**What is a Conservation Plan?**

A conservation plan is a document that outlines the decisions you have made to protect and enhance the natural resources on the land you own and operate. A conservation plan, when completed, describes and schedules each of the conservation practices you’ve decided to apply to meet your goals and objectives. Developing a conservation plan is voluntary and relies on you making the decisions and implementing the plan.

NRCS conservation planners provide technical assistance at no cost to help develop and implement your plan. A conservation plan is protected by the Freedom of Information Act, and creating a plan does not provide public access to your property or information.

The conservation planning process consists of nine steps. This completed workbook is needed to start the planning process. After you fill in the workbook as completely as possible, the NRCS conservation planner will still need to gather additional information and make one or more visits to your farm in order to complete your conservation plan.

After completing this workbook, please contact your local NRCS field office to make an appointment to begin working on your conservation plan. Contact information for each NRCS field office is listed at the end of this workbook.

**Potential Benefits of Implementing a Conservation Plan on your Farm/Ranch**

- Increase economic return on the operation
- Improve soil quality and plant production
- Control weeds
- Improve the water holding capacity of your soil for crops and native plants
- Sustain the natural resource quality for you, your animals, and your neighbors
- Increase your property value
- Enhance open space and wildlife habitat
- Improve animal health
- Prevent off-farm impacts
- Contribute to plant health and vigor
- Improve air quality
- Improve water quality
- Maximize water use efficiency
- Address environmental regulation issues

*Before: Fallow cropland under drought conditions.*

*After: Cropland converted to pasture to control excessive soil erosion.*
**Table of Contents**

Please fill out Section A. In Section B, please fill out all information that applies to your operation. Section C provides information on the assistance that NRCS can provide to help you complete your conservation plan.

### A. Conservation Planning Documentation and Resource Assessment

- Identify Your Objectives ........................................... Page 1
- Natural Resource Information .................................... Page 2
- Identify Your Resource Concerns ................................. Page 3

### B. Land Uses

- Cropland ....................................................................... Page 4
- Forestland ..................................................................... Page 8
- Rangeland, Pastureland, and Grazed Forest ................... Page 9
- Livestock ....................................................................... Page 10
- Wetland ......................................................................... Page 11
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat ............................................. Page 11
- Farmstead ...................................................................... Page 12

### C. Assistance Information ........................................ Page 13

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### E. Workbook Evaluation ............................................ Page 16
Identify Your Objectives

What do you want to accomplish with your conservation plan? Conservation plans developed and implemented with clearly defined objectives are most successful. Set realistic objectives that can be reached with small, achievable steps. To have positive outcomes, you need to describe clearly what you want to happen on your land and where you want to be within a selected time frame. Ask yourself, “What do I want my place to look like in five years?” A clear objective statement will assist you and NRCS in developing a conservation plan that is right for you.

Natural Resource Objectives

Short term:

________________________________________________________________________________________

Long term:

________________________________________________________________________________________

Production and Economic Objectives

Short term:

________________________________________________________________________________________

Long term:

________________________________________________________________________________________

Quality of Life Objectives

Short term:

________________________________________________________________________________________

Long term:

________________________________________________________________________________________
Natural Resource Information

1. Do you have any streams running through or adjacent to your land?  Yes ___  No ___

2. Do you have any woody draws and/or streamside tree/shrubs (riparian areas)?  Yes ___  No ___

3. Do you have any natural or constructed ponds on your land?  Yes ___  No ___

4. Do you have any wetlands?  Yes ___  No ___

5. Do you use an irrigation system?  Yes ___  No ___

6. If yes, what is your application method?  flood ___  sprinkler ___  drip ___

    Do you use fertigation?  Yes ___  No ___

    Do you apply liquid manure?  Yes ___  No ___

    Where do you get your irrigation water? __________________________________________________________

List contracts, easements, and/or agreements for technical/financial assistance that restrict land management options:
Identify Your Resource Concerns

Describe the natural resource concerns/problems that occur on your land. These can include but are not limited to soil condition/erosion, water quality/quantity, and plant and/or animal health/productivity:

Cropland: _________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

Hayland: _________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

Forestland: _____________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

Patureland: _____________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

Rangeland: _____________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

Wildlife land: ___________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

Farmstead – including feedlots, dairies, or other lands: _________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

NRCS conservationist and landowner test soil moisture in a wheat field.
Cropland Information

1. Do you use a cover crop at any time during your regular crop rotation? Yes ___   No ___
   (A cover crop is a temporary planting to protect the soil or improve soil health. It is not harvested, but rather tilled under or sprayed down.)
   If yes, what do you plant and when in the rotation?______________________________________________________

2. Do you no-till any of your crops? Yes ___   No ___
   If yes, what crops? _______________________________________________________________________________

3. Do you apply herbicides and/or pesticides to your cropland? Yes ___   No ___

4. Do you apply nutrients (commercial or manure) and/or soil amendments to your cropland? Yes ___   No ___

5. Do you take soil tests? Yes ___   No ___
   If yes, how often? ________________________________________________________________________________

6. What is your typical crop rotation? __________________________________________________________________

7. Do you have alfalfa or other legumes in your rotation? Yes ___   No ___
   If yes, how many years are in alfalfa or other legumes? __________________________________________________

8. What type of hay do you grow? None ___   Alfalfa ___   Grass/Alfalfa ___   Grass ___

9. Do you use “precision ag” and/or global positioning techniques on your farm/ranch? Yes ___   No ___
   If yes, please explain _____________________________________________________________________________

Farming Equipment

Check the specific type of equipment that you use.

1. Chisel: Straight Points ___   Twisted Shank ___   Sweeps ___

2. Planter: Double Disk Opener ___   Sweeps or Double Row Cleaning Disks ___   Hoe Openers ___

3. No-Till Planter: Offset Double Disk Openers ___   Smooth Coulter ___   Ripple Coulter ___   Fluted Coulter ___

4. Disk: Offset Light Duty ___   Offset Heavy Duty ___   Tandem Disk ___   One Way ___

5. Field Cultivator (primary tillage): Duckfoot Points ___   Sweeps or Shovels 6-12” ___   Shovels ___   Undercutter ___

6. Finishing Tools: Culti-mulcher ___   Harrow ___   Roller/packer ___   Rod weeder ___

7. Moldboard Plow: 6-8” Deep ___   >8” Deep ___   With Trash racks removed ___
Crop Residue Levels

Please select a photo from below that best represents the appearance of the seedbed at planting time and insert the percentage on the following chart in the column “Crop Residue Percent after Planting.”

15 percent crop residue

30 percent crop residue

50 percent crop residue

70 percent crop residue
Please complete this chart to the best of your knowledge. This is pertinent information that will assist the planner in analyzing resource data and preliminary fact gathering needed for the plan. Use the crop residue level photos on page 7 to estimate the “Crop Residue after Planting” column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crop</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Manure Type (liquid, soild, etc)</th>
<th>Spread Time (spring, fall, etc.)</th>
<th>Incorporated (Yes or No)</th>
<th>Rate/Acre</th>
<th>Commercial Fertilizer Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spr. Wheat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,250</td>
<td>solid</td>
<td>fall, before tillage</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>10 tons/ac</td>
<td>18-46-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley, feed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>solid</td>
<td>fall, before tillage</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>8 tons/ac</td>
<td>18-46-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical summer fallow</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate/Acre</td>
<td>Applied Date</td>
<td>Avg Yield/Acre</td>
<td>Soil Prep (tillage used)</td>
<td>Number of Passes?</td>
<td>Approx. Planting Date</td>
<td>Row Width</td>
<td>Crop Residue Percent after Planting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 lbs/ac</td>
<td>Apr. 20</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Fall, chisel plow, Spr. cultivator, harrow</td>
<td>2x 1x 1x</td>
<td>Apr. 20</td>
<td>10 inches</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 lbs/ac</td>
<td>Apr. 25</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Spr. cultivator, harrow</td>
<td>1x 1x</td>
<td>Apr. 25</td>
<td>11 inches</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Round-up</td>
<td>2x 1x 1x</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Forestland Information

Check either yes or no for each question and describe the situation.

1. Do you have a current Forest Stewardship Plan or a Forest Management Plan?  
   Yes ___  No ___

2. Has there been any timber harvested from your land?  
   Yes ___  No ___

   If yes, when?  ____________________________________________

3. Have you installed any of the following forest practices? (mark applicable practices)
   - Tree Plantings ___
   - Forest Stand Improvement (Pre-Commercial Thinning) ___
   - Site Preparation ___
   - Prescribed Burning ___
   - Other Agro-Forestry Practices (Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment) ___
   - None ___

4. Do you graze livestock in your forestland?  
   Yes ___  No ___

   If yes, then fill out the “Rangeland, Pasture, and Grazed Forest Information” section as well.

5. Do you have noxious weeds on your forestlands?  
   Yes ___  No ___

   If yes, what kind?  _________________________________________

6. Check major vegetation types located in your forestlands.
   - Ponderosa Pine ___  Western Hemlock ___  White-Bark Pine ___  Douglas Fir ___  Western Red-cedar ___
   - Limber Pine ___  Lodgepole Pine ___  Engleman Spruce ___  Cottonwood/Aspen ___  Western Larch ___
   - Subalpine Fir ___  Ash ___  Western Juniper ___  Other ___

7. Are forest insects or diseases present?  
   Yes ___  No ___

   If yes, please identify type (if known)  _________________________________________

8. Have your timber resources been recently impacted by a wildfire?  
   Yes ___  No ___

   If yes, when?  ____________________________________________
Rangeland and Pasture and Grazed Forest Information

1. Acres of rangeland: __________  Acres of pasture: __________  Acres of forest: __________

2. Kind and number of each class of grazing animals: _____________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________________________

3. Approximate days per year on rangelands: __________  Approximate days per year on pasture: __________
   Approximate days per year on forest: __________
   Approximate days per year on hayland: __________  Approximate days per year fed hay: __________

4. Are there any streams going through your pasture, range, or forest?  
   Yes ___  No ___

   If yes, do livestock have access to the streams?  
   Yes ___  No ___

   If no, how do you water your animals?  
   _______________________________________________________________

5. Do you measure the stubble height to determine when to rotate livestock to another pasture?  
   Yes ___  No ___

6. Do you use a rotational system to graze your rangeland, pasture, and forest?  
   Yes ___  No ___

   If yes, does it include any of the following?
   • Identifying periods of grazing, rest, rotation, etc for each management unit.  
     Yes ___  No ___
   • Identifying and maintaining adequate plant cover or residue in each pasture and in sensitive areas (riparian, wetlands, or other habitats of concern).  
     Yes ___  No ___
   • Identifying and monitoring key areas and key plants to evaluate grazing management decisions.  
     Yes ___  No ___

7. Do you balance forage availability with livestock and wildlife demands for each field?  
   Yes ___  No ___

8. Total tons of hay fed per year (average): __________  Amount fed per head per year: __________

9. Do you apply nutrients and/or soil amendments to your pastureland?  
   Yes ___  No ___

10. Do you have any noxious weeds on your rangeland?  
    Yes ___  No ___

    If yes, please identify (if known): ________________________________

    Are there poisonous plants that limit when you can graze in certain fields?  
    Yes ___  No ___

Rangeland on the Northern Cheyenne reservation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Livestock</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Average Weight</th>
<th>Days/Years on Farm</th>
<th>Weaning Date</th>
<th>Selling Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horses</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Dairy</td>
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<td>Milking Cows</td>
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<td>Dry Cows</td>
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<td>Heifers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calves</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beef</td>
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<td>Cows</td>
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<td>Calves</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yearlings</td>
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<td>Bulls</td>
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<td>Bulls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Replacements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeders (if there is a feedlot)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sheep</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ewes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lambs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Layers</td>
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<td>Broilers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turkeys</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swine</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lactating Sows</td>
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<tr>
<td>Piglets</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeders</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>i.e. llamas, goats, bison</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Wetland Information

1. Do you have persistently wet areas on your property?  
   Yes ___  No ___  
   (i.e. - saturated soils or surface flooding/ponding for an extended period during the growing season)

2. Is the vegetation different than areas nearby?  
   Yes ___  No ___  
   (i.e. - grasses are higher, sedges and rushes are seen growing there)

3. Are you utilizing this land for the following uses?  
   - grazing ___  
   - haying ___  
   - cropping ___  
   - other ___

4. What are your interests for this land?  
   ________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________

### Fish and Wildlife Habitat Information

1. Do you specifically manage all or part of your land for wildlife habitat?  
   Yes ___  No ___
   If yes, what areas are managed, how is it managed, and what wildlife species do you manage?  
   ________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________
   If no, would you like to?  
   Yes ___  No ___
   What wildlife species would you like to manage for?  
   ________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________

2. Do you use your land for any recreational activities? (hunting, trapping, bird watching)  
   Yes ___  No ___
   Do you provide or allow for public access?  
   Yes ___  No ___
   Do you plant a wildlife food plot or leave a crop stand for this purpose?  
   Yes ___  No ___

3. Do you consider wildlife needs during cropping, haying, and/or grazing?  
   Yes ___  No ___
   If yes, how?  
   __________________________________________________________________

4. Do you specifically manage cropping, haying, and/or grazing activities to protect riparian (streamside) wetland habitat for fish and wildlife?  
   Yes ___  No ___
   If yes, how?  
   __________________________________________________________________

5. Are you interested in managing your land for rare or declining wildlife species?  
   Yes ___  No ___

6. Are predators a factor in the management of your operation?  
   Yes ___  No ___
   If yes, which species and when?  
   __________________________________________________________________
Farmstead Information

1. Do you generate and store any manure on the farmstead? Yes ___  No ___
2. Do animals have access to a stream in any concentrated feeding areas? Yes ___  No ___
3. Do you have a fertilizer/pesticide storage site and/or mixing and loading areas? Yes ___  No ___
4. Is your well at least 100 feet from your fertilizer/pesticide mixing/loading area? Yes ___  No ___
   From your feedlot? Yes ___  No ___
   From your fuel storage area? Yes ___  No ___
Please indicate if you are interested in any of the technical or financial assistance programs.

**Plan Development and/or Implementation**

- Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)
  CTA provides free technical assistance to help farmers and ranchers identify and solve natural resource problems on their farms and ranches. This might come as advice and counsel, through the design and implementation of a practice or treatment, or as part of an active conservation plan. This is provided through NRCS or your local conservation district.

**Stewardship Programs**

- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
  CSP is a voluntary program that provides stewardship and maintenance payments to farmers who agree to continue using good conservation practices on their production land. CSP also provides enhancement payments for farmers who go beyond the minimum requirements for protecting resources such as soil, water, air, energy, and plant and animal life on working lands. CSP is offered to selected watersheds each year, so not everyone is eligible to participate each year.

**Cost-share Programs**

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
  EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants in installing or implementing structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.

- Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)
  WHIP is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wildlife habitat on their property through the implementation of conservation practices.

**Easement Programs**

- Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)
  GRP is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance grasslands on their property.

- Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)
  WRP is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property. Easements and restoration payments are offered as part of the program.

- Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program (FRPP)
  FRPP is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect their farm and ranchlands with prime or unique soil or historic or archeological resources from conversion to non-agricultural uses.

**Additional Information Required for Program Participation**

If you are considering applying for any of the NRCS conservation programs, you must also have the following forms completed and filed at the USDA service center:

- AD-1026 – Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation (HELC/WC) Certification
- CCC-933 – Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) Certification
- CCC-901 – Member’s Information (for entity and joint operations only)
- CCC-902 – Farm Operating Plan for Corporations, Limited Partnerships, or other similar entities.
- Signature Authority of an individual requesting benefits for an entity or joint operation.
NRCS Field Office Contact Information

Now that you have completed the Conservation Planning Workbook, please either stop in the office or call one of the following to get assistance in completing the conservation planning process. You can also find more information about NRCS and conservation at http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field Office</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Field Office</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baker Field Office</td>
<td>22 South Fourth Street West</td>
<td>(406) 778-2217</td>
<td>Conrad Field Office</td>
<td>406 Main Street</td>
<td>(406) 278-7611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Sandy Field Office</td>
<td>200 1st Street North</td>
<td>(406) 378-2298</td>
<td>Crow Agency Field Office</td>
<td>Tribal Administration Building (Casino Units)</td>
<td>(406) 638-9102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Timber Field Office</td>
<td>225 Big Timber Loop Road</td>
<td>(406) 932-5160</td>
<td>Culbertson Field Office</td>
<td>508 6th Street East</td>
<td>(406) 787-5232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billings Field Office</td>
<td>1629 Avenue D, Building A, Suite 4</td>
<td>(406) 657-6135</td>
<td>Cut Bank Field Office</td>
<td>Third Street NE</td>
<td>(406) 873-4292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bozeman Field Office</td>
<td>3710 Fallon Street, Suite B</td>
<td>(406) 522-4000</td>
<td>Deer Lodge Field Office</td>
<td>1 Hollenback Road</td>
<td>(406) 846-1703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadus Field Office</td>
<td>114 North Lincoln Street</td>
<td>(406) 436-2417</td>
<td>Dillon Field Office</td>
<td>420 Barrett Street</td>
<td>(406) 683-3800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Browning Field Office</td>
<td>Blackfeet Tribal Headquarters</td>
<td>(406) 338-3153</td>
<td>Ekalaka Field Office</td>
<td>400 Mormon Street</td>
<td>(406) 775-6355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chester Field Office</td>
<td>18 Main Street</td>
<td>(406) 759-5778</td>
<td>Eureka Field Office</td>
<td>655 U.S. Hwy 93 North</td>
<td>(406) 296-2233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinook Field Office</td>
<td>230 Ohio Street</td>
<td>(406) 357-2320</td>
<td>Forsyth Field Office</td>
<td>270 S. Prospect Street</td>
<td>(406) 346-7333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chouteau Field Office</td>
<td>1102 Main Avenue NW</td>
<td>(406) 466-5722</td>
<td>Fort Belknap Field Office</td>
<td>Telephone: (406) 353-8488</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circle Field Office</td>
<td>106 10th Street</td>
<td>(406) 485-2744</td>
<td>Fort Benton Field Office</td>
<td>1210 25th Street</td>
<td>(406) 622-5627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus Field Office</td>
<td>334 N. 9th Avenue</td>
<td>(406) 322-5359</td>
<td>Glasgow Field Office</td>
<td>54062 U.S. Highway 2 West, Suite 2</td>
<td>(406) 228-4321</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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Lewistown Field Office  
211 McKinley Street, Suite 3  
Telephone: (406) 538-7401

Livingston Field Office  
5242 Highway 89 South  
Telephone: (406) 222-2899

Malta Field Office  
1120 U.S. Hwy 191 South, Suite 2  
Telephone: (406) 654-1334

Miles City Field Office  
3120 Valley Drive East  
Telephone: (406) 232-7905

Missoula Field Office  
3550 Mullan Road, Suite 106  
Telephone: (406) 829-3395

Pablo Field Office  
51383 Hwy 93 North  
Telephone: (406) 675-1245

Philipsburg Field Office  
105 S. Holland  
Telephone: (406) 859-3291

Plains Field Office  
102 Highway 200 West  
Telephone: (406) 826-3701

Plentywood Field Office  
119 N. Jackson  
Telephone: (406) 765-1801

Poplar Field Office  
500 Medicine Bear Road  
Telephone: (406) 768-3566

Rocky Boy Field Office  
Telephone: (406) 395-4066

Ronan Field Office  
4538 Highway 93  
Telephone: (406) 676-2841

Roundup Field Office  
109 Railroad Avenue East  
Telephone: (406) 323-2103

Scobey Field Office  
131A Highway 5 East  
Telephone: (406) 487-5366
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Workbook Evaluation

The intent of this workbook is to accelerate the conservation planning process by gathering resource information from you in advance. Please take a few moments to complete the evaluation below. Your feedback will be crucial in improving the workbook for future use.

If your answer to any question is “no,” please provide suggestions for improvement in the space provided. Your local NRCS conservationist will collect your comments when you return, with this workbook, to progress with the next steps in developing your conservation plan.

Was this workbook helpful in inventorying your natural resources?  
Yes ___  No ___  
__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

Did it help you to evaluate your conservation needs?  
Yes ___  No ___  
__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

Was the workbook useful in defining your conservation goals?  
Yes ___  No ___  
__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

Was the workbook easy to understand and use?  
Yes ___  No ___  
__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

Has completing the workbook been a worthwhile investment of your time?  
Yes ___  No ___  
__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

How long did it take you to complete the workbook? _______________________________________________________

What would you change about the workbook?  ____________________________________________________________  
__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

Optional

If we have any questions, may we contact you?  
Yes ___  No ___  
Name: ______________________________________  Phone Number: ______________________________________

Helping People Help the Land