



Natural Resources Conservation Service
P.O. Box 2890
Washington, D.C. 20013

NATIONAL WATERSHED MANUAL
390-V
Circular No. 8, (Part 505)

June 8, 2006

SUBJECT: PDM – Watershed Surveys and Planning Program

Purpose. To clarify the review process and establish policy for watershed plans developed through the Watershed Surveys and Planning Program.

Effective Date. This Circular is effective upon receipt.

Background. Part 505, Section 505.02 of the National Watershed Manual provides policy on technical review of watershed plans. This portion of the policy is obsolete and currently being revised. Since the NRCS 2004 reorganization, State Conservationists have been delegated the responsibility to ensure that watershed plans are technically adequate. The following policy is being instituted to assure quality of plans submitted for funding approval.

Policy. All watershed plans developed under the authority of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, Public Law 83-566, will be reviewed by the National Water Management Center (NWMC) for adequacy. Watershed Rehabilitation projects will continue to be reviewed under the procedures of 390-V Circular 7, dated October 2001. States will receive appropriate recommendations from the Director of the NWMC and document consideration and disposition of the recommendations before the State Conservationist approves the plan. The NWMC will coordinate the review with the State Conservationist and National Headquarters, as needed. The National Watershed Surveys and Planning Program (WSPP) Manager will conduct a final review from a program perspective and manage the funding authorization process with the Chief and/or Congressional Committees and approval by the agency. Further details of the review and approval process are provided below:

Review Process

1. State Conservationist will submit an unsigned draft watershed plan and all relevant materials to the NWMC Director, prior to interagency review circulation.
2. NWMC will conduct a thorough review and provide assistance on the unsigned draft watershed plan in conjunction with the State Conservationist to determine whether draft plan follows the planning process, provides rationale for plan selection, and conforms to NRCS policy and watershed planning standards.

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3. NWMC will prepare written comments on the unsigned draft watershed plan and provide these to the State Conservationist and WSPP Manager. Comments will include appropriate recommendations for resolving deficiencies.
4. State Conservationist will document the consideration and disposition for each NWMC recommendation and provide documentation to the NWMC Director.
5. State Conservationist will circulate the appropriately reviewed draft plan for interagency review. Interagency comments will be addressed as needed.
6. State Conservationist will obtain the sponsoring local organization signatures and then sign the plan.
7. State Conservationist will submit the documentation of the NWMC recommendations and the official (signed) watershed plan to the NRCS Chief to request funding authorization with copies to the Deputy Chief for Programs, the CPTAD Director and NWMC Director.
8. The National WSPP Manager will conduct a final programmatic review, considering items in the attached watershed plan checklist and prepare the letter for the NRCS Chief's signature.
9. Plans requiring Congressional approval will be forwarded to the Department and Office of Management and Budget for review prior to being sent to Congress for approval.

Plans already approved by State Conservationists that have not been reviewed by the NWMC must also be submitted to the NWMC for review. The NWMC will provide appropriate recommendations and work with the State Conservationist to resolve deficiencies. State Conservationists will document the consideration and disposition for each recommendation and submit the recommendations and the final watershed plan in accordance with items in 7 - 9 (above).

Funding authorization for projects can only be made by the NRCS Chief. This is separate from plan approval. Funds will only be expended on any project subject to a letter of funding authorization from the Chief and annual appropriation.

The responsibility remains with the State Conservationist to ensure that plans submitted are consistent with program policy and are technically adequate.

Contact. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the National WSPP Manager, at 202-690-2825.

/s/

THOMAS W. CHRISTENSEN
Deputy Chief for Programs

/s/

LAWRENCE E. CLARK
Deputy Chief for Science and Technology

Attachment

CHECKLIST - CONTENTS FOR WATERSHED PLANS

Watershed:

Date:

State:

Subject	Included	Comments
Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Fly Sheet	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Addendum (when necessary)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Watershed Agreement		
a) Construction Cost outlined Practice list for Watershed Protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b) Cost Share rates meet policy and in line with national rates for Land Treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c) Technical engineering services	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d) Relocation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
e) O&M	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Table of Contents	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Summary	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Introduction	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Project Setting		
a) Physical	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b) Social	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c) Economic	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d) Present	<input type="checkbox"/>	
e) Future	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Watershed Problems and Opportunities		
a) Need for the project	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b) What is being damaged (how much, where, how often)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Scope of EIS or EA		
a) Identified problems & opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b) Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c) Threatened and Endangered species	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d) Fish & wildlife habitat	<input type="checkbox"/>	

CHECKLIST - CONTENTS FOR WATERSHED PLANS

e) Wetlands	<input type="checkbox"/>	
f) HEL & Swampbuster	<input type="checkbox"/>	
g) Water Quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	
h) Health & Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Formulation & Comparison of Alternatives		
a) Rationale for Plan Formulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b) Formulation Process (basis for selecting combinations of measures to include in alternatives)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c) Description of Alternative Plans	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d) Effects of Alternative Plans		
1) Economic	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2) Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3) Social	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4) Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	
e) Comparison of Alternative Plans (comparative form using four accounts)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
f) Risk and Uncertainty	<input type="checkbox"/>	
g) Rationale for Plan Selection	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Consultation and public participation		
Recommended Plan		
a) Purpose & Summary (summary of plan & description of purposes served)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b) Measures to be installed		
1) Land Treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2) Non Structural		
Floodplain acquisition		
Flood proofing	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Relocation		
Wetland or conservation easements		
3) Structural Measures		
Reservoir		
Channel	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Recreation		
Rural water/M&I		

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CHECKLIST - CONTENTS FOR WATERSHED PLANS

4) Mitigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c) Permits and Compliance	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d) Costs	<input type="checkbox"/>	
e) Installation & Financing		
1) Framework to carry out plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2) Planned sequence of installation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3) Responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4) Contracting	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5) Real property & relocations	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6) Other agencies (responsibilities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7) Cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8) Financing	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9) Conditions for providing assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	
f) Operations & Maintenance Sponsors responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	
g) Tables		
1 - Estimated Installation Cost	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2 - Estimated Cost Distribution	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2a - Cost Allocation & Cost-sharing summary	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2b - Recreation Facilities, Estimated Construction Costs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3 - Structural Data - Dams	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3a - Structural Data - Dikes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3b - Structural Data - Channels	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4 - Average Annual NED Cost	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5 - Estimated Average Annual Flood Damage Reduction Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5a - Estimated Average Annual Watershed Protection Damage Reduction Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6 - Comparison of NED Benefits and Costs	<input type="checkbox"/>	

CHECKLIST - CONTENTS FOR WATERSHED PLANS

List of Preparers	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Closing Pages		
References	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Index		
Appendixes		
a) Letters & comments	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b) Support maps	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c) Investigation & analyses	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d) Supporting information	<input type="checkbox"/>	
e) Project map	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Technical Peer Review		
a) Conducted By:		
b) All Concerns Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Programmatic Review		
a) Conducted By:		
b) All Concerns Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/>	
General Comments:		
I recommend authorization for federal funding : Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Reviewer: Date:		