

TITLE 180 – GENERAL MANUAL

PART 480 – JOB APPROVAL FOR ECOLOGICAL SCIENCE PRACTICES

480.0 Purpose

480.1 General

Exhibit A – Form CPA-219

PART 480 - JOB APPROVAL FOR ECOLOGICAL SCIENCE PRACTICES

NM480(c)(1)

NM480 Purpose.

The NRCS New Mexico job approval for ecological science practices.

NM480 General.

(a) Job Approval Authority is part of the overall NRCS process used to ensure both efficiency and quality during the planning, design and installation of *conservation* management systems and their associated practices. The primary purposes for providing approval authority to NRCS and non-NRCS personnel include:

(1) To assure those personnel resources are used efficiently by delegating approval authority at the local level.

(2) To communicate to NRCS and non-NRCS personnel, the extent of their technical authorities and their responsibilities associated with the planning, design and application of conservation management systems and associated practices.

(3) To provide conservation practices that, with proper operation and maintenance, will support conservation management systems and perform their intended functions for the appropriate life span of the practices.

(4) To assure that technical work complies with established practice standards, as well as applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and codes.

(b) Location of New Mexico Job Approval Authorities and Policy. New Mexico Ecological Science Job Approval policy is located in the following sections. The New Mexico Engineering Job Approval policy is located in the National Engineering Manual.

(c) Establishment of Ecological Science Practice Job Approval Authorities. NRCS and non-NRCS employees, who plan, design, and install conservation practices, are to be evaluated and assigned an appropriate level of technical approval authority. The level is based on the individual's training, experience and proven competence.

(1) Job Approval Land Use Types. Individual conservation practices vary significantly in complexity from site to site. This requires varying amounts of training and experience to plan and apply the conservation practices. To address this complexity, New Mexico policy is to establish Job Approval for practices based on four land use types: Cropland, Grazingland, Animal Feeding Operations/Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (AFO-CNMP), and Other.

NM480(c)(2)

(2) Job Approval Categories for Conservation Practices Three technical categories of Job Approval Authority will be used in New Mexico:

(i) Inventory and Evaluation. On site inventory which includes, skills in problem identification and preparation of sound alternative solutions so the recipient of the technical service can make informed decisions. In general, an individual with inventory and evaluation approval will have adequate knowledge, skills and abilities to assure that proposed practices prepared are technically, socially and economically feasible.

(ii) Design Approval. Approval of designs and specifications for site-specific practices, which meet NRCS standards, and objectives of the selected conservation management system. In general, an individual with design approval will have adequate knowledge, skills and abilities to ensure that site-specific NRCS designs and specifications meet standards and the objectives of the conservation management system.

(iii) Installation and Certification. Authority to accept the practice as meeting applicable NRCS standards. In general, an individual with installation and certification approval will have adequate knowledge, skills and abilities to determine that the practice is functional and applied according to site specific specifications.

(3) Assigning Job Approval Authority. Formal assignment of Ecological Science Practice Job Approval Authority to NRCS and non-NRCS personnel will be by issuance of NM- FORM-CPA- (TBA). (See Exhibit A).

(i) Original Job Approval Authority or a revision is initiated by a request of the individual or the individual's supervisor.

(ii) The individual's supervisor reviews and concurs in the request and forwards the request to the Area Conservationist for approval.

(iii) The Area Conservationist reviews the request and approves as appropriate. The Area Conservationist may request documentation from the individual or the supervisor to substantiate the requested authority. The Area Conservationist may consult with other specialists to aid in determining the appropriate level of authority.

(iv) The Area Conservationist will maintain a copy of the NM-CPA-219 for each employee in the Area. By January 1st of each year, an updated list will be provided to the State Resource Conservationist.

(4) Quality Assurance. Job Approval Authorities will be subject to program reviews carried out by state staff according to the quality assurance plan.

(d) Minimum requirements for Job Approval Authority. The following is a list of minimum requirements for Job Approval Authority that employees must meet before the authority can be issued:

(1) An awareness of the NRCS conservation planning process comparable to the information contained in the NRCS “Conservation Planning Modules 1-5.”

(2) For any practice authority for AFO/CNMP:

(i) An awareness of agricultural waste management systems equivalent to the information contained in NRCS’ Agricultural Waste Management Systems: A Primer Course.

(ii) The contents and use of the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide as related to specific practices for the AFO/CNMP for which expertise is being provided.

(iii) Criteria associated with the various practices of a AFO/CNMP as contained in the NRCS “Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning Technical Guidance.”

(iv) Applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations that impact the elements of a AFO/CNMP

(3) For practices 360, 317, 634, 521a, 521c, 558, 313, and 359 to obtain authority for AFO/CNMP:

(i) Knowledge and experience adequate to design and implement these practices.

(ii) Working knowledge of the information contained in the NRCS Agricultural Waste Management Systems Level 2 Course or its equivalent.

(4) For practices 328, 340, 589a, 589b, 589c, 362, 382, 393, 410, 412, 464, 449, 329a, 329b, 391a, 612, 633, and 380 to obtain authority for AFO/CNMP.

(i) Skill in applying the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE) or the Wind Erosion Prediction System (WEPS), as appropriate.

(ii) Skill in using phosphorus index and leaching index.

(iii) Ability to plan and implement conservation practices common to the geographic area.

(5) For Nutrient Management (590) to obtain authority for AFO/CNMP:

(i) Working knowledge of the information contained in the NRCS Introduction to Water Quality Course, or equivalent.

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(ii) Skill in using phosphorus index.

(iii) Working knowledge of the information in the NRCS Nutrient Management Course or its equivalent.

(iv) Skill in developing nutrient management practice in compliance with the NRCS Nutrient Management (590), and, as appropriate, Irrigation Water Management (CODE449) conservation practice standards.

(6) Maintaining Job Approval Authority. The Area Conservationist and supervisor will review all Job Approval Authorities every three years. Personnel are responsible for keeping their own personal training plan updated to reflect training needed and obtained to maintain or increase their skill level. Training to maintain and update skills must, at a minimum, occur once every three years. A minimum of five days of training every three years will be identified in the employee development plan and concurred in by the supervisor. The training will be that needed by the employee to maintain and improve current skills in the primary practices installed by the employee.

(7) Conservation Planning Certification. NRCS requires staff that provide conservation planning assistance be certified. The Conservation Planning Certification policy and requirements are located in GM-180-409. A record of an employee's conservation planning certification will be maintained on the Job Approval Authority Form NM-CPA-219.