

Conservation Planning



The Planning Process

Step 1: Identify Problems and Opportunities

Conservation planning begins by visiting with NRCS to identify natural resource problems, opportunities, and concerns on your land.



Erosion is a common resource concern. Cover crops can reduce the amount of soil carried away by wind and water.



Step 2: Determine Objectives

The conservation plan is based on your farming, ranching, or other land management goals along with your land's unique natural resource features.



Step 3: Inventory Resources

NRCS will inventory your natural resources and their condition. Your knowledge of current and historical land use is a valuable tool.



Step 4: Analyze Resource Data

NRCS will analyze the resource information gathered in Step 3 to clearly define the natural resource conditions, including challenges and potentials.



Step 5: Formulate Alternatives

NRCS will suggest real-life, practical solutions that help to achieve your objectives, solve natural resource concerns, and take advantage of opportunities to improve and protect resource conditions.



High tunnel



No-till farming



Pollinator habitat strip



Livestock water system

NRCS Assistance

NRCS's high quality conservation plans give you, as a land manager, step-by-step recommendations to improve wildlife habitat, pest management, soil health, and yields while reducing energy and input costs. The conservation plan integrates management of the natural resources you rely on with your business objectives. The information gathered in the planning process will help to enhance your decision-making process and provide long-term results benefitting your land and your bottom line.

Conservation plans can help a variety of customers, including farm and ranch operators, non-operating landowners, farm management companies, nonprofit organizations, universities, community co-ops, and others. These customers may be on private land, in urban areas, on tribal lands, have just started farming, farm organic or specialty crops, or have once served in the military.

Talk to your NRCS planner about programs that may help to implement the systems and practices developed through conservation planning. Financial assistance can cover 50 to 75 percent of the cost of a conservation system.

Contact your local NRCS office for assistance.

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Step 6: Evaluate Alternatives

You evaluate the alternatives, with help from NRCS, to determine their effects in addressing your objectives and the natural resource problems and opportunities.



Step 7: Make Decisions

Select the alternative(s) that best suit your land-management goals and the needs of the resources and work with NRCS to schedule the conservation practices.



Step 8: Implement the Plan

Implement the scheduled conservation practices. NRCS will provide you with detailed guidance.



Electric fence facilitates a grazing plan.

Wildlife escape ramp in a stockwater tank.



Precommercial thinning improves forest health and increases plant diversity.

Step 9: Evaluate the Plan

Work with NRCS to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan as it is implemented and adjust as needed.



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