

CONTENTS OF THE NRCS SOUTH DAKOTA TECHNICAL GUIDE

Technical guides are the primary technical references for NRCS. They contain technical information about the conservation of soil, water, air, and related plant and animal resources.

Technical guides used in each field office are localized so that they apply specifically to the geographic area for which they are prepared. These documents are referred to as South Dakota Technical Guides (SDTGs). The SDTG is maintained in each NRCS field office as a compilation of technical knowledge, resource data references and conservation practice standards.

Appropriate parts of the SDTGs are automated as databases, computer programs, and other electronic-based materials such as those included in these web pages.

Section I - General Resource References

In this section you will find general state maps, descriptions of Major Land Resource Areas, watershed information, and links to NRCS reference manuals and handbooks. This information helps people understand natural resources of the field office service area and in making decisions about resource use and management systems. Section I also contains references or electronic links to researchers, universities, and cooperating agencies, as well as conservation practice costs, agricultural laws and regulations, and computer-based tools used in resource analysis.

Section II – Natural Resource Information

In this section you will find detailed information, data, and interpretations about soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources. The following information is contained in subsections of Section II of the FOTG: Soils Information; Climatic Data; Cultural Resources Information; Threatened and Endangered Species Lists; Ecological Site Descriptions; and Forage Suitability Group Descriptions.

Section III - Resource Management Systems and Quality Criteria

In this section you will find information on NRCS Quality Criteria. Quality Criteria, establish standards for resource conditions that help provide sustained and enhanced use of natural resources.

- ◆ Resource Management Systems (RMS's) address all identified resource concerns at or above the level of sustainability, taking into account human-cultural, economic and social concerns relative to each of the following natural resources for: Soil; Water; Air; Plants; and Animals, plus Humans (SWAPA+H).
- ◆ Sample RMS's that treat resource concerns in the field office service area are maintained in Section III. The practices that make up a system are identified in this section. The guidance documents are the result of documentation of actual field experience, measurable criteria and directions provided in the NRCS - National Planning Procedures Handbook.
- ◆ Quality Criteria for resource treatment at the RMS level are established by NRCS and filed in this section of the FOTG. Criteria are stated in either qualitative or quantitative terms for each resource consideration. Where State and/or local regulations establish more restrictive criteria, those criteria must be used in development of the RMS.

Section IV - Practice Standards and Specifications

In this section you will find the NRCS Conservation Practices. Practice Standards define the practice and where it applies in that field office. Practice standards establish the minimum level of acceptable quality for planning, designing, installing, operating, and maintaining conservation practices. Practice specification guidance, developed by each State and approved by the State Technical Guide Committee, establishes terms and conditions, and documents how the practice standard will be made site-specific.

Section V - Conservation Effects

In this section you will find background information on how Conservation Practices affect each identified resource concern in the state. Conservation effects provide indicators of the impacts conservation practices and systems have on natural and cultural resources. They are based primarily on empirical data and field experience with practices and systems of practices. The effects are listed for each individual practice. When properly planned and applied, systems of conservation practices are generally complimentary and accumulative. Rarely are conservation practice effects opposing or damaging to the natural resources base.

Technical guides provide:

1. Soil interpretations and potential productivity within alternative levels of management intensity and conservation treatment (Section II);
2. Technical information for achieving objectives of the NRCS and decision maker (All sections);
3. Information for interdisciplinary planning for the conservation of soil, water, and related resources (Section III);
4. A basis for identifying resource management system (RMS) options and, when needed, guidance on options and components thereof (Section III);
5. Information on effects of resource management systems, acceptable management systems, and their component practices (Section V);
6. Criteria to evaluate the quality of RMS options and components thereof (Section III);
7. Standards and specifications for conservation practices (Section IV);
8. Information for evaluating the economic feasibility of conservation practices and resource management system options;(Section I)
9. Information for locating and identifying cultural resources and methods to account for their significance (Section II); and
10. Technical material for training employee's, partners and third party vendors (All sections).