USDA PROGRAM PARTICIPANT – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Allow access to the site by NRCS staff for inventory, assessment, planning, design, and construction quality assurance. Provide all requested inventory information in a timely manner.

2. Assist in any subsurface investigations as needed during planning and design work. Request utility locates from the ND One Call Center when requested by NRCS.

3. Participate fully in the planning and design process. During planning, NRCS will provide multiple conceptual alternatives to treat resource concerns on your operation. Timely input on your part is essential to ensuring a good quality plan, as well as ensuring efficient use of government resources. Recognize that only one final design will be provided and therefore your involvement in the development and evaluation of conceptual alternatives is critical. A preliminary design review will be prepared and reviewed with you on larger projects, prior to completion of the final design package. Design changes will not be made unless unforeseen factors are discovered during design investigations or construction.

4. Agree that construction will not begin until the program contract is obligated (or a waiver is obtained) and NRCS provides a final approved design.

5. Obtain and comply with all applicable regulatory agency permits.

6. Hire a construction contractor to install the practice(s) in accordance with the approved construction drawings and specifications. Alternatively, make plans to install practices with your own labor and equipment.

7. Attend a pre-construction meeting to go over details of the plans and specifications, with the NRCS and the individuals who will be completing the construction work (for example your contractor, or your employees). For smaller projects, these meetings may occur by phone after all parties have received copies of the design documents by mail.

8. Provide anticipated construction dates to the servicing NRCS office, and ensure NRCS is aware when construction activities are taking place. Request that NRCS come out to complete construction staking and/or inspections as agreed to at the pre-construction meeting. NRCS will not stake a project more than once, unless additional phases are identified in an inspection plan, so schedule staking accordingly.

9. Ensure corrective measures are taken if deficiencies are identified via construction inspection conducted by the NRCS. Understand practices which are not installed in accordance with the design drawings and specifications will not be certified unless approved prior to construction by an NRCS employee with proper Job Approval Authority.

10. Concur with certified quantities of installed practices, and sign Section 2 “Participant Certification and Signature” on the NRCS-CPA-1245, Practice Approval and Payment Application form.

11. Follow the operation and maintenance (O&M) plan for the practice(s) included in the construction drawings. Contact NRCS as needed for operation and maintenance follow up questions during the practice lifespan. If a management practice is included, complete identified activities, record keeping, and communication with NRCS as outlined in the design.

NRCS – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

NRCS FIELD OFFICE

1. Review the "USDA Program Participant Roles and Responsibilities" fact sheet with the USDA program participant, and explain the overall process NRCS utilizes to plan and implement conservation practices.
2. Work cooperatively with the program participant to complete steps 1 through 7 of the conservation planning process. It is the FO's responsibility to ensure that appropriate NRCS technical staff (i.e. engineers, agronomists, biologists, etc.) are consulted when appropriate. Document planning process on the CPA-52, CPA-6, and in other worksheets as needed. For engineering practices, document needs and feasibility work, preliminary engineering, and job class/approving individual for planning work.

   If a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) has been completed on the operation, NRCS staff with appropriate planning job approval authority must review the CAP and concur that proposed practices are needed and feasible whether a TSP will continue with the design phase or whether NRCS will complete the design work. As needed, FO staff should consult with agency technical staff. Ensure work required to complete steps 1-7 of the planning process is completed including work needed to addresses the needs and feasibility of the project, before the client implements the plan (step 8). Document planning work on the CPA-52.
3. Complete program ranking and contracting procedures as appropriate. Ensure that all documentation related to planning, including needs and feasibility assessment of alternatives, preliminary engineering, and job class approval is loaded onto the DMS system for technical review.
4. Maintain Conservation Assistance Notes (NRCS-CPA-6) through design and construction phases of the project. If staff outside the FO (Area, SO, or neighboring FO staff) are handling construction inspection work, ensure that they provide copies of their documentation for the file prior to practice certification.
5. Maintain engineering design records throughout the project, including design drawings, specifications, materials list, supporting computations, design report (for JC IV+), inspection plan (JC IV+), construction inspection notes, photos, and as-built drawings. Ensure design job class is clearly documented and the approving individual is listed on the design documents.
6. As early in the planning process as possible, or upon completion of the final design, complete onsite cultural resources review and ensure ND NRCS Cultural Resources guidance requirements have been met. Schedule a pre-construction meeting with the program participant and the designer. At that meeting, which may be completed by phone after mailing out the design package on smaller projects, the designer should go over critical details of the design and points of the project where NRCS staff will need to be onsite for inspection. Request that the program participant keep FO staff informed of construction activities and progress to ensure good communications, avoid issues with installation not meeting the design, and facilitate prompt certification of practices.
7. After the final design is completed, review the contract and complete any contract modifications as needed.

8. Keep the designer, if not at the FO, informed of progress and issues during construction as appropriate. Provide as much technical assistance to the program participant as needed to ensure good quality practice implementation, and contact technical specialists as necessary to provide assistance as well. Contact the designer for approval if changes are proposed to the design during construction.

9. As practices (or groups of practices that form a functional system), are completed contact the designer, or other individual with adequate construction JAA, to utilize inspection documentation, construction surveys, and materials submittals to approve practices as meeting the design. Final technical approval for certification must come from an NRCS employee with adequate construction job approval authority, FO is responsible for ensuring that is documented in the contract folder.

10. Contact program assistant to generate the NRCS-CPA-1245, Practice Approval and Payment Application form(s) and work with the program participant for signature.

11. Report progress in the Performance Results System (PRS).

12. Provide follow up assistance to the program participant as needed, for practice operation and maintenance. Complete conservation planning step 9, to evaluate the effectiveness of practices to address resource concerns over time.

NRCS DESIGNER

1. Work cooperatively with the Field Office and Program participant to provide technical input to steps 1 through 7 of the conservation planning process. Document needs and feasibility work as appropriate for the project, as well as any preliminary engineering work completed during the planning phases of the project. When requested, review Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) and concur that practices are needed and feasible, or initiate additional planning work if necessary. Provide documentation to the FO, to include in the contract folder.

2. Provide technical assistance to the FO on answering ranking questions, and determining eligible practices and quantities for inclusion in program contracts.

3. For large, complex projects prepare a preliminary design and meet with the program participant to review prior to finalizing design. Complete final design work, as outlined in the National Engineering Manual, National Engineering Handbook, and as required by individual practice standards. A typical design package will include: design drawings, construction specifications, materials list, supporting computations, job class documentation, and an operation and maintenance plan. Projects with a job class IV or higher practice must have a design report and construction inspection plan written for them. All documents should be specifically tailored to the project, and an individual other than the designer needs to complete a check of the design for all projects.

4. Keep the FO and program participant involved and aware of issues that arise during the final design process, particularly if substantial changes are made that will impact the program contract. Program participant decisions and input to the design need to be documented in the contract folder, so if FO staff are not present in those discussions provide notes, emails, etc. to them for documentation.

5. Provide technical assistance to the program participant in acquiring project permits.

6. Conduct a pre-construction meeting with the program participant, installer, and field office to go over critical details of the design and key elements of construction inspection. Ensure that field office employee are clear on their roles during construction,

and provide any necessary technical training to ensure they can accomplish assigned inspection tasks.

7. Provide oversight to construction inspection activities throughout the project, and schedule time onsite as needed. Identify a backup to answer question or provide approval for changes when you are not available.

8. Conduct final inspection of installed practices, compute quantities, and approve for certification. As needed, provide formal written communication to the program participant of deficiencies. Provide inspection documentation, construction surveys, materials submittals, asbuilt drawings, and photos to the FO to file in the contract folder.

9. Provide follow up assistance to the program participant as needed, for practice operation and maintenance.

I have read and understand the responsibilities indicated above. Sign and date.

_____ _____

Program Participant Date

_____ _____

NRCS Planner Date