

## APPRENTICE CHECKLIST FOR FIELD OFFICES

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Field Office: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Started: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Obligations, responsibilities, and privileges of a Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) employee/apprentice**

#### **References:**

- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Employee Handbook
- General Manual (GM), Title 360

1. Working with others
2. Office procedures
3. Appropriate dress in office and field
4. Building rules, restrooms, and parking
5. Careers in NRCS
6. Conduct
7. Equal Employment Opportunity and Civil Rights
8. Safety (office and field)
9. Reference material and filing systems

### **Mission and history of NRCS**

#### **References:**

- GM, Title 360, Part 404  
<http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/RollupViewer.aspx?hid=17046>

1. History
2. What is NRCS?
3. What does NRCS do?
4. How does NRCS work?

### **Identify the structure of the organization**

#### **References:**

- GM, Title 360, Part 404
- Area and state office assistance

1. USDA
2. NRCS
3. National Headquarters
4. Technical Support Centers
5. Offices
  - a. Area office
  - b. Field office
  - c. Other offices (state, technical, soil survey, Plant Materials Center, etc.)

## **Identify the major disciplines in NRCS**

### **Spend field time with each discipline with specific skill levels**

1. Soil conservationist and rangeland management specialist
2. Soil conservationist/civil engineering technician
3. District conservationist
4. Soil scientist
5. Engineer

## **Identify conservation district (CD) functions and responsibilities**

### **References:**

- CD Supervisor Handbook  
<http://agriculture.ks.gov/divisions-programs/division-of-conservation/conservation-districts>
  - GM, Title 180  
<http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/RollupViewer.aspx?hid=16970>
  - CD Annual Plan of Work
  - Local Operational Agreement
  - Field Operations Training Handbook
1. Philosophy underlying CDs
  2. Applicable CD laws
  3. How CDs are organized
  4. CD programs and work plan
  5. Agreements between USDA and others
  6. Responsibilities of CD governing bodies
  7. National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD); Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD); and Division of Conservation (DOC), Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA)—formerly known as the State Conservation Commission (SCC)

## **Identify relations with other organizations/agencies**

1. Farm Service Agency
2. Watershed districts
3. Cooperative extension service
4. Environmental organizations
5. Other federal agencies
6. Other state agencies
7. Technical service providers
8. Other groups and organizations

## **Identify other responsibilities/activities**

1. Conservation Operations
  - a. Conservation technical assistance (CTA)
  - b. Soil surveys (SS)
  - c. National resource inventory (NRI)

2. Plant Materials Center (PMC)
3. Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
4. Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
5. Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
6. Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
7. Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program
8. Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program
9. Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS)

**Ability to use the NRCS directives system References:**

- GM, Title 120, Parts 403 and 408  
<http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/RollupViewer.aspx?hid=16966>

- a. NRCS directives, forms, and reports
- b. General Manual
- c. Records
- d. Progress reporting
- e. Filing system
- f. Equipment management
- g. Technical reference material
- h. Freedom of Information Act
- i. Privacy Act

**SOILS**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Identify soil-mapping procedures
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete at least ten hours of training with soil scientist
- \_\_\_\_\_ Use and identify soil survey techniques

**CONSERVATION PLANNING**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Obtain an understanding of basic steps of conservation planning
- \_\_\_\_\_ Identify proper land uses within work area
- \_\_\_\_\_ Describe/document benchmark conditions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Recognize typical resource concerns with work area
- \_\_\_\_\_ Become familiar with Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Identify typical conservation practices that are applied to address typical resource concerns in the work area
- \_\_\_\_\_ Become familiar with Farm Bill programs
- \_\_\_\_\_ Become familiar with vegetation types and plant species with the work area

- \_\_\_\_\_ Identify basic Ag operations in the work area
- \_\_\_\_\_ Identify typical implement types/tillage systems in work area
- \_\_\_\_\_ Understand how to use legal description to locate a specific piece of land

## **ENGINEERING**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Job shadow soil conservation technician
- \_\_\_\_\_ Develop an understanding of surveying techniques
- \_\_\_\_\_ Become familiar with the National Engineering Manual and Engineering Field Handbook
- \_\_\_\_\_ Become familiar with engineering design forms for typical conservation practices
- \_\_\_\_\_ Develop knowledge of proper documentation and proper note keeping methods

## **ADDITIONAL TRAINING IF TIME ALLOWS:**

## **CONSERVATION PLANNING**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Assist with development of resource management plan. Use ARCGIS to develop plan map and supporting resource maps
- \_\_\_\_\_ Participate in using typical assessment tools for describing/documenting benchmark resource conditions (for example, Kansas Wildlife Habitat Assessment Guide, Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation, Wind Erosion Equation, and range condition)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Participate in the layout, design, and certification of typical conservation practices applied with the county
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete at least 8 hours of training with each of the following resource specialists: Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) Biologist, Kansas Forest Service (KFS) Forester, NRCS multicounty range conservationist, and NRCS area resource specialist
- \_\_\_\_\_ Demonstration of use/familiarity with electronic FOTGs and other reference materials used in the planning process
- \_\_\_\_\_ Become familiar with conservation planning policy regarding conservation planning and practice approval authority as addressed in GM, Title 180
- \_\_\_\_\_ With limited assistance, develop Toolkit conservation plan
- \_\_\_\_\_ Become familiar with laws and regulations pertaining to conservation planning (National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, CPA-52 Environmental Evaluation, etc.)

## **ENGINEERING**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Stakeout and checkout of a terrace system with supervision
- \_\_\_\_\_ Measure drainage area on different sites