

II. Communication

KSA	<i>One shall be able to:</i>	Current Level	Desired Level	Training Needs
1. Ability to communicate with customers and others to engender cooperation, and voluntary adoption of conservation practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Engage customers in an ongoing dialogue to elicit information, gain understanding, and coordinate action towards improving the conditions of natural resources. b. Work with customers to determine objectives, informed by the conservation planning process. c. Work with resource specialists, program managers and others to facilitate technical transfer and support in conservation delivery. 		<p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p>	
2. Knowledge and understanding of Privacy and Freedom of Information responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explain, in general, the purpose of the federal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Privacy Act. b. Describe the procedure for responding to a request for information from conservation plans and case files. c. Explain the components of the conservation plan and case file that are unavailable to the public based on federal privacy laws. d. Describe the types of information that are available for public review in field offices (for example, aerial photos, HEL and wetland determinations, published maps and soil surveys). 		<p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p>	

III. NRCS Conservation Planning Process: Phase I. Resource Inventory/Analysis, And Problem Identification

KSA	<i>One shall be able to:</i>	Current Level	Desired Level	Training Needs
1. Ability to assimilate all pertinent sources of information to identify problems and opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Accurately interpret and document customers' identified problems and expressed concerns. b. Fully assess potential resource problems and opportunities, following accepted methods and procedures, guided by an ability to "read the land" and apply sound judgments. c. Identify problems based on a resource inventory and analysis. 		<p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p>	

<p>2. Ability to develop and document basic resource inventories, using remote sensing, field observation, and other recognized methods.</p>	<p><u>Soil Resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use the soil survey and understand basic soils information to determine the important properties of soils found on a land unit (e.g., texture, slope, permeability, pH, depth to groundwater, frequency of flooding, etc.) b. Determine the location of a land unit on maps, including aerial photographs, topography maps, soil survey maps, etc. c. Explain how soil properties may affect crop production, land use decisions, and alternative treatments. d. Define and explain the different types of erosion e. Develop and document soil loss predictions, using RUSLE-2 or most recent approved soil loss technology. f. Measure and estimate crop residue and ground cover. <p><u>Water Resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify and document the presence of wetlands, relative to the Swampbuster provisions of the Food Security Act. b. Locate and describe watershed boundaries, drainage basins, surface waters, groundwater sources, and hydrologically sensitive areas. c. Identify and document potential concerns regarding water quantity (e.g., seeps, runoff and overland flow, inadequate outlets, flooding, poor drainage, deficient amounts, water management, restricted capacity). <p><u>Animal Resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Inventory and document the extent and condition of domestic animal life needs and management components, (e.g., animal numbers and classes, feed, drinking water, waste). b. Inventory and document presence or absence of wildlife needs and management elements (e.g., food, cover, drinking water, population/resource balance, animal health). 		<p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>2</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>3</p>	
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<p>3. Ability to assess field conditions relative to the Sodbuster and Swampbuster provisions of the Food Security Act.</p>	<p>a. Identify and document the presence of Highly Erodible Land (HEL).</p> <p>b. Demonstrate the correct procedure for determining whether or not a field is highly erodible, or a wetland.</p> <p>c. Document the HEL determination in the conservation plan folder using an approved soil loss worksheet.</p>		<p>4</p> <p>2</p> <p>4</p>	
<p>4. Ability to identify and document environmentally sensitive areas.</p>	<p>a. Locate, and document environmentally sensitive resources associated with a conservation management unit, such as: Tidal and Non-Tidal Wetlands, Waters of The State and United States, 100-Year Floodplains, Riparian Areas, Scenic and Wild Rivers, Outstanding Resource Water, Wellhead Protection Areas, Medium or High Yield Aquifers, Designated Shellfish Growing Areas, Cold Water Fisheries, Anadromous Fish Runs, Threatened, Rare And Endangered Animal & Plant Species, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.</p>		<p>4</p>	
<p>5. Ability to collect and analyze nutrient and pest management related data.</p>	<p>a. Conduct and explain soil sampling procedures, and interpret results of laboratory analysis.</p> <p>b. Conduct and explain manure and other organic by-product sampling procedures, and interpret results of laboratory analysis.</p> <p>c. Collect and analyze nutrient and pest management related data needed for operating NRCS approved planning tools, (e.g., MMP and WIN-PST).</p> <p>d. Use Nutrient and Pest Management Risk Assessment tools, including Nitrogen Leaching Index, Phosphorous Index, WIN-PST, or most recent approved technology..</p>		<p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p>	
<p>6. Ability to recognize, document and discuss sources of agricultural pollution.</p>	<p>a. Identify and document existing and potential sources of sediment, other particulates, nutrients and pathogens that may be delivered to surface water.</p> <p>b. Identify and document existing and potential sources of groundwater contamination, including improper storage or disposal of animal wastes, pesticide handling facilities, nutrient</p>		<p>4</p> <p>4</p>	

	and pesticide application methods. c. Discuss the relationships between sediment, nitrogen, phosphorus and pathogens and water quality.		4	
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IV. Conservation Planning Process: Phase II. Formulate And Evaluate Alternatives.

KSA	<i>One shall be able to:</i>	Current Level	Desired Level	Training Needs
1. Working knowledge of federal, state and local regulations that affect conservation planning and land use decisions	a. Identify the federal, state, and local agencies that have regulatory or resource responsibilities for environmental concerns, such as HEL, tidal and non-tidal wetlands, waters of the United States, 100-year floodplains, designated shellfish areas, riparian areas, scenic and wild rivers, threatened and endangered species, cultural resources, and other significant concerns in the work area. b. Provide a general explanation of the pertinent federal, state, and local regulations that affect the above-listed environmental concerns. c. Describe sources of information for the various federal, state, and local regulations that are available within and outside of the field office.		4 4 4	
2. Awareness of federal and state conservation assistance programs	a. Provide a general explanation of the purpose of various federal programs (e.g., EQIP, WHIP, CRP/CREP, WRP), and the types of conservation practices and assistance included in those programs. b. Provide a general explanation of the purpose of various state programs and the types of practices and assistance included in those programs. c. Identify the potential for using federal and/or state programs to achieve the client's objectives and address resource concerns. d. Describe sources of information available within and outside of the field office for clients who wish to pursue enrollment in federal and/or state programs.		4 4 4 4	

<p>3. Knowledge of conservation practices and systems common to the work area</p>	<p>a. Describe the conservation practices commonly used in the geographic region; note their purpose(s), and where and how they are applied.</p> <p>b. Develop appropriate conservation system alternatives for each land use (e.g., cropland, pasture, hayland, etc.), taking into consideration the client's objectives, identified resource concerns, and constraints such as cost, availability of equipment, access, and regulatory or cost-share requirements.</p>		<p>4</p> <p>4</p>	
<p>4. Ability to formulate and evaluate an alternatives analysis.</p>	<p>a. Draw from client's objectives, resource data analysis, problem identification, and knowledge of conservation practices to formulate alternatives.</p> <p>b. Describe the positive and negative effects of conservation practices and systems common to the work area, including consideration of the social, economic, and ecological factors that influence planning.</p> <p>c. Develop and present a basic economic analysis of each alternative.</p> <p>d. Use the environmental evaluation process to determine and document the effects of alternative practices or systems on environmentally sensitive resources (NEPA Evaluation).</p> <p>e. Present alternatives to clients in ways that facilitate decision-making and adoption of conservation systems.</p>		<p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p>	
<p>5. Ability to develop a basic conservation plan</p>	<p>a. Obtain clients' decisions from identified alternatives and record the plan.</p> <p>b. Schedule application of conservation practices.</p> <p>c. Prepare plan documents according to the NPPH (e.g. maps, schedule, O&M, job sheets, etc.).</p> <p>d. Deliver the plan to the client, reviewing the objectives, planned practices and implementation schedule.</p> <p>e. Maintain Field Office case files according to policy, including technical assistance notes, correspondence, status reviews, etc.</p> <p>f. Direct customers to other sources of assistance, as appropriate.</p>		<p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p>	

V. Conservation Planning Process: Phase III. Implement & Evaluate the Plan

KSA	<i>One shall be able to:</i>	Current Level	Desired Level	Training Needs
1. Ability to provide overall guidance towards conservation system installation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide the client with adequate information to understand, implement, operate and maintain the planned conservation system. b. Work with field engineers and technicians to coordinate practice design, layout, construction and inspection. c. Certify that conservation practices are installed according to NRCS standards and specifications. d. Maintain on-going relationships with clients to monitor completion, operation and maintenance, and evaluation of conservation systems. 		<p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p>	
2. Ability to review and revise a conservation plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Determine whether an existing conservation plan reflects the resource concerns and client's objectives for the current operation. b. Recommend the addition and/or deletion of conservation practices and systems as appropriate for the current operation. c. Revise the appropriate plan documents. d. Direct customers to other sources of assistance, as appropriate. 		<p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p>	
3. Ability to evaluate the effectiveness of conservation systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Determine whether installed practices are functioning properly and solve the identified problem, as planned. b. Provide feedback to the planning process and technical guidance system to foster continued learning and adaptive management. 		<p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p>	

NOTE: Rate the individual's *current level* of knowledge, skill and ability using the following rating definitions, and identify the specific areas of training needed to meet the minimum desired level for conservation planners (parts i-v).

RATINGS:

- 1 = Limited knowledge or understanding.
- 2 = Has a basic knowledge and can perform in minimally complex circumstances with supervision or oversight.
- 3 = Has working knowledge and competent to perform under moderately complex circumstances with limited supervision.
- 4 = Has an advanced level of working knowledge and competent to perform independently under very complex circumstances.
- 5 = Expert knowledge and competent to perform under the most complex circumstances and able to train or demonstrate to others.

SIGNATURES

Planner

Date:

Supervisor

Date:

**State Resource
Conservationist**

Date:
