

Part 409 – Conservation Planning Policy

WV409.9(a) – NRCS candidates must:

1. Complete modules 1-5 of the NRCS Conservation Planning Course online at the following web site: <http://www.elearning.nrcs.usda.gov/consplan/start.htm>
2. Complete modules 6-8 in-field training portion of the NRCS Conservation Planning Course within one year of completion of module 1-5.
3. Each planner will develop independently three acceptable conservation plans (Module 9) within 6 months of completion of Modules 1-8.

WV409.9(b)

West Virginia NRCS will use Individual Development Plan (IDP) or Exhibit 1 – Skill Assessment to help determine candidates' knowledge, skills and abilities.

WV409.9(b)(2)

Exhibit 3 – Skills to Apply the Conservation Planning Process will be used to document proficiency.

WV409.9(b)(4)

Exhibit 4 – Knowledge to Plan/Apply Practices and Engineering Job Approval Authority will be used to document knowledge of standards and specifications.

WV409.9(c)

Each conservation planner must demonstrate the ability to perform independently and proficiently the required abilities, skills and knowledge (ASK) of the planning process prior to issuance of conservation planning certification.

Each planner will be rated for field and farm planning units as defined in the National Planning Procedures Handbook (NPPH). This rating will initially be completed by the SRC when applicants complete Module 9. Succeeding annual ratings will be completed by the employee's immediate line officer (DC or ASTC-FO).

Planners or those that approve plans must meet the KSA to perform independently and proficiently the application of the Nine Step planning process; their ability to plan and implement conservation practices common to their work area; approved erosion prediction technology; knowledge of federal, state and local laws or regulations; skills in using site vulnerability assessment tools and awareness of National Conservation Programs.

WV409.9(c)(1)

The three conservation plans submitted for completion of Module 9 may be a Resource Management System (RMS) and/or progressive plans. Each plan will have a minimum of two land uses such as cropland, pastureland, hayland, forestland, wildlife habitat or animal feeding operation.

WV409.9(c)(2)

To maintain the Certified Conservation Planner designation requires 6 hours of State Conservationist prior approved conservation planning credit annually and one approved conservation plan.

WV409.9(d)(1)(a)

Three initial plans (Module 9) will be submitted to the State Resource Conservationist for acceptance. One of the plans will be selected by the SRC for field review to insure the planning process was used to help develop an individual's conservation plan.

WV409.9(d)(1)(b)

The following positions are delegated to serve as the State Conservationist designee to field review the initial (Module 9) conservation plan: SRC, State Biologist, State Agronomist, State Forester, Area Grassland Specialist, or Area Resource Conservationist.

WV409.9(d)(2)

West Virginia NRCS will use Exhibit 2 – Checklist for Evaluating an Existing Plan as part of the field review.

WV409.9(e)

The list of NRCS Certified Conservation Planners in West Virginia is available from the State Conservationist or is available on the NRCS website (<http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov>).

WV409.9(e)(1)

The State Conservationist will provide approval of acceptable training. Training approval will be based upon topics listed in GM, Title 180.Part 409 3(c)(2).

The process for approval requires prior submission. The following support documentation is required: training title, a narrative of each training component describing the applicability to conservation planning in West Virginia, name of trainer, trainer's title, trainer's agency/organization/business, hours of training, date of training and location of training. Training courses for Nutrient Management are not acceptable for conservation planning training courses.

NRCS employees will submit training course approval requests through the Assistant State Conservationist-Field Operations for State Conservationist Approval.

Non-NRCS employees will submit training approval requests directly to the State Conservationist for course consideration if not previously approved.

The NRCS state website will list training that has received prior approval.

Individuals are responsible for maintaining proof of attendance at prior approved training by copy of sign-in sheet, registration, letter by supervisor, certificate, etc.

WV409.9(f)(1)

Certified NRCS Conservation District or State Conservation Agency Certified Conservation Planners must submit annually at least one acceptable plan for a conservation management unit (CMU) to their immediate NRCS line officer (District Conservationist, Assistant State Conservationist-Field Operations) or designated NRCS official for review and approval on or before December 31.

All submitted plans may be field reviewed with the landowner and planner present to evaluate if the plan development was preformed at the rating level of independently and proficiently or higher.

In Section 409.9(b) and the National Planning Procedures Handbook reviewers will use Exhibits 2, 3 and 4 to document annual plan reviews results.

Exhibit 1

United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service

**INDIVIDUAL CERTIFICATION RATING SYSTEM
SKILLS ASSESSMENT**

Section A: Current Position Information				
Employee Name and Title				
Employer		Position Grade		
Location		Years There		
Section B: Summary of Past Positions (enter applicable positions; attach additional sheets if necessary)				
Employer	Location	Title	Grade	Years
Section C: Academic History				
Institution	Major	Degree	Year	
Section D: Continuing Education (list other college courses taken beyond those for degree requirements and the year the course was completed)				
Institution	Course	Year		
Section E: Professional Training				
Agency	Course	Year		

Exhibit 2

Checklist for Evaluating an Existing Plan

Planner _____

Client _____

Reviewer _____ Date _____

	Yes	No
1. Principal client(s) and Decisionmaking authority recorded		
2. Client’s statement of problems, concerns, and opportunities clearly recorded		
3. Client’s objectives recorded		
4. Land units recorded		
5. Location described		
6. Owners and operators identified		
7. Utilities, easements, constraints and determinations recorded		
8. Soils recorded		
9. Benchmark system (and/or current system) including narrative, existing practices, and effects recorded		
10. Problem identification consistent with SWAPA and quality criteria		
11. Supporting forms and worksheets for inventory and evaluation in case file, for example, calculations for soil loss, sediment delivery, etc.		
12. Discussions between client and planner recorded		
13. Discussion with client supplies evidence of adequate planner communication with and involvement of client		
14. Planned system meets quality criteria for resource concerns and client objectives		
15. CPPE worksheets – completed for each alternative, resource concerns consistent with benchmark, practices consistent with alternative, effects reasonable		
16. Discussions between client and planner recorded		
17. Revisions recorded including scheduled practice application		
18. Case file contains conservation plan map including scale, location, date prepared, north arrow, property boundaries, field boundaries, field labels including NRCS land use and acres		
19. Case file contains soils map and legend		
20. Discussion with client supplies evidence of adequate planner communication with and involvement of client		

**The plan meets NPPH requirements
and addresses the clients resource concerns**

(Signature)

(Date)

COMMENTS:

Title 180 – General Manual

Exhibit 3

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE – NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

JOB APPROVAL AUTHORITY

INDIVIDUAL CERTIFICATION RATING SYSTEM
SKILLS TO APPLY THE CONSERVATION PLANNING PROCESS

A: Planners Information

NAME:		TITLE:
LOCATION:	AGENCY:	GRADE AND STEP:

B. Concurrence and Authorized Signatures

SUPERVISOR	SIGNATURE:	DATE:
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C. Rating

PLANNING PROCESS NPPH	<i>PLANNING UNITS</i>			
	FIELD	FARM	TRAINING COMMENTS	TARGET COMPETENCY
	Certification Rating Levels			
9 - STEPS	RMS	RMS		
1. Identify Problems				
2. Determine Objectives				
3. Identify Resources				
4. Analyze Resource Data				
5. Formulate Alternatives				
6. Evaluate Alternatives				
7. Make Decisions				
8. Implement Plan				
9. Evaluate Plan				

COMMENTS: _____

D. General Notes

- a) Certification Rating Levels:
 - 1) Awareness and Understanding
 - 2) Perform with Supervision
 - 3) Perform Independently and proficiently
 - 4) Perform Proficiently and Capable of Providing Training
- b) Resource Management System (RMS) planning will address all identified concerns for the treatment of soil, water, air, plant, animal, and human resources (SWAPA+H) treated to the quality criteria in Section III of the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG).

The Planning Process and Planning Units are defined and outlined in the National Planning Procedures Handbook (NPPH).

**Exhibit 4
INDIVIDUAL CERTIFICATION RATING SYSTEM
KNOWLEDGE TO PLAN/APPLY PRACTICES**

A: Planners Information

NAME:		TITLE:
LOCATION:	AGENCY:	GRADE AND STEP:

B. Concurrence and Authorized Signatures

SUPERVISOR	SIGNATURE:	DATE:
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C. Ability to Plan/Apply Practices

Practice Name	Practice Code/Units	Required Competency Level	Certification Rating Levels		Training Needs and Comments
			Planning	Application	
Animal Trails and Walkways*	575/ft				
Composting Facility*	317/no				
Conservation Crop Rotation	328/ac				
Contour Buffer Strips	332/ac				
Contour Farming	330/ac				
Cover Crop					
Critical Area Planting	342/ac				
Fence	382/ft				
Field Border	386/ft				
Filter Strip	393/ac				
Forest Site Preparation	490/ac				
Grassed Waterway	412/ac				
Hedgerow Planting	422/ft				
Nutrient Management	590/ac				
Pasture and Hayland Planting	512/ac				
Pest Management	595/ac				
Prescribed Grazing	528A/ac				
Residue Management, No-till & Strip-till	329A/ac				
Residue Management, Mulch-till	329B/ac				
Residue Management, Seasonal	344/ac				
Riparian Forest Buffer	391/ac				
Stripcropping Contour	585/ac				
Trees/Shrub Establishment	612/ac				
Waste Management System	312/no				
Waste Utilization	633/ac				
Wildlife Upland Habitat Management	645/ac				

COMMENTS:

Exhibit 4 (cont.)

D. Rating for other National or State Practices Not Listed Above

Practice Name	Practice Code/Units	Target Competency Level	Certification Rating Levels			Training Needs and Comments
			Inventory & Evaluate	Planning	Application	

COMMENTS: _____

E. Competency Rating Levels:

- 1) Awareness and Understanding
- 2) Perform with Supervision
- 3) Perform Independently and Proficiently
- 4) Perform Proficiently and Capable of Providing Training