

## Application for Wisconsin NRCS Conservation Planner Certification

**Note:** The contents of these worksheets reflect the Conservation Planning Certification Policy located in General Manual 180 Part 409, Amend. WI-4, June 2008.

Complete the appropriate steps by following the instructions provided. Review the completed application package with your supervisor. Submit the application to the NRCS Area Resource Conservationist and NRCS Area Engineering staff or DATCP Conservation Engineering Section staff for review and submission to the NRCS State Resource Conservationist for processing.

**Step 1. Documentation of Prior Conservation Planning Experience.** Review the following options and select Option A or Option B by checking the box adjoining the narrative. Follow the instructions provided.

- Option A – Abbreviated Conservation Planning Certification.** An applicant with 5 years or more experience conducting resource assessments and developing conservation planning alternatives for cropland, forestland, headquarters, pastureland, and wildlife land utilizing the planning process defined in Part 602.2 of the NRCS National Planning Procedures Handbook (Amendment 4, March 2003) may apply for acceptance into the "abbreviated" conservation planning certification process. The applicant may document their conservation planning experience by providing a narrative of planning experience by land use, an example of a RMS plan written by them, or documentation of an in-field assessment of their resource assessment and conservation planning skills by an Area Resource Conservationist or the State Resource Conservationist.

A narrative application must address conservation planning experience on cropland, forestland, headquarters, pastureland, and wildlife land. The applicant shall include examples of actual resource assessments completed, conservation alternatives offered to clients, and documentation of client decisions in a conservation plan. Position descriptions detailing conservation planning duties, performance appraisals documenting successful planning activities or narratives from prior job applications could be used to fulfill this requirement.

An evaluation of the documentation will be completed and returned. If the application for the "abbreviated" conservation planning certification process is accepted, the applicant must complete Modules 1-8 of the Resource Management System (RMS) Conservation Planning training or equivalent, complete the prerequisites for Modules 1-8, and document the Demonstrated Performance for Engineering Practices (Step 3) and Non-Engineering Practices (Step 4). If the application is not accepted, an appeal process will be provided (WI GM 180 Part 409.15). Unsuccessful applicants for the "abbreviated" process will use Option B – Formal Conservation Planning Certification.

- Option B – Formal Conservation Planning Certification.** Applicants who do not qualify for the Wisconsin NRCS Abbreviated Conservation Planning Certification Process must use the formal conservation planning certification process. The formal process will include a series of mandatory training courses, observation of demonstrated proficiency in the use of specific engineering and non-engineering technical practice standards, and the writing of a RMS conservation plan that evaluates cropland and a minimum of two other land uses. The RMS plan will be developed with the assistance of a certified conservation planner and may include an interview with the client prior to final approval of the RMS conservation plan. Applicants using the formal conservation planning certification must complete all of the components of the Required Training Courses (Step 2), Demonstrated Performance for Engineering Practices (Step 3), and Demonstrated Performance for Non-Engineering Practices (Step 4).

**Step 2. Required Training Courses.** Applicants must complete one of the following required training curriculums. This step is required for applicants who do not qualify for the "abbreviated" conservation planning certification process. **Applicants completing Step 2 must also complete Steps 3 and 4 to earn NRCS Conservation Planning Certification.**

- a. Conservation Planning Boot Camp sponsored by the NRCS National Employee Development Center.
- b. Attendance of other training recognized by Wisconsin NRCS or NRCS Tech Reg as an acceptable source of conservation planning training.
- c. Formal Wisconsin Conservation Planning Certification Training

<u>GENERAL</u>	<u>Date Completed</u>
Core Conservation 1* .....	_____
Core Conservation 2* .....	_____
Core Conservation 3* .....	_____
Conservation Planning 1.....	_____
Conservation Planning 2.....	_____
Conservation Planning 3.....	_____
Conservation Planning 4.....	_____
RUSLE2 User Training .....	_____
Cultural Resources Field Training.....	_____
Managing Nutrient on Wisconsin Soils – UW Soils .....	_____
Training for Nutrient Management Planners – UW Soils .....	_____
CCA/TSP Introduction to Conservation Planning Training (required for private sector applicants) .....	_____

*\* Core Conservation Courses may be waived for individuals who can document two years of experience working in a NRCS field office or County Land Conservation Department office*

**Note:** Alternative coursework submitted for certification credit will be evaluated by the State Conservationist, or designee, to determine equivalency to training prescribed above. Equivalency will be based on an evaluation of whether the alternative training covered the technical and policy learning objectives identified for the NRCS training course.

**Step 3. Demonstrated Performance for Engineering Practices.** Applicants must demonstrate performance in the planning, basic design, and implementation skills for a minimum of three out of five of the groups of engineering practices listed below. (Note: the specified minimum number of practices must be selected within each group.)

Demonstrated performance for the engineering practices is as achieved by:

- A. Possession of current NRCS Engineering Job Approval/DATCP Agricultural Engineering Practitioner Certification for “Planning” (I&E) or a valid Wisconsin Engineering License with declared expertise for design and construction of these practices (attach current engineering job approval/certification or engineering license) **or**,
- B. Private sector employees may demonstrate performance by providing documentation of the skills as defined below and have the possession of their skills affirmed by a person with a valid Wisconsin engineering license.

Demonstrated performance includes knowledge of the NRCS practice standard, experience appropriately siting the practice in the field, ability to design the practice to the extent necessary to determine feasibility, ability to explain operation and maintenance of the proposed practices, and the ability to generate an initial practice cost estimate. In addition, the applicant must demonstrate knowledge of practice construction techniques in order to explain to a client the quality of materials that must be used and the inspection requirements necessary to certify the practice under the NRCS practice standard.

**ENGINEERING PRACTICES**

**JA Attached (Public Sector) or  
WI PE License Holder (Private Sector)**

1. Select one from the following:
  - Grassed Waterway (412) or \_\_\_\_\_
  - Diversion (362)
  
2. Select one from the following:
  - Access Road (560) or \_\_\_\_\_
  - Animal Trails and Walkways (575) or \_\_\_\_\_
  - Stream Crossing (578)
  
3. Wetland Restoration (657) – minimum of 2 of the following:
  - scrape                       tile break
  - ditch                             embankment
  - plug
 \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Select one from the following:
  - Grade Stabilization Structure (410) or \_\_\_\_\_
  - Sediment Basin (350)
  
5. Select one from the following:
  - Streambank Protection (580) or \_\_\_\_\_
  - Shoreline Stabilization (580)

**Step 4. Demonstrated Performance Non-Engineering Practices.** For each of the following practice standards, applicants must demonstrate knowledge of the practice standard, practice siting, practice design and layout to the extent necessary to determine feasibility and provide an initial cost estimate, practice implementation techniques to the extent necessary to explain to the client how the practice will be laid out and inspected to certify installation.

A NRCS Certified Conservation Planner must document the competency of an applicant who cannot demonstrate prior experience independently implementing each practice. Candidates who can demonstrate prior experience with implementation of a non-engineering practice may have their supervisor certify achievement of this requirement.

<u><b>NON-ENGINEERING PRACTICES</b></u>	<u><b>Initial/Date by Certified Planner or Supervisor</b></u>
1. Conservation Cover (327)	_____
2. Cover and Green Manure Crop (340)	_____
3. Select from one of the following:	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Contour Farming (330)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Contour Strip Cropping (585)	
4. Critical Area Planting (342)	_____
5. Select from one of the following:	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Filter Strip (393)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Riparian Forest Buffer (391)	
6. Nutrient Management (590)	_____
7. Residue Management, No Till/Strip Till (329)	_____
8. Residue Management, Mulch Till (345)	_____
9. Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)	_____
10. Prescribed Grazing (528)	_____
11. Select from one of the following:	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife Wetland Habitat Management (644)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife Upland Habitat Management (645)	

I certify that all the information provided is true and accurate based on my understanding of the Wisconsin "Basic Conservation Planning Certification" process.

Applicant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Supervisors' Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

NRCS Area Resource Conservationist Certification of Review: (Initial and Date) \_\_\_\_\_

NRCS/DATCP Engineering Staff Certification of Review: (Initial and Date) \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that this candidate has completed the requirements to achieve certification as a Conservation Planner in Wisconsin (State Conservationist or designee).

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_