

# Section III

## Planning Resource Management Systems

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### INTRODUCTION TO CONSERVATION PLANNING FOR RMS's

Conservation planning is a natural resource problem solving and management process. The process integrates economic, social, and ecological considerations to meet private and public needs. This approach, which emphasizes desired future conditions, helps improve natural resource management, minimize conflict, and address problems and opportunities. The nine step planning process used by NRCS is discussed in detail in the National Planning Procedures Handbook (NPPH).

The first step in the planning process is an initial determination of the client's problems, opportunities, and concerns related to natural resources and human considerations within the planning area. Then the customer's objectives for the desired future conditions in the planning area are compared to existing resource conditions. Resource Concerns are documented on the Field Inventory Guide Sheet which is found within NE-CPA-52 "Environmental Evaluation". The Landuser's resource objectives can also be noted on NE-CPA-52.

Resource inventories and an analysis of resource data are completed in steps three and four. The results of this analysis are compared to quality criteria to document the kind, amount, and extent of existing and potential resource problems.

A broad range of technically feasible conservation alternatives is developed with the client. Alternatives may include

structural and management measures as well as measures that mitigate potential adverse impacts on the resources. The purpose of formulating alternatives is to provide the most effective, efficient, and economical conservation treatments that address resource concerns and are acceptable to the client in solving problems, addressing opportunities, and meeting the stated objectives.

At least one of the conservation alternatives must be developed to a Resource Management System (RMS) level. A RMS is a combination of conservation practices that, when installed, will meet or exceed established Quality Criteria for identified resource concerns and meet the customer's objectives. The installation of the planned practices will provide for the long-term conservation, protection, and/or improvement of the resource base. When one or more of the resource concerns do not meet the minimum requirements for sustainability, planning is considered progressive. Progressive planning is when a client is ready, willing, and able to make some, but not all, of the decisions necessary to achieve an RMS level.

The customer then decides which alternative(s) to implement and the planner prepares the necessary documentation. As the conservation decisions are implemented, the customer may require technical assistance for installing conservation practices and obtaining permits, funding, surveys, final designs and inspections for structural practices. Conservation planning is an ongoing process that continues after the plan has

# Section III

## Planning Resource Management Systems

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been implemented. The last step in the planning process is evaluation of the implemented plan to determine if it is functioning as planned and if it is achieving the desired objectives. When the actual results differ from those anticipated, the information provides feedback into the planning process. The process of monitoring, evaluating, and experimenting in order to add to resource management information and modify decisions is known as adaptive management.

The challenge in conservation planning is to balance the short-term demands for production of goods and services with long-term sustainability of a quality environment. The success of conservation planning and implementation depends on the voluntary participation of clients and the development, implementation and evaluation of reasonable and sustainable resource management alternatives.

The Resource Management System formulation process is discussed in detail in the National Planning Procedures Handbook (NPPH).

The preplanning phase can involve the use of information found in the FOTG. These include:

- **General Resource References for Resource Planning:**

Field office resource inventory and other supporting data are located in Section I of the FOTG.

Site and soils information is found in Section II of the FOTG.

- **Quality Criteria:**

Quality Criteria are contained in Section III of the FOTG.

- **Guidance Documents:**

Guidance documents are located in Section III of the FOTG. These documents are usually specific for a particular area, generally a county or a group of counties.

- **Section IV Practice Standards:**

Section IV of the FOTG provides standards for applying practices including criteria to achieve specific purposes within each standard.

- **Conservation Practice Physical Effects (CPPE) Documents:**

The CPPE Worksheet for each conservation practice standard can be found in Section V of the eFOTG.

### PLANNING RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

All Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) policy must be adhered to throughout the planning, implementation, and evaluation process (environmental compliance, documentation and reporting, etc.). All practices contained in the FOTG, Section IV, must be applied according to the Standard.

This section details RMS requirements for typical landuses and/or landuse conversions

# Section III

## Planning Resource Management Systems

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in Nebraska. Details for particular landuses are shown in Table 2. When planning a RMS for a particular landuse the following guidance and instructions will be followed.

### **Table 2 Definitions/Instructions General**

Table 2 is a Statewide Conservation Planning Guide that contains the framework for development and reporting of RMS level conservation plans in Nebraska. The table is sorted by common land uses, as listed in the National Planning Procedures Handbook (NPPH).

### **Landuse / Setting**

Landuse of the planning unit for the planned/applied RMS. Setting refers to additional distinctions that have been made relevant to the landuse in order to guide the planner to selection of appropriate resource concerns and practices.

### **Resource Consideration and Resource Concern**

Resource Concerns are a more specific subset of Resource Considerations. Resource concerns that are listed in Table 1 “Resource Concerns and Quality Criteria” must be treated to the level listed in the table in order to be an RMS level conservation plan. Resource concerns that are not listed in Table 1 must be addressed according to the appropriate practice standard(s) and/or landuser objectives.

Resource Concerns listed in Table 2 are typical for the Landuse / Setting identified. Primary Resource Concerns are listed in **bold** font and must be addressed. Secondary Resource Concerns (normal font) should be addressed when they are

applicable to the planning unit. Additional Resource Concerns should be addressed when they are identified by the landuser, or are otherwise known to be present and are potentially a concern to public health, safety, etc., or are otherwise mandated due to law, regulation, program policy, etc.

### **Applicable Practices**

Applicable Practices are suggested to treat each Resource Concern listed (identified by practice code). One or more Applicable Practices should be included in the RMS for each Resource Concern to be addressed. Essential Practices (as listed in **bold** font in the column “PRACTICE NAME”) must be applied in order address Primary Resource Concerns. Additional information on conservation practices and their impact on resource concerns may be found in the Conservation Planning and Physical Effects (CPPE) tables in Section V of the FOTG.

### **Assessment**

Assessment methods and tools are identified in Table 1. Observation and Deductions when used as assessment tools may be based on client input when the resource concern is not readily evident on the planning unit due to timing or other circumstances.

### **Practice Name**

All Applicable Practices are listed here in numerical order and identified by name. Essential Practices are listed in **bold** font and must be included in the RMS alternative.

For unusual or non-typical planning situations, or, where additional resource concerns need to be addressed that are not

# Section III

## Planning Resource Management Systems

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listed on the planning guide for the landuse /  
setting given, additional practices may be  
applicable