

Introduction to Conservation Planning

Module 6 of the NRCS Conservation Planning Course

Overview

This training course is designed to provide an introduction to conservation planning assistance provided in Pennsylvania. The course introduces the conservation planning process and focuses on developing quality plans that address the objectives of the decision maker in consideration of their economic and social needs and requirements by federal, state, and local laws and regulations. The course targets entry level conservationists introducing them to the conservation planning process and supporting tools and technology in Pennsylvania and supplements the online NRCS Conservation Planning Modules 1 – 5 with face- to- face classroom and on- farm training.

Objectives

There are several key objectives of the course. First, an objective of the course is to give the beginning entry level conservationist an awareness level of understanding of the NRCS conservation planning process, related federal and state laws and regulations, and supporting technology used to assist clients in making decisions. The result of an effectively executed planning process is a conservation plan that restores, sustainably uses, protects, and/or enhances natural resources while meeting the client's economic and social needs and requirements by federal, state, and local laws and regulations. 20 hours of total training for entry level participants.

The course is not a substitute for other courses that provide more in-depth technical details such as Agricultural Conservation Technician "Bootcamp" Training Levels I & II (Module 7) which builds conservation implementation skills of planning and applying conservation practices or Certified Conservation Planner (Module 8) training which prepares conservation planners to certify a plan as meeting NRCS requirements.

Second, the course will facilitate building relations among the members of the conservation partnership by understanding each other's roles and responsibilities in working together to help the operators and owners of Pennsylvania farms and forests and meet their conservation objectives.

Prerequisites

Having a basic understanding of the farm operations in their service area and passing the NRCS Conservation Planning Online Modules 1 – 5 is required for attending the entry level Introduction to Conservation Planning course.

Materials to be provided by students

As the farm visit will occur in fall, please dress appropriately to adapt to variable weather conditions. Bus transportation will be provided to the on-farm field exercise on the third day.

Most planning tools and up to date guidance documents are found on line today. All students with laptops should bring their computer to use in either of the concurrent sessions offered. Any student without a laptop may pair up with others to follow along.

Target audience

The 3 day Intro to Conservation Planning Course is targeting 30 entry-level employees of all organizations in Pennsylvania delivering conservation planning technical assistance, including but not limited to, NRCS, SCC, conservation districts, farmland preservation entities, non-profits, and private consultants.

Training Credits

Course Participants are encouraged to record completion of this course on the Individual Employee Development training plan. It will be accepted as meeting the Module 6 requirement for those pursuing conservation planner certification for delivering NRCS assistance.

Delivery Schedule

The session will be offered at the Holiday Inn Harrisburg Hershey, Grantville, PA from November 13-15, 2018. Lunch provided.

***Introduction to Conservation Planning Agenda
Holiday Inn Harrisburg (Hershey Area), Grantville, PA
November 13-15, 2018***

Day 1 Resource Inventory and Evaluation

- 10:00 Introductions, Pre test
- 10.30 What is Conservation Planning?
- 11:15 NEPA
- 12:00 BAG WORKING LUNCH – Meet the Conservation Partnership
- 1:00 Field Exercise
- 3:00 Return to Hotel / Pennsylvania Technical Guide
- 4:00 Adjourn

Day 2 Conservation Decision Support

- 8:00 Review
- 8:30 Inventorying the Resource Concerns
- 9:00 Tools to Evaluate Resource Concerns
- 9:30 Break
- 9:45 Cropland
- 10:15 Pasture and Hayland
- 10:45 Wildlife
- 11:45 Forestland
- 12:00 BAG WORKING LUNCH
- 1:00 Field Exercise
- 3:00 Return to Hotel / Inventory Exercise
- 4:00 Adjourn

Day 3 ***Introduction to Conservation Planning***

8:00	Review
8:30	Formulating Alternatives Exercise
9:30	Break
9:45	Formulating Alternatives Exercise
10:45	Evaluating Alternatives and Decision Making Exercise
11:45	Lunch
12:45	Evaluating Alternatives and Decision Making
1:15	Post Test
2:00	Planning and Regulations
3:00	Wrap Up
4:00	Adjourn