Locally Led Conservation

Resource Needs Assessments

Version 1 – August 2018

A Guide for Conservation Districts

"At risk is locally led, which could go from our base of influence (useful in the old days) to a noble but anemic historic concept, given 'lip-service' but lacking credibility and potency to effect results benefiting our local constituencies…The opportunities for the conservation delivery system of the future are promising. The challenges can be turned into opportunities if we manage them wisely. We have to help shape and empower new ways of doing business to benefit our constituencies…What's at risk? Survival! We either deliberately choose to use our wisdom, experience, passion, resources and powers and authorities to effect positive growth OR we might head down a rocky road to irrelevancy and eventually become unnecessary. Nothing is sadder than being the 'voice of conservation' in America if nobody is listening."

Conservation Delivery System of the Future Building Blocks for a Changing World
Revised DO/MS Committee CDs Report to NACD/2015
(http://www.nacdnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Conservation_Delivery_System_of_the_Future_White_Paper.pdf)

When Congress, and subsequently the states, created and empowered Conservation Districts (CDs), they believed that conservation decisions should be made at the local level and that CD's should have positive influence and involvement on natural resource and associated agricultural issues.

Conservation districts should play the lead role in the Locally Led Conservation process. The process, which is resource driven rather than program driven, should be used to direct and coordinate all federal, state and local conservation efforts.

This Guide will explain the steps for a conservation district to follow to conduct an inventory of resource issues and concerns and begin to utilize the information gained to create a Resource Needs Assessment (RNA) and subsequent Conservation Action Plans. The process will generate input for Local Work Groups to provide recommendations to the NRCS State Technical Advisory Committee and ultimately assist coordination and cooperation with federal, state and local planning and implementation of planning in your area.

Nevada Association of Conservation Districts (NvACD) and
Cooperative Extension, Eureka, NV
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Adapted from *Locally Led Conservation* by National Association of Conservation Districts
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We are excited about this opportunity; we know it will require much effort, but we think it is a powerful way to lead locally led conservation and we think CDs should be those leaders!

This Guide is a living document; please submit any suggestions to president@nvacd.org.

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<u>Introduction</u>

Nevada Association of Conservation Districts (NvACD) signed a Cooperative Agreement in 2017 with Natural Resources Conservation Service in Nevada; NRCS sought to increase the effectiveness of CD-led Local Work Groups and their State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) and NvACD will train and educate CDs and the agencies, groups, and local publics that will help them develop **Resource Needs Assessments (RNA)** to accomplish that.

The Resource Needs Assessment process begins when a CD brings together local producers, local groups, agencies and general public to identify resource concerns by means of the detailed NRCS Resource Concerns Checklist used for farm planning. This is the key, to first identify the resource concerns of soil, water, air, plants and animals, before adding in the human element. The process is effective because it is driven by resource concerns, not programs. It answers the question of what the resource concerns are BEFORE human traditions, wants, needs, values, biases, emotions or political position can cloud the issue. When the resource concerns are identified first, it keeps the human part from inadvertently dominating. It makes the focus be how to solve the resource issue at hand. This method will seek the most appropriate outcome, even if that may not appear to be the most desired at first.

Local knowledge and agency GIS layers and other data will inform the process with the results being run through NRCS' Conservation Practices Physical Effects (CPPE) matrix to identify appropriate solutions to remedy the resource concerns. The CD Resource Needs Assessment process will:

- Provide a foundation for **Locally Led** conservation actions and management of resources
- Inform the STAC process to prioritize NRCS funding on a state and local basis for landowner and District projects
- Ensure that your conservation programs address the <u>most important local resource needs in a manner acceptable to your community objectives</u>

This Guide and template provide a stepwise process and materials to assist CDs reach out to many groups/entities/publics to inform them about CDs and how this process can help them with locally led conservation. The Guide will explain the steps for a CD to follow to conduct an inventory of resource concerns and begin to utilize the information gained to create a Resource Needs Assessment and subsequent Conservation Action Plans. University of Nevada Reno (UNR) and Nevada Cooperative Extension (UNCE) are assisting NvACD to develop a sophisticated survey instrument to obtain public input to determine stakeholder conservation priorities and objectives. The total process will generate input for CD Local Work Groups to provide recommendations to the NRCS STAC and will ultimately assist with coordination and cooperation with federal, state and local planning and implementation of planning in your area.

History and Overview

The need for local leadership in natural resources management was one of the most important factors leading to the establishment of conservation districts 80 years ago. Conservation Districts were founded on the philosophy that conservation decisions should be made at the local level, CDs should have positive influence and involvement on natural resource issues, and that CDs could significantly leverage local, state and national funding sources to deliver "on-the-ground" conservation projects and management that is beneficial to both the local community and their natural resources.

THE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS' MISSION IN NEVADA

Conservation Districts work for the conservation and proper development of the state's natural resources by taking available technical, financial and educational resources, and coordinating them to meet the needs of landowners and land users. They often work in cooperation with counties, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, as well as other public and private agencies for the conservation of soil, water and related natural resources.

CDs develop and implement programs to protect and conserve soil, water, prime and unique farmland, rangeland, woodland, wildlife, energy and other renewable resources on nonfederal lands. Districts also stabilize local economies and resolve conflicts in land use. Nationally, CDs typically operate under the following general policies:

- That conservation should be led by local citizens;
- That the final responsibility for conservation lies with the landowner;
- That landowners have legitimate operating goals;
- That CDs are responsive to landowners, operators and the community as a whole, and;
- That the best agricultural land should be maintained for agriculture.

Following the creation of the federal Soil Conservation Service, conservation districts were created as a local focal point for coordinating and delivering technical assistance and funding to private land managers. Over the years, federal, state and local governments have channeled assistance through conservation districts to address virtually every aspect of natural resource conservation. Districts have focused on setting priorities and carrying out programs based on local conditions and needs.

However, legislation such as the 1985 and 1990 Farm Bills, the 1987 Clean Water Act amendments and the 1990 Coastal Zone Act significantly changed the way we address conservation and natural resource management needs. These and other programs, driven largely by national priorities, focused federal conservation efforts on a narrow range of natural resource concerns. State and local conservation leaders were often left on their own to balance limited program resources against growing conservation needs.

1996 Farm Bill

The enactment of the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, the 1996 Farm Bill, signaled a shift back to the original district approach of Locally Led Conservation. Elected officials and policy makers reaffirmed that local leadership and grassroots decision making are the keys to successfully managing and protecting our natural resources. As a result, conservation districts now have the opportunity to return to their roots and lead their communities in determining local conservation needs and priorities.

Nevada Collaborative Conservation Network

The recent formation of the Nevada Collaborative Conservation Network (NCCN) provides a great opportunity for Community Based or Locally Led Conservation in Nevada. NCCN is developing within the state to serve as a bridge between various local groups that are already operating and to utilize their experience, knowledge and passion as a way to enhance, expand and network other conservation efforts across the state to build momentum and the ability to lead to more and better conservation on the ground in a triple-bottom-line way. This Locally Led Conservation will be beneficial to both communities and natural resources and is imperative to regain local trust, input and acceptance for implementation of meaningful land management actions going forward. The initial NCCN workshop recognized and identified that Nevada is a unique and diverse state where implementation of federal actions is best understood and accomplished by incorporating local science and knowledge provided by those closest to the land. In order for federal land management agencies like the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to successfully implement management of federal lands, collaboration between state, federal, and local partners operating in an adaptive management environment is essential.

In considering the 1996 Farm Bill as part of the Locally Led Conservation process, Congress emphasized the need for a close working relationship among conservation districts, NRCS, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and other government agencies. To facilitate this, conservation districts are being asked to bring together local stakeholders to provide input to the USDA via Local Work Groups (LWGs) in order to guide program implementation and integrate the Farm Bill with other local initiatives. See Appendix E for direction on LWGs and the STAC.

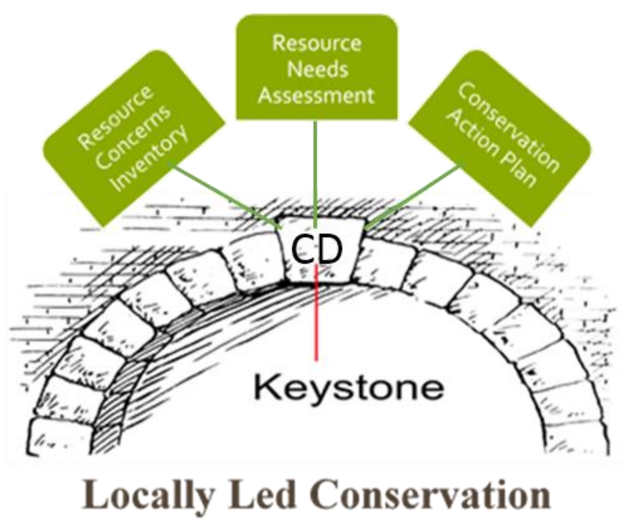
Nevada Revised Statutes and CDs

In Nevada and many other western states, where the federal government administers and manages significant portions of the land within the state, CD’s serve a vital role connecting private and public interests. Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) Chapter 548 grants CD's specific duties and powers to develop and carry out District policies or Conservation Plans for the conservation and management of renewable natural resources across both private and federal land. Some of these duties and powers include:

1) NRS 548.113 officially states that CD's "may be recognized as having special expertise regarding local conditions, conservation of renewable resources and the coordination of local programs which make conservation districts uniquely suitable to serve as cooperating agencies for the purpose of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 et seq.
2) The 2008 Farm Bill provided an allowance to expend EQIP funds on federal lands where resource issues and impacts extend across ownership and management boundaries creating new opportunity.
3) The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) and BLM signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) providing for a cooperative working relationship between the NACD and the BLM on July 16, 2013. This MOU recognizes and supports the role of Conservation Districts taking the leading role in administering Locally Led Conservation practices and provides for national and local sharing of technical, fiscal and administrative support to local conservation districts.

As a process, however, Locally Led Conservation goes beyond the Farm Bill or any other individual program. There are a number of program resources and data available through USDA, the Environmental Protection Agency, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, USFS, BLM, and other federal agencies that can be tapped for assistance in carrying out a local conservation program. There are also many resources available through state and local sources. District leadership will be critical to marshal and coordinate these resources to increase the visibility and effectiveness of local conservation efforts.

There is more opportunity for involvement and real beneficial impact at the local level than ever before. But in order to realize the benefits, local people must become involved at the local level with their Conservation Districts and the NCCN to make the opportunity become the reality.



Locally Led Conservation

<u>Putting Locally Led Conservation to Work</u>

Locally Led Conservation creates new opportunities but also poses significant challenges to districts to step up as conservation leaders in their communities; to lead in planning and implementation so all conservation begins at the local level. The fundamental requirement to initiate Locally Led "Resource-Based" conservation is always the development of a Resource Needs Assessment and analysis. The process outlined in this document utilizes the NRCS Resource Concerns Checklist approach which is resource driven rather than program driven. This inventory is a tried and true step by step process that will pinpoint for each resource concern, what, where, when, how big, why, and what can be done; it has been used successfully at many scales and for a variety of purposes. It is outlined in extensive detail in the **NRCS National Planning Procedures Handbook** (NPPH), Edition 1 which can be found at https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/OpenNonWebContent.aspx?content=36483.wba.

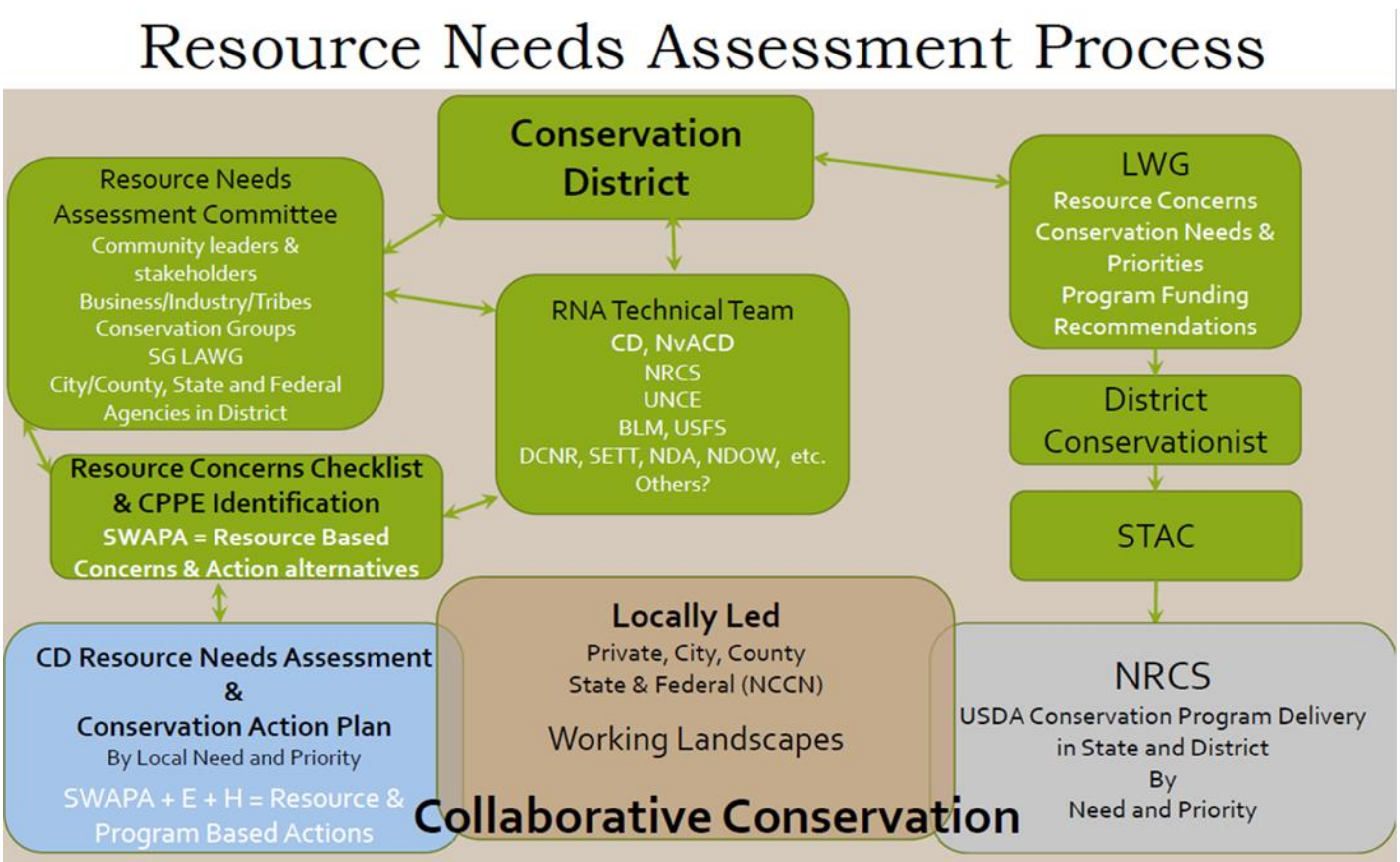
The steps of an RNA as outlined by this Guide will help involve the entire community in both planning and implementation by identifying resource concerns first. The process will generate input for Local Work Groups (See Appendix E) to provide recommendations to the NRCS State Technical Advisory Committee and ultimately assist coordination and cooperation with federal, state, and local planning and implementation of planning in your area.

Always keep in mind – <u>this is a guide; it is not a cookbook</u> – as such, everything must be tailored to the specific needs of your local area. There are many resources to assist you and you don't have to reinvent the wheel. Because it is resource driven, you will focus on what concerns in your area need to be addressed. The purpose of a CD RNA is to ensure that your conservation focus addresses the most important local resource needs in a manner acceptable to your community's objectives.

NvACD recognizes that while CD supervisors are elected officials, they also serve in their official capacities as unpaid volunteers. All supervisors have full time jobs, businesses, farms, or ranches; any time and effort away from family and business must be worthwhile in order to make that commitment. We feel that this process is worth the additional time and effort because it will provide the information needed to identify, prioritize, and address local resource issues efficiently and effectively. It will evaluate and incorporate potential conservation practices that are known to be effective, and thus provide a scientific basis and plan for implementation of effective on-the-ground practices. It will also provide a platform that will be science-based when engaging governmental and nongovernmental agencies and partners for the acquisition of funding and implementation of conservation projects.

This process, if done properly, will take time and will require commitment by the supervisors. In order for this process to be truly meaningful at the district level it must incorporate input from stakeholders throughout the District and across all demographic, cultural and ethnic lines so that stakeholders and the community are accurately represented. One of the main duties of the supervisors will be outreach and engagement of these diverse stakeholders. We have proposed a committee structure outlined in the graphic below to increase input, share in the workload, obtain additional expertise, and optimize usefulness of the RNA.

NvACD has partnered with UNR and UNCE to develop a sophisticated survey instrument to obtain input from a broader cross section of stakeholders; this will be available in 2019. The initial seven CDs participating have contractors with NRCS planning experience to assist them paid by funds from National Association of Conservation Districts; NvACD hopes to obtain funding in the future to be able to continue to hire contractors to assist CDs.



The proposed committee structure begins with the CD supervisors as the lead or convening entity. CD supervisors would then form committees seeking membership from local stakeholders with agricultural and/or natural resource interests in the local community. The committees, which include District supervisors, would perform separate but interrelated tasks.

1) Resource Needs Assessment Committee: Outreach and data/information collection
   a) Assist to develop the RNA by identifying resource concerns and broad conservation goals to solve natural resource problems
   b) Assist CD and NRCS with public outreach and information efforts
   c) Identify education and training needs

2) RNA Technical Team: Data/information compilation, analysis and reporting

3) Local Work Group (LWG – CD/NRCS specific): interaction with STAC to:
   a) Recommend USDA conservation program design and policy in addition to funding criteria, eligible practices and establishing limits on practice payment
   b) Recommend educational and producer's training needs
   c) Recommend program policy to the STAC based on resource data

The committees should keep in mind how the CD can meet the goals of their responsibility by staying true to the process:
The first step, using the Resource Concerns Checklist is to catalog what resource concerns exist, with no bias, no political positioning, no desired outcomes, no organizational issues; this is simply – what are the real, measurable, quantifiable resource concerns that exist on the ground. This is the first step for the CD to do as we have the responsibility to catalog the resource concerns and present them to others to review and add any additional resource concerns that weren't identified.

At a later time, there will be interviews, involvement and additions of all the desired outcomes and organizational needs.

The CD is not a land use planning agency; a CD is responsible for knowing the resource concerns in their area, identifying possible solutions and initiating programs, positions or policy to address them at a local level.

Basic Steps to the Resource Needs Assessment Process and Follow-Through

1. Form committees and begin public outreach to bring local stakeholders together.

2. Complete a Resource Concerns Checklist to identify, document, and map local concerns and needs using data collection derived from local knowledge and state and federal agencies specific to the local area for soil, water, animals, plants and air (SWAPA).

3. Identify, agree upon and document community conservation priorities and objectives including human and energy considerations (SWAPA + H + E) based on public input and what the data is saying. This step can be enhanced by the UNR/UNCE survey and larger public meetings that ensure the committees haven't missed anything.

4. Identify and analyze potential conservation practices based on the NRCS Conservation Practices Physical Effects (CPPE) matrix. Look for other funding and partner resources available to address local needs and priorities.

5. Prioritize resource concerns by geographic areas and potential priority areas. Document findings and conclusions in a Resource Needs Assessment document.

6. CD Supervisors develop a Conservation Action Plan utilizing the RNA document.

7. Inform the Local Work Group and NRCS STAC process to help determine NRCS funding and project priorities in your area and in Nevada.

8. Implement the Conservation Action Plan.
9. Utilize the Action Plan to seek and obtain funding from any source for project work or to coordinate or cooperate with other federal, state or local plans and work with these entities to implement the Conservation Action Plan.

10. Review and adjust the Action Plan as necessary every 5-10 years to evaluate needs and accomplishments.

Steps 7, 8 and 9 are concurrent; Steps 6 and 7 could be reversed in order; the order of these steps is not as important as recognizing the process is a progression from identifying resource concerns to creating and implementing a plan to alleviate those resource concerns.

Step 1 – Public Outreach / Involvement

One of the most important steps in the Locally Led Conservation process is to solicit input from organizations and individuals familiar with local resource needs and conditions. Local stakeholders are a critical link to assess the resource base, set priorities and ultimately carry out the local conservation program. An effective outreach effort could involve setting up public meetings to gather community input. It might also include the establishment of an ongoing advisory committee which could work with or as the LWG. Other ideas to consider include utilizing the survey developed by UNR/UNCE or holding focus group meetings.

The most important goal of your outreach effort is to enable your constituents to help identify natural resource issues that affect them. By involving a broad representation of stakeholders, you will have the opportunity to increase visibility, prestige and base of support within the community and provide detailed documentation of local resource concerns and objectives when working with entities and agencies outside of your District.

To begin your public outreach effort, you will need to identify all of the agencies, organizations, businesses and individuals in your community that have an interest in natural resource management. Even organizations and individuals that traditionally have not shared your point of view should be included. Appendix C includes detailed ideas and guidelines to assist in your public outreach effort.

Step 2 – Resource Concerns Checklist

The National Planning Procedures Handbook (Handbook) explains in detail the process an NRCS planner follows to do a farm plan. The same principles and technique lend themselves to watershed level planning that a CD can accomplish to meet an ultimate goal of a Conservation Action Plan to guide their CD's participation in locally led conservation. See Map in Appendix F for Nevada Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 10 watersheds or decide locally the scale at which you choose to inventory; it should be a HUC 10 at a minimum. Repeat the Checklist for each subdivision or group of subdivisions you employ for your RNA until you complete all the areas within your CD area.

The Handbook can be found at:
https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/OpenNonWebContent.aspx?content=36483.wba
NRCS staff can help explain and make the information they have available for your use. NRCS also has Field Office Technical Guides (FOTG) and soil survey information.

The Resources Concerns Checklist has updated multiple times and while the intent is required by NRCS throughout the nation, the exact form used is at each state's discretion which means that form is difficult to locate in a publicly accessible site; NRCS reports these sites may become totally unavailable to the public in the future. A PDF of the basic Checklist is on the NvACD website at http://nvacd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Resource-Concerns-Checklist-national.pdf

An elongated form for all types of land use can be found at https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1243948.pdf.
The left-hand column is what is used to determine resource concerns for your RNA.

Descriptions of all the categories included in the Checklist can be found at https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1187296.pdf or on the NvACD website at http://nvacd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Resource-Concerns-descriptions-by-NRCS.pdf

The first thing to do is familiarize yourself with NRCS terminology. Review the Definitions near the beginning of the Handbook. (600.2) "Clients" are defined on page 600-A.7. You and all your publics and agencies are clients. Keep in mind that since the Handbook is now in revision, page numbers shown below may change when it is reissued; consult with your District Conservationist.

Seek information from other agencies, local, state and federal, that are specific to your area. You will need to make the local government entities aware of your RNA effort. Develop relationships within all the offices. The state and federal agencies are aware of this RNA work CDs are doing; build awareness as you build relationships.

Checklist inventory direction is provided in the Handbook on page 600-C.8. While this is written from an agricultural standpoint, the inventory categories apply to all situations, even urban. Urban CDs should address such concerns as dust abatement and soil compaction for example. The more complete your data collection is, the better you can accurately address the questions on the Resource Concerns Checklist and the more effective your STAC recommendations and planning implementation will be.

The Inventory should attempt to answer the questions: what, where, when, and why you have resource concerns. Putting them together will tell you how big the problem is. This method bases the solution on what the resource concern is, not on any politics that creates the perception of a real or perceived resource concern. What the current land use is becomes part of the equation after this inventory; when the human part is included.

A major purpose of the resource concerns checklist is to ensure that conservation programs address the most important local resource needs. Resource concerns may be identified through the resource checklist process and by screening and assessment of individual concerns. The objective in conservation planning is to help manage resources for sustained use and productivity while considering economic and social needs of the local community. The resource concerns inventory will be the basis for selecting the type and extent of needed conservation systems and practices. It will also be the basis for making recommendations on funding priorities and priority areas to be addressed by the various conservation programs available within the district. This is the link between your CD and the NRCS Local Work group!

Step 3 – Set Local Priorities

Through your group process, list the SWAPA resource concerns and prioritize them. Analyze the Energy component on the Resource Concerns Checklist, then make sure stakeholders discuss difficult social issues such as traditions, lifestyles, local economics and fears. Insure specific environmental concerns are addressed specific to the discussion. (SWAPA + E + H) The concerns brought forward through your committee can then be vetted in larger public meetings or supplemented with information from the survey.

Step 4 – Conservation Practices Physical Effects (CPPE) Matrix

CDs and Local Work Groups should likely choose to have NRCS or a contractor run the Checklist results through the CPPE. This looks at every concern: soil, water, air, plant, animal, and adds in what modifies it: energy and human, and considers it against every conservation practice (see Definitions in the Handbook, page 600-A.10) developed by NRCS to give a suite of practices that if implemented will have a positive effect on the resource concern. This information has been developed by accumulating all the years of research and application into effective practices.

In the NRCS process for planning on private lands, when you complete the CPPE process to know what concerns you have, and add in your desired land use(s), the resulting list will plug into what National Environmental Policy Act paperwork NRCS is required to do. This applies to private land only.

The CPPE results will help the CD, LWG, and the local NRCS District Conservationist know how to direct NRCS funding to alleviate the resource concerns you have identified. Additionally, these results equip you with information that will enable you to seek funding outside of NRCS.

Step 5 – Resource Needs Assessment Document

The RNA is a comprehensive analysis of the work that needs to be done to achieve broad conservation goals and to solve specific natural resource problems. It should be based on public input and include a detailed analysis of natural resource concerns within the district. The RNA should begin with a resource concerns inventory that addresses the entire resource base: soil, water, air, plants, animals (SWAPA). When developing the RNA, the effects of energy and humans can be integrated into the process.

The Checklist inventory is the anchor point of the Resource Needs Assessment. When complete, the document will identify what the problems are, and what available tools and opportunities exist to address the problems. The Needs Assessment adds in the human factors; it moves the process from recognizing the existing situation, to identifying what you want it to be within the confines and capabilities of the resource. Following the steps in this order prevents a frequent planning problem from occurring – injecting the human element too soon in the process. A locally developed RNA that first identifies the resource concerns and then adds in the human element will have the most chance for success.

With input from interested parties, this assessment will provide a comprehensive evaluation of the condition of the district's natural resource base and be the platform for making decisions about local priorities or policies in all local conservation programs. The process must be driven by resource needs rather than driven by programs. Resource needs should be used to guide and coordinate all federal, state and local conservation efforts to solve the resource problems.

Step 6 - Putting the Pieces Together – Conservation Action Plan

The information gathered through the public outreach and resource concerns inventory process can then be used to:

- set measurable conservation goals and objectives;
- identify conservation systems and practices needed to achieve these goals and objectives; and
- identify federal, state, local and non-government programs and services that are available to address specific conservation needs.

The resource concerns checklist, subsequent RNA and resulting district conservation action plan will form a foundation upon which all local conservation efforts should be based. This process should be the source for carrying out federal programs such as the Farm Bill, Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act and Endangered Species Act, as well as the many state and local programs that can provide assistance to private land managers.

<u>Farm Bill Conservation Programs</u>

The Locally Led Conservation process is an important mechanism for coordinating and carrying out all federal, state and local conservation programs. In the 1996 Farm Bill, Congress recognized the need for conservation districts to be fully involved in the development and delivery of USDA conservation programs. The intent of Congress was clarified in the Farm Bill's conference report, which states that:

. . . The Secretary of Agriculture should, to the fullest extent practicable, recognize the responsibilities and utilize the authorities of state and local governments, including conservation districts. . . In particular, Congress intends for the Secretary to acknowledge and maintain the historic role of conservation districts in assessing natural resource priorities, approving site-specific conservation plans, and coordinating the delivery of federal conservation programs at the local level.

In carrying out the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and other Farm Bill conservation programs, one of a districts' most important responsibilities will be to represent local stakeholders' interests through the LWG and STAC.

Step 7 – Inform LWG and NRCS State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC)

Completing an RNA means a CD has the information in place to make the best recommendations about how best to spend any program dollars available from any source to solve resource concerns, and how to locally lead planning for the future. This will provide information for the NRCS STAC and other partners available to work in your local area so that the best decisions can be made how to implement projects to solve your resource concerns.

Conservation districts will convene and lead the Local Work Groups that will guide the implementation of Farm Bill programs. The work groups will consist of district board members and key staff, NRCS staff, FSA county committee members and key staff, and other federal, state and local government agencies. NRCS policy specifically says, "Membership should include agricultural producers representing the variety of crops, livestock and poultry raised within the local area; owners of non-industrial private forest land, as appropriate; representatives of agricultural and environmental organizations; and representative of governmental agencies carrying out agricultural and natural resource conservation programs and activities." See Appendix E.

CDs need to develop relationships in their area that will become the foundational members of the LWG for that CD. The members of the LWG will meet to determine goals and priorities for local delivery of USDA conservation programs, monitor the overall effectiveness of USDA's conservation programs and make recommendations for improvements. Recommendations from the LWGs will also be included in the state and national conservation needs assessments for USDA programs and will be used in developing future program priorities and policies. This is the connection from the local to the national level. It begins at the LWG level; the direction the

LWG provides is passed up to the STAC which will consider the input from all the LWGs and make national recommendations as appropriate.

LWGs and the STAC are exempt from provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act according to 16 U.S.C. Section 3862(d) since the 2008 Farm Bill. Specific guidance for LWGs and the STAC is available from the NRCS Manual available at the NvACD website at http://nvacd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/STACpolicy-1-Manual-Title-440-Part-501.pdf

Step 8 – Implement the Conservation Action Plan

From the National Planning Procedures Handbook, "*Conservation planning is a natural resource problem solving and management process. The process integrates economic, social/cultural resources and ecological consideration to meet private and public needs. This approach, which emphasizes desired future condition, enhances natural resource management through identification and prioritization of resource concerns and evaluating the tools to address these concerns.*

The role of humans is considered in the formulation and delivery of planning activities. Human values and activities influence the structure and functions of ecological systems. Human actions result in direct and indirect effects on natural resources. The challenge in conservation planning is to balance the short-term demand for goods and services with the long-term sustainability of ecological systems. A conservation plan facilitates a user to operate in an ecologically sustainable, economically sound, and socially acceptable manner.

Conservation planning can be implemented successfully using current knowledge and technology, while recognizing that the art and science of natural resource management will continue to evolve and will never be complete or finished. The planner strives to balance natural resource issues with economic and social needs through the development and implementation of the conservation plan."

Step 9 – Utilize the Conservation Action Plan

This Locally Led planning process establishes a foundation upon which the District's conservation efforts are based. It provides the informational and scientific rigor for planning and project implementation that is on par with other federal agency planning and provides the context to develop collaborative solutions with state and federal partners. It challenges neighbors, both urban and rural, to work together and take responsibility for addressing local resource needs. It involves the community in the assessment of those needs, as well as the solutions and priorities. The approach emphasizes voluntary, non-regulatory, incentive-based actions before use of regulatory measures. It is not driven by any single piece of legislation, any one fiscal year or any individual program; it is an on- going, timeless approach that is not tied to any particular year. As such, it is able to be evaluated regularly to ensure it is effectively meeting the long-term needs of the local community.

Step 10 – Review and Adjust the Conservation Action Plan regularly

Every plan requires updates for it to remain effective. This process is designed to be dynamic and allow for additions or adjustments to your plan to allow inclusion of new information, new partners, or a response to a new challenge.

Conclusions

The Nevada CD Supervisors Handbook (http://dcnr.nv.gov/uploads/CD-Documents/Nevada-CD-Supervisors-Handbook.pdf) identifies planning as the basic tool for developing conservation district programs. NvACD and NRCS agree with this concept and it is the basis for the Agreement and funding which makes conservation programs available to Nevada CDs.

In 1947, Hugh Hammond Bennett, the leader in the soil conservation movement in America, identified the principles of conservation planning in his text, *Elements of Soil Conservation.* According to Bennett, an effective conservation planner must adhere to the following principles:

1. Consider the needs and capabilities of each acre within the plan,
2. Consider the client's facilities, machinery, and economic situation,
3. Incorporate the client's willingness to try new practices,
4. Consider the land's relationship to the entire farm, ranch, or watershed,
5. Ensure the conservationist's presence out on the land.

Some things change, some things should remain the same, with some modifications to match the times. We should always be in touch with the land we seek to manage; for conservation districts, it is our trust and our responsibility.

NVACD

Nevada Association of Conservation Districts

CONSERVING NATURAL RESOURCES FOR OUR FUTURE

Appendices

Appendix A	(2 pg)	RNA – Abbreviated Process
Appendix B	(2 pg)	Information for the Contractor and Technical Team
Appendix C	(4 pg)	Guidelines for Public Outreach Efforts
Appendix D	(3 pg)	Additional Resources
Appendix E	(3 pg)	LWG Descriptions and Manual
Appendix F	(1 pg)	NV HUC 10 Map
Appendix G	(1 pg)	Conservation District and Area Map
Appendix H	(1 pg)	Survey instrument
Appendix I	(1 pg)	Updates and Lessons Learned

Appendix A Abbreviated Resource Needs Assessment Process 2 pages

Identify Watershed(s) to Include and break out manageable areas to assess
Determine HUC level to use
Combine or separate units based on complexity
Prioritize watershed order

Inform your local area about Resource Needs Assessment
Develop a selected Resource Needs Assessment Committee (community leaders and stakeholders, business/industry/tribes, conservation groups, SG LAWG, city/county, state, federal agencies)
Begin an ongoing process to inform key leaders and public of your intent, what will be accomplished and when and how they will be needed to participate
Build relationships to develop into an ongoing CD-led Local Work Group (LWG)

Identify and gather information available to inform process, Sources or contacts to obtain it from and organize it so the information is useful to discussions to follow

Soil survey – NRCS (https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm)
Vegetation – NRCS Ecological Site Descriptions, BLM mapping
Weeds – NDA, CWMAs
Habitat designations – NDOW
State water quality standards – NDEP
State air quality standards – NDEP
Ground water basin information – State Water Engineer/Department of Water Resources
Cultural Resources – BLM, SHPO
Recreation – BLM, State Parks, USFS, other
Special land designations – BLM, other
Others

Gather CD Supervisors, key users and specialists for that area (RNA Technical Team)
This needs to be a smaller group to be able to work effectively and efficiently
Provide for transcription of meetings to retain information
Analyze watershed area by NRCS Resource Concerns Checklist
Determine what you are going to use for the standards

- Is there an established standard by which we measure this?
- Does the resource concern exceed standards or not? You don't have to know exactly how much it exceeds
- Do you have the information needed to define the resource concerns using the Team's baseline knowledge?
- If not, determine where you need to go to get that information and reexamine checklist based on information gained
- Answer: where is the problem coming from, how big is it, what is possibly causing it, and any ideas to fix it

Make it as simple as you can with the known information

Appendix A Abbreviated Resource Needs Assessment Process 2 pages

Compile data – look at the data and see what it is telling you for each resource concern

Is it a problem or is it not a problem?
If there is not a standard, but we know there are concerns, we need to document we recognize a problem and monitor the situation
Depict the information gained by GIS as much as possible
Organize information and store it appropriately
This is an iterative process, repeat for each resource concern in each watershed

Confer with Resource Needs Assessment Committee and conduct public meetings

Present the known data you have collected in most effective way for your area (maybe regionalize some watersheds)
Ask: these are the concerns we have identified, we seek your input, are there any concerns we have missed…
Stress this is not about politics; we can't talk about the politics until we identify the resource concerns

Conservation Practices Physical Effects (CPPE) matrix

https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/technical/econ/data/?cid=nrcs143_009740
Identify solutions that may not be documented by the CPPE matrix, such as fall grazing of cheatgrass

Public Input

Send out survey developed by UNR
USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service can send to ag producers and nag for return for a fee

Conservation Practices Physical Effects (CPPE) matrix

The CPPE may need to be run again after public input is incorporated

Develop Conservation Action Plans

CD-led Local Work Group process to take the information gained from the RNA to direct conservation planning and implementation to address resource needs and priorities in your area

- Inform NRCS State Technical Advisory Committee
- Have a plan in place to coordinate and cooperate with federal agency planning per NRS 548.113
- Be able to direct funding from any source toward appropriate conservation projects
- Assist your County with local planning to address local resource concerns
- Creates an understandable mechanism for a LWG to function and fulfill its responsibilities
- Furtherance of partnerships begun by varied sage grouse efforts

Appendix B Information for the Contractor and Technical Team 2 pages

FOR THE CONTRACTOR

NvACD has signed an agreement with NRCS for CDs to complete resource needs assessments to be able to properly inform the STAC of their issues, and priorities for addressing those issues, to improve and invigorate the function of the State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC).

The NRCS Planning Manual incorporates two tools which you can use assist the District to prepare and document a resource needs assessment to fulfill this process. These are the Resource Concerns checklist and the Conservation Practices Physical Effects (CPPE) matrix. The CD will not be completing a full planning process but will be documenting information that is needed for them to provide guidance to NRCS through the STAC process for priorities and concerns within their area, and subsequently, resource planning and program implementation or targeted needs for planning and funding of any programs within their area.

The Planning Manual offers several levels of SCOPE or DETAIL for completing a conservation plan. The needed analysis to meet the terms of NvACD's agreement would require only the simplest of detail. As a result, this can be completed at a much less detailed level than what would be conducted for any area, regional, or farm plan. The intent is to conduct this analysis at a very broad scale this first time through and be only detailed enough to comply with the terms of NvACD's funding agreement with NRCS.

For example: when guiding the CD through the Resource concerns checklist. You would look at a topic such as soil erosion and identify that there is significant wind erosion on cultivated fields in X valley during the spring and that the last years flood has left some gully erosion along two miles of "test creek" in Y valley. It is likely that you would not need to be any more detailed at this point other than to try to identify some of the causes for these issues. Then you would run through a CPPE review and identify what practices (out of the Handbook of Conservation Practices) could be applied that would be beneficial (practices with a plus only) for addressing these concerns for soil erosion. You do not need to carry the analysis any farther as this information allows you to complete a summary of how the CD would like to see funds and programs or priorities directed (the needs assessment).

The object is to conduct this review at the simplest level possible for this first analysis. The target items to include in this review are:

- Is there or is there not a resource concern?
- Where is it?
- How big is the affected area?
- What are the likely causes creating or aggravating the concern?
- Does this concern need more detailed investigation as to causes, or data, or potential affect?

At this point a review of the CPPE to identify the list of possible conservation practices to address each of these concerns should be conducted.

Appendix B Information for the Contractor and Technical Team 2 pages

Lastly, a report that compiles

- these identified issues,
- identifies the list of possible conservation practices to address each these concerns,
- prioritization of the most frequently occurring concerns and
- the CD's 12345 priority order for working on them,
- identify the locations in the CD to concentrate on to address these top 5 concerns and
- if any of these concerns need further research, investigation, level of planning or focus of resources to address.

Any work beyond answering the initial purpose of the Agreement by these bulleted items would be a new scope of work and level of planning.

Remember, the intent is to conduct this at the simplest level that will comply with the agreement NvACD has with NRCS regarding informing the STAC process. These two tools allow adequate opportunity for a CD to do more detailed analysis on any specific issue at any time in the future. The work can lead to a conservation action plan on any issue.

Appendix C Guidelines for Public Outreach Efforts 4 pages

Determine how, and to what degree, you want to engage the public in developing the resource needs assessment. Vehicles for soliciting public input include meetings, focus groups and surveys. When choosing from among these options, consider the following questions:

- what is your time frame for gathering input?
- What financial resources are available for this effort?
- What personnel resources (district board members, staff, and volunteers, outside facilitators) are available?

Meetings

You will need to decide the future relationship you want to have with the group you invite. You may decide to hold just one meeting. If so, the agenda should include only a realistic number of steps towards developing the resource needs assessment.

If you want the group to do more than simply recommend broad conservation goals, you should probably plan for more than one meeting. You may even want to consider forming a group that meets periodically to review progress, consult on new projects or work to get funding to implement your conservation program.

Detailed guidelines and a sample invitation are provided on the following pages.

Focus Groups

Focus groups, or direct interview sessions with a carefully selected group that reflects the diversity of the community, can provide more detailed input than a larger public gathering.

A facilitator trained in focus group methodology can also help assure that you get the information you are seeking from your focus group. Your state NRCS office, Extension office or Land Grant university may be able to help you locate a trained facilitator. Additionally, the NCCN maintains a list of trained facilitators for resource issues in Nevada.

Surveys

Providing a short survey form can increase the effectiveness of your public outreach effort by ensuring that you receive input from stakeholders whether or not they participate in meetings or focus groups. Also, encourage recipients to send in written comments to address issues not covered by the survey.

PREPARING FOR A PUBIC MEETING

When? Select an appropriate time and date for the meeting. Consult local calendars and other organizations to ensure that other events will not interfere with attendance.

Where? Select a central, easily accessible location. The location should be familiar, comfortable, well-lit and equipped with a good public address system. Consider taping the proceedings to assist in accurately recording the input.

What do we call the meeting? What you call the meeting should reflect its intent and purpose. If you plan to have the group meet periodically, it might be referred to as a conservation advisory committee or council. If you plan to convene only one or two meetings, you may want to simply call it a public meeting, community forum, or a town hall meeting.

Appendix C Guidelines for Public Outreach Efforts 4 pages

Who should be involved? Aim to include as broad a cross section as possible of individuals and organizations with knowledge of, and interest in, the natural resource concerns of your community. Possible participants include:

- FSA county committee and staff
- Other federal agencies with offices in the state or district, e.g. BLM, USFS, NRCS
- District cooperators
- State conservation agency representatives
- Local, state, and tribal environmental, agricultural and recreational agencies
- Agricultural organizations
- Environmental and conservation organizations
- Civic groups
- Local and state elected officials
- Tribal officials
- Residential community associations
- Local boards of education and local schools
- Local businesses that have an impact on natural resources
- Garden clubs
- Political organizations (Democratic and Republican clubs, League of Women Voters)
- Hunting, fishing, and recreation organizations
- Builder associations

Invitations. Prepare a mailing list of appropriate participants. Three to four weeks ahead of the meeting, send them an invitation describing the nature and importance of the task they are asked to help with. The invitation should include a brief description of the local district, a brief description of the resource needs assessment process and the agenda for the meeting. Follow-up phone calls should be made to key organizations and individuals three to five days prior to the meeting.

Additional publicity. Make sure that the meeting is well publicized in advance. Prepare a press release or media announcement based on the information included in the invitation letter. Contact local newspapers, radio and television stations two to three weeks before the meeting. Also include information about the meeting in newsletters published by your district, your county FSA office and other local organizations. Place posters in appropriate high traffic areas such as the meeting location, post offices, store windows, etc.

The agenda. When designing the meeting agenda, think about how to motivate the audience to become involved and generate significant input. For example, it may be desirable to form small groups to recommend broad conservation goals and to use a nominal group technique for voting. The bulk of the agenda should be devoted to looking at each natural resource and dominant land use, the existing conditions and priorities for your district.

Facilitation. Consider using a trained facilitator to run the meeting. Such an individual can be invaluable in keeping the discussion focused, resolving conflicts and maximizing audience participation. Meet with or call the facilitator before the meeting to discuss goals, procedures and expectations. Your state NRCS office, Extension office or Land Grant university may be able to help you locate a trained facilitator.

Appendix C Guidelines for Public Outreach Efforts 4 pages

CONDUCTING A PUBLIC MEETING

Staffing. Appoint district board or staff members to serve as discussion leaders, timekeepers and recorders. The facilitator or discussion leader may need one or more assistants to record comments on flip charts, provide assistance to small groups and perform other tasks. Technical experts from the district, NRCS, FSA and county committee staff should also be on hand to answer questions.

Materials. Provide a document table at the meeting on which you can display district fact sheets and policy positions, the agenda and other information. A large map of your county or area, displayed in a prominent position in the meeting room, will be helpful when referring to specific areas during your discussions. Flip charts and easels will be helpful for capturing and displaying participants' comments. Sign-in sheets should be used to collect participants' names, organizations, mail and email addresses, phone and fax numbers. (Add these names to your district mailing list for future contact.)

Introduction. Start on time and set the tone and purpose of the meeting right away. A brief explanation of the conservation district, the conservation delivery system and the resource needs assessment should be presented. Consider using a brief slide presentation or video to illustrate existing natural resource conditions. This presentation can later be used at other district events.

Discussion/Brainstorming. The facilitator should initiate discussion and encourage input from the audience regarding the condition of natural resources in the community and how these resources are affected by dominant land uses. The audience also should be encouraged to recommend conservation goals and priorities. If there is a large audience, you may want to break up into smaller groups. Recommendations should be recorded on a flip chart. Once all input is recorded, the facilitator should work with participants to help them vote upon and/or rank the most important conservation goals and priorities.

Follow-up. Before participants leave the meeting, be sure to describe to them what the district will do with the input they have provided. Consider holding a follow-up meeting to report on progress. At very least, keep stakeholders informed with at least one follow-up mailing or reporting in local news.

Appendix C Guidelines for Public Outreach Efforts 4 pages

Sample invitation to Resource Needs Assessment meeting

We Need Your Help to Plan the Future of ______ County's Natural Resources!

As a community leader with an interest in our natural resources, you are invited to attend a public meeting to share your ideas for the development of (*Your District's name)* Resource Needs Assessment. We hope you can join us on (*date)* at (*time)* at the *(meeting location and address.)*

The Resource Needs Assessment will evaluate the current conditions of ________ County's natural resources and dominate land uses, identify natural resource concerns and goals, and prioritize areas where our conservation efforts are most needed. This assessment will become the foundation on which our future plans and projects will be based. We want to hear your recommendations on where the natural resource problems are and how we can work together to solve them.

The *(your District's name)* was created by state law in 1937. Conservation districts were charged to direct programs protecting local renewable and natural resources. Their mission is to protect and manage the natural resources of (*your county)*. (*Your district's name)* serves as local coordinators of technical and financial assistance for natural resource problems from all levels of government to private landowners and in some cases public land users.

The District is governed by a board of supervisors who are local residents, elected to four-year terms, and take an oath of office to carry out the District's mission, or are appointed by the county or city. The district supervisors are unpaid officials who dedicate their time to serve the community and its natural resources.

Whether you can attend or not, we encourage you to fill out the enclosed survey form and mail it back to us so we can benefit from your opinions. You may also wish to send additional written comments if the form doesn't adequately address the natural resource issues of concern to you.

We hope to see you at the meeting and look forward to your participation. You are one of our customers and we intend, through this process, to serve you better. Please join us and help us plan for proper management of our natural resources into the next century.

Sincerely,

Appendix D Additional Resources 3 pages

Publications

NRCS

Social Sciences Team Publications

https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/people/outreach/oe/?cid=stelprdb1045637#ppcs will take you to:

The People, Partnerships and Communities series provide guidance to the conservation partnership about how to effectively work with people and communities. Each information sheet covers one topic and answers 5 questions about that topic: Why is the topic important? Who benefits from the information? When is the information useful? How do you apply the information? Where do you go to get more information? Go To PPCs table.

Technical reports provide more technical, scientific coverage of natural resource topics than the PPC series. They cover social science topics in more depth, with more analysis. Go To Tech reports table.

The Marketing Guidebooks were produced by the National Association of Conservation Districts, in cooperation with the Institute. They help conservation districts and conservation offices market natural resources conservation and build better conservation programs. Go To Marketing table.

Product and Program Brochures include flyers, brochures, and handouts that we make available at public meetings. Go To Brochures table.

Miscellaneous publications don't fit any of the three niches explained above. They include position descriptions and "non-official" writings. Go To Miscellaneous publications table.

NRCS National Planning Procedures Handbook

https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/OpenNonWebContent.aspx?content=36483.wba

Field Office Technical Guides (FOTG)

https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/technical/fotg/

For Nevada: https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/

NRCS / US Army Corps of Engineers Partnership Handbook

NvACD website at http://nvacd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/NRCS.USACE-Partnership-Handbook.pdf

National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)

The NACD website provides many useful links – http://www.nacdnet.org.

The Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC)

http://www.ctic.org/Know%20Your%20Watershed/Watershed%20Guides/

CTIC developed a series of guidebooks; the information is applicable to all Locally Led Conservation efforts; see list below available at the above link.

Watershed Guides

Building Local Partnerships

Describes challenges and benefits, development, obstacles, technical advisor selection, conducting effective meetings, team building exercises. 12-page guide.

Getting to Know Your Local Watershed

Provides background, describes components, highlights key elements. 8-page guide.

Groundwater and Surface Water: Understanding the Interaction

Describes the relationship between groundwater and surface water in a watershed. Identifies threats to groundwater. 16-page guide.

Leading and Communicating

Explains how to develop communication and leadership skills. Includes listening, brainstorming and meeting suggestions. 8-page guide.

Managing Conflict

Describes sources, assessments, strategies, negotiation, public policy, conflict, resolving conflict. 8-page.

Putting Together a Watershed Management Plan

Explains how to put together a plan. Covers gathering and analyzing information, setting objectives, selecting management alternatives, developing strategies, measuring progress and evaluating efforts. 16-page guide.

Reflecting on Lakes

Describes how a lake and its watershed are linked. 12-page guide.

Wetlands: A Key Link in Watershed Management

Provides an explanation of wetlands and how they are beneficial to your watershed, as well as methods of managing and restoring wetlands. 8-page guide.

Training

Conservation Partnership Operations Work Group. This team of NACD, National Association of Conservation Agencies (NASCA) and NRCS representatives works directly with states to assist districts with leadership training, program planning, meeting design and other needs.

NACD District guides: http://www.nacdnet.org/general-resources/district-guides/
Webinars: http://www.nacdnet.org/general-resources/webinars/

NASCA provides personalized training programs to states that request it. This training can include district official training programs, staff training programs, or training on specific issues of concern. The

NASCA Resource Library has over 350 documents with information on topics ranging from: district operations and accountability, conservation district funding, to outreach and legislative funding.
http://www.nascanet.org/resource-library/dstrict-training

Facilitation

View the Nevada Collaborative Conservation Network for potential facilitation assistance:
http://sagebrusheco.nv.gov/About/Collaborative_Network/
Contact your local cooperative extension educator, or your state NRCS office to get a list of trained NRCS facilitators in your state.

Ten Basic Principles of an Effective Stakeholder Collaboration

1. Clarity of purpose (informed commitment and commitment to use the process to inform decisions
2. Timeliness in relation to decisions
3. Inclusiveness (balanced, voluntary representation)
4. Collaborative problem formulation and process design (group autonomy; process impartiality)
5. Focus on implementation
6. Accountability (good faith communication)
7. Openness (transparency)
8. Adequate capacity and resources
9. Commitment to shared learning
10. Iteration between analysis and broadly-based deliberation

Appendix E Local Work Group Descriptions and Manual 3 pages

1. Appendix E, page 3 of 3 has an NRCS description of the Local Work Group.

2. The NRCS Manual for USDA Conservation Program Delivery is available from the NvACD website at: http://nvacd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/STACpolicy-1-Manual-Title-440-Part-501.pdf

USDA United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Manuals
Title 440 - Programs
Part 501 - USDA Conservation Program Delivery

Table of Contents - USDA Conservation Program Delivery

Subpart A – USDA Conservation Program Delivery

501.0 Introduction

501.1 Conservation Program Delivery Process

Subpart B – Local Working Groups

501.10 Purpose

501.11 Responsibilities of the Local Working Group

501.12 Local Working Group Membership

501.13 Responsibilities of Conservation Districts and NRCS

501.14 Standard Operating Procedures for Local Working Groups

Subpart C – State Technical Committees

501.20 Purpose

501.21 Responsibilities of State Technical Committees

501.22 State Technical Committee Membership

501.23 Responsibilities of the State Conservationist

501.24 Specialized Subcommittees of State Technical Committees

501.25 Standard Operating Procedures for State Technical Committees

A Word version of Subpart A is available at
https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/RollupViewer.aspx?hid=27712
A Word version of Subpart B is available at
https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/viewerFS.aspx?hid=27718

3. A Montana example of an LWG submission to the STAC is available from the NvACD website at http://nvacd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/2018-LWG-funding-recommendation-Lewis-and-Clark-1.pdf

Appendix E Local Work Group Descriptions and Manual 3 pages

And http://lccd.mt.nacdnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2018-LWG-funding-recommendation-Lewis-and-Clark.pdf
Title: 2018 LWG funding recommendation Lewis and Clark.pdf

4. "A Seat at the Table," NRCS pamphlet; available on the NvACD website or https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs141p2_018303.pdf

5. A Minnesota invitation to LWG meetings at https://www.maswcd.org/Meetings_and_Events/Registration_Locally_Led_Workshops_2018.pdf

6. A Guide for Organic Farmers and Ranchers, NRCS State Technical Committees and Local Work Groups
http://sustainableagriculture.net/wp-content/uploads/2008/08/stc_lwg_guide.pdf
and the NvACD website at http://nvacd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/stc_lwg_guide-for-organic-farmers.pdf

7. https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/16/3861
US Code of Federal Regulations description of LWG and STAC

8. The Power of Your Voice at a Local Working Group (Wisconsin)
https://mywisconsinwoods.org/2018/06/07/the-power-of-your-voice-at-a-local-working-group-lwg/
or the NvACD website at http://nvacd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/The-Power-of-Your-Voice-at-a-Local-Working-Group.pdf

Appendix E Local Work Group Descriptions and Manual 3 pages

NRCS

United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Fact Sheet

August2011

Local Work Groups (LWG}

Natural Resources Conservation Service

What is a Local Work Group?

The locally led conservation effort is the foundation of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) conservation program delivery process. The local work group supports the locally led conservation effort by coordinating USDA programs with other Federal, Slate, tribal, and local conservation programs to provide an integrated solution to addressing natural resource concerns.

Purpose

Local working groups provide recommendations on local natural resource priorities and criteria for USDA conservation activities and programs. Convened by the local conservation district, the local work group responsibilities include:

- Develop a conservation needs assessment identifying broad conservation goals to solve natural resource problems;
- Identify priority resource concerns that can be addressed by USDA programs;
- Recommend USDA conservation program application and funding criteria, eligible practices (including limits on practice payments or units), and payment rates;
- Assist NRCS and the conservation district with public outreach and information efforts;
- Identify educational and producers' training needs; and,
- Recommend program policy to the State Technical Advisory Committee based on resource data.

Membership

Local working group membership should be diverse and focus on agricultural interests and natural resource issues existing in the local community. Membership should include agricultural producers representing the variety of crops, livestock, and poultry raised within the local area: owners of nonindustrial private forest land, as appropriate; representatives of agricultural and environmental organizations; and representatives of governmental agencies carrying out agricultural and natural resource conservation programs and activities. Local work group membership may include:

- NRCS designated conservationist.
- Members of conservation district boards or equivalent.
- Members of the county Farm Service Agency (FSA) committee.
- FSA county executive director or designee.
- Cooperative extension (board members or manager).
- State or local elected or appointed officials.
- Other Federal and State government representatives.
- Representatives of American Indian and Alaskan Native governments

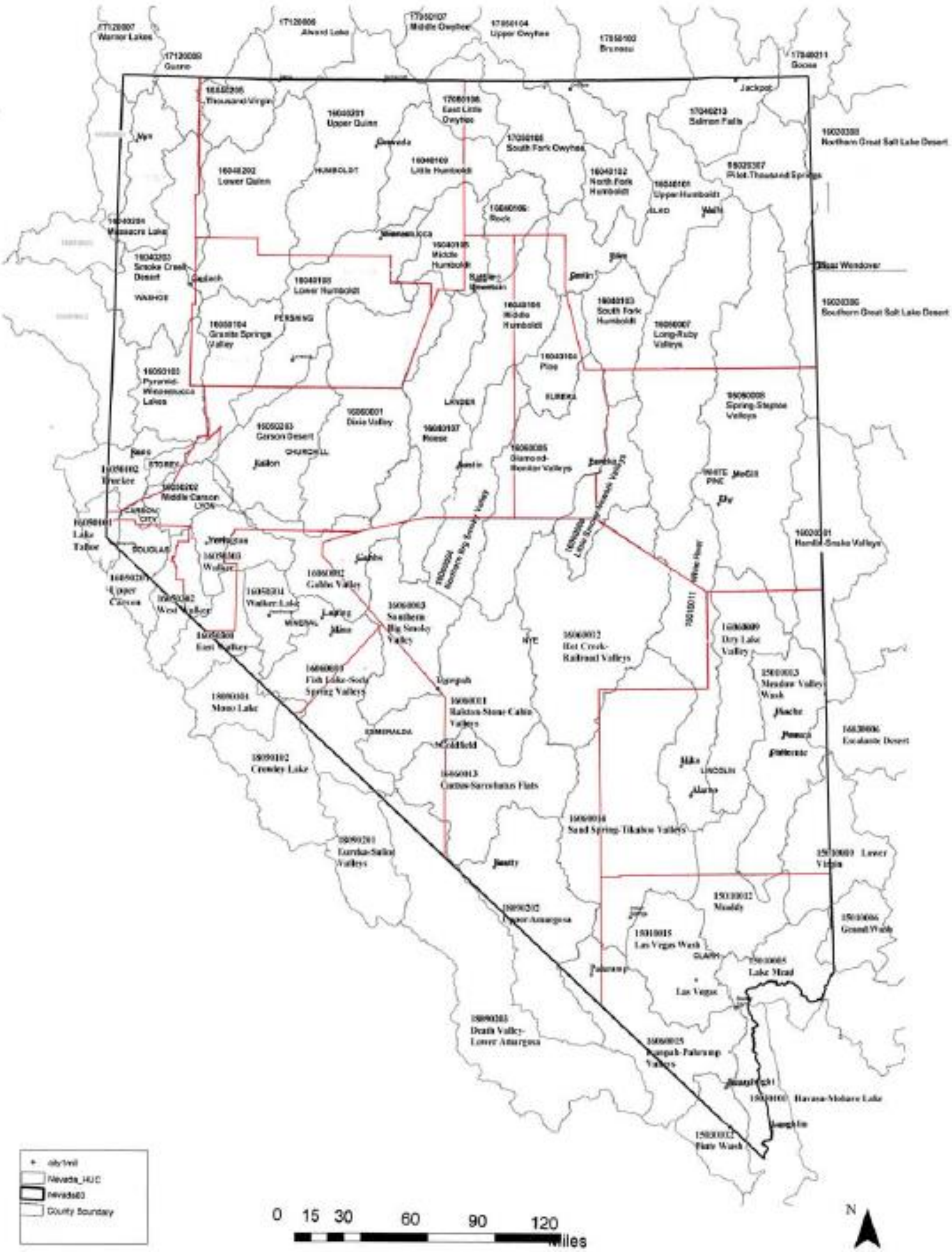
LWG Meetings

- Occur at least once each year;
- Meetings are open to the public;
- Meetings will be conducted as an open discussion among members; and,
- Individuals attending the local working group meetings will be given the opportunity to address the local working group.

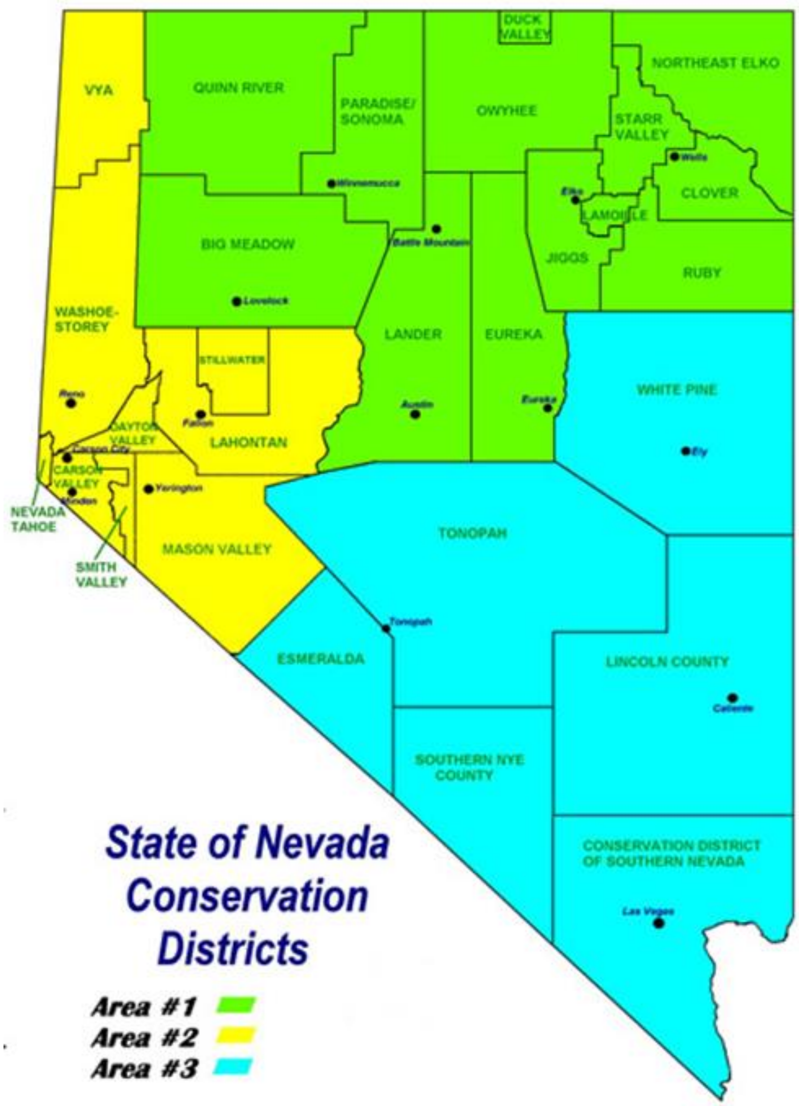
For More Information

Contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service or the local conservation district in your county for more information. The NRCS office is listed in the telephone book under U.S. Government, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Nevada HUC Boundaries
January 2008



- Big Meadow CD
- Carson Valley CD
- Clover Valley CD
- Dayton Valley CD
- Duck Valley CD
- Esmeralda CD
- Eureka CD
- Jiggs CD
- Lahontan CD
- Lamoille CD
- Lander CD
- Lincoln CD
- Mason Valley CD
- Nevada Tahoe CD
- Northeast Elko CD
- Owyhee CD
- Paradise/Sonoma CD
- Quinn River CD
- Ruby Valley CD
- Smith Valley CD
- Starr Valley CD
- Stillwater CD
- Southern Nevada CD
- Southern Nye CD
- Tonopah CD
- Vya CD
- Washoe-Storey CD
- White Pine CD



Appendix H Survey Instrument 1 page

The purpose of the survey instrument is to gather public input from a broad range of agencies, organizations, businesses and individuals within conservation districts who have an interest in natural resource conditions. This information will inform and assist CD supervisors when working through the CPPE process and completing conservation action plans. It will help supervisors assess natural resource conservation needs and set community conservation goals in context of community goals and priorities.

Appendix I Updates and Lessons Learned 1 page

Thoughts from the contractors:

Focus on the top 5 concerns; 10 at most and capture all the other concerns in an appendix.

A 35 page, 50 pages at most, document will be most usable for a CD

We will follow the Utah County Resource Assessments format:

https://www.uacd.org/resource-assessments-news

For future information, formatting on this document:

Section breaks were inserted to title the Appendices. To adjust, click the paragraph symbol on the Home tab to show hidden formatting symbols. I went to the bottom of the previous page, Layout tab/Breaks/Next Page. Double click in new page with existing header. CLICK ON "LINK TO PREVIOUS" which becomes available from the Header Footer Tools, and "same as previous" disappears on the right side of the header. Edit the header title to the next Appendix, check to make sure it didn't change in the previous. Save.