Explanation Sheet

RESOURCE CONCERNS & PLANNING CRITERIA FOR CONSERVATION PLANNING

10/1/2012

Resource Concern - Cause	Description of Concern	Land Use	Planning Criteria		Measurement & Assessment Tools
A resource concern (RC) is an expected degradation of the soil, water, air, plant, or animal resource base to an extent that the sustainability or intended use of the resource is impaired. Because NRCS quantifies or describes resource concerns as part of a comprehensive conservation planning process that includes client objectives, human and energy resources are considered components of the resource base. The "Cause" is the specific reason or threat to the resource that results in the resource concern.		* Required Assessment	A planning criterion is a quantitative or qualitative method to assess the existing condition of the natural resources on a site to determine whether additional treatment is needed to address a specific potential resource concern. **Planning Consideration** A planning consideration is a description of potential actions or activities that should be considered to help address an identified resource concern and/or to address unintended consequences of an action. Planning considerations are identified for resource concerns when it is not appropriate or technologically feasible to identify specific criteria or a threshold for treatment.		Description of the technology or process for determining if assessment criteria are met.
			Screening Level Screening level criteria are defined, when appropriate, to identify sites with conditions that have little or no probability of needing additional treatment to address the specific resource concern. If the site meets the screening level criteria, then no other assessment is needed to document that planning criteria are met on this site. States can delete or edit nationally identified screening criteria to address localized conditions.	***Basic Assessment Level*** Basic assessment level criteria are used when a site does not meet screening level criteria, or when no screening level criteria are defined. Assessment levels are also used when formulating and evaluating alternatives. National criteria establish the minimum for all sites. States may add state-specific criteria to address local conditions.	

Water

WATER

- 8 **EXCESS WATER – Ponding, flooding, seasonal high water table, seeps, and drifted snow**	Surface water or poor subsurface drainage restricts land use and management goals. Wind-blown snow accumulates around and over surface structures, restricting access to humans and animals.	• Crop • Forest • Farmsteads • Pasture • Range • Developed Land • Associated Ag Land • Designated Protected Area • Other Rural Land	Excess water is not a problem **AND** Activities do not cause ponding/flooding problems	Excess water is managed to meet Client's objectives	Client input / planner observation
- 9 **INSUFFICIENT WATER – Inefficient moisture management**	Natural precipitation is not optimally managed to support desired land use goals or ecological processes	• Crop • Developed Land • Forest • Associated Ag Land • Designated Protected Area	Moisture Management is not a problem **AND** Activities do not cause inefficient moisture management	Runoff and evapotranspiration levels are minimized to meet Client's management objectives	Client input / planner observation
		• Range*		RHA - hydrologic function attributes slight to moderate or less	RHA - Rangeland Health Assessment
		• Pasture	Moisture Management is not a problem **AND** Activities do not cause inefficient moisture management	PCS – compaction element score ≥ 4 **AND** PCS - plant cover element score ≥ 4	PCS - Pasture Condition Score

- 10 INSUFFICIENT WATER – Inefficient use of irrigation water	Irrigation water is not stored, delivered, scheduled and/or applied efficiently Aquifer or surface water withdrawals threaten sustained availability of ground or surface water Available irrigation water supplies have been reduced due to aquifer depletion, competition, regulation and/or drought	• All*	PLU is not irrigated	IWI ≥ 85%	IWI - Irrigation Water Index
- 11 WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION – Excess nutrients in surface and ground waters	Nutrients - organic and inorganic - are transported to receiving waters through surface runoff and/or leaching into shallow ground waters in quantities that degrade water quality and limit use for intended purposes	• Crop*	Organic or inorganic nutrients are not applied **AND** PLU is not grazed	Nutrient and amendment applications are based on soil or tissue tests and nutrient budgets for realistic yields **AND** Conservation practices and managements are in place to minimize offsite impacts	Client input / planner observation Nutrient budget

- 11 WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION – Excess nutrients in surface and ground waters	Nutrients - organic and inorganic - are transported to receiving waters through surface runoff and/or leaching into shallow ground waters in quantities that degrade water quality and limit use for intended purposes	• Pasture*		PCS - streambank / shoreline erosion element score ≥ 4 **AND** PCS - livestock concentration areas element score ≥ 4 **AND** Nutrients are applied and based on a soil test, tissue tests or nutrient budget	PCS – Pasture Condition Score Nutrient budget
		• Developed Land	Organic or inorganic nutrients are not applied	Nutrients if applied, are based on a soil test, tissue tests or nutrient budget **AND** Conservation practices and managements are in place to minimize offsite impacts	
		• Other Rural Land • Associated Ag Land • Designated Protected Area • Water • Forest • Range	Organic or inorganic nutrients are not applied **AND** PLU is not grazed **AND** There are no confined livestock areas	Nutrients if applied, are based on a soil test, tissue tests or nutrient budget **AND** Conservation practices and managements are in place to minimize offsite impacts	
		• Farmsteads*	Organic or inorganic nutrients are not applied **AND** PLU is not grazed **AND** There are no confined livestock areas	Conservation practices and managements are in place to minimize offsite impacts **AND** Surface and ground waters are protected from contamination due to runoff and leaching from storage sites, spill and other concentrated sources	Client input / planner observation
- 12 WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION – Pesticides transported to surface and ground waters	Pest control chemicals are transported to receiving waters in quantities that degrade water quality and limit use for intended purposes	• All	Pest control chemicals are not applied	Pesticides are stored, handled, disposed and managed to prevent runoff, spills, leaks and leaching **AND** Conservation practices and managements are in place to minimize offsite impacts	Client input / planner observation WinPST

- 13 WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION – Excess pathogens and chemicals from manure, bio-solids or compost applications	Pathogens, pharmaceuticals, and other chemicals carried by land applied soil amendments are transported to receiving waters in quantities that degrade water quality and limit use for intended purposes. This resource concern also includes the off-site transport of leachate and runoff from compost or other organic materials of animal origin.	• Crop* • Farmsteads* • Forest • Developed Land • Associated Ag Land • Other Rural Land • Designated Protected Area • Water • Pasture* • Range	Are potential sources of pathogens or pharmaceuticals applied on the land	Organic materials are applied, stored, and/or handled to mitigate negative impacts to water sources	Client input / planner observation
- 14 WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION – Excessive salts in surface and ground waters	Irrigation or rainfall runoff transports salts to receiving water in quantities that degrade water quality and limit use for intended purposes	• All	Salt concentrations is not a limiting factor	Salt concentrations are managed to mitigate off-site transport to surface or ground waters	Client input / planner observation
- 15 WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION – Petroleum, heavy metals and other pollutants transported to receiving waters	Heavy metals, petroleum and other pollutants are transported to receiving water sources in quantities that degrade water quality and limit use for intended purposes	• All	Activities do not present the potential for contamination	Petroleum, heavy metals or other potential pollutants are stored and handled to avoid runoff or leaching	Client input / planner observation

- 16 **WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION – Excessive sediment in surface waters**	Off-site transport of sediment from sheet, rill, gully, and wind erosion into surface water that threatens to degrade surface water quality and limit use for intended purposes	• Crop* • Developed Land* • Farmsteads* • Other Rural Land • Associated Ag Land • Designated Protected Area • Water • Pasture*	Permanent ground cover > 90% and slope < 10% **AND** Classic gullies are not present **AND** Streams or shoreline are not on or adjacent to site	Upslope treatment and buffer practices address concentrated flows to water bodies **AND** SVAP2 - bank condition ≥ 5 **AND** Livestock and vehicle water crossings are stable **AND** Water erosion rate ≤ T **AND** Wind erosion rate ≤ T	RUSLE2 WEPS Client input / planner observation SVAP2
		• Forest*	There are no untreated sources of erosion **AND** Streams or shoreline are not on or adjacent to site	Upslope treatment and buffer practices address concentrated flows to water bodies **AND** Heavy use areas are stable **AND** SVAP2 - bank condition ≥ 5	Client input / planner observation SVAP2
		• Range*	There are no untreated sources of erosion **AND** Streams or shoreline are not on or adjacent to site	RHA - hydrologic function attribute - slight to moderate or less **AND** SVAP2 - bank condition ≥ 5	RHA - Rangeland Health Assessment SVAP2
- 17 **WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION – Elevated water temperature**	Surface water temperatures exceed State/Federal standards and/or limit use for intended purposes	• Crop • Forest • Pasture • Range • Developed Land • Associated Ag Land • Designated Protected Area • Water • Other Rural Land • Farmsteads •	Water courses on or adjacent to the site are not designated by a State Agency as a temperature impairment **OR** Water course temperature is not a client concern	[SVAP2 - riparian area quality element score ≥ 5 **AND** SVAP2 - riparian area quantity quality element score ≥ 5 **AND** SVAP2 - canopy cover element score ≥ 6] **OR** Existing conservation practices are in place to address water temperature	Client input / planner observation SVAP2