

Training Curriculum: 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)

Intermediate

CORE COURSES

Early mid-career

- Rangeland Ecohydrology and Soil Erosion (NRCS-NEDC-000412)
- Rangeland Ecology II (NRCS-NEDC-000027)
- Interpreting and Measuring Indicators of Rangeland Health (NEDC-NRCS-000155)
- Nitrogen Management and Concerns – No. 2 (NRCS-NHQ-000039)
- Phosphorus Management and Concerns – No. 3 (NRCS-NHQ-000040)
- Sediment Management for Water Quality – No. 4 (NRCS-NHQ-000041)
- Pest Management and Water Quality Implications – No. 6 (NRCS-NHQ-000043)
- Water Management – No. 7 (NRCS-NHQ-000044)
- Statistics for Soil Survey Part 1 (NRCS-NEDC-000400)
- Technical Writing in the SPSD ([Files - USDA CloudVault](#))

Mid-career

- Vegetation Monitoring and Data Interpretation (SRM developed online course with interpretive videos, new in 2021)
- Digital Soil Mapping with ArcSIE (NRCS-NEDC-000273)
- Introduction to Digital Soil Mapping (NRCS-NEDC-000272)
- NASIS Understanding Soil Interpretations (NRCS-NEDC-000279)
- Remote Sensing for Soil Survey Applications (NRCS-NEDC-000244)
- Science of Interpretations (NRCS-NEDC-000288)
- Soil Correlation (NRCS-NEDC-000036)

RECOMMENDED ELECTIVE COURSES

Basic Skills

- Conquering the Challenges of Public Speaking (AgLearn Web-based learning)
- Managing for Excellence (NRCS-NEDC-000010)

Leadership

- USDA Aspiring Leader Program (AgLearn Self-assigned curriculum)

Technical Skills

- Discipline Specific Ecology (Range, Pasture, Forestry – depending upon SSO/MLRA needs)
- Hydric Soil for Wetland Delineation (NRCS-NEDC-000022)
- Wetland Identification for Food Security Act purposes – Phase 1: Basic Concepts (NRCS-NEDC-000268)
- Wetland Identification for Food Security Act purposes – Phase 2: Applications (NRCS-NEDC-000254)
- Environmental Evaluation Webinar Series No. 3-11 (depending upon SSO/MLRA needs) (NRCS-NHQ-000013)
- Soil Health and Sustainability Training, State or National-NEDC/EDS/Instructor led (NRCS-NHQ-LOCAL-000004 or NRCS-NEDC-000050)
- Air Quality, Climate Change, and Energy Course (NRCS-NEDC-000253)

Work Life

- Emotional Intelligence at Work (AgLearn Web-based learning)
- Emotional Intelligence: Building Self-Management Skills (AgLearn Web-based learning)
- Time Management (AgLearn Web-Based books)

Advanced/Leadership

CORE COURSES

- A course on ArcGIS Online or sharing GIS content on the web (ESRI Academy)
- Management of Soil Survey by MLRA (NRCS-NEDC-000248)
- Spatial Analysis Workshop (NRCS-NEDC-000271)

RECOMMENDED ELECTIVE COURSES

Agency Knowledge

- Capitol Hill Workshop (NRCS-NEDC-000001)

Leadership

- Emotionally Intelligent Leadership (AgLearn Web-based learning)
- Everything You Need to Know About Leadership in 60 Seconds (AgLearn Web-based learning)
- 151 Quick Ideas for Delegating and Decision Making (AgLearn Web-based learning)
- 151 Quick Ideas to Improve Your People Skills (AgLearn Web-based learning)
- USDA Team Leader program (AgLearn Self-assigned curriculum)
- USDA Leadership Essentials Certificate Program (Self-assigned curriculum)

Technical Skills

- Cultural Resources Training Series, Modules 7 & 8 (Offered by state)
- NASIS – Designing and Developing Soil Interpretations (NRCS-NEDC-000302)
- Statistics for Soil Survey Part 2 (NRCS-NEDC-000332)
- Economics of Conservation Planning Course (NRCS-NEDC-000017)

Worklife

- Just Listen: Discover the Secret of Getting Through to Absolutely Anyone ((AgLearn Web-based learning)
- 100 ways to Motivate Yourself (AgLearn Web-based learning)