



Design and Implementation Activity

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Design

DIA 144

Definition

Design the conservation practices needed to address a fish or wildlife habitat resource concern.

A fish and wildlife habitat Design and implementation Activity (DIA) provides site-specific instructions to implement fish and wildlife habitat conservation practices included in a conservation plan.

REQUIREMENTS

General Requirements

A DIA assists a participant with implementing their conservation plan by providing site-specific instructions, requirements, plans, or specifications for putting conservation practices and enhancements on the land.

A DIA may involve providing assistance for a single conservation practice or a combination of structural, vegetative, or land management conservation practices, enhancements, and management activities.

Prior to initiation of the DIA, the Technical Service Provider (TSP) will schedule a conference with the participant and NRCS field office staff to ensure an understanding of the participant objectives (including practices to be covered by the DIA), required deliverables, and characteristics of the DIA tasks. The meeting between all parties may take place in person or electronically.

The participant and conservation planner have determined which practices a TSP will provide DIA assistance for. The TSP must have certification in NRCS Registry for each practice they will provide assistance for through this DIA. If not certified for a practice(s), a TSP can use a subcontractor who is a certified TSP for the practice(s). If there are no available certified TSPs, then that practice shall be removed from the scope of the participant's DIA.

DIA assistance is based on the participant's conservation plan and applicable conservation practice standards and related technical guidance provided in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG). Each NRCS State Office publishes appropriate technical guidance and reference information in the state's version of the FOTG. DIA assistance must conform with the conservation practice standards included in FOTG, Section 4 for the state where the practice(s) are to be implemented. A TSP may use conservation practice supporting documents found in the applicable state's FOTG, Section 4 to facilitate delivery of appropriate information to the participant.

Examples of conservation practice supporting documents include statements of work (SOW), implementation requirements (IR), practice specifications (PS), standard drawings (SD), General Specifications (GS), Construction Specifications (CS), Material Specifications (MS), and design support tools. The FOTG homepage hyperlink is: <https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/>.

This DIA must improve the condition for one or more of the following resource concerns:

- 1) Terrestrial Habitat:
 - a) Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates.
- 2) Aquatic Habitat:
 - a) Aquatic habitat for fish and other organisms.
 - b) Elevated water temperature.

This DIA must provide implementation instructions for at least one of the following NRCS conservation practice standards, as supplemented in the state FOTG where the DIA planning land unit is located:

- Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (Code 395).
- Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (Code 645).
- Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (Code 644).

DELIVERABLES

The TSP must provide documentation showing all the tasks indicated in the **REQUIREMENTS** section, and **DELIVERABLES** section are completed:

Cover Page

The cover page must include the following:

- 1) DIA name and number.
- 2) Participant information: Name, farm bill program name, contract number (TSP obtains contract number from participant), land identification (e.g., state, county, farm, and tract number).
- 3) TSP name, TSP number, TSP expiration date, mailing address, phone number, email address.
- 4) Farm identification:
 - a) Farm name, owner name, street address, and county/state.
 - b) Primary phone number of the participant.
 - c) List of all practice and/or scenario designs included in this plan.
- 5) A statement by the TSP that services meet the DIA requirements, such as:

I certify the work completed and delivered for this DIA:

- *Complies with all applicable Federal, State, Tribal, and local laws and regulations.*
- *Meets the General and Technical Requirements for this DIA.*
- *The planned practices are based on NRCS Conservation Practice Standards in the state Field Office Technical Guide where the practices are to be implemented.*
- *Is consistent with and meets the conservation goals and objectives for which the program contract was entered into by the participant.*
- *Incorporates alternatives that are both cost effective and appropriate to address the resource issue(s) and participant's objective(s).*

TSP Signature _____ Date _____

- 6) Participant's acceptance statement indicating:

I accept the completed DIA deliverables as thorough and satisfying my objectives.

Participant Signature _____ *Date* _____

- 7) A designated space for an NRCS reviewer to certify the agency's acceptance of the completed DIA.

NRCS administrative review completion by:

Signature _____ *Title* _____ *Date* _____

Notes and Correspondence

- 1) Provide notes, in date-order that:
 - a) Document the participant's objectives.
 - b) Document each interaction with the participant, results of that interaction, and the date of the interaction.
 - c) Document each site visit, its participants, the activity completed in the field, and results of each site visit.
 - d) Provide initials of the note-maker, if more than one person provides the assistance.
- 2) Provide copies of correspondence between the TSP and the participant relating to decision-making and completion of this DIA. For example, description of alternatives presented for evaluation and decision-making.

Implementation Maps

- 1) **Habitat Practice Implementation Map** (this may consist of several maps to account for the entire implementation area). This map will specifically include:
 - a) Boundary lines for the Planning Land Units (PLUs) with labels (name, number, or both). A PLU is a unique geographic area, defined by a polygon, that has common land use and is owned, operated, or managed by the same participant or participants. The PLU is the minimum unit for planning.
 - b) Acreage of each PLU.
 - c) Land uses (noting management activities associated with each land use).
 - d) Delineation of vegetation communities present onsite.
 - e) Habitat features (rock piles, snags, den sites, nest boxes, etc.)
 - f) Streams, surface waters, wetlands.
 - g) Fences, watering facilities.
 - h) Location of planned and applied conservation practices.
- 2) Other maps, as needed, with appropriate interpretations.
- 3) All maps for a DIA must include these features:
 - a) Map title.
 - b) Participant's name.
 - c) Assisted By [TSP planner's name].
 - d) Name of applicable conservation district, county, and State.
 - e) Date prepared.

- f) Map scale.
- g) Information needed to locate the planning area, such as geographic coordinates, public land survey coordinates, etc.
- h) North arrow.
- i) Appropriate map symbols and a map symbol legend on the map or as an attachment.

Design or Implementation Details

- 1) Develop site-specific written instructions for implementing each planned conservation practice or activity included in the participant's DIA. Those instructions must:
 - a) Include, as a minimum, all items listed in each CPS "Plans and Specifications" section and the applicable Practice Specification (PS).
 - b) Include all items listed in the "Operations and Maintenance" section.
- 2) SOW documents in a state's FOTG Section 4, include a Design section that lists deliverables needed for the participant's successful implementation.
- 3) Implementation Requirement documents in a state's FOTG Section 4 may be used to prepare and deliver site-specific conservation practice instructions, but are not required to be used.

Supporting Documentation

Provide results of design tools, resource assessments, or other analyses that are required to meet the Criteria in the state's CPS and PS.

- 1) Provide documentation of the following:
 - a) Site-level resource inventory and assessment data and analysis used to develop the site-specific conservation practice instructions.
 - b) Reference to assessment information incorporated from a fish and wildlife management plan.
 - c) Provide an Endangered Species Act effects determination (no affect, may affect but not likely to adversely affect, may adversely affect) for practice implementation for all Federal candidate, proposed, threatened and endangered species with the potential to occur onsite. If critical habitat has been designated onsite, make determination whether practice implementation may adversely modify critical habitat. Provide conservation measures that avoid or minimize adverse effects.
- 2) Quality assurance activities that are required during the installation to ensure the materials and installations meet the CPS purpose, function properly and can be certified as meeting the plans and specifications.
- 3) Other information as required in the CPS SOW, including but not limited to, practice purpose, list of permits, facilitating practices, and state required items that affect safety and other environmental concerns.

Deliver Completed Work

The TSP must:

- 1) Prepare and provide their participant two sets of the items listed in Deliverables.
 - a) One set is for the participant to keep.
 - b) The other set is for sharing with the local NRCS Office.

- c) The TSP may transmit a set of the Deliverables to the local NRCS Office, if their participant has authorized it. It is recommended to provide NRCS field office an opportunity to review the DIA deliverables, prior to asking for its acceptance.
- 2) Upload electronic copies of all the Deliverables on NRCS Registry.

References

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. National Biology Handbook.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. National Biology Manual.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. National Environmental Compliance Handbook
<https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/viewerFS.aspx?hid=39467>

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Field Office Technical Guide.
<https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/>

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. National Forestry Handbook.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. National Forestry Manual.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. National Planning Procedures Handbook.
<https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/viewerFS.aspx?hid=44407>

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. National TSP Resources.
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/technical/tsp/?cid=nrcseprd1417414>

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. National TSP Website.
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/technical/tsp/>