

GENERAL INFORMATION

What is the Nebraska Field Office Technical Guide (NE-FOTG)?

The Nebraska Field Office Technical Guide (NE-FOTG) is the basic reference tool used to accomplish the Natural Resources Conservation Service mission.

The mission of the Natural Resources Conservation Service is to provide leadership and administer programs to help people conserve, improve and sustain our natural resources and environment. Fulfilling this mission is everyone's responsibility. It requires the input and cooperation of all individuals concerned with natural resource conservation in Nebraska.

The NE-FOTG contains technical reference material to be used when planning, designing, applying, and maintaining conservation practices.

The NE-FOTG is designed to be used by technically trained persons who are providing conservation planning and application assistance. It contains technical information about the conservation of soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources.

The NE-FOTG is housed in each USDA-NRCS field office and is localized so that it specifically applies to that geographic area. It is a dynamic and flexible document that is regularly revised and updated as needed to reflect changing concerns.

The NE-FOTG provides:

- Interpretations of resource use and potential productivity within levels of management intensity and conservation treatment.
- Technical information for achieving technical standards and land users' objectives.
- Interdisciplinary planning information for the wise use of natural resources.
- A basis for identifying proper Conservation Management Systems (CMS).
- Criteria to evaluate the adequacy of a candidate Resource Management System (RMS) to meet quality standards for resource management.
- Standards for conservation practices, including requirements of state and local regulations.
- Information for evaluating and comparing the economic feasibility of conservation practices for RMS's, Acceptable Management Systems (AMS's), etc.

Contents of the NE-FOTG

The NE-FOTG contains five sections:

Section I

- General Resource References

Section II

- Soil and Site Information

Section III

- Conservation Management Systems

Section IV

- Practice Standards and Specifications

Section V

- Conservation Effects

General Description of Each Section of the NE-FOTG

Section I - General Resource References

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Section I lists references, cost data, maps, and erosion prediction, and other information for use in making decisions about resource use and conservation management. The actual references listed are to be filed, to the extent possible, in the same location as the NE-FOTG.

Section II - Soil and Site Information

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Section II contains resource inventory information about soils, climatic data, cultural resources, threatened and endangered species and forestry, pasture, trees, shrubs, grass forbs and other information. Local soils are described and interpreted to help make decisions about use and management of land. Soil characteristics that limit or affect land use and management are identified and soils are rated according to limitations, capability, suitability, and/or potential. Interpretations include relationships of soils to natural plant communities for management of rangelands and croplands.

Section III - Conservation Management Systems

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This section provides information for developing Resource Management Systems (RMS's) to prevent or treat problems associated with soil, water, air, and related plant and animal resources. It contains quality criteria and minimum requirement for RMS's. Guidance is also provided for developing Acceptable Management Systems (AMS's) when economic, social, or cultural constraints prohibit RMS development. This section describes the resource

considerations and their acceptable levels of quality criteria. All conservation planning assistance provided to resource users will be directed toward achieving the objective of natural resource protection that prevents degradation and permits sustainable use.

Section IV - Practice Standards and Specifications

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This section describes the standards and specifications for conservation practices used in the field office. Practice standards establish the minimum level of acceptable quality for planning, designing, installing, operating, and maintaining conservation practices.

Practice specifications describe the technical requirements necessary to install a practice to function properly.

Section V - Conservation Effects

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The information in this section forms the basis for formulating and evaluating Conservation Management Systems that are responsive to resource concerns. The data applies to all NRCS programs and is dependent upon the conservation planning disciplines for input.

Conservation Effects for Decision Making (CED) with qualified or narratively described effects for each of the listed resources are in this section. Case studies identifying and documenting management systems are also included here.

Updating of the NE-FOTG

Updating of the NE-FOTG shall be done in accordance with the procedures outlined in General Manual (GM), Part 401 and associated Nebraska GM supplements.

Technical Guide Notices Title 450 are used to transmit new materials, supplements, and revisions to the NE-FOTG. The Directive Tabulation Sheet located immediately behind this General Information is used to tract the NE-FOTG notices.

Record the following information for each Technical Guide Notice received:

- Notice Number (These should be consecutive.)
- Issue Date.
- Section(s) and page number(s) affected by the change.
- Initials of person filing the notice.

Attachments to the Technical Guide Notice are to be filed in accordance with the instructions contained in the notice. The Technical Guide Notice may be destroyed when the instructions and required actions have been completed.

GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING PARTS I AND II OF THE FIELD OFFICE TECHNICAL GUIDE CHANGE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

Rather than completing suggested wording/text changes in part I of the Transmittal Sheet, there are two options to make proposed changes direct to the appropriate pages of the FOTG, using method I or method II. When either of these methods are used for completing part I of the transmittal sheet, a reference must be made in part to the Microsoft Word UNIX file or to the attached FOTG pages which edits are made on. Part II of the Transmittal Sheet also needs to be completed. Thorough documentation and adequate supporting data for the proposed FOTG changes will need to be included in part II.

ALTERNATIVE METHODS FOR COMPLETING PART I OF FOTG CHANGE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

METHOD I. Direct edits to Microsoft Word FOTG files.

a) Request file of appropriate FOTG section/ pages/standard/specification etc. from the FOTG Coordinator in the State Office Resources Conservation section. This request can be via e-mail or normal correspondence. E-mail requests should be sent to the FOTG Coordinator. Click on Tools, click on track changes, click on highlight changes and then click all boxes.

METHOD II. Part I of the FOTG Change Transmittal Sheet should include suggested updates. Include with this transmittal a photocopy of the appropriate FOTG pages, with suggested edits marked in red. Included for your use is a blank copy of the Field Office Technical Guide Change Transmittal Sheet. The transmittal sheet and attached FOTG pages should be sent to the Resource Conservationist or State Resource Conservationist.

Reference GM-450, NE Amendment 6, August 2003 for additional information.