

Training Curriculum – First Three Years: Ecological Site Specialist Group

Preface

The following list is a **recommended progression** of official trainings grouped within broad career advancement stages. Courses are listed within recommended career timeframes, to which there is no requirement implied, simply a guide to supervisory expectations of job duty skill acquisition with experience.

Elective courses are highly recommended, but not required within the curriculum. Nor are electives limited to those courses listed on this curriculum -- individuals are encouraged to tailor their trainings to fit their needs.

Offerings are not restricted to the level in which they occur and should not be used as a means of determining promotion eligibility.

These curricula do not in any way reflect the training necessary to fulfill the requirements for specific OPM job series, nor do they serve in any way to change the existing OPM-defined requirements for the specific job series.

Beginner

CORE COURSES

Year 1

- Conservation Planning, Part 1 - AgLearn/Web-based (NRCS-NEDC 00019)
- Conservation Planning Course, Part 2 - Offered by State (NRCS-NHQ-LOCAL-000003); **OR** Conservation Planning Bootcamp (NRCS-NEDC-000164)
- Ecological Site Descriptions for Management, Monitoring and Assessment – NRCS ESD Webinars ([YouTube playlist](#))
- Ecological Site Descriptions (NRCS-NEDC-000428)
- Rangeland Ecology 1: Principles and Applications (NRCS-NEDC-000026)
- Cultural Resource Training Series, Part 1 (NRCS-NEDC-000141)

Year 2-3

- Basic Soil Survey – Field and Lab (NRCS-NEDC-000012)
- Digital Soil Survey Data Editing (NRCS-NEDC-000250)
- How to Use DigiTop and Dimensions for USDA (National Agricultural Library interface and Dimensions for USDA)
- An introductory ESRI GIS course, ArcGIS or ArcGIS Pro (ESRI Academy)
- NASIS Basic (Guides)
- Overview of Water Quality for Conservation Planners – No. 1 (NRCS-NHQ-000038)
- Water Bodies – No. 5 (NRCS-NHQ-000042)
- Plant ID (Local and Regional Field Botany Courses)

Year 4

- Soil Geomorphology Institute (NRCS-NEDC-000142)

SELF-STUDY AND ON THE JOB TRAINING (OJT)

- OJT Modules
 - 701-734 Ecological Inventory
- EDIT User's Guide
- Basic Soils & Web Soil Survey to Interpret Land Capabilities & Limitations (NRCS-NHQ-000009)
- Field Inventory Methods
- Plant Taxonomy and Plants Database
- Soil Spatial and Tabular Data
- Soil Survey Conventions
- Vegetation Science/plant community ecology (including local short courses and webinars)

RECOMMENDED ELECTIVE COURSES

Agency Knowledge

- Introduction to the Field Office Technical Guide – AgLearn/Web-based (NRCS-NEDC-000149)
- Environmental Evaluation Webinar Series No. 1: Primer on NRCS Environmental compliance - S&T Training Library for content; completion marked/self-certified in AgLearn
- Environmental Evaluation Webinar Series No. 2: Documenting the Environmental Evaluation - S&T Training Library for content; completion marked/self-certified in AgLearn
- NRCS Mentor and Protégé Training (NRCS-NEDC-LOCAL-000003)
- Orientation for New Employees (NRCS-NEDC-000013)

Basic Skills

- MS Excel Series (AgLearn Web-based learning)

Work Life

- Emotional Intelligence 2.0 (Audio book USDA-BOOK-49926)
- What is Emotional Intelligence? (AgLearn Web-based learning)