

## **Tribal Resource Assessment**

### **Priority Treatment Area and Acreage Development**

To complete this phase of the Tribal Resource Assessment, NRCS and the Tribes need to develop and agree on both Priority Treatment Areas and acreage amounts. This document is intended to provide a process that should help the NRCS and Tribes accomplish this task. What are treatment areas and the associated acres?

Priority Treatment Areas show where an identified Tribal resource concern will be treated on one of five designated landuse categories (cropland, range, forest, pasture & other associates ag lands).

The associated acreages are described in three amounts for each resource concern on each landuse:

- How many acres of a landuse are potentially “at risk” for an identified resource concern.
- How many of these “at risk” landuse acres need treatment.
- How many acres a Tribe believes they can treat over the next few years.

Below are some general guidelines, options and examples related to how the NRCS and Tribes can work together to develop the Priority Treatment Areas and associated acreages.

There are three sections to this document. The first discusses Priority Treatment Areas, the second discusses acreage estimates, and the third provides a timeline to complete these tasks.

#### **1) PRIORITY TREATMENT AREAS**

NRCS is currently developing Priority Treatment Areas for each reservation. These are based on the NRCS Landuse and Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) Cropland datasets. As soon as these are completed, they will be provided to each Tribe for review and approval.

The goals of this process are to:

- Give each Tribe the widest latitude for addressing identified resource concerns on the five designated landuses.
- Develop treatment areas that are acceptable to, and approved by, each Tribe.
- Provide consistency within the NRCS resource assessment process.

#### **NRCS Developed Priority Treatment Areas:**

If one or more of the following landuses exist on the NRCS Landuse dataset within a reservation boundary, NRCS will develop a Priority Treatment Area and map for:

- **Cropland, Range, Forest & Pasture.**

Some Tribes will only have a single treatment area to review, while other Tribes will have up to four treatment areas to review.

The Priority Treatment Areas are intended to give the Tribes the widest latitude for addressing resource concerns on a landuse category. This is possible because any identified resource concern on a landuse can be addressed anywhere within that landuse's priority area.

As soon as they are completed, each Tribe will be provided a map for each of their Priority Treatment Areas, with the NRCS Landuse displayed underneath (there is an example on page 5). These maps can be delivered as printed maps or as electronic documents (.pdf), whichever is preferable to each Tribe. If a Tribe has GIS capability, a set of shapefiles can also be provided.

The NRCS Tribal Liaison will forward the maps to the appropriate Tribal contacts. The Tribes will need to review and approve these areas. If approved, a phone call or email to the Tribal Liaison indicating the approval is sufficient.

If a tribe would like to have their treatment area(s) modified, they will need to provide these modifications back to NRCS. These can be sent to the NRCS Tribal Liaisons via mail or email. Options include:

- **A modification drawn on the provided map(s) for NRCS to digitize.**
- **A modification to the NRCS shapefile.**

### **Limitations of the NRCS Landuse Dataset**

It should be noted that the NRCS Landuse dataset is just a model of what is truly found on the landscape and is actually intended for use at the county or statewide scale. The dataset is therefore inaccurate to some degree when looking at small areas of land. It is however, the best available landuse data and provides NRCS with a consistent way of mapping landuses across the state.

The Pasture landuse category is especially problematic, and was supplemented by using the pasture categories in the WSDA Cropland dataset as the Pasture priority areas were developed. Some or all of pasture displayed on the Pasture Priority Treatment Area maps may not actually exist within the reservation boundary. Or it could be incorrectly located.

Tribes should carefully review their Pasture Priority Treatment Area map (if provided) and tell the NRCS to eliminate it (if they actually don't have any pasture on their lands), or describe how it needs to be modified (move the boundary, take out some of the area, etc.).

### **Tribe Developed Priority Treatment Area - Other Associated Ag Land:**

Because of the nature of the **Other Associated Ag Land** landuse, NRCS cannot develop these priority treatment areas without input from the Tribes. This priority area is only necessary if a Tribe has identified resource concerns on this landuse within their reservation. If so, they will need to provide NRCS with one or more "Other Associated Ag Land" Priority Treatment Areas.

There will only need to be more than one of these priority areas if the Tribe has “Other Associated Ag Land” areas for more than one resource concern.

The options for developing these priority areas include:

- **Provide shapefiles of the treatment area boundaries.**
- **Draw boundaries on maps for NRCS to digitize.**
- **Designate one or more of the NRCS developed Cropland, Range, Pasture, or Forest landuse Priority Treatment Areas as “Other Associated Ag Land” priority areas.**
- **Indicate that NRCS should use the entire reservation boundary.**
- **Indicate a combination of the above options for multiple “Other Associated Ag Land” priority areas.**

The Tribe will also need to provide:

- **A short description of their intent for each of the “Other Associated Ag Land” Priority Treatment Areas**

The descriptions should indicate the identified resource concern and what is being addressed. Below is the definition of this landuse category:

- Other Associated Ag Land - Land associated with farms and ranches that are not purposefully managed for food, forage or fiber and are typically associated with nearby production and/or conservation lands.
- This could include incidental areas such as: Idle center pivot corners, odd areas, draws, hedgerows, riparian areas, field edges, seasonal and permanent wetlands, or rocky outcrop.
- It includes the headquarters area used for facilities and supporting infrastructure where farming, forestry, animal husbandry and ranching activities are often initiated. This may include dwellings, equipment storage plus farm input and output storage and handling facilities.
- Also included is land dedicated to the facilitation and production of high intensity animal agriculture in a confinement facility (milking barns, holding lots, heavy use areas, waste treatment and storage facilities, composting facilities, fish production facilities, etc.) This may include land enrolled in USDA easement programs that is not used for the production of food, forage, or fiber.

#### **Examples of “Other Associated Ag Land” Priority Treatment Area Descriptions:**

- A Tribe indicates that NRCS should use their Croplands Priority Treatment Area because they intend to address Inefficient Energy Use on their Headquarters areas.
- A Tribe indicates that NRCS should use the entire reservation boundary because of the wide distribution of “odd areas” and “draws” that have the Degraded Plant Condition – Excessive Plant Pest Pressure resource concern.
- A Tribe sends an email providing NRCS with a shapefile of boundaries around areas of permanent wetlands because they want to address Inadequate Habitat in those areas.
- A Tribe prints one of the NRCS provided Priority Treatment Area maps, draws a boundary around a portion of a river because they want to treat elevated water temperature in the riparian area, and mails it to the NRCS Liaison.

## 2) ACREAGES

As previously mentioned, there are three acreages amounts needed for each resource concern on each landuse to complete the Tribal Resource Assessment. The Tribes should work with the NRCS Tribal Liaisons to develop these acreages.

- **Potential At Risk Acres** - how many acres of a landuse are potentially “at risk” for an identified resource concern.
- **Acres Needing Treatment** - how many of these “at risk” landuse acres need treatment.
- **Priority Treatment Acres** - How many acres a Tribe believes they can treat over the next few years.

**Potential At Risk Acres** - land that is at risk or vulnerable to a resource concern.

NRCS will provide an estimate of the “Potential At Risk Acres” for Cropland, Forest, Range and Pasture with the treatment area maps. This acreage amount is the total acreage of a single landuse. The information NRCS is providing is based on the NRCS Landuse data. The Tribes can use these estimates, or provide NRCS with an amount.

- Because NRCS has no way to provide “Other Associated Ag Land” landuse information, the Tribes will need to provide an acreage estimate for this landuse. This acreage is dependent of the identified resource concern and what is being addressed (as described on page 3).
- As mentioned before, the Pasture acres may be questionable. If necessary, a Tribe should indicate that there isn’t any Pasture on the reservation. Or, if a larger or smaller acreage is appropriate, a Tribe should adjust the acreage amount accordingly and provide that to the NRCS.
- If a Tribe has better acreage information for any of the landuses, then they can provide it and the NRCS will use that amount instead.

**Acres Needing Treatment** - the number of acres that need to be treated for the identified resource concern.

Each Tribe will need to provide NRCS with these acreages. This could be the entire “At Risk” amount, or some percentage of the “At Risk” acreage. Or it could be an acreage amount that the Tribe has previously assessed and has determined they want to use. If this is the case, it must be no more than the “At Risk” acreage.

- There should be an acreage amount for every identified resource concern on each landuse.

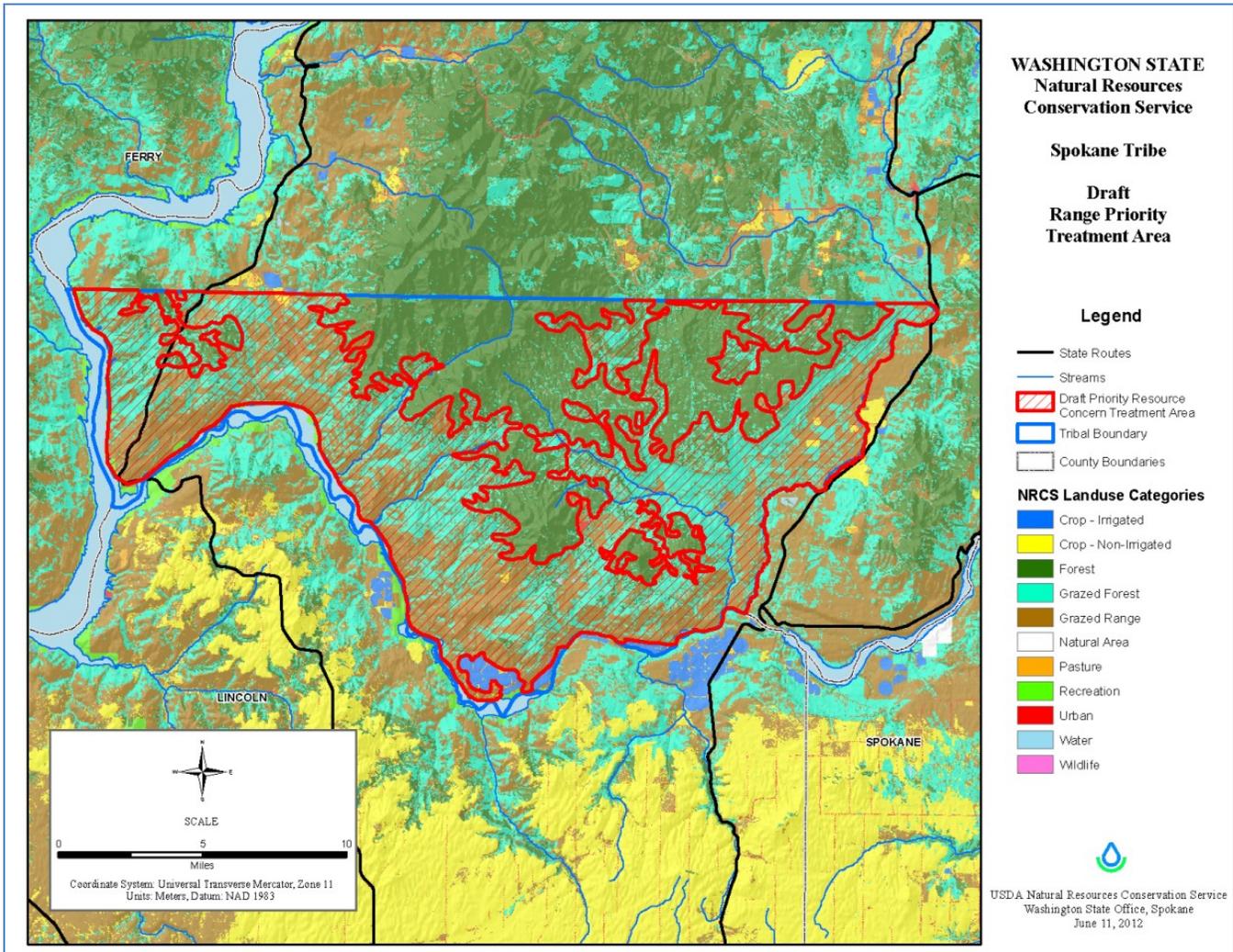
**Priority Treatment Acres** - the number of acres identified for treatment for a specific resource concern during the 3 year period from FY 2012 through FY 2014.

Each Tribe will need to provide NRCS with these acreages. This is the number of acres that a Tribe wants to treat for a particular resource concern on a given landuse.

- These amounts can vary for a given landuse depending on the resource concern.

**Example Priority Treatment Area and Acreage Development:**

**Example Priority Treatment Area Map** - this map shows the draft **Range** Priority Treatment Area (with the NRCS Landuse underneath) for the Spokane Tribe. It includes both Grazed Range and Grazed Forest:



**Example of Acreage Development** – this table shows the NRCS Landuse acreage estimates for the Spokane Tribe:

<b>Crop – Irrigated</b>	1,484.37
<b>Crop - Non-Irrigated</b>	420.38
<b>Forest</b>	53,099.02
<b>Grazed Forest</b>	48,614.37
<b>Grazed Range</b>	46,389.21
<b>Pasture</b>	54.85
<b>Urban</b>	383.70
<b>Water</b>	435.50
<b>Wildlife</b>	14.50
<b>Total Acres</b>	150,895.89

Below is an example of using the Spokane Tribe’s draft **Range** Priority Treatment Area and NRCS Landuse acreages for an identified resource concern:

- **Potential At Risk Acres:** (from NRCS Landuse table)
  - Grazed Forest @ 48,614.37 acres + Grazed Range @ 46,389.21 = 95,000.00 acres (rounded)
- **Acres Needing Treatment:**
  - 95,000 acres x 80% = 76,000 acres (Tribe determines %)
  - Or Tribe assessed amount: 65,000 acres (Tribe provides this acreage)
- **Priority Treatment Acres:**
  - 10,000 acres (Tribe provides this acreage)

Or, the **Range** landuse acres for an identified resource concern could be provided entirely by the Tribe based on Tribal GIS data and/or some other local source. The source citation for the acreage should be provided to the NRCS.

- **Potential At Risk Acres:**
  - 105,000.00 acres
- **Acres Needing Treatment:**
  - 105,000 acres x 65% = 68,250 acres
  - Or Tribe assessed amount: 65,000 acres
- **Priority Treatment Acres:**
  - 15,000 acres

### 3) TIMELINE

Once NRCS has forwarded their Priority Treatment Area maps and acreage estimates to them, each Tribe should work with the NRCS Tribal Liaison on the following tasks:

#### **Priority Treatment Area Maps:**

- Review and approve NRCS developed Priority Treatment Areas boundaries, if acceptable.
- Provide modifications to NRCS developed Priority Treatment Areas boundaries, if necessary.
- Indicate any Pasture landuse issues.
- Develop and provide “Other Associated Ag Land” Priority Treatment Area boundaries, if needed.
- Provide “Other Associated Ag Land” boundary and resource concern descriptions, if needed.

#### **Acreage Estimates:**

- Work with the NRCS Tribal Liaisons to develop the three acreage estimates.
- Potential At Risk Acres – review the NRCS landuse acreages and decide if these estimates will be sufficient to use. If not, provide alternative acreage estimates and source citations for each landuse.
- Acres Needing Treatment – determine how many acres need to be treated on each landuse for each resource concern.
- Priority Treatment Acres – determine how many acres will be treated for each resource concern on a given landuse through 2014.
- Develop the three acreages for “Other Associated Ag Land”, if needed.

This information should be submitted to the NRCS Tribal Liaison no later than:

- **Friday, August 10, 2012**

Earlier submissions are welcomed and encouraged.