

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

The process of using monitoring, evaluation, and experimentation to provide information to adjust resource management decisions as needed. Adaptive management is closely linked to planning step nine and is essential for continuous improvement of the resource base.

AIR CONDITION

An NRCS air resource consideration that includes air temperature, air movement, and humidity.

AIR QUALITY

An NRCS air resource consideration that includes airborne soil and smoke particulates that can cause safety related problems, machinery and structure damage, health problems, deposition of airborne sediment in water conveyances, airborne chemical drift, odors, and fungi, molds, and pollen.

AGRICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT (AEM)

The Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Program helps farmers meet economic challenges and address environmental concerns while complying with regulatory requirements and maintaining the viability of their farm operations. (See: New York State Consolidated Laws – Agriculture and Markets – Article 11-A, Sections 150 – 151-i).

ALTERNATIVE CONSERVATION SYSTEMS (ACS)

A conservation system for treating sheet, rill, wind, and ephemeral gully erosion on highly erodible land that is documented in the FOTG and which achieves a substantial reduction in soil loss rates. This term applies 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, the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, and the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002.

ALTERNATIVE SYSTEM

A conservation system that is presented to a client during the planning process as one of multiple alternatives to address resource problems/opportunities. When a client decides

which of the offered alternative systems will be implemented, the selected alternative becomes the planned system.

ALTERNATIVES

A set of one or more options provided to the client to solve resource problems or address opportunities and achieve proper management of the resources.

ANIMAL FEEDING OPERATION

Animal Feeding Operations (AFOs) are agricultural operations where animals are kept and raised in confined situations. AFOs generally congregate animals, feed, manure, dead animals, and production operations on a small land area. A facility is an animal feeding operation (AFO) if animals are stabled/confined, or fed/maintained, for 45 days or more within any 12-month period, and the facility does not produce any crops, vegetation or forage growth. A Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) is an AFO which:

- (1) Has more than 1,000 animal units (AU), or
- (2) Has 301 to 1,000 AU and wastes are discharged through man-made conveyance or directly into US waters, or
- (3) Is designated a CAFO by the permitting authority on a case-by-case basis.

See: http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/home.cfm?program_id=7 .

APPLICATION

The act of installing planned conservation practices, management measures, and management systems on the land in conformance with planning decisions. Application is the same as implementation but does not include operation and maintenance.

AREAWIDE CONSERVATION PLAN

A plan developed with a client for a watershed or other geographical area defined by the client and stakeholders. The areawide conservation plan addresses all resource problems identified, contains alternative solutions that meet the minimum quality criteria for each resource, and addresses applicable laws and regulations.

ASSISTANCE NOTES

Notes maintained by planners in the case file for each individual client receiving planning and implementation assistance. These notes are to be a concise, factual, and chronological narrative of significant conservation activities, and may summarize progress in planning and implementation.

BASIC CONSERVATION SYSTEM (BCS)

An erosion control system for treating sheet, rill, wind, and ephemeral gully erosion on highly erodible land. A BCS may be a component of a Resource Management System (RMS). The BCS must achieve the soil loss tolerance requirements for the principal soil it is designed to protect and be documented in the FOTG. This term applies 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, the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, and the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002.

BENCHMARK CONDITION

The present condition or situation that is used as a point of reference to measure change in resource conditions resulting from conservation treatment. In addition to the benchmark condition, other points of reference are sometimes used for discussion and comparison purposes, especially in an areawide conservation planning situation, *i.e.*, forecasting the resource conditions expected at some point in the future by maintaining current levels of resource management and treatment.

BENCHMARK NARRATIVE

A written statement of the benchmark condition. The narrative includes a description of the current conditions, crops, soils, major resource problems, etc. It includes conservation practices that meet NRCS standards and those that do not. For areawide conservation plans the narrative also includes information on future conditions if the problems are not treated.

BENCHMARK PRACTICES

Existing conservation practices included in the current management system for the planning unit. These practices meet NRCS standards and specifications.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICE (BMP)

An Environmental Protection Agency term used in water quality activities that may use NRCS technical assistance in planning and implementation. A BMP is a practice, or combination of practices, determined by a state or other agency to be the most effective and practicable (including technological, economic, and institutional considerations) means of reducing the amount of pollution from non-point sources to a level compatible with water quality goals.

BREAK-EVEN ANALYSIS

Estimates target values that would just cover the costs of production (*i.e.*, “break-even”). For example, a client may want to know what the “break-even” yield is, given the cost of production and an expected price per unit of production. Break-even yield = (Total cost per acre)/(Price per bushel). Alternatively, a client may want to know at what price he or she will cover the costs of production given a yield. Break-even price = (Total cost per acre)/(Yield per acre).

CASE FILE

The record of resource information, decisions, and technical assistance for a specific client. A case file is established and maintained in the NRCS field office for each client where NRCS is providing continuing technical assistance on a planning unit. The case file will be maintained electronically. Information not amenable to electronic format will be maintained in hard copy under the client’s name.

CLIENT

An individual, group, or unit of government that is the recipient of NRCS technical assistance. Examples of NRCS clients are:

- (1) An owner, manager, or partner who is primarily responsible for the business entity in its dealings with NRCS; or
- (2) The group or local sponsoring organization or federal official responsible for fulfilling requirements or exercising judgments consistent with law, Executive Order, or established federal policy. Examples of clients include persons, groups, Tribes, corporations, organizations, conservation districts, and units of government.

COMMON RESOURCE AREAS

A geographical area where resource concerns, problems, and treatment needs are similar. Landscape conditions, soil, climate, human considerations, and other natural resource information is used to determine the geographical boundaries of the common resource area.

COMMUNITY

A particular locality, generally smaller than a county, in which people share concerns and responsibility for (potential impact on) soil, water, and related resources.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A plan for an area under the jurisdiction of a unit of government that may include, but is not limited to, policies, goals, and interrelated plans for private and public land use, transportation systems, community facilities, and capital improvements. The plan represents the decisions of local people as expressed through units of government. This type of plan may also be called a general plan, master plan, or a regional development plan.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

A continuing process by a unit of government that includes preparation of a comprehensive plan and adoption of the administrative and regulatory measures to implement and maintain the plan. The Intergovernmental Cooperation Act of 1968 (Public Law 90-577), section 109, states: Comprehensive Planning includes the following to the extent directly related to area needs or needs of a unit of general local government:

- (1) Preparation as a guide for governmental policies and action, of general plans with respect to:
 - (a) pattern and intensity of land use;
 - (a) provision of public facilities (including transportation facilities) other government services; and
 - (a) effective development and utilization of human and natural resources.
- (2) Long-range physical and fiscal plans for such actions.
- (3) Programming of capital improvements and other major expenditures based on a determination of relative urgency, together with definitive financing plans for such expenditures in the earlier years of the program.
- (4) Coordination of all related plans and activities of the state and local governments and agencies concerned.
- (5) Preparation of regulatory and administrative measures in support of the foregoing.

CONCENTRATED ANIMAL FEEDING OPERATION

See Animal Feeding Operation.

CONDITIONAL USE (SPECIAL EXCEPTION USE)

A use of land or structures that is permitted only if special conditions described in a zoning ordinance or permit allow.

CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE NOTES

Information kept by NRCS personnel in the case file for each individual, group, and unit of government receiving planning and implementation assistance. These notes are to be a concise, factual, and chronological narrative of significant conservation activities, and summarize progress in planning and implementation (including any other pertinent data relevant to the planner).

CONSERVATION DISTRICT COOPERATOR

Any client who has entered into a working arrangement or cooperative agreement with a conservation district to work together in planning and carrying out resource use, development, and conservation on a specific land area.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Agreements, understandings, or arrangements between Resource Conservation District governing bodies and individuals, groups, and units of government establishing procedures by which NRCS and other assistance from and through the district will be made available.

CONSERVATION EFFECTS PROCESS

A process that supports the NRCS planning process. It uses worksheets, client case studies, and other technologies to document and estimate effects of benchmark systems and resource management systems, evaluate impacts, and gauge advantages and disadvantages to help the end user make informed conservation decisions.

CONSERVATION IMPACTS

The differences between anticipated effects of treatments in comparison to existing or benchmark conditions. Differences may be expressed in narrative, quantitative, or visual format, or reflected by conservation decisions and behavior.

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

A generic term that includes any combination of conservation practices and management that achieves a level of treatment of natural resources specified by criteria contained in the FOTG, such as a resource management system, an acceptable management system or other program-designated system.

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT UNIT (CMU)

A field, group of fields, or other land units of the same land use and having similar treatment needs and planned management. CMU is a grouping by the planner to simplify planning activities and facilitate development of resource management systems. A CMU has definite boundaries, such as fence, drainage, vegetation, topography, soil lines, or land use.

CONSERVATION PLAN

A record of the client's decisions and supporting information, for treatment of a unit of land or water as a result of the planning process, that meets FOTG quality criteria for each natural resource (soil, water, air, plants, and animals) and takes into account economic and social considerations. The plan describes the schedule of operations and activities needed to solve identified natural resource problems, and take advantage of opportunities, at a resource management system level. The needs of the client, the resources, and federal, state, and local requirements will be met.

CONSERVATION PLANNING

The activity of NRCS and others in helping a client use the planning process, which is intended to result in a conservation plan or an areawide conservation plan.

CONSERVATION PRACTICE

A specific treatment, such as a structural or vegetative measure, or management technique, commonly used to meet specific needs in planning and implementing conservation, for which standards and specifications have been developed. Conservation practices are contained in the FOTG, Section IV, which is based on the National Handbook of Conservation Practices (NHCP).

CONSERVATION PRACTICES PHYSICAL EFFECTS (CPPE) MATRIX

The matrix in the FOTG, Section V, that gives the physical effects of many conservation practices on soil, water, air, plants, and animals.

CONSERVATION SYSTEM

A combination of conservation practices and resource management for the treatment of soil, water, air, plant, and/or animal resource concerns.

CONSERVATION TREATMENT

Any and all conservation practices, management measures or actions, works of improvement, and legislative actions that have the purpose of solving or reducing the severity of natural resource use problems.

CONSERVATION TREATMENT UNIT (CTU)

A field, a group of fields, or other units of land and/or water with similar resource use problems, opportunities, uses, and conservation treatment needs. A CTU is the unit of land and/or water, including the soil root zone, that will be used as a basis for setting objectives and for planning and applying conservation treatments.

COORDINATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (CRM)

A specific application of the planning process, that may include a variety of clients, stakeholders, organizations, agencies, and others, and a variety of land ownership, that can address a multitude of resource or resource related problems, opportunities, or concerns. CRM is frequently accomplished through “consensus” involving participants that may or may not be landowners or users, or have decisionmaking authority for the planning area involved. The planning area encompasses the geographical area defined by the parties involved in the CRM effort.

CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION (CCE)

Cornell Cooperative Extension is the arm of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University that helps build partnerships and coalitions with individuals, communities, organizations, government agencies, and businesses around issues of mutual concern.

COST-RETURN ANALYSIS

A cost-return analysis compares the costs and returns (revenue) of agricultural enterprises.

COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (COG)/REGIONAL COUNCIL

A voluntary or legislatively created association of local governments represented predominantly by elected officials in a metropolitan or multiple government area for the purpose of identifying areawide problems and solutions, based on cooperation, coordination, and planning.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Evidence of activities and accomplishments of people including remnants of past cultures and some unique resources associated with present day cultures. The most common ones are sites, buildings, structures, and objects that have scientific, historical, archaeological, and cultural value. NRCS identifies such resources during planning, determines their significance according to the National Register of Historic Places criteria (420-GM, Part 401), avoids adverse effects to them, and protects and enhances them.

DECISIONMAKER

An individual, group, or unit of government, or other entity that has the authority by ownership, position, office, delegation, or otherwise to decide on a course of action.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION (DEC)

The mission of the department (§ 1-0101 - New York State Environmental Conservation Law) is to "conserve, improve, and protect its natural resources and environment, and control water, land and air pollution, in order to enhance the health, safety and welfare of the people of the state and their overall economic and social well being." See: <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dpae/mission.html> .

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION

Desired future condition is a quantitative or qualitative expression of an ecological, economic, or social condition one is attempting to achieve. It is the goal to compare with the predicted outcomes of alternative implementation options. A desired future condition should include at least one indicator and a target value for each indicator in order to quantify or qualify the condition.

ECOLOGICAL SYSTEM

The organization and interactions of communities of living things, including humans, together with the chemical and physical factors in their environment.

EFFECTS

The anticipated or experienced results of applying one or more conservation treatments on a planning unit in a particular resource setting. They include both on-site and off-site results of applied conservation treatments. They are measures of a level of outcome and may be expressed in ecological, economic, or social terms.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)

A concise public document required under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) that briefly provides sufficient evidence and analysis of the impacts of proposed actions on soil, water, air, plant and animal resources, to determine whether to prepare a more comprehensive environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) (190-GM, 410.4 (b)).

ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION (EE)

A concurrent part of the planning process in which the potential long-term and short-term impacts of an action on people, their physical or social surroundings, and nature are evaluated and alternative actions explored.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)

A document detailing the environmental impact of a proposed law, construction project, or other major action that may significantly affect the quality of the environment. An EIS is required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) whenever there is a major Federal undertaking. In New York State, an EIS is required under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR). See: <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dcs/seqr/index.html> .

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Requires, per Executive Order 12898, that no program, procedure, or activity be carried out that has disproportionately adverse human health or environmental effects on minority or low income populations.

ESSENTIAL PRACTICE

A practice that singly, or in combination with other practices or management measures or actions, is required to solve the identified resource problems to the level established in the FOTG to meet RMS quality criteria, or that is required for a system to meet its intended purposes.

FACILITATING PRACTICE

A conservation practice that facilitates management or the function of another practice, or both, but does not achieve the desired effects on its own. Example: A fence is a facilitating practice for prescribed grazing. Prescribed grazing helps improve forage for livestock.

FARM SERVICE AGENCY (FSA)

The agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that assists in stabilizing farm income, helping farmers to conserve land and water resources, providing credit to farmers and ranchers, and helping farm operations recover from the effects of natural disasters.

FIELD

A part of a farm that is separated from the balance by a management practice or some other sort of boundary.

FIELD OFFICE TECHNICAL GUIDE (FOTG)

The official NRCS guidelines, criteria, and standards for planning and applying conservation treatments. The document and its associated reference material contain technical information, important conservation considerations for each natural resource, quality criteria for treatment of resource concerns and opportunities, and NRCS practice standards for conservation of soil, water, air, plant and animal resources. NRCS field office employees and decisionmakers use the FOTG in resource conservation planning and implementation (450-GM, Part 401).

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

A document indicating that no significant environmental impact will occur with a proposed activity.

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE (FWS)

An agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior. Their mission is to work with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

FOLLOW-UP

The act of maintaining contact with clients/decisionmakers to provide timely assistance in implementing decisions, keeping current with new technology, encouraging implementation, updating objectives and decisions in a conservation plan, and determining the nature and level of conservation effects experienced.

FOREST LAND

Land on which the primary vegetation is forest (climax, natural, or introduced plant community) and use is primarily for the production of wood products.

FUTURE WITHOUT TREATMENT OR FUTURE PROJECTED CONDITION

The ecological, economic, or social condition(s) that is expected to exist in the future if no change is made in the current use, management, or treatment regarding one or more resources. This is sometimes referred to as the “no action” projection.

GROUP

Two or more decisionmakers who are cooperating to achieve common or mutual conservation objectives to address natural resource or related problems, concerns, or opportunities.

HIGHLY ERODIBLE LAND (HEL)

Land that has an erodibility index of eight (8) or more. The erodibility index (EI) is calculated as using Universal Soil Loss Equation (not RUSLE) factors as follows:

$$\frac{R \cdot K \cdot LS}{T}$$

Where: R = Rainfall Factor
K = Soil Erodibility Factor
LS = Slope %-Length Factor
T = Tolerable Soil Loss in tons/acre/year.

HUMAN CONSIDERATIONS

The potential social, economic and cultural resource factors that should be considered in the conservation planning process. A partial listing of human considerations, social and economic, are included in Figure 1 of this handbook.

HYDROLOGIC UNIT (HU)

A drainage basin or watershed that collects and discharges its surface stream flow through one outlet or mouth, typically implying a topographic divide. Also, a term used to reference specific geographic delineations made by federal agencies (such as NRCS, USFS & USGS), based on surface drainage characteristics.

HYDROLOGIC UNIT CODE

A unique identification code that is assigned to watersheds. The standard eleven-(11) digit code currently used in New York is made up of the following:

Example: 02020003.010 (reading from left to right):

Digit Set	Code
1 (2 digits)	Region
2 (2 digits)	Subregion
3 (2 digits)	Accounting Unit
4 (2 digits)	Cataloging Unit
5 (3 digits)	Watershed Unit

IMPACTS

The difference between the anticipated effects of alternative treatment in comparison to existing or benchmark condition effects. Differences may be expressed by narrative, quantitative, visual, or other means. Impacts are used as a basis for making informed conservation decisions.

IMPLEMENTATION

The act of installing planned conservation treatment and management measures that are documented in plans and case files. Includes enacting measures called for in areawide conservation plans, such as flood plain zoning, and sediment and erosion control ordinances.

INDICATOR

The description or measurements of a resource concern that, when observed periodically, indicates or demonstrates trends. Directly linked to indicators are target values which identify a specific quantitative or qualitative estimate for the desired state of the resource concern.

INTERNAL RATE OF RETURN

A financial analysis tool that estimates the interest rate which would make the present value of a stream of net cash revenues equal to zero. The resulting interest rate can be compared to the internal rate of returns of other investment alternatives to determine the alternative with the highest rate of return.

INVENTORY AND EVALUATION (I&E)

The process of systematically inventorying and evaluating the resource conditions on a conservation treatment unit. This includes an intensive assessment of the soil, water, air, plant, animal resources and the human social concerns/conditions unique to the planning unit and local area.

LAND COVER

A categorization of a specified unit of land or water based on the primary kind of cover on the surface.

LAND KIND

A categorization of a specified unit of land or water that describes the climax or pristine condition of the earth's surface prior to human alteration.

LAND UNIT

Any area of land that is of concern in the planning process.

LAND USE

A term used by NRCS to identify the intent of the client with regard to the purpose to which a land unit is to be put. The two designations of land use are the official NRCS designation, and the client land use designation agreed-to by the client and planner. The accepted NRCS land use designations are:

CROP

Land used primarily for the production of field crops or orchard crops alone or in association with sod crops.

FOREST

Land on which the primary vegetation is forest (climax, natural, or introduced plant community) and use is primarily for production of wood products.

GRAZED FOREST (NOT USED IN NEW YORK)

Forest land that produces understory vegetation that is used for the production of livestock.

GRAZED RANGE (NOT USED IN NEW YORK)

Rangeland that is used primarily for the production of domestic livestock. Includes native plant communities and those seeded to native or introduced species, or naturalized by introduced species, that are ecologically managed using range management principles.

HAY

Land on which perennial plants are managed and harvested for hay. (Annual plants planted for hay, and forage crops in short-term rotation are cropland.)

HEADQUARTERS

Land used for dwellings, barns, pens, corrals, or other facilities used in connection with farm and ranch operations.

MINED

Land on which the soil has been disturbed by the mining of minerals, or subsurface deposits (sand, gravel, bedrock).

NATIVE OR NATURALIZED PASTURE (NOT USED IN NEW YORK)

Forest land that is used primarily for the production of forage for grazing by livestock rather than for the production of wood products. Overstory trees are removed or managed to promote the native or introduced understory vegetation occurring on the site. This vegetation is managed for its forage value using grazing management principles.

NATURAL AREA

Land or water used for the preservation, protection, and observation of the existing resources, archaeological or historical interpretation, resource interpretation, or for aesthetic value. Legislation or other authorities may officially designate some of these areas.

PASTURE

Grazing lands composed of introduced or domesticated native forage species that are used primarily for the production of domestic livestock. They receive periodic renovation and/or cultural treatments, such as tillage, fertilization, mowing, weed control, and may be irrigated. They are not in rotation with crops.

RECREATION

Land and water used and managed for recreational purposes.

URBAN

Land occupied by buildings and related facilities used for residences, industrial sites, institutional sites, public highways, airports, and similar uses associated with towns and cities.

WATER

A geographic area whose dominant characteristic is open water, but which may include a large proportion of intermingled land, including coastal marshlands.

WATERSHED PROTECTION

Land managed and used specifically for water production into streams, rivers, lakes, and aquifers.

WILDLIFE

Land or water used, protected, and managed primarily as habitat for wildlife.

LAND EVALUATION AND SITE ASSESSMENT (LESA)

A system developed by USDA NRCS to determine the quality of land for agricultural uses and to assess sites or land areas for their agricultural viability.

LAND OR WATER USE

A categorization of a specified unit of land or water that describes the primary goods or services for which the area is to be treated and managed. The occupation or reservation of a land or water area for a human activity or a defined purpose. More than one use for a specific unit of land or water may be appropriate. See multiple use.

LANDSCAPE QUALITY

A composite of those landscape conditions and perceived values that provide diverse and pleasant surroundings for human use and appreciation. Recognized components of landscape quality include visual resource, landscape use, viewscape, and visibility.

LEAST-COST ANALYSIS (COST-EFFECTIVENESS)

Least-cost analysis identifies the least costly alternative (compared to all other alternatives), with the stipulation that all alternatives satisfy the client's objective.

LOCALLY LED CONSERVATION

A concept whereby local people assess their natural resource conditions and needs, set goals, identify programs and other resources to solve those needs, develop proposals and recommendations, implement solutions, and measure their success.

LOW INITIAL COST STRUCTURES

Structures for treating resource problems that are specifically designed for low initial cost for certain situations, recognizing that the operation and maintenance costs may be higher than those for conventional structures.

MANAGEMENT MEASURE

One or more specific actions that are not conservation practice but that have the effect of alleviating problems or improving the treatment of the resources. These actions are not conservation practices described in the FOTG, Section IV.

[SOIL] MAP UNIT

A collection of areas defined and named the same in terms of their soil components or miscellaneous areas, or both.

MULTIPLE USE

Treating and managing a single area for two or more complementary or compatible uses that occur concurrently or consecutively. Examples: (a) land used for wood and wildlife production; (b) water areas used for flood control, recreation, and wildlife production; (c) land used for livestock grazing and wildlife habitat.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA)

The 1970 Act that requires federal agencies to consider the effects on the environment of proposed federal actions. This Act established the requirement for conducting environmental evaluations and for the preparation of environmental assessments and environmental impact statements.

NATURAL RESOURCE

Any naturally occurring resource needed by an organism, population, or ecological system. NRCS applies this term to soil, water, air, plants, and animals.

NATIONAL SOILS INFORMATION SYSTEM (NASIS)

The National Soils Information System integrates soil survey information, operations, and management. It divides soil survey data into four major categories: (1) map unit records, (2) geographic areas, (3) point characteristics, and (4) standards, criteria, and guidelines. The system also includes ancillary tools, functions, and records to assure the security, integrity, and utility of the soil survey data.

NATIVE PASTURE

Land that originally had a climax plant community of forage species is now being primarily used for grazing of native and/or introduced species. Range management principles and concerns are used to meet the resource needs and the decisionmaker's objectives.

NATURAL RESOURCE

Any naturally occurring resource needed by an organism, population, or ecosystem. NRCS applies this term to soil, water, air, plants, and animals. This is the same as resource base.

NET PRESENT VALUE ANALYSIS

Net present value analysis converts future flows of benefits and costs to the present, thus allowing for comparisons of alternatives on a common time basis.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives are quantitative or qualitative statements of desired future conditions as determined by the client.

OFF-SITE

Locations outside the area on which conservation treatment is being considered. Also refers to areas outside the planning unit that should be considered for potential impacts.

ON-SITE

Locations within the area on which conservation treatment is being considered.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

That phase of operation of conservation practices or systems that involves the proper use and upkeep of the installations to assure that purpose and efficacy goals are attained.

OPERATIONAL PLANS/IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES/REGULATIONS

These terms describe the administrative and legislative actions taken by units of government to carry out or implement the decisions that were made in the comprehensive plan. Such actions are generally those that are outlined in paragraphs (c), (d), and (e) of the definition of comprehensive planning. Examples of these actions include capital improvements program, financing plans for specific functions, intergovernmental coordinating committees, zoning and subdivision regulations, and building and housing codes.

PARTIAL BUDGETING

Partial budgeting analysis is used to analyze only the change in costs and returns associated with the agricultural enterprise affected by the adoption of proposed alternatives.

PASTURELAND

Land that is used for production of forage crops for livestock using agronomic practices such as regular fertilizer applications, liming, and weed control in addition to grazing management.

PLAN MAP

An aerial photograph or sketch of a land area developed during the planning process that shows property boundaries, land unit boundaries, physical features, location of planned and applied practices, and other features that are useful to the client in plan implementation.

PLAN REVISION

Action needed as a result of significant changes in one or more of the conservation systems defined in the conservation plan. This may be caused by changes in land use, changes in technology, changes in the set of practices included in the system, a change in the land units treated by the system, etc. The product is a revised plan.

PLANNED SYSTEM

The conservation system selected for implementation and described in the plan document.

PLANNER

A person, qualified by training and experience, who effectively assists the client in completing the planning process.

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

NRCS technical assistance activities with clients and decisionmakers on opportunities and problems dealing with use, development, and conservation of soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources. Assistance includes developing plans with individuals, helping develop resource inventories, interpretations, (and assisting in their evaluation, analysis, and use), and assistance to representatives of units of government to develop and carry out resource plans for communities, areas, or regions. Planning and implementation assistance may be given for any non-Federal lands and, under certain conditions, for Federal lands.

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

A flexible continuing process of identifying problems and opportunities, determining objectives, inventorying resources, analyzing resource information, and developing and evaluating alternatives to help decisionmakers make and implement decisions for the management of their natural resources.

PLANNING PROCESS

The three-phase, nine-step process used by NRCS to help clients plan and apply conservation treatments or make land use and treatment decisions.

PLANNING STANDARD

Identifies the minimum quality level to which each step in the planning process must be carried out in order to help the client develop a successful plan. The standard establishes the condition expected to exist at the successful completion of each planning step.

PLANNING UNIT

A planning unit is generally the entire operating unit, but can be a group, or groups, of fields with similar land use and management (see Conservation Management Unit) in which the decision has been made to initiate the planning process. A field is normally the smallest increment for planning resource management systems or practices. However, in rare instances a subfield (a field within a field - for example, the drainage area into a waterway and the outlet area below the waterway) may be appropriate. The planning unit must be large enough to encompass the area that influences, and the area that is directly impacted by, the resource management system or practice being planned.

POLLUTANT

Any introduced substance that limits the use of a resource for a specific purpose.

PRACTICE

Same as Conservation practice.

PRACTICE NARRATIVE

A brief non-technical description of the planned practice.

PRIORITIES

A method of distributing NRCS resources to deal with identified problem areas.

PROGRESSIVE PLANNING

The planning process is progressive when a client is ready, willing, and able to make and implement some, but not all of the decisions necessary to achieve an RMS level of management. The rate of progress in moving to an RMS level will depend on the client's desires and constraints. Some situations make it difficult for people to be able to make all of the needed decisions at one time. The rate of progress in planning will depend on the decisionmaker's level of understanding, commitment to resource improvement, and financial, and other personal capabilities.

PROJECT

Any undertaking that will likely require a plan to accomplish, and that has a definite beginning and ending.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

An integral part of a planning or major decisionmaking process [areawide planning] which provides opportunities for the public to be involved in an interchange of data and ideas. It is required by the National Environmental Policy Act [190-GM, 410 9 (d), 40 CFR part 1500-1508, and 400-GM Part 400].

QUALITY CRITERIA

A quantitative or qualitative statement of a treatment level required to achieve an RMS for identified resource considerations for a particular land area. It is established in accordance with local, state, and federal programs and regulations in consideration of ecological, economic, and social effects.

RECORD OF COOPERATOR DECISIONS

A part of the conservation plan and case file documents that contains the decisions for the CMU(s).

RECORD OF DECISIONS

A concise written rationale by the responsible Federal Official regarding implementation of a proposed action requiring an Environmental Impact Statement.

RESOURCE CONSIDERATION / RESOURCE CONCERN

Elements of the natural resources that may be sensitive to change by natural forces or human activity. These elements directly impact the conservation planning process. A comprehensive list of resource elements is found on the Conservation Practice Physical Effects matrices in the FOTG.

REGION

A relatively large land area characterized by similar climatic, physical, economic, and social conditions. Its resource opportunities and problems may also be similar. A region may include parts or all of one or more states.

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

Making known to the Resource Conservation District or NRCS a need or desire for technical or financial assistance.

RESOURCE BASE

Soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources. This is the same as natural resources.

RESOURCE CONDITIONS

A definable, distinct set of resource conditions, such as cover, land and water uses, topography, climate zones, or aquifer recharge; and a distinct set of social, cultural, and/or economic characteristics that establish the basis for appropriate conservation management systems.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (RMS)

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.

RESOURCE PLANNING

The act of formulating a plan of action to correct a public or community problem or to take advantage of an opportunity. Technical assistance for resource planning usually requires an interdisciplinary team with specialized expertise to address the problems.

RESOURCE PROBLEM

The condition related to one or more resources that does not meet the minimum acceptable condition levels as established by resource quality criteria shown in the FOTG, Section III.

RESOURCE SETTING

A description of ecological characteristics, land use, and management important for comparison of resource information among planning units. Such background information also provides better understanding of the relative magnitude of resource problems. An adequate description may include such information as dominant soils, range sites, important topographic or geomorphic characteristics, Major Land Resource Area, precipitation patterns, seasonal land use, climate, current resource conditions, type of operation, and relationships to streams, lakes, and aquifers.

REVISED PLAN

A conservation plan or areawide conservation plan that has been changed by mutual agreement of NRCS and the client to the extent that a new document needs to be generated to show changes in land unit boundaries, resource management systems, and type of enterprise.

RISK ANALYSIS

A process for analyzing a selected course of action to determine risks expected from carrying out a course of action.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk management is the process of identifying potential risks from various courses of action or non-action, gathering pertinent information relative to the risk, and then taking appropriate action to eliminate or minimize the risk as much as possible.

RIVER BASIN

A river basin is large watershed of a regional scale in which all of the surface and subsurface water drains to the outlet of a major river. Examples include the Hudson River and Oswego River Basins in New York as well as the Mississippi River Basin in the central United States.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The utilization, protection, and development of natural, cultural, and human resources which affect the economic vitality, social well-being, or local management capacities of small towns, villages, and the countryside; also included are larger communities whose economic base depends on mining, forestry, agriculture, fishing, tourism, or recreation.

SCOPING

Scoping is the early, up-front and open process to determine the extent of the significant issues, such as resource problems and concerns, regulatory requirements, etc., to be addressed in the planning process.

SITE-SPECIFIC PRACTICE EFFECT

The expected effect that a particular conservation practice has on defined resource problems/opportunities in a site-specific situation. This data represents the planner's refinement of more general effects shown in the CPPE Matrix in the FOTG, Section V.

SOIL DESCRIPTION

A listing of soil properties, both site and profile, specific to a geographical location.

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT (SWCD)

A subdivision of a state, Indian Tribe, or territory, organized pursuant to the state soil conservation district law, as amended, or Tribal law. They may be called soil conservation districts, soil and water conservation districts, resource conservation districts, land conservation committees, natural resource districts, etc.

SOIL INTERPRETATIONS

Soil interpretations provide users of soil survey information with predictions of soil behavior to help in the development of reasonable and effective alternatives for the use and management of soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources.

SOIL MAP UNIT

An area of the landscape shown on a soil map which consists of one or more soils.

SOIL, WATER, AIR, PLANT, AND ANIMAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION

The development, use, and management of soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources in a way that will restore, enhance, protect, or maintain their quality and quantity for the benefit of people and their environment now and in the future.

STAKEHOLDER

An individual or group of clients that may or may not be decisionmakers and who have an interest in or may be impacted by actions recommended through application of the planning process.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Sustainable agriculture is a way of practicing agriculture which seeks to optimize skills and technology to achieve long-term stability of the agricultural enterprise, environmental protection, and consumer safety. It is achieved through management strategies which help the producer select hybrids and varieties, soil conserving cultural practices, soil fertility programs, and pest management programs. The goal of sustainable agriculture is to minimize adverse impacts to the immediate and off-farm environments while providing a sustained level of production and profit. Sound resource conservation is an integral part of the means to achieve sustainable agriculture.

SYSTEM

See Conservation System.

SYSTEM NARRATIVE

A description of the existing, proposed, or planned conservation practices and management measures associated with specific land units for a client and business. The description defines how well the system meets quality criteria, if at all. Alternative, planned, and completed systems should meet quality criteria specified in the FOTG. Benchmark systems may not meet FOTG specifications; deficiencies can be noted in the description and system evaluation records.

TARGET VALUE

Identifies a specific value to be used in conjunction with an indicator.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Help provided by NRCS and employees of other entities or agencies under the technical supervision of NRCS, to clients and decisionmakers on opportunities, potentials, and problems related to natural resource use. Technical assistance may include program formulation, planning, application, and maintenance.

TECHNICAL NOTE

See "Conservation Assistance Note"

UNIT OF GOVERNMENT

A state or territorial government, together with its planning commissions, boards, agencies, and representatives, or a municipality, county, town, parish, or other political subdivision of a state or territory, including its planning commissions, boards and agencies having planning responsibility and concern over lands that it may or may not directly own or control.

URBAN AREA

An area predominantly occupied by manmade structures used for residential, commercial, and industrial purposes. The Bureau of the Census defines communities over 2,500 population and urbanized areas as urban areas.

VALUES

Ideals, customs, attitudes, and beliefs used to judge the impacts of conservation treatments as favorable or unfavorable. Includes individual client values as well as collective values of groups and society as a whole.

WALK-IN

A recipient of information that does not result in the development of a case file and practices applied to the land. Walk-ins include people who visit or call the field office for information or assistance.

WATERSHED

A watershed is the area of land where all of the water that is under it or drains off of it goes into the same place, point of drainage, or outlet.

WETLAND

An area that has a predominance of hydric soils and that is inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and under normal circumstances does support, a prevalence of hydrophytic vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions, except lands in Alaska identified as having a high potential for agricultural development and a predominance of permafrost soils.

WOODLAND

See “Forestland”

ZONING ORDINANCE

An ordinance to control the type of use and intensity of development of land and structures thereby protecting the public health, safety, and general welfare. This authority is usually delegated to local governments. The ordinance consists of both a map and text. The map indicates the geographic area included in different zones and the text describes the regulations, some of which will vary from zone to zone, whereas others apply to the entire area covered.