
United States
Department of
Agriculture

**Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service**

National Biology Handbook

Part 621

Technical Guidance Documents

Part 621

Technical Guidance Documents

Contents:	621.00	Introduction	621-1
	621.01	Technical notes	621-1
	621.02	Job sheets	621-2
	621.03	Other technical guidance references	621-3

621.00 Introduction

Many technical guidance documents are available to field personnel and conservation planners. NRCS state offices manage Web sites with links to state- and region-specific technical information regarding conservation of aquatic and terrestrial habitats.

Other technical documents useful to field office personnel for integrating biodiversity, fisheries, and wildlife considerations into the conservation planning process are *technical notes* and *job sheets*. These guidance documents are NRCS directives originating at the national, regional, state, and area office level. They are generally prepared entirely or in part by NRCS biologists or other technical specialists. Examples of these types of guidance documents are provided in Part 630, Exhibits.

621.01 Technical notes

The fundamental purpose of a biology technical note is to provide information related to improving wildlife and fisheries habitat when assisting with conservation planning on private lands. Technical notes have been developed on many subjects important to field office staff. In many instances the technical notes are developed specifically at the request of the field office to address a specific need. Generally, technical notes fall into five categories:

Tech notes that highlight tools designed to restore, create, or enhance habitat:

Exhibit A—Idaho Plant Materials Technical Note on the Waterjet Stinger.

Tech notes that take national guidance and develop it for use in a particular state:

Exhibit B - Hawaii Biology Technical Note and Transmittal Letter providing state instructions for implementing national guidance on the Stream Visual Assessment Protocol.

Tech notes that provide technical information, for example, state heritage databases or threatened and endangered species lists to the conservation planner:

Exhibit C—Hawaii Biology Technical Note demonstrating the use of ArcView and Toolkit to access the state heritage database.

Exhibit D—Kentucky Biology Technical Note listing threatened and endangered species by county.

Exhibit E—Kentucky Biology Technical Note listing FOTG practice effects on threatened and endangered species.

Tech notes that highlight techniques designed to restore, create, or enhance habitat:

Exhibit F—Indiana Biology Technical Note on developing macrotopography and microtopography in wetland restoration.

Technical notes that provide guidance on how to evaluate habitat conditions.

Exhibit G—Fish Assemblages as Indicators of the Biological Condition of Streams and Watersheds, Technical Note 190-16

Exhibit H—Stream Visual Assessment Protocol

621.02 Job sheets

The purpose of a biology job sheet is to provide the "how-to" information necessary to create, restore, or enhance the fish and wildlife habitat when developing a conservation plan for the landowner. Job sheets, in general, are associated with standards and specifications for specific conservation practices in the FOTG and become a part of the landowner's conservation plan.

Although development of biology job sheets is the responsibility of the NRCS biologist, interest in fish and wildlife habitat development on working lands is important to many conservation partners. Involving these partners in the process of developing job sheets can improve the content and enhance the partnership.

The Wildlife Habitat Management Institute undertook a pilot project to evaluate this technique in six states (Illinois, Maryland, North Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, and Utah) in 1998. Each of the states hosted a facilitated workshop to gather the information and design the job sheets that would work for the NRCS state office as well as include components important to our conservation partners. The process, although challenging, was supported by all and viewed as a commitment to considering fish and wildlife habitat in conservation planning. Although such extra effort is often viewed as unnecessary to develop the technical document, it is extremely valuable for gaining support.

The following job sheet examples are for the same practice from different states. They illustrate the multitude of options available to accomplish the same task across the varied landscape in the United States.

Field Border—Practice Code 386

Exhibit I—Field Borders Wildlife, Illinois

Exhibit J—Wildlife Habitat in Field Borders, North Carolina

Exhibit K—Buffers for Wildlife Field Borders, Texas

Exhibit L—Field Borders as Wildlife Habitat, Georgia

Exhibit M—Field Borders for Wildlife, Utah

Exhibit N—Field Border Buffers for Wildlife, Maryland

621.03 Other technical guidance references

NRCS State Offices and National Institutes and Centers develop technical guidance materials for internal and external use by partners and clients. In particular, the following NRCS Web sites provide excellent technical information for aquatic and terrestrial habitat considerations:

Fish & Wildlife Habitat:

www.whmi.nrcs.usda.gov

Watershed Science:

www.wsi.nrcs.usda.gov/products/

Soil Quality:

<http://soils.usda.gov/>

Wetland Science:

www.wli.nrcs.usda.gov

NRCS Plant Data Center:

<http://plants.usda.gov/>

For additional sources of technical guidance documents, see part 620 of this handbook.