



Resource Planning Guidebook Introduction

Purpose of the Resource Planning Guidebook

The Resource Planning Guidebook (RPG) is a source book for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) and other conservation partners in Illinois to use when facilitating locally-led planning. Locally-led resource planning, or “Areawide Planning,” as it’s called in the NRCS National Planning Procedures Handbook, is the problem-solving and management process NRCS uses to help clients develop resource plans that meet locally-identified objectives.

The resource planning process helps citizens develop productive partnerships, reach consensus, make decisions, and obtain financial and technical resources to carry out their ideas. This demands that NRCS/SWCD draw upon our many talents in facilitating, leading, partnering, and of course, our expertise in the natural resource sciences. One outcome of resource planning is the enhanced ability of communities to manage their natural resources to meet their goals. The Resource Planning Guidebook can help staff and citizens alike meet these challenges. The purpose of the Resource Planning Guidebook is to:

- Supplement National Planning Procedures Guidebook.
- Empower Conservation Partners to carry out resource planning.
- Assist communication between Conservation Partners and the public about the planning process.

How To Use This Guidebook

The RPG complements the NRCS National Planning Procedures Handbook (NPPH). The NPPH describes the policy and procedures pertaining to the resource planning process. To supplement this material, the RPG gives detailed “insider tips” for carrying out resource planning at the local level. The guidebook explains why a particular step is important and suggests how to do it. The RPG also includes “General Resources” which cover a variety of tasks and skills relevant during the entire planning project.

The Resource Planning Guidebook follows the Nine-Step, Three Phase planning process. It has practical ideas for implementing locally-led planning, gleaned from our experience working with Illinois communities. It will tell you what to do first and what comes next.

Refer to the RPG for help with identifying stakeholders, conducting effective meetings, involving the public, determining inventory needs, analyzing data, building local ownership of plans, implementing plans, and much more.

To help stakeholders understand the planning process, material in the RPG is suitable for distribution to the public. For example, share “Establishing Operating Procedures” when the locally-led committee is newly organized. “Working with the Media” will give the Planning Committee ideas for communicating their activities to the public. Use “Evaluating Alternatives” to help the Committee understand this critical step in selecting management strategies.

These and all other factsheets are protected in plastic sleeves in the Resource Planning Guidebook to ensure clean copies are available for you to duplicate. The Resource Planning Guidebook has also been formatted in a 3-ring binder to encourage you to add other material that you find helpful or to insert updated versions as changes are made.

Resource planning is driven by local needs, local people, and local action. The Resource Planning Guidebook can help you facilitate planning so that local people develop and implement plans to protect, conserve and enhance natural resources within their social, economic, and ecological interests.

To learn more about resource planning in your community, contact the USDA NRCS Service Center nearest you. It is listed in the phone book under U.S. Government. In the appendix of the RPG is a list of all Illinois county NRCS/SWCD offices. The Illinois NRCS homepage can be found at www.il.nrcs.usda.gov