

## Reading the Rapid Watershed Assessment Matrices Summary

RWAs document current conservation status as well as pre-decisional, qualitative projections of future opportunities for conservation implementation in the watershed. This document identifies opportunities that may be achieved taking into account local participation rates and average ability of landowners to finance their portion of the average cost share for conservation programs. Estimates in the RWA are developed based on availability of optimal funding and staffing for conservation efforts. Availability of actual program funding and staffing is unknown and may vary based on a variety of factors.

Because of various procedural limitations in their development, RWAs are limited in the details they provide. This document does not address cumulative efforts or serve to monitor conservation implementation progress that is dependent on future funding or other factors.

For the purpose of this document:

**Current Status** indicates benchmark conditions noted in the Watershed Profile (or at the time the RWA was developed).

**Future Opportunities** is used to describe the level of conservation that is estimated to be possible with in five years based on the type and magnitude of resource concerns, average participation rates, and estimated landowner ability to finance average cost share obligations. The estimate assumes availability of optimal technical and financial assistance. Actual available assistance may vary; the RWA could serve as a starting point in identifying potential funding from a variety of private, local, state and federal sources.

Estimates for future conditions do not suggest that all resource concerns for each land unit in the watershed will be addressed, but rather indicate the typical systems of practices that may be applied to address priority resource concerns on existing land uses.

**Conservation Systems** are interrelated conservation practices developed to address resource concerns appropriate to the landscape and land use. Numerous alternatives and combinations of practices exist that may be made available to landowners and producers in order to meet their desired level of treatment.

**Potential Five-Year Resource Status** compares current level of conservation application on private lands to the estimated level of conservation application that may potentially be achieved within five-year time frame as described under *Future Opportunities*. Levels of conservation application are described below.

Key to Resource Status Charts:

Baseline
Describes land units with no treatment or with treatment of one or more resource concerns, but with conservation practices that do not meet NRCS quality criteria.
Progressive
A level of conservation adoption at which landowners actively participate in conservation programs and have adopted several practices, but they do not yet meet the highest levels of land stewardship.
Resource Management System (RMS)
Land units that have all known resource concerns treated with conservation practices.