



United States Department of Agriculture



Environmental Evaluation: CPA-52

September 2020

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

Acronyms Explained:

- CatEx – Categorical Exclusion (from NEPA)
- CAA – Clean Air Act
- CART – Conservation Assessment & Ranking Tool
- CEQ – Council on Environmental Quality
- CIG – Conservation Innovation Grant
- CRP – Conservation Reserve Program
- CSP – Conservation Stewardship Program
- CWA – Clean Water Act
- EA – Environmental Assessment
- EE – Environmental Evaluation
- EIS – Environmental Impact Statement
- EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- ESA – Endangered Species Act
- EWP – Emergency Watershed Protection (Program)
- FONSI – Finding of No Significant Impact
- FSA – Farm Service Agency
- NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act
- NECH – (NRCS) National Environmental Compliance Handbook
- NFSA – National Food Security Act (sometimes shown just as “FSA”)
- NHPA – National Historic Preservation Act
- NOI – Notice of Intent
- NPPH – (NRCS) National Planning Procedures Handbook
- ROD – Record of Decision

Environmental Evaluation: CPA-52 Overview

- What is Environmental Evaluation
- History of the Environmental Evaluation
- When to Complete the Environmental Evaluation
- Environmental Evaluation and the Planning Process:
 - The CPA-52 form
 - Alaska Resource Concerns
 - Required Alaska Resource Concerns (Programs)
 - Requirements for Completing the CPA-52
 - Special Environmental Concerns

What is Environmental Evaluation

7 CFR § 650

“...the part of planning that inventories and estimates the potential effects on the human environment of alternative solutions to resource problems.”

Environmental Evaluation Series #1: Primer on NRCS Environmental Compliance on the [Conservation Webinar Portal](#) provides an introduction to the environmental compliance and evaluation.

History of the Environmental Evaluation

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

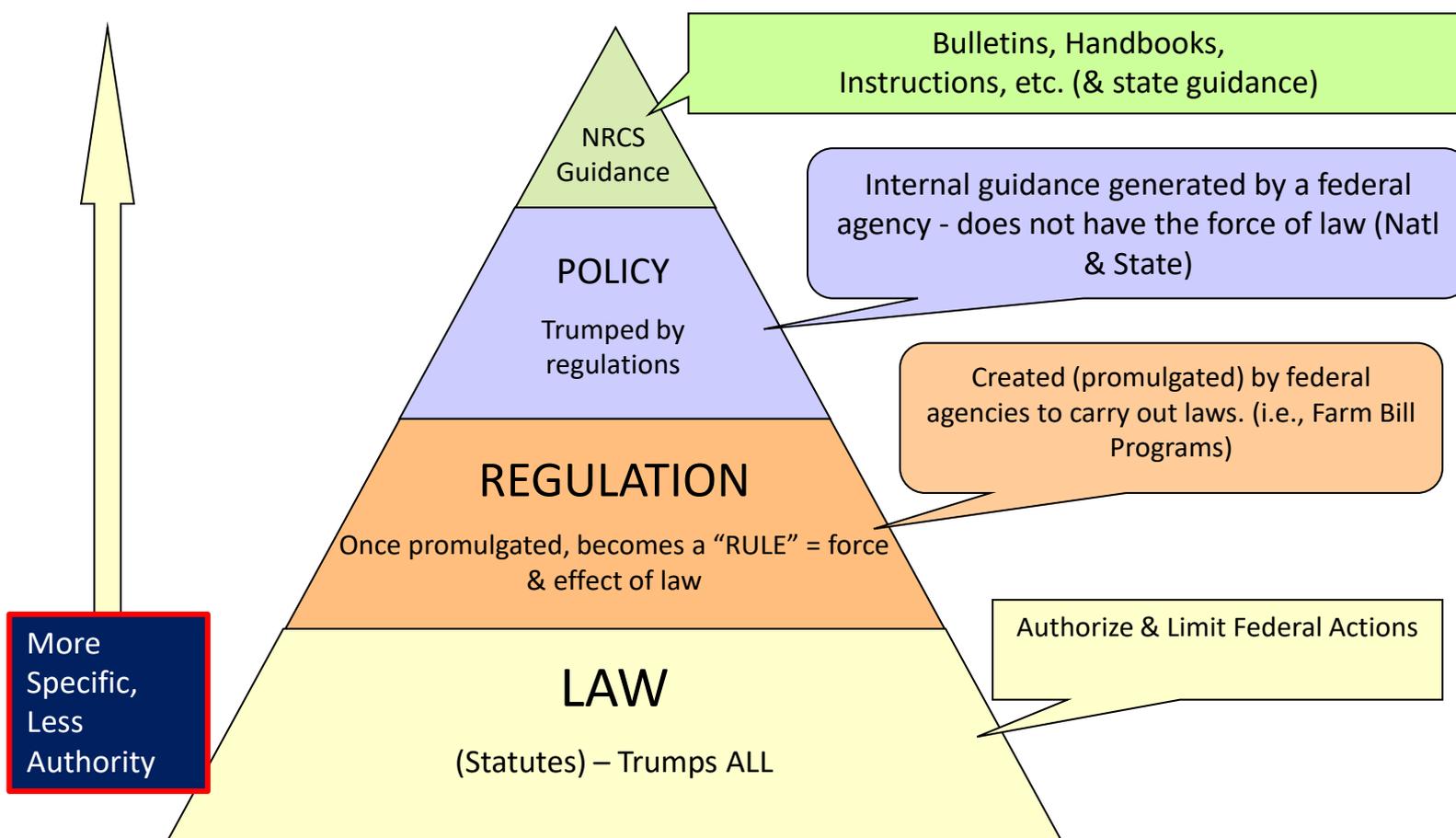
- Signed into law by President Nixon effective January 1, 1970.
- Ensured that environmental effects of government actions were taken into consideration and required the consideration of ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects before implementing those actions.
- Created the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), which was to oversee Federal agency compliance with the Act.
- Required Federal agencies to provide a detailed statement of environmental impacts for major federal actions.

History of the Environmental Evaluation

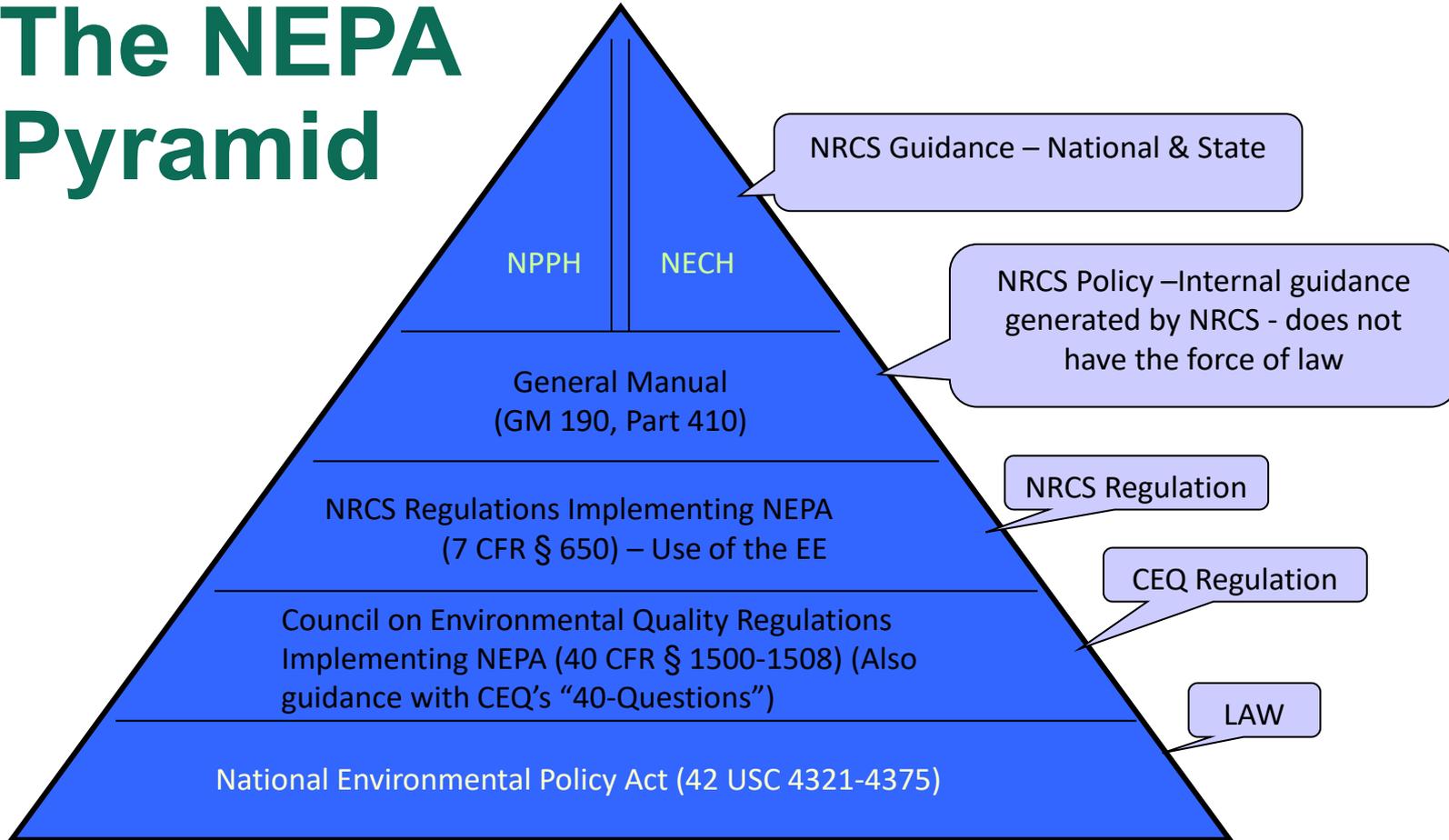
National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (continued)

- August 29, 1979 - NRCS published its final rules for implementation of NEPA (7 CFR 650)
 - NEPA will be considered in all steps of the planning process and should not as a separate process or requirement.
 - The only time it is not required is when making a technical determination, such as a wetland determination, or providing technical information.
 - Environmental Evaluations determine if an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement is needed.

Understanding the Regulatory Landscape

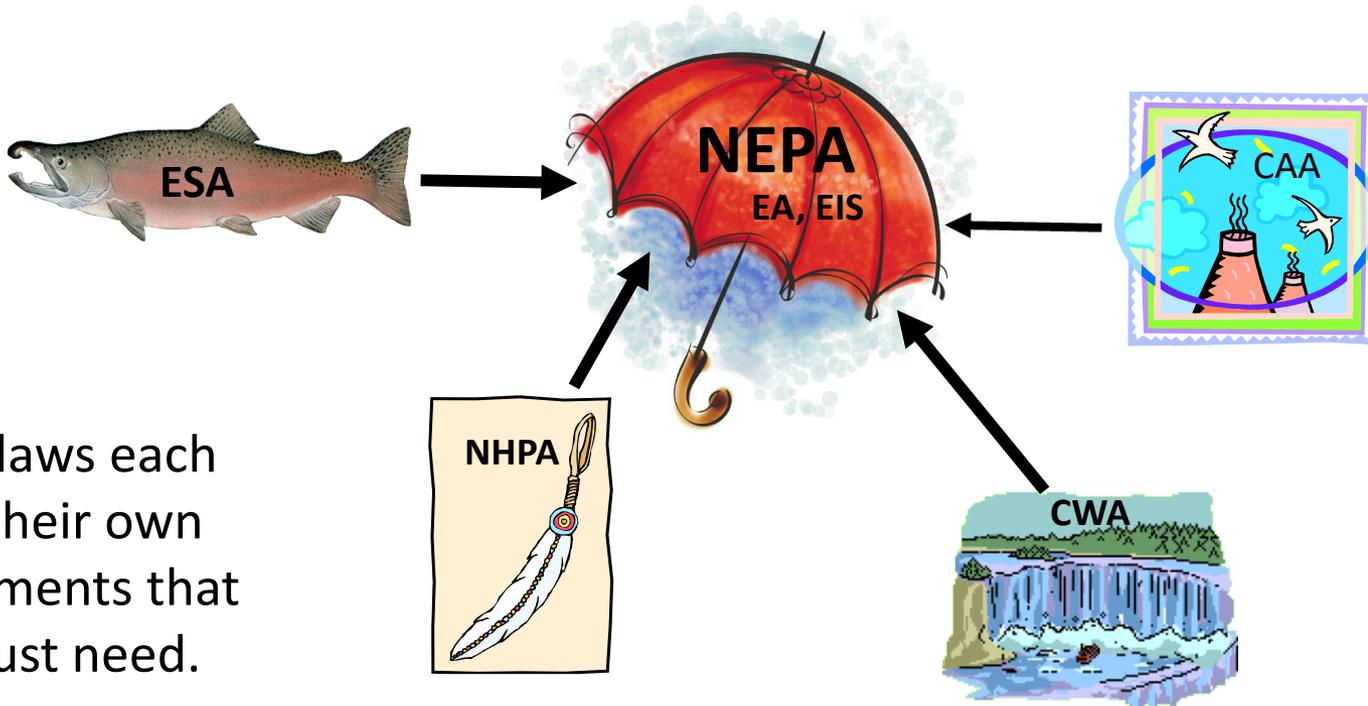


The NEPA Pyramid



NOTE: We have the same pyramid for all other Environmental Laws we must comply with, including NHPA, ESA, CWA, etc.

NEPA serves as an over-arching umbrella for complying with many laws, regulations, and executive orders.



These laws each have their own requirements that we must need.

Lit. Rev/Site Visit/Consultation

Producer Permits, TMDLs



Important Elements of NEPA

- Public Disclosure of Federal Actions
- Presentation of Appropriate Range of Alternatives (at least two – 1) “No Action” and 2) “Proposed Action”. More is preferred.)
- Interagency Coordination (as appropriate)
- Public Participation (as appropriate, e.g., scoping under EIS)

NRCS Environmental Compliance Documents

Time Needed
and Generally
Increasing
Complexity



- When developing conservation plans, including component plans such as nutrient management plans
- When completing areawide and watershed planning
- For financial assistance in the form of grants (CIGs)
- For conservation planning activities contracted to entities outside of NRCS
- For all NRCS financial assistance conservation programs including easements

Enforcement

- NRCS can be sued in federal court to stop activities if we do not follow procedures required by NEPA.
- NEPA require that the proper procedures are followed when considering the effects of NRCS actions on the environment.
- NEPA does NOT require NRCS to take the action that results in the least environmental impact.
- However, NRCS policies require us to take actions which avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects on the environment.

What a Federal Action Is

- NEPA applies whenever a federal agency proposes to take a “major federal action” that may affect the quality of the human environment.
- A “federal action” is any action where the federal agency controls or has responsibility over the actions, including:
 - Financed/Funded
 - Approved/Authorized
 - Assisted
 - Conducted
 - Regulated

What a Federal Action Is NOT

- Situations where NRCS is ONLY providing technical assistance (CTA) because we have no control over what the client will do with it.

However...

- NRCS Policy requires a complete CPA-52 as a part of EVERY planning activity, regardless of whether or not it is a federal action under NEPA.

When to Complete the Environmental Evaluation

NRCS is required to complete an environmental evaluation for all planning and financial assistance including but not limited to (NPPH 600.41C):

- When developing conservation plans, including component plans such as nutrient management plans
- When completing areawide and watershed planning
- For financial assistance in the form of grants (CIGs)
- For conservation planning activities contracted to entities outside of NRCS
- For all NRCS financial assistance conservation programs including easements

When to Complete the Environmental Evaluation

NRCS is required to complete an environmental evaluation for all planning and financial assistance including but not limited to (NPPH 600.41C): (continued)

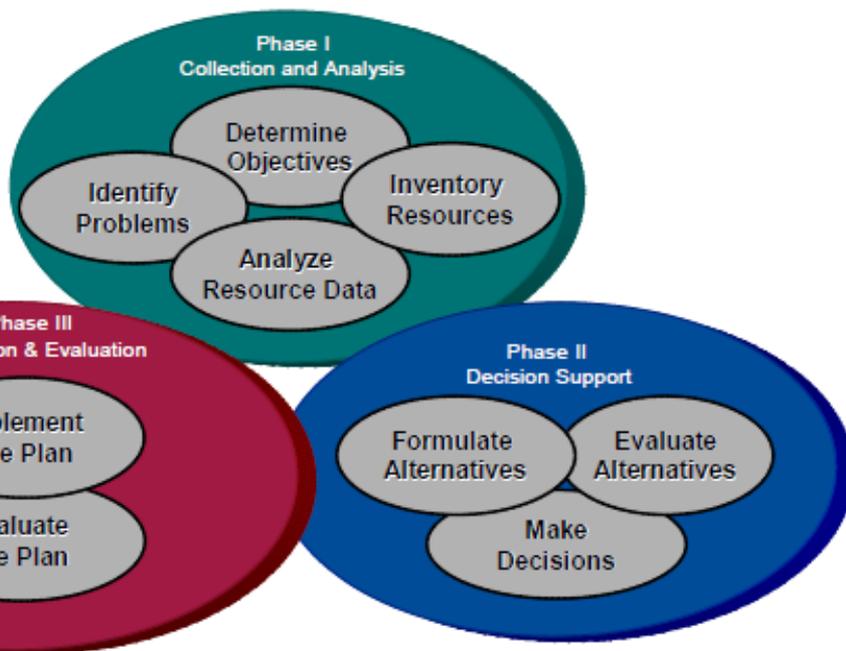
- Other State, Tribal, Territorial, or local programs that require NRCS approval
- The establishment of new structures associated with Snowpack Telemetry (SNOWTEL)
- Propagation and release of plant materials
- Emergency Watershed Program (EWP) damage survey reports (DSRs)
- NRCS-assisted programs through other agencies (e.g., FSA programs like CRP)
- Compatible uses and infrastructure projects on NRCS easements

The CPA-52 Form (EE document)

- The PRIMARY NRCS planning document
- NOT just a NEPA thing
- Integrates environmental concerns throughout the planning, installation, and operation of NRCS-assisted projects
- Used for ALL planning actions
- A decision tool for landowners, helping them evaluate a range of conservation alternatives

Environmental Evaluation and the Planning Process

The Nine Step Planning Process



Phase I Collection and Analysis

- Step 1 Identify Problems
- Step 2 Determine Objectives
- Step 3 Inventory Resources
- Step 4 Analyze Resource Data

Phase II Decision Support

- Step 5 Formulate Alternatives
- Step 6 Evaluate Alternatives
- Step 7 Make Decisions

Phase III Application & Evaluation

- Step 8 Implement the plan
- Step 9 Evaluate the plan

Environmental Evaluation and the Planning Process: The CPA-52

The planning process is documented on the form "CPA-52"

A complete overview of the CPA-52 and how the planning process is documented is provided in two courses:

1. The NRCS-CPA-52 Environmental Evaluation Worksheet (NRCS-NHQ-000048) on [AgLearn](#)
2. The Environmental Evaluation Series #2 on [Conservation Webinar Portal](#).

U.S. Department of Agriculture National Resources Conservation Service		MCS-CPA52 11/2009		A. Client Name:	
ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION WORKSHEET				B. Conservation Plan ID # (as applicable): Program Authority (optional):	
C. Client's Objective(s) (purpose): Step 2 Determine Objectives				C. Identification # (farm, tract, field #, etc. as required):	
Planned for Action: Step 1 Identify Problems	D. Alternatives				
	No Action <input type="checkbox"/> if RMS <input type="checkbox"/>	Alternative 1 <input type="checkbox"/> if RMS <input type="checkbox"/>	Alternative 2 <input type="checkbox"/> if RMS <input type="checkbox"/>	Step 5 Formulate Alternatives	
Resource Concerns					
In Section "F" below, analyze, record, and address concerns identified through the Resources Inventory process. (See FOTG Section III - Resource Planning Criteria for guidance).					
F. Resource Concerns and Existing Benchmark Conditions (Analyze and record the existing benchmark conditions for each identified concern)	I. Effects of Alternatives				
	No Action	Alternative 1	Alternative 2		
Amount, Status, Description (Document both short and long term impacts)	Amount, Status, Description (Document both short and long term impacts)	Amount, Status, Description (Document both short and long term impacts)	Amount, Status, Description (Document both short and long term impacts)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> if does NOT meet PC	<input type="checkbox"/> if does NOT meet PC	<input type="checkbox"/> if does NOT meet PC		
SOIL					
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	NOT meet PC	NOT meet PC	NOT meet PC		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	NOT meet PC	NOT meet PC	NOT meet PC		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	NOT meet PC	NOT meet PC	NOT meet PC		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	NOT meet PC	NOT meet PC	NOT meet PC		
WATER					
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	NOT meet PC	NOT meet PC	NOT meet PC		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	NOT meet PC	NOT meet PC	NOT meet PC		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	NOT meet PC	NOT meet PC	NOT meet PC		



Environmental Evaluation and the Planning Process : The CPA-52

F. Resource Concerns and Existing/Benchmark Conditions (Analyze and record the existing/benchmark conditions for each identified concern)	L. (continued)					
	No Action		Alternative 1		Alternative 2	
	Amount, Status, Description (Document both short and long term impacts)	✓ if does NOT meet PC	Amount, Status, Description (Document both short and long term impacts)	✓ if does NOT meet PC	Amount, Status, Description (Document both short and long term impacts)	✓ if does NOT meet PC
AIR		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
		NOT meet PC		NOT meet PC		NOT meet PC
		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
		NOT meet PC		NOT meet PC		NOT meet PC
PLA		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
		NOT meet PC		NOT meet PC		NOT meet PC
		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
		NOT meet PC		NOT meet PC		NOT meet PC
AND		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
		NOT meet PC		NOT meet PC		NOT meet PC
		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
		NOT meet PC		NOT meet PC		NOT meet PC
ENV		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
		NOT meet PC		NOT meet PC		NOT meet PC
		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
		NOT meet PC		NOT meet PC		NOT meet PC
Human Economic and Social Considerations						

Step 3 Inventory Resources
Step 4 Analyze Resource Data

Step 6 Evaluate Alternatives



Environmental Evaluation and the Planning Process : The CPA-52

Special Environmental Concerns: Environmental Laws, Executive Orders, policies, etc.						
at Section "G" complete and attach Environmental Procedures Guide Sheets for documentation as applicable. Items with a "*" may require a federal permit or consultation/coordination between the lead agency and another government agency. In these cases, effects may need to be determined in consultation with another agency. Planning and practice implementation may proceed for hardships not involved in consultation.						
I. Special Environmental Concerns (Document existing/benchmark conditions)	J. Impacts to Special Environmental Concerns					
	No Action		Alternative 1		Alternative 2	
	Document all impacts (Attach Guide Sheets as applicable)	if needs further action	Document all impacts (Attach Guide Sheets as applicable)	if needs further action	Document all impacts (Attach Guide Sheets as applicable)	if needs further action
*Clean Air Act Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
*Clean Water Act / Waters of the U.S. Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
*Coastal Zone Management Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Coastal Resource Guide		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
*Cultural Property Guide		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
*Endangered Species Guide		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Environ. Guide		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
*Essential Guide		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Floodpl. Guide		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Historic Guide		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
*Migratory Golden Guide		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Natural Areas Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Prime and Unique Farmlands Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Riparian Area Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Scenic Beauty Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

Step 3 Inventory Resources
Step 4 Analyze Resource Data

Step 6 Evaluate Alternatives



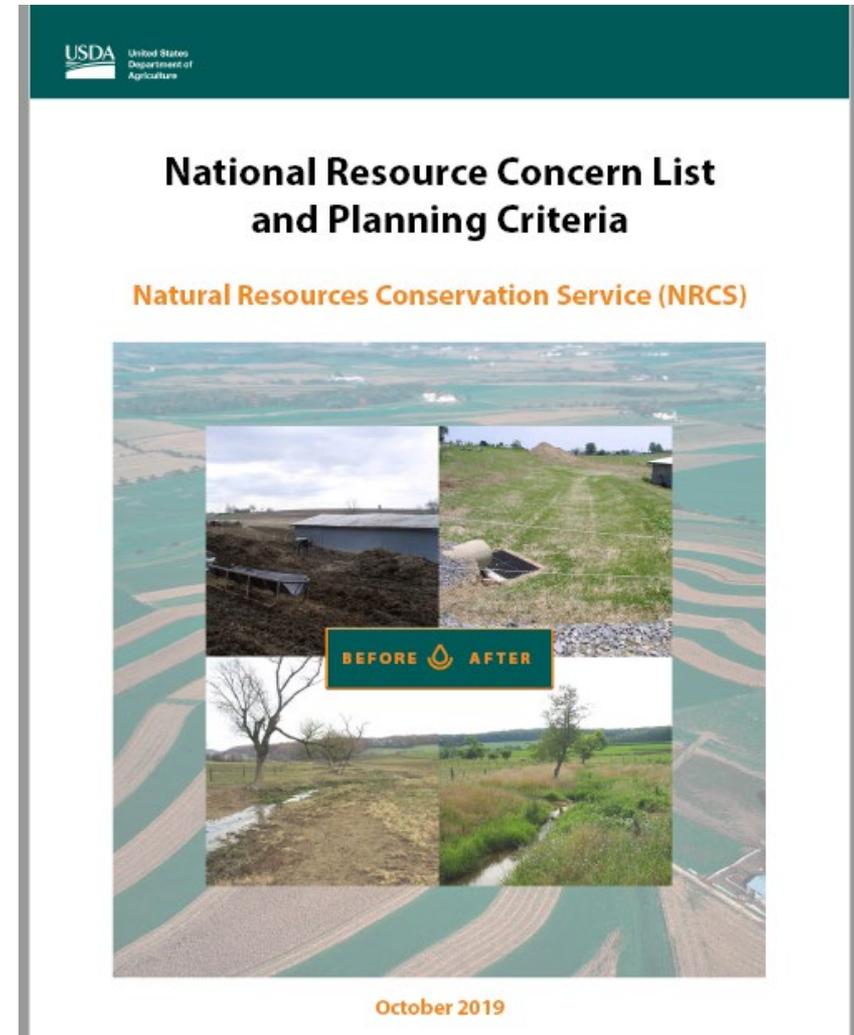
Environmental Evaluation and the Planning Process : The CPA-52

Wetlands Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Wild and Scenic Rivers Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
K. Other Agencies and Broad Public Concerns Assessments, Permissions, Public Review, or Permits Required and Agencies Consulted.	Step 6 Evaluate Alternatives					
L. Cumulative Effects Narrative (Describe the cumulative impacts considered, including past, present and known future actions regardless of who performed the actions)	Step 7 Make Decisions					
M. Mitigation (Record actions to avoid, minimize, and compensate)						
N. Preferred Alternative	Preferred alternative	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Supporting Reason					
N. Context (Record context of alternatives analysis) <small>(The significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human, national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality.)</small>						
O. To the best of my knowledge, the data shown on this form is accurate and complete: <small>In the case where a non-NRCS person (e.g. a TSP) assists with planning they are to sign the first signature block and then NRCS is to sign the second block to verify the information's accuracy.</small>						
		Signature (TSP if applicable)		Title		Date
		Signature (NRCS)		Title		Date
<small>If preferred alternative is not a federal action where NRCS has control or responsibility and this NRCS-CPA-52 is shared with someone other than the client then indicate to whom this is being provided.</small>						
The following sections are to be completed by the Responsible Federal Official (RFO)						
<small>NRCS is the RFO if the action is subject to NRCS control and responsibility (e.g., actions financed, funded, assisted, conducted, regulated, or approved by NRCS). These actions do not include situations in which NRCS is only providing technical assistance because NRCS cannot control what the client ultimately does with that assistance and situations where NRCS is making a technical determination (such as Farm Bill title 1, or wetland determinations) not associated with the planning process.</small>						
P. Determination of Significance or Extraordinary Circumstances						
<small>To answer the questions below, consider the severity (intensity) of impacts in the contexts identified above. Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that on balance the effect will be beneficial. Significance cannot be avoided by timing an action temporary or by breaking it down into small component parts.</small>						
<small>If you answer ANY of the below questions "yes" then contact the State Environmental Liaison as there may be extraordinary circumstances and significance issues to consider and a site specific NEPA analysis may be required.</small>						
Yes		No				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	• Is the preferred alternative expected to cause significant effects on public health or safety?				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	• Is the preferred alternative expected to significantly affect unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas?				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	• Are the effects of the preferred alternative on the quality of the human environment likely to be highly controversial?				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	• Does the preferred alternative have highly uncertain effects or involve unique or unknown risks on the human environment?				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	• Does the preferred alternative establish a precedent for future actions with significant impacts or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration?				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	• Is the preferred alternative known or reasonably expected to have potentially significant environment impacts to the quality of the human environment either individually or cumulatively over time?				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	• Will the preferred alternative likely have a significant adverse effect on ANY of the special environmental concerns? Use the Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheets to assist in this determination. This includes, but is not limited to, concerns such as cultural or historical resources, endangered and threatened species, environmental justice, wetlands, floodplains, coastal zones, coral reefs, essential fish habitat, wild and scenic rivers, clean air, riparian areas, natural areas, and invasive species.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	• Will the preferred alternative threaten a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements for the protection of the				

Environmental Evaluation and the Planning Process

Alaska Resource Concerns

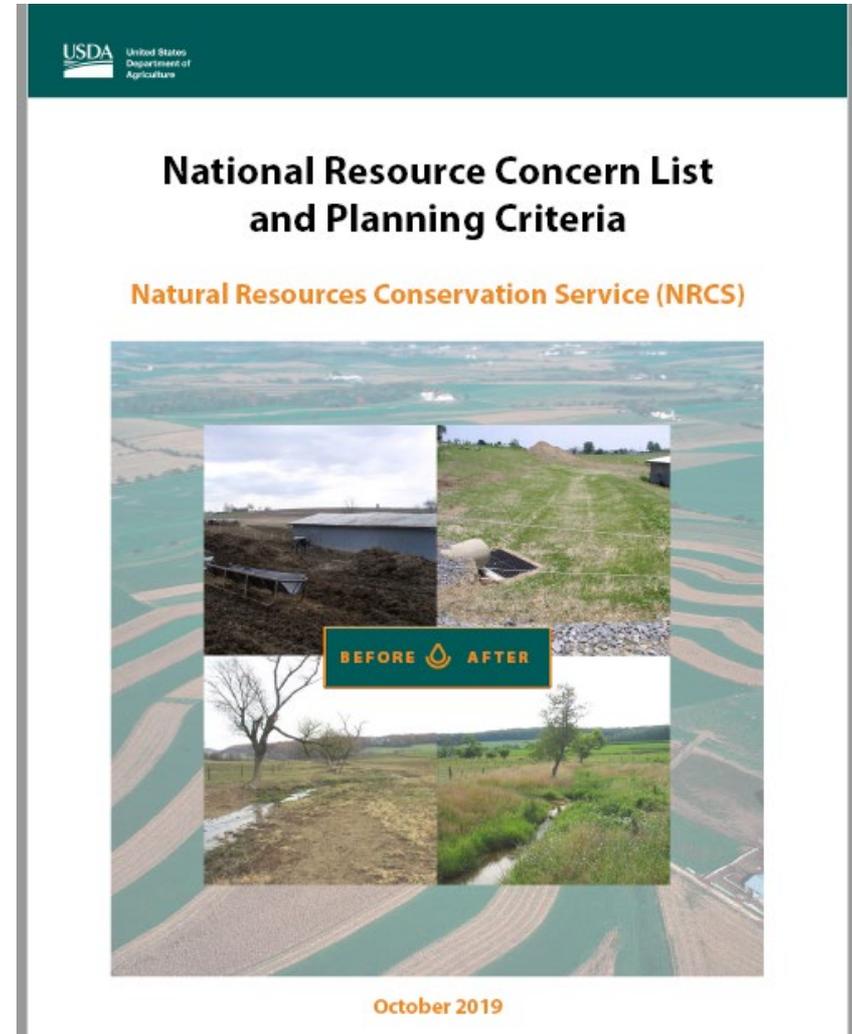
- Use the Resource Concern List and Planning Criteria found in Section III of the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) to identify and assess resource concerns.
- The Resource Concern List and Planning Criteria identifies tools for assessing resource concerns and the minimal acceptable conditions that must be met to address the resource concern.



Environmental Evaluation and the Planning Process

Alaska Resource Concerns

- Alaska requires certain resource concerns be evaluated based on land use and/or land management, such as irrigation or applied nutrients. The planner is not limited to evaluation of only the required resource concerns; however, it is the minimum evaluation required.



Environmental Evaluation and the Planning Process

Required Alaska Resource Concerns

Programs like EQIP and CSP may have a minimum set of resource concerns that are required to be evaluated during the planning process, assessed in CART and documented on the CPA-52.

National Resource Concern List and Planning Criteria Applicability (landuse/resource concern) X - Alaska Required (Xmo-modifier dependent; Xmg-management dependent)	RC Applicability to Land Use																				
	Landuse								Modifier			Management									
	Assoc. Ag	Crop	Farmstead	Forest	Pasture	Other	Drainaged	Range	Irrigated	Grazed	Wildlife	Surface Water	Manure, compost or bio solids applied	Pesticides applied	Nutrients applied	Confined Livestock	Stored Nutrients	Stored Pathogens	Stored Pesticides	Stored Petroleum	
Resource Concerns																					
Air quality emissions																					
Emissions of airborne reactive nitrogen																					
Emissions of greenhouse gases - GHGs																					
Emissions of ozone precursors																					
Emissions of particulate matter (PM) and PM precursors	X	X	X	X	X			X													
Objectionable odor																					
Aquatic habitat																					
Aquatic habitat for fish and other organisms	Xmo	Xmo	Xmo	Xmo	Xmo	Xmo	Xmo	Xmo			Xmo										
Temperature effects on aquatic habitat	Xmo	Xmo	Xmo	Xmo	Xmo	Xmo	Xmo	Xmo			Xmo	Xmo									
Concentrated erosion																					
Bank erosion from streams, shorelines or water conveyance channels	Xmo	Xmo	Xmo	Xmo	Xmo	Xmo	Xmo	Xmo				Xmo									
Classic gully erosion	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X													
Ephemeral gully erosion		X																			
Degraded plant condition																					
Plant productivity and health		X		X	X			X													
Plant structure and composition				X	X			X													
Field pesticide loss																					
Pesticides transported to groundwater	Xmg	Xmg	Xmg	Xmg	Xmg	Xmg	Xmg	Xmg						Xmg						Xmg	
Pesticides transported to surface water	Xmg	Xmg	Xmg	Xmg	Xmg	Xmg	Xmg	Xmg						Xmg						Xmg	
Field sediment, nutrient and pathogen loss																					
Nutrients transported to groundwater		Xmg			Xmg		Xmg							Xmg	Xmg						
Nutrients transported to surface water		Xmg	Xmg		Xmg		Xmg							Xmg	Xmg						
Pathogens and chemicals from manure, biosolids or compost applications transported to groundwater		Xmg	Xmg		Xmg		Xmg				Xmg			Xmg							
Pathogens and chemicals from manure, biosolids or compost applications transported to surface water		Xmg	Xmg		Xmg		Xmg				Xmg			Xmg							
Sediment transported to surface water	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X													
Fire management																					
Wildfire hazard from biomass accumulation																					
Inefficient energy use																					
Equipment and Facilities																					
Farming/Ranching Practices and Field Operations																					
Livestock production limitation																					
Feed and forage balance		Xmo	X	Xmo	X			X			Xmo										
Inadequate livestock shelter	X	Xmo	X	Xmo	X	X	X	X			Xmo										
Inadequate livestock water quantity, quality and distribution		Xmo	X	Xmo	X			X			Xmo										
Long term protection of land																					
Loss of functions and values																					

Environmental Evaluation and the Planning Process

Requirements for Completing the CPA-52

Need for Action

- Reason for NRCS to take action
- Ties to resource concerns

Inventory and Benchmarks

- Short and concise
- List field (if applicable)
- Should be site-specific, tailor narrative to the operation
 - Do not use a template
- Quantify when possible
- Identify tools used in analysis
- If a required resource concern is not applicable, document the evaluation of it
- Include special environmental concerns

E. Need for Action:

Current contour flood system in pasture is inefficient, plant productivity is less than desired as a result. Existing pump is 50 years old and inefficient. Current irrigation scheduling is based on visual estimates and records are not kept.

SOIL: EROSION
Sheet & Rill Erosion
Sheet & Rill erosion- fields 1-3 @ 9 t/ac/yr- (RUSLE2)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean Water Act / Waters of the U.S. <p><i>Guide Sheet Fact Sheet</i></p> <p>0.2 mi. Rock Ck. WOUS adjacent to field 4 (USGS Quad) / 303d listed for bacteria and 0²</p>
--

<p>SOIL EROSION</p> <p>Sheet & Rill Erosion - Farmstead</p> <p>Not a Resource Concern. Permanent ground cover is > 90% and slope is < 10%.</p>
--

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean Air Act <p><i>Guide Sheet FS1 FS-2</i></p> <p>No nonattainment areas present in the planning area (FOTG 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean Water Act / Waters of the U.S.

Environmental Evaluation and the Planning Process

Requirements for Completing the CPA-52

Alternatives

- A “No Action” alternative must always be included as required by NEPA.
- Must evaluate “No Action” and “Alternative 1”. More alternatives are optional.
- Be concise and objective.
- List practice codes.
- Use the CPPE, tech notes, and specialists (experts from NRCS and other agencies) to guide practice selection.
- You may list non-NRCS practices when planning.

H. Alternatives			
<i>No Action</i> ✓ if RMS <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Alternative 1</i> ✓ if RMS <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Alternative 2</i> ✓ if RMS <input type="checkbox"/>	
Contour flood system will continue to waste water, plant productivity and health will continue to be poor as a result. Irrigation scheduling will continue to be based on visual estimates.	Pumping Plant (533), Irrigation land leveling (464), Irrigation Pipeline (430), Structure for water control- Flow meter (587), Structure for Water Control- Fish Screen (587) Structure for Water Control (587)- Irrigation Water Management (449)	Irrigation Pipeline (430), Pumping Plant (533), Sprinkler System (442), Structure for Water Control (587)- Fish Screen, Structure for Water Control- Flow Meter (587), Irrigation Water Management (449)	
Resource Concerns			

Environmental Evaluation and the Planning Process

Requirements for Completing the CPA-52

Effects of Alternatives

- Short and concise
- Should be site-specific narrative tailored to the operation
 - Do not use a generic template
- Identify tools used in analysis of alternatives and document the results
- List the practice and practice code treating the resource concern
- If the treatment of resource concern does not meet planning criteria, check “NOT meet PC”
- Include any special environmental concerns

T et	ST<: Irrigation land leveling (646), Irrigation Water Management (587), and Irrigation Pipeline (430) will increase irrigation efficiency by 15%. And 9.4 Ac-in/Ac savings (CA Water Savings Tool)	<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC

@	Sheet & Rill erosion will remain @ 9 t/ac/yr	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC



Environmental Evaluation and the Planning Process

Requirements for Completing the CPA-52

Section Q NEPA Compliance Finding and Section R Rational Supporting the Finding

- The Environmental Evaluation Series #11 on [Conservation Webinar Portal](#) provides an overview of the categorical exclusion
- There are 21 NRCS Categorical Exclusions and 7 USDA Categorical Exclusions
- One or more categorical exclusions can be used
- For typical planning activities in Alaska:
 - If all practices and activities to be implemented can be described with one or more categorical exclusions, select all applicable categorical exclusions in R.2 and check item 2 in section Q.
 - If all practices and activities to be implemented cannot be described using the categorical exclusions, select the appropriate program environmental assessment in R.1, if applicable and check item 3 in section Q.
- This section is typically completed by the planner; however, it is reviewed by the responsible federal official for accuracy.

Responsible Federal Official Signature

- The Alaska State Conservationist is the responsible federal official, but he/she may designate another individual to sign.

Environmental Evaluation and the Planning Process

Requirements for Completing the CPA-52

NRCS Categorical Exclusions (CatEx)

- A Cat Ex is defined as “a category of actions which do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment ... and ... for which, therefore, neither an environmental assessment nor an environmental impact statement is required.” (40 CFR 1508.4)
- Preferred by NHQ as they carry more ‘legal weight’ than Programmatic EAs and EISs (i.e., check box #2 over #3 when possible).
- Caveat: Must meet “Sideboard Criteria” and test for “Extraordinary Circumstances (Section ‘O’)”

Environmental Evaluation and the Planning Process

Special Environmental Concerns: The Environmental Evaluation (EE) Series found on the [Conservation Webinar Portal](#) provides an overview of the Special Environmental Concerns and how to document them on the CPA-52

- EE Series #3 *Planning for Floodplain and Riparian Area Special Environmental Concerns*
- EE Series #4 *Planning for Wetlands and Clean Water Act Special Environmental Concerns*
- EE Series #5 *Planning for Prime and Unique Farmland and Invasive Species Special Environmental Concerns*
- EE Series #6 *Planning for Endangered Species/Migratory Birds/Bald and Golden Eagles Special Environmental Concerns*
- EE Series #7 *Planning for Natural Areas, Scenic Beauty, and Wild and Scenic Rivers Special Environmental Concerns*
- EE Series #8 *Planning for Clean Air Act and Environmental Justice Special Environmental Concerns*
- EE Series #9 *Planning for Essential Fish Habitat, Coastal Zones, and Coral Reef Special Environmental Concerns*
- EE Series #10 *Planning for Cultural Resources Special Environmental Concerns*

Environmental Evaluation and the Planning Process

Special Environmental Concerns

Tips for Alaska Specific information

- Clean Air Act - List of Alaska nonattainment/maintenance status for each borough by year for all criteria pollutants can be found at [EPA Green Book](#). Additional information can be found at [Alaska Division of Air Quality](#)
- Clean Water Act - a brief explanation of Section 404 can be found at [EPA Clean Water Act Section 404 and Swampbuster](#). Alaska NRCS maintains an impaired waters GIS layer for determining if your planning units contain or are adjacent to 303d listed water bodies. They can also be looked up at [Alaska Division of Water Quality](#) or [EPA Impaired Waters and TMDLs](#)
- Coastal Zone Management - Alaska withdrew from the National Coastal Zone Management program on July 1, 2011.

Environmental Evaluation and the Planning Process

Special Environmental Concerns

Tips for Alaska Specific information

- Endangered Species Act - a list of Federal threatened and endangered species as well as State species of special concern can be found at [Alaska Department of Fish and Game](#). Use of [USFW Information for Planning and Consultation \(IPaC\)](#) will allow you to see if any listed species, critical habitat, or migratory birds will be impacted by the proposed project.
- Environmental Justice - Find area statistics and demographics using [EPA's Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool](#) or [US Census Data](#)
- Essential Fish Habitat - use [NOAA Essential Fish Habitat Mapper](#) to locate water bodies considered to be essential fish habitat.

Environmental Evaluation and the Planning Process

Special Environmental Concerns

Tips for Alaska Specific information

- Floodplain Management - For many areas in Alaska you can find floodplain maps using [FEMA Flood Map Service Center](#)
- Invasive Species - a list, with pictures, of prohibited and restricted noxious plant species can be found at [Alaska Department of Agriculture](#)
- Migratory Birds/Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act - use of [USFW Information for Planning and Consultation \(IPaC\)](#) will allow you to see if migratory birds, bald or golden eagles or their habitat will be impacted by the project. The [Alaska Wildlife Action Plan](#) also contains information related to these birds and their habitat.
- Prime and Unique Farmlands - Soils of local importance for various areas in Alaska can be found at [Alaska Prime and Important Farmlands](#)

Environmental Evaluation and the Planning Process

Special Environmental Concerns

Tips for Alaska Specific information

- Wetlands - AK NRCS maintains several wetland GIS layers. National Wetlands Inventory can be found by using [USFW NWI Wetlands Mapper](#)
- Wild and Scenic Rivers - less than 1% of Alaska's river miles are designated as Wild and Scenic. A list of Alaska Rivers can be found at [National Wild and Scenic River System](#). Clicking on the river will provide a river map and description of the reach designated Wild and Scenic.
- For addition information on Special Environmental Concerns, refer to Section II of the Field Office Technical Guide.

Environmental Evaluation and the Planning Process

Revisiting or Reinitiating a completed CPA-52

The CPA-52 must be updated, or a new CPA-52 completed, when:

- Outstanding environmental effects determinations are not being resolved as intended
- When NRCS makes “substantial changes” to the proposed action (e.g., the customer changes their mind, or NRCS adds or subtracts practices from the conservation plan, or NRCS makes significant changes to the practice scope or design.)
- When there is “significant new circumstances or information” (such as when previously unknown natural resource conditions are discovered during the implementation process.)



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(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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