



# Evaluating the Resource Plan

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### What is it?

Evaluating the resource plan involves assessing the effectiveness of the implemented plan to ensure desired results are being achieved. Plan evaluation provides information about how implementation is proceeding, and if necessary, reveals why actual results differ from what was desired and anticipated. Plan evaluation also provides an opportunity for stakeholders to modify their objectives and actions.

### When do we do it?

Plan evaluation and plan implementation go hand in hand. As projects are implemented, their outcomes are evaluated. Subsequent actions may be modified in light of the findings.

In addition to continual evaluation, stakeholders may want to work with technical advisors to conduct a systematic plan evaluation at a specific future time. For example, stakeholders may want to do an annual plan evaluation and update.

### How do we do it?

Evaluation of the plan is conducted by stakeholders in the planning area with assistance from technical experts. Usually stakeholders are represented by the coordinating committee--or "Implementation Committee"--which was formed to coordinate implementation of the plan. To evaluate the effectiveness of the resource management plan over time, the Implementation Committee needs to be a viable and on-going organization. Evaluation also requires continued support from technical experts, and direct input from stakeholders who carry out the projects specified in the plan.

A necessary first step for plan evaluation is to identify the purpose of doing the evaluation. Stakeholders can ask themselves, "How will we use the results of the evaluation?" Stakeholders may want to evaluate some projects to determine if similar projects should be undertaken again; they may want to document results to provide progress reports to partners; or they may need to evaluate the plan in order to revise it in the future.

Details on how to conduct the analysis of specific projects is provided in various NRCS technical manuals and program manuals. During evaluation of the plan, the actual ecological, economic, and social effects and impacts are reviewed and compared to those anticipated by stakeholders. Significant differences are addressed by stakeholders, partners and technical experts.

### The Next Step

Resource management never ends. Conditions change, new opportunities arise, public support for particular projects wanes or increases and additional projects are identified. Stakeholders continually respond to these challenges, evaluating the successes and failures of the plan and modifying it as necessary.

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