns for soil, water, air, plants, and animals that meets or exceeds the quality criteria in the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) for resource sustainability.

Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) is a type of conservation plan focused on a specific resource concern or technical area. These plans are intended to be completed by a Technical Service Provider (TSP). The technical criteria provide the technical requirements and deliverables for completing the Conservation Activity Plan.

Quality Criteria are quantitative or qualitative statements of a treatment level required to achieve a RMS for identified resource considerations for a particular land area. They are established in accordance with local, state and federal programs and regulations in consideration of ecological, economic, and social effects. Quality criteria for RMSs are approved by the State Conservationist and located in Section III of the FOTG.

Resource Considerations is a term used to describe the kinds of natural resource aspects/problems that might be found on the landscape. For example, a resource consideration associated with the soil resource could be soil erosion. Currently, the quality criteria for many resource considerations are qualitative narrative statements. Agency policy calls for continual refinement of the FOTG, including the quality criteria.

The NRCS objective in the conservation planning process is to help each client attain a Resource Management System. Conservation planning assistance is provided to clients and decisionmakers to progressively plan as much treatment towards a RMS as they are willing and able to attain at any point in time. The RMS will be considered applied when all of the planned conservation practices that make up the system have been installed according to the practice standards and specifications found in Section IV.

## Section Content

This section establishes **Quality Criteria** and provides guidance for developing **Resource Management Systems**. Direction is also provided to properly integrate social, economic, and cultural characteristics within Resource Management Systems. Guidance documents and guidesheets for the various land uses are located in the **Resource Management Systems** subsection.

This section also provides information for meeting the requirements of **Legislated Programs**, including the 1985, 1990, and 1996 USDA Farm Bills. Delineated are the minimum requirements for Basic Conservation Systems (BCSs) and Alternative Conservation Systems (ACSs). These terms apply only to conservation plans and conservation systems developed to carry out the provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended by the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990, and the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act of 1996.

Guidance is provided in the **Other** subsection where local programs initiated or promoted by a Resource Conservation District require specialized conservation systems.