

# Indiana NRCS Conservation Planning for Technical Service Providers



## Purpose of this Module

This module will provide some general information that Technical Service Providers (TSPs) need to conduct conservation planning in Indiana. This information is general in nature so the TSP will need to follow up with additional reading or training to make sure they have the knowledge, skill, licenses and certifications to conduct conservation planning in Indiana as a TSP Conservation Planner (TSP-CCP).



## What This Module Will Not Do...

This module only serves the purpose of a broad overview of conservation planning in Indiana and will enable prospective TSPs to perform certain components of nationally-established TSP planning requirements as a TSP Conservation Planner.

This module does not meet the requirements of a “Certified Conservation Planner” in Indiana. Details of that process are covered later...





Conservation Planning's Primary Purpose:  
Identify Solutions to Address ***Resource Concerns***



# Conservation Planning Process

## Nine Steps of Conservation Planning:

1. Identify Problems & Opportunities
2. Determine Objectives
3. Inventory Resources
4. Analyze Resource Data
5. Formulate Alternatives
6. Evaluate Alternatives
7. Make Decisions
8. Implement Plan
9. Evaluate Plan



# Indiana Conservation Planning Certification Process and Timeline

## Expectations of Indiana Certified Conservation Planners:

- Ability to independently identify resource concerns on all land uses in Indiana.
- Ability to recognize and collect the field data needed to adequately assess potential resource concerns
- Knowledge of Planning Criteria related to each resource concern.
- Knowledge of FOTG practices impacts on each resource concern.
- Ability to formulate alternative systems of practices to address resource concerns to Planning Criteria within the producer's abilities and objectives.
- Ability to satisfy all NEPA-related issues.
  - Cultural Resources
  - Threatened and Endangered
  - Wetlands, etc.
  - Etc.
- Ability to use agency business tools
  - Toolkit
  - PRS
  - ArcGIS (maps)
  - Soil survey
  - RUSLE2
  - Etc.



## What is considered a complete Conservation Plan?

- Conservation Plan (CPA-068)
  - Signed by:
    - Certified Planner
    - SWCD District Board (offered)
    - Producer
- Maps
  - Plan Map
  - Soils
- Environmental Evaluation
  - CPA-52
- As appropriate if the plan will be implemented = Job sheets/Engineering Designs

LAUNDRY LIST OF SKILLS NEEDED FOR PLANNING:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ FOTG<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ At least 100+ standards that may apply locally</li><li>○ Seeding Calculator (+cc)</li><li>○ Engineering Job Approval Authority</li><li>○ Win-PST</li></ul></li><li>○ 9-Steps</li><li>○ NEPA<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Environmental Evaluation</li><li>○ CPA-52</li><li>○ Cultural Resources Certification</li></ul></li><li>○ NRCS Resource concerns<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ New vs. existing</li><li>○ Quality Criteria</li><li>○ Planning Criteria</li></ul></li><li>○ Plant ID</li><li>○ Soil health</li><li>○ Water quality</li><li>○ Soils</li><li>○ Animal behavior</li><li>○ Hydrology</li><li>○ Wetlands</li><li>○ RUSLE2</li><li>○ WEPS</li><li>○ GPS</li><li>○ GIS</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Toolkit (7, ±)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ CDSI Desktop</li><li>○ SCIMS</li></ul></li><li>○ PRS</li><li>○ Forestry<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Production</li><li>○ Wildlife</li></ul></li><li>○ Biology<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Wetlands</li><li>○ Woodlands</li><li>○ Grasslands</li><li>○ Cropland</li><li>○ T &amp; E</li></ul></li><li>○ Agronomy<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Corn, bean, wheat</li><li>○ Cover crops</li><li>○ Specialty crops</li><li>○ Irrigation</li><li>○ Nutrient management</li><li>○ Pest management</li></ul></li><li>○ Livestock Production<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Grazing Management</li><li>○ Hay Management</li><li>○ Confined Livestock (poultry, beef, pork, other)</li></ul></li></ul>
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## Review of National and State Laws

- ❑ National and state laws prohibit activities that may impact protected resources without adequate evaluation and public comment, including but not limited to:
  - ❑ Threatened and Endangered species, especially the Indiana Bat
  - ❑ Cultural Resources
  - ❑ Wetlands
  - ❑ Waters of the US

- ❑ **NRCS will complete environmental evaluations of the practices in plans developed by TSPs prior to practice implementation. TSPs must inform producers in writing to not implement the recommended practices until NRCS has adequately reviewed them for compliance with state and federal laws.**

# Review of State Laws

State laws that impact planning considerations in Indiana:

- Office of the Indiana State Chemist
  - Animal Feeding Operations
  - Confined Animal Feeding Operations
- Planning of engineering practices does not require the TSP to have a Professional Engineering (PE) License in the State of Indiana. However, it is expected the TSP-CCP will have the technical knowledge, skills and ability to complete the inventory & evaluation and any necessary site feasibility for all planned engineering practices. Conservation Practice Standards (FOTG-Section IV) contain the minimum site feasibility criteria.

# Special Considerations in Conservation Planning in Indiana

- ❑ Indiana is divided into 3 main climatic and soil regions
  - Northern
  - Central
  - Southern
- ❑ Climatic differences may impact field conditions for installing structural practices.
  - If a structural practice cannot be installed due to winter conditions provisions must be included in the planned practice specification that will provide temporary cover to prevent erosion on disturbed areas.

# Review of Indiana FOTG

## Providing Services in Multiple States or New TSPs

- After taking the “Introduction to the Field Office Technical Guide” online training course, it is required the TSP review and understand the Conservation Practice Standards (CPS) and Job Sheets in the different states they work in to recognize if there are major differences.
  - Contact the State’s TSP Coordinator for a discipline specialist name & contact information if further clarification is needed for specific practices.



# Review of Indiana FOTG

Indiana's practice standards and job sheets are all located in Section IV of the FOTG  
 (http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/treemenuFS.aspx)

The screenshot shows the NRCS website interface. At the top, it says "United States Department of Agriculture" and "NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service". The date is "Feb 18 | Wed". There are navigation links for "Close", "Preferences", "Contact", "Help", and "Login". A "Refresh Menu" button is visible. The main content area is titled "FOTG Home Page" and includes a section "What is FOTG?" with a description of technical guides and a link to "more". Below this is a link to "USDA Service Center". The left sidebar shows a tree view with "FOTG" expanded to "Section IV", which includes "Table Of Contents", "Tools", "Non-Practice Statements of Work", and "Indiana Standards".



# Review of Indiana FOTG

Indiana's Technical Notes and other technical resources are located in Section I of the FOTG

(<http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/treemenuFS.aspx>)

The screenshot shows the NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service website. The header includes the NRCS logo, the date 'Feb 18 | Wed', and navigation links for 'Close', 'Preferences', 'Contact', 'Help', and 'Login'. A secondary navigation bar contains 'FOTG', 'Search/Index', and 'Ab'. A 'Refresh Menu' button is located below the header.

The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column is a navigation tree with a search box at the top. It shows a folder named 'FOTG' which is expanded to show 'Section I'. Under 'Section I', there is a list of links: 'Table Of Contents', 'Water Quality Monitoring', 'Activities', 'Resource Fact Sheets', 'Flood Data and Profiles', 'eFOTG Transmittals', 'Cost Data', 'Erosion Prediction', 'Laws', 'Maps', 'Reference List', and 'Technical Notes'. The 'Technical Notes' link is highlighted in green.

The right column contains the main content. It starts with a green header 'FOTG Home Page'. Below this is a blue header 'What is FOTG?'. The text reads: 'Technical guides are the primary scientific references for NRCS. They contain technical information about the conservation of soil, water, air, and related plant and animal resources.' followed by a '...more' link. Below this is a paragraph: 'For additional information and requirements please contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).' followed by another '...more' link. At the bottom of this section is a blue header 'What's in FOTG?' followed by a list of sections and their topics:

- Section I - General References
- Section II - Natural Resources Information
- Section III - Conservation Management Systems
- Section IV - Practice Standards and Specifications
- Section V - Conservation Effects

At the very bottom of the right column, there is a blue header 'In The Spotlight' followed by a '...more' link.



# Review of Indiana FOTG

Indiana's Conservation Activity Plan Criteria are located in  
 Section III of the FOTG  
 (<http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/treemenuFS.aspx>)

The screenshot shows the NRCS website interface. At the top, it says "United States Department of Agriculture" and "NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service". There are navigation tabs for "FOTG", "Search/Index", and "Ab". Below the header, there are links for "Close", "Preferences", "Contact", "Help", and "Login". A "Refresh Menu" button is visible. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column contains a search bar and a tree menu with the following items: "FOTG", "Section III" (expanded), "Table Of Contents", "Resource Concerns, Land Uses, and Planning Criteria", "Conservation Activity Plans", "Technical Criteria", and "ARCHIVED - Quality Criteria". The right column has a green header "FOTG Home Page" and a blue header "What is FOTG?". The text below reads: "Technical guides are the primary scientific references for NRCS. They contain technical information about the conservation of soil, water, air, and related plant and animal resources." followed by a "...more" link. Below that, it says "For additional information and requirements please contact your local [USDA Service Center](#)." and another blue header "What's in FOTG?".



# Review of Indiana FOTG

Indiana's Resource Concerns, Land Uses, and Planning Criteria are located in Section III of the FOTG  
 (http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/treemenuFS.aspx)

The screenshot shows the NRCS FOTG website interface. At the top, the NRCS logo and 'Natural Resources Conservation Service' are displayed. A navigation bar includes 'FOTG', 'Search/Index', and 'A'. Below this, a secondary bar shows the date 'Feb 18 | Wed' and links for 'Close', 'Preferences', 'Contact', 'Help', and 'Login'. A 'Refresh Menu' button is also present.

The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column contains a search box and a tree menu under the 'FOTG' folder. The tree menu is expanded to show 'Section III', which includes links for 'Table Of Contents', 'Resource Concerns, Land Uses, and Planning Criteria', 'Conservation Activity Plans', 'Technical Criteria', and 'ARCHIVED - Quality Criteria'. The right column features a green header 'FOTG Home Page' followed by a blue header 'What is FOTG?'. The text below explains that technical guides are primary scientific references for NRCS and lists related resources. A '...more' link is provided. Below this, another blue header 'What's in FOTG?' is visible, with 'Section I - General References' listed underneath.



# Indiana Planning Criteria Tool:

United States Department of Agriculture  
**NRCS** Natural Resources Conservation Service

Feb 4 | Wed [Close](#) | [Preferences](#) | [Contact](#) | [Help](#) | [Login](#)

[Refresh Menu](#) [Information](#)

Search

- FOTG
  - Section III ▾
    - Table Of Contents
    - Resource Concerns, Land Uses, and Planning Criteria
      - Resource Concerns
      - Land Uses
      - Planning Criteria
      - Indiana Planning Criteria Tools**

**FOTG Home Page**

**What is FOTG?**

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

Technical guides used in each county are localized so that they apply specifically to the geographic area for which they are used. These documents are referred to as Technical Guides (FOTGs).

Appropriate parts of the Field Guides are automated as data management programs and other electronic

# Indiana Planning Criteria Tool – Land Uses:

<u>New Land Uses and Land Use Modifiers - Definitions and Abbreviations</u>	
<b>1 Crop</b>	<b>C</b>
<i>Land used primarily for the production and harvest of annual or perennial field, forage, food, fiber, horticultural, orchard, vineyard, or energy crops.</i>	
<b>2 Pasture</b>	<b>P</b>
<i>Land composed of introduced or domesticated native forage species that is used primarily for the production of livestock. Pastures receive periodic renovation and cultural treatments, such as tillage, fertilization, mowing, weed control, and may be irrigated. Pastures are not in rotation with</i>	
<b>3 Forest</b>	<b>F</b>
<i>Land on which the primary vegetation is tree cover (climax, natural or introduced plant community) and use is primarily for production of wood products or non-timber forest products.</i>	
<b>4 Farmstead</b>	<b>HQ</b>
<i>Land used for facilities and supporting infrastructure where farming, forestry, animal husbandry, and ranching activities are often initiated. This may include dwellings, equipment storage, plus farm input and output storage and handling facilities. Also includes land dedicated to the facilitation and production of high-intensity animal agriculture in a containment facility where daily nutritional requirements are obtained from other lands or feed sources.</i>	
<b>5 Designated Protected Area</b>	<b>DPA</b>
<i>Land or water used for the preservation, protection, and observation of the existing resources, archaeological or historical interpretation, resource interpretation, or for aesthetic value. These areas are officially designated by legislation or other authorities. Examples: legislated natural or scenic areas and rural burial plots.</i>	
<b>6 Associated Ag Land</b>	<b>AAL</b>
<i>Land associated with farms and ranches that are not purposefully managed for food, forage, or fiber and are typically associated with nearby production or conservation lands. This could include incidental areas, such as idle center pivot corners, odd areas, ditches and watercourses, riparian areas, field edges, seasonal and permanent wetlands, and other similar areas.</i>	

# Indiana Planning Criteria Tool – Planning Criteria:

<b>Resource Concern</b> <i>Resource Concern (RC) = an expected degradation of the (SWAPA) resource base that will impair its sustainability or intended use.</i>	<b>Land Use</b> * Required Assessment	<b>Resource Concern Component</b>	<b>Planning Criteria</b> Assessment Level Measurement and Assessment Tool(s)
<b>SOIL</b>	Land Use	Component	Assessment Level
<b>SOIL EROSION - Sheet, rill, &amp; wind erosion</b> <i>Soil particle movement caused by rainfall runoff/splash, irrigation runoff or wind.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crop*</li> <li>• Developed Land*</li> <li>• Farmsteads*</li> <li>• Associated Ag Land*</li> <li>• Designated Protected Area*</li> <li>• Other Rural Land*</li> <li>• Pasture*</li> </ul>	Sheet & Rill	Permanent ground cover > 90% and slope < 10% <b>OR</b> Water erosion rate ≤ T <i>RUSLE2</i>
		Wind	Permanent ground cover > 90% and slope < 10% <b>OR</b> Wind erosion rate ≤ T <i>WEPS</i>
	• Forest*	Sheet & Rill	Soil surface organic residue cover > 80%, <b>OR</b>
	Wind	Site is stable and without visible signs of erosion <i>Visual inspection</i>	

Indiana RC Checklist

**IN\_Planning Criteria**

Land Uses

CROP\_Planning Criteria

PASTURE Plannir ...



# Indiana Planning Criteria Tool – Resource Concern Checklist:

Resource Concerns - Inventory and Documentation Field Checklist for Indiana				
Participant:				
Tract/PLUs:		Date:		
Inventoried by:				
Resource Concern components on page 1 are <i>required</i> to be assessed on one or more land use. Additional Resource Concern components should be assessed if the resource concern is identified on site, and will be considered in planning activities.				
<b>If 'Assessment Criteria Met?' = "NO", there is a resource concern that should be documented on the CPA-52 during the planning process.</b>				
Resource Concern Category	Resource Concern Components	Required to be assessed on these land uses	Land Use(s) being evaluated	Assessment Criteria Met?***
Soil Erosion	<a href="#">Sheet and Rill</a>	C, P, F, HQ, AAL,		
	<a href="#">Wind</a>	DPA, D, ORL		
	<a href="#">Ephemeral Gully</a>	C		
	<a href="#">Classic Gully</a>	C, P, F, HQ, AAL,		
	<a href="#">Streambank, Shoreline, Water Conveyance Channels</a>	DPA, D, ORL C, P, HQ, AAL,		
Soil Quality Degradation	<a href="#">Compaction</a>	C, P		
	<a href="#">Organic Matter Depletion</a>	C, P		
Excess/ Insufficient Water	<a href="#">Inefficient Use of Irrigation Water</a>	C, P, F, HQ, AAL,		
	<a href="#">Nutrients in Groundwater</a>	DPA, D, W, ORL		
	<a href="#">Nutrients in Surface water</a>	C, P, HQ		
	<a href="#">Excessive Sediment in Surface Water</a>	C, P, F, HQ, D,		

# Indiana Planning Criteria Tool – Land Use Specific Resource Concerns:

1 CROPLAND				
2 Resource Concern	* Required?	Resource Concern Component	Planning Criteria Assessment Level Measurement and Assessment Tool(s)	Assessment Criteria Met?***
3 SOIL	* Required?	Component	Assessment Level	Criteria Met?
4 SOIL EROSION - Sheet, rill, & wind erosion	Yes	Sheet & Rill	Permanent ground cover > 90% and slope < 10% <b>OR</b> Water erosion rate ≤ T <i>RUSLE2</i>	
		Wind	Permanent ground cover > 90% and slope < 10% <b>OR</b> Wind erosion rate ≤ T <i>WEPS</i>	
5 SOIL EROSION – Concentrated flow erosion	Yes	Ephemeral gullies	A complete conservation cropping system is being implemented, <b>OR</b> Other conservation practices and managements are in place to prevent or control ephemeral gullies post-harvest and before spring field operations. <i>Visual inspection and/or producer input</i>	
	Yes	Classic gullies	Classic gullies are not present <b>OR</b> Classic gullies are controlled. <i>Visual inspection and/or producer input</i>	
7 SOIL EROSION– Excessive bank erosion from streams,	Yes		Streams, shorelines or channels are not adjacent to site <b>OR</b>	



# Indiana Planning Criteria Tool – Measurement and Assessment Tools:

Evaluate the site and rate each indicator based upon your observations. Scores for each indicator may range from 1 to 5. Sum the indicator scores to determine overall pasture condition score.

Indicator	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
<b>Desirable Plant Population</b> (Evaluate as a complete system.) <b>10%</b>	Undesirable weeds and/or encroaching woody species are dominant. Shade may be a factor. <3 forage species present being <20% of stand.	Mostly undesirable weeds and/or encroaching woody species present and expanding. Shade may be a factor. <3 forage species present being 20-40% of stand.	Undesirable broadleaves and annual weedy grasses invading. Some woody species encroaching. 3 or more desirable species being 40-60% of stand and some annuals being utilized to extend the season or for the summer slump period.	Dominantly desirable forage species. Remainder mostly intermediates and a few undesirables are present. 3 or more desirable cool season species present and some warm season grasses managed separately. Desirable species 60-80% of stand.	Dominantly desirable species with the remainder being scattered intermediate utilized species. 3 or more desirable cool season species present and 10% or more of the system in perennial warm season grasses and managed separately. Desirable species >=80% of stand.
	Photosynthetic area is very low due to thin stands. Very little plant cover to	Photosynthetic area is low. Runoff is fast due to low plant cover. Some bare	Most forages are grazed close, with little leaf area to intercept sunlight	Spot grazed so there is some loss of photosynthetic potential. Runoff is	Forages are maintained mainly in leafy condition for best photosynthetic

# Resource Concerns – Soil (Erosion)



## CROPLAND

Resource Concern	* Required?	Resource Concern Component	Planning Criteria Assessment Level Measurement and Assessment Tool(s)	Assessment Criteria Met? **
SOIL	* Required?	Component	Assessment Level	Criteria Met?
SOIL EROSION - Sheet, rill, & wind erosion	Yes	Sheet & Rill	Permanent ground cover > 90% and slope < 10% <b>OR</b> Water erosion rate ≤ T <i>RUSLE2</i>	
		Wind	Permanent ground cover > 90% and slope < 10% <b>OR</b> Wind erosion rate ≤ T <i>WEPS</i>	
SOIL EROSION – Concentrated flow erosion	Yes	Ephemeral gullies	A complete conservation cropping system is being implemented, <b>OR</b> Other conservation practices and managements are in place to prevent or control ephemeral gullies post harvest and before spring field operations. <i>Visual inspection and/or producer input</i>	
		Classic gullies	Classic gullies are not present <b>OR</b> Classic gullies are controlled. <i>Visual inspection and/or producer input</i>	



# Indiana is a national leader in Soil Health!

- What does *Soil Health* mean?
- **Soil Health Key Indicators =**
  - Increasinging organic matter
  - Improving aggregate stability
  - Increasinging water infiltration
  - Increasinging water-holding capacity
  - Improving nutrient cycling
  - Enhancing and diversifying soil biology



**Soil Health is not a destination...it's a Journey**

# NRCS is Making Soil Health a Priority!

## Soil Health Principles



# Indiana is a national leader in Soil Health!

- Achieving soil health through:
  - A Quality No-till (Never-Till) System
  - Diverse and Strategic Cover Crops
  - Adapted Nutrient Management
  - Integrated Weed & Pest Management
  - Diverse Crop Rotations
  - Precision Farming Technology
  - Prescriptive Buffers



# CROPLAND

Resource Concern	* Required?	Resource Concern Component	Planning Criteria Assessment Level Measurement and Assessment Tool(s)	Assessment Criteria Met? **
<b>SOIL</b>	* Required?	Component	Assessment Level	Criteria Met?
<b>SOIL EROSION— Excessive bank erosion from streams, shorelines, or water conveyance channels</b>	Yes		Streams, shorelines or channels are not adjacent to site  SVAP2 bank condition element score $\geq 6$ <i>Visual inspection and/or producer input; SVAP2</i>	OR

## SVAP2 Element 3 - Bank Condition

### Element 3 Bank condition

<p>Banks are stable; protected by roots of natural vegetation, wood, and rock <sup>1/</sup></p> <p>No fabricated structures present on bank</p> <p>No excessive erosion or bank failures <sup>2/</sup></p> <p>No recreational or livestock access</p>	<p>Banks are moderately stable, protected by roots of natural vegetation, wood, or rock or a combination of materials</p> <p>Limited number of structures present on bank</p> <p>Evidence of erosion or bank failures, some with reestablishment of vegetation</p> <p>Recreational use and/or grazing do not negatively impact bank condition</p>	<p>Banks are moderately unstable; very little protection of banks by roots of natural wood, vegetation, or rock</p> <p>Fabricated structures cover more than half of reach or entire bank</p> <p>Excessive bank erosion or active bank failures</p> <p>Recreational and/or livestock use are contributing to bank instability</p>	<p>Banks are unstable; no bank protection with roots, wood, rock, or vegetation</p> <p>Riprap and/or other structures dominate banks</p> <p>Numerous active bank failures</p> <p>Recreational and/or livestock use are contributing to bank instability</p>
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Right bank	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
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# Resource Concerns – Water (Quality and Quantity)



WATER	* Required?	Component	Assessment Level	Criteria Met?
<b>WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION: Excess nutrients in surface and ground waters</b>	Yes	surface water	Organic or inorganic nutrients are not applied <b>OR</b> The conservation cropping system is implemented <b>OR</b> There are no opportunities for improvements in nutrient-use efficiency and subsequent nutrient loss reductions through application timing, rate, form, and/or placement;	
		groundwater	<b>OR</b> There are no opportunities for filtering, buffering, and/or setbacks to further limit nutrient losses. <i>Nutrient budget; visual inspection; producer input</i>	
<b>WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION – Excessive sediment in surface waters</b>	Yes		[Upslope treatment and buffers and/or filtering practices address gullies and runoff to water bodies <b>AND</b> SVAP2 - bank condition $\geq 6$ <b>AND</b> Livestock and vehicle water crossings are stable] <b>OR</b> The conservation cropping system is implemented <b>OR</b> Water erosion rate $\leq T$ ; <b>OR</b> No opportunities exist for water erosion to $\leq 1/2 T$ . <b>OR</b> Wind erosion rate $< T$ ; <b>OR</b> No opportunities exist for wind erosion $< 1/2 T$ . <i>Visual inspection; producer input; SVAP2; RIISIE2</i>	

# Resource Concerns – Animals



# • Resource Concerns – Animals

ANIMAL	Land Use	Component	Assessment Level
<p><b>INADEQUATE HABITAT FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE – Habitat degradation</b>  <i>Habitat is negatively impacted to the point that one or more habitat components do not support identified wildlife species. Habitat components include: quantity/quality/connectivity of food, cover, space, shelter, and/or water.</i></p>	<p>All with “wildlife” modifier* -            (Required when Land Use has a wildlife modifier)</p>	<p>Inadequate Food</p> <hr/> <p>Inadequate Water</p> <hr/> <p>Inadequate Cover/Shelter</p> <hr/> <p>Inadequate Habitat continuity and/or space</p>	<p>Conservation practices and managements are in place that meet or exceed species or guild-specific habitat requirements  <i>Species-specific wildlife habitat assessments; Visual inspection; producer input</i></p>
<p><b>LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION LIMITATION – Inadequate livestock water</b>  <i>Livestock water that is inadequate to support intended land use and livestock management.</i></p>	<p>• All with “grazed” modifier            (Applicable when Land Use is grazed)</p>		<p>Water of acceptable quality and quantity adequately distributed to meet animal needs.  <i>Visual inspection; producer input</i></p>
<p><b>LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION LIMITATION – Inadequate feed and forage</b>  <i>Feed and forage quality and/or quantity that is inadequate to support intended land use and livestock management.</i></p>	<p>• All with “grazed” modifier            (Applicable when Land Use is grazed)</p>		<p>Livestock forage, roughage and supplemental nutritional requirements addressed.  <i>Visual inspection; producer input; GRAS</i></p>

# Resource Concerns – Plants



# • Resource Concerns – Plants

PLANT	Land Use	Component	Assessment Level
<p><b>DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION – Excessive plant pest pressure</b>  <i>Plant pest damage exists to the point that the vegetation does not support intended land use and management. This applies to invasive plant, animal, and insect species.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crop</li> <li>• Forest*</li> <li>• Farmsteads</li> <li>• Developed Land</li> <li>• Associated Ag Land</li> <li>• Designated Protected Area</li> <li>• Water</li> <li>• Other Rural Land</li> </ul>		<p>Pest damage to plants are below economic or environmental thresholds or client-identified criteria  <b>AND</b>            Plant pests, including noxious, invasive, and herbicide-resistant species are managed to reduce on-site and off-site impacts  <i>Visual inspection; producer input</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pasture*</li> </ul>		<p>Indiana PCS - vigor element score <math>\geq 4</math>  <b>AND</b>            Indiana PCS - diversity element score <math>\geq 4</math>  <b>AND</b>            Plant pests, including noxious, invasive, and herbicide-resistant species are managed to reduce on-site and off-site impacts  <i>PCS; Visual inspection; producer input</i></p>

# Resource Concerns – Air and Energy



# NRCS Certified Conservation Planner Certification vs. TSP Planner Certification

## Indiana Certified Conservation Planner Responsibilities

- Certified planners' decisions directly impact program eligibility through the identification of resource concerns and suitable alternatives (i.e. – 'needed and feasible' for CRP; 'existing resource concern that can be adequately treated' for EQIP; etc.).
- Certified planners' decisions directly impact program priorities/ranking = funding decisions through the identification of resource concerns and suitable alternatives (i.e. – Ranking scores for EQIP; WRP; etc.).
- Certified planners' decisions directly impact program payments through the verification that the practices were applied according to standards and are adequately treating the resource concerns.

## Indiana Conservation Certification Process and Timeline

1. Employee acquires 2 years of experience in conservation planning via training, on-the-job experience, AgLearn, Cultural Resources certification, understanding of the planning process, Toolkit/PRS/RUSLE2, etc.).
2. Area Staff verify that the employee has 2 years of experience in conservation planning and has the knowledge, skills, and ability to be a certified conservation planner to the SRC.
3. SRC staff conducts the Indiana Certified Planners Evaluation.
4. Employee participates in the Indiana Certified Planners Evaluation.
  - a. Field-based exercise to evaluate each planner's knowledge, skills, and ability.
5. SRC staff provides feedback to each attendee based on the information they submit from the Evaluation.
  - a. Copies are also provided to the supervisor, AC, and Resource Management Specialist.
6. Employee works with area staff, State Office staff, and independently to acquire any knowledge, skills, and ability identified from the Evaluation.
7. Employee develops a Resource Management System plan independently.
8. Area staff (RMS) reviews the plan.
9. When the area staff feels the employee has acquired all knowledge, skills, and ability, the Area Conservationist recommends the employee for certification to the SRC.
10. SRC recommends certification to State Conservationist.
11. State Conservationist issues the employee their Certified Conservation Planner Certificate.
12. Certified planner status for NRCS and partner employees is maintained in the Certifications database, on file in the State Office.
13. Area staff review certified conservation planner status on a 3-year basis as part of the Indiana quality assurance process.

## Expected Level of Performance for TSP

### Conservation Planner Certification

**Plans submitted to Indiana for a conservation planner certification review should be a Resource Management System level plan covering a minimum of two land uses.**

- A RMS level plan addresses all resource concerns on all the land units for the planned land uses under control of the farm.
- Plan documents should include an overview of the landowners operation and conservation objectives; all plan maps; soil maps and map unit descriptions; a description of the site specific resource concerns; all assessment tools used to determine the benchmark conditions and make any technical conclusions; a schedule of implementation; and the planned practice specifications describing how the landowner will implement the practice, it is requested planners use NRCS-Indiana planning criteria sheets and job sheets to provide this information so no component is left out.
- Engineering designs are not necessary but adequate site feasibility of proposed practices such as documented soil borings should be included.

## Expected Level of Performance for TSP Conservation Planner Certification

- ❑ So how does a private provider gain the knowledge, skills and abilities to perform at the independent level?
  - The TSP CCP category is not an entry level position.
  - It is recommended a person, interested in becoming a TSP, with little or no experience seek out a position where they will gain the needed experience as they would for any other type of technical job they pursue after completing a formal education.
  - An individual may need to spend as much as 2 years working in the field for an agricultural business, private provider, local organization, state or federal agency to gain the necessary experience and skills.

## Expected TSP Workflow

- ❑ Contact Shannon Zezula, State Resource Conservationist (SRC) ([Shannon.Zezula@in.usda.gov](mailto:Shannon.Zezula@in.usda.gov)) and Tony Bailey, State Conservation Agronomist ([tony.bailey@in.usda.gov](mailto:tony.bailey@in.usda.gov)) at the Indiana NRCS State Office to start the certification process.
  - The SRC will assign a discipline specialist or a team of specialists, as needed, to complete the plan review and recommend certification or prepare a summary of deficiencies.
  - Summary of deficiencies will include a detailed description of the deficiency, technical guidance to complete or revise the plan and deadline for completing any additional work\*.
  - Additional plan reviews will be required if the first plan cannot be approved as submitted.

## Expected TSP Workflow

- ❑ After TSP CCP Certification, subsequent conservation plans written for NRCS clients will be reviewed by the State Office.
- ❑ **NRCS in Indiana provides no financial assistance to landowners for conservation planning outside of EQIP contracted Conservation Activity Plans (CAP).**
- ❑ Plan reviews for TSP planner certification renewals will be completed by the planning specialist or discipline specialist at the State Office.
- ❑ TSPs will work with the State Office to make sure the proper environmental evaluations (NRCS.CPA.52) are completed.

## Additional Certifications TSP-CCP does not include:

- ❑ Developing Conservation Activity Plans (CAP) contracted through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) require a separate TSP certification. They include but are not be limited to CAP-102-CNMP; CAP-104-NMP; CAP-110-IPMP; or CAP-112-Prescribed Burn Plan. Many require specialized trainings or certifications.
- Please contact the NRCS-Indiana TSP Coordinator, Tony Bailey if you intend to offer CAP planning services:
  - [tony.bailey@in.usda.gov](mailto:tony.bailey@in.usda.gov) or
  - 317-295-5845 for additional guidance.

## Additional References or Training Recommended

- NRCS Website at [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov)
- NRCS-Indiana Website:  
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/in/home/>
- Indiana Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG)  
[http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/efotg\\_locator.aspx](http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/efotg_locator.aspx)
- NRCS Technical Notes (see FOTG-I)
- Air Quality Resource Concerns (online AgLearn)
- Environmental Compliance in Conservation Planning (online AgLearn)
- Nutrient and Pest Management Considerations in Conservation Planning (online AgLearn)

## Certificate of Completion

After viewing the State Specific Training module, please print and sign the completion certificate on the following slide.

The certificate is your acknowledgement that based on the information provided in this module, you have the proper knowledge, skills and ability to conduct planning in this state.

Send the signed certificate to the State TSP Coordinator. Copy the below link to your browser for a list of State TSP Coordinators.

<https://techreg.sc.egov.usda.gov/RptStateContact4Admin.aspx>

## STATE SPECIFIC TRAINING MODULE COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby verify I have viewed and understand the  
*TSP Name*  
content of the Indiana State Specific Training Module and affirm I have the  
knowledge, skills and ability to conduct conservation planning services in that  
state.

\_\_\_\_\_

TSP signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date