

Natural Resources Conservation Service

**Soil Conservation Career Group
Career Guide**

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
<i>NRCS Career Mapping</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Career Group Description</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Jobs within Soil Conservation</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Crosswalk of Career Levels to the General Schedule</i>	<i>3</i>
Soil Conservation Job Descriptions	5
Overall Soil Conservation Job Duties	7
Specifics by Job – Soil Conservation Technician	9
<i>Job Duties by Career Level – Soil Conservation Technician</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Foundational Competencies – Soil Conservation Technician</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Recommended Foundational Experience – Soil Conservation Technician</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Occupational Competencies – Soil Conservation Technician</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Recommended Occupational Experience – Soil Conservation Technician</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Recommended Trainings – Soil Conservation Technician</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Recommended Education/Certifications – Soil Conservation Technician</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Professional Associations – Soil Conservation Technician</i>	<i>19</i>
Specifics by Job – Soil Conservationist	20
<i>Job Duties by Career Level – Soil Conservationist</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Foundational Competencies – Soil Conservationist</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Recommended Foundational Experience – Soil Conservationist</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Leadership Competencies – Soil Conservationist</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Occupational Competencies – Soil Conservationist</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Recommended Occupational Experience – Soil Conservationist</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Recommended Trainings – Soil Conservationist</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>Recommended Education/Certifications – Soil Conservationist</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>Professional Associations – Soil Conservationist</i>	<i>39</i>

Specifics by Job – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations	40
<i>Job Duties by Career Level – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Foundational Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Leadership Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>Recommended Leadership Experience – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations.....</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Occupational Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations.....</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>Recommended Occupational Experience – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations.....</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>Recommended Trainings – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations.....</i>	<i>47</i>
<i>Recommended Education/Certifications – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations.....</i>	<i>48</i>
Specifics by Job – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs	49
<i>Job Duties by Career Level – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs</i>	<i>49</i>
<i>Foundational Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs.....</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>Leadership Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs.....</i>	<i>51</i>
<i>Recommended Leadership Experience – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs</i>	<i>52</i>
<i>Occupational Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs.....</i>	<i>54</i>
<i>Recommended Occupational Experience – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>Recommended Trainings – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs</i>	<i>56</i>
<i>Recommended Education/Certifications – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs.....</i>	<i>57</i>
Specifics by Job – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations	58
<i>Job Duties by Career Level – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations</i>	<i>58</i>
<i>Foundational Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations.....</i>	<i>59</i>
<i>Leadership Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations.....</i>	<i>60</i>
<i>Recommended Leadership Experience – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations</i>	<i>61</i>
<i>Occupational Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations.....</i>	<i>63</i>
<i>Recommended Occupational Experience – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations</i>	<i>64</i>
<i>Recommended Trainings – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations</i>	<i>65</i>
<i>Recommended Education/Certifications – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations.....</i>	<i>66</i>

Specifics by Job – State Resource Conservationist	67
<i>Job Duties by Career Level – State Resource Conservationist</i>	67
<i>Foundational Competencies – State Resource Conservationist</i>	68
<i>Leadership Competencies – State Resource Conservationist</i>	69
<i>Recommended Leadership Experience – State Resource Conservationist</i>	70
<i>Recommended Occupational Experience – State Resource Conservationist</i>	71
<i>Recommended Trainings – State Resource Conservationist</i>	72
<i>Recommended Education/Certifications – State Resource Conservationist</i>	73
<i>Professional Associations – State Resource Conservationist</i>	74
Specifics by Job – State Conservationist	75
<i>Job Duties by Career Level – State Conservationist</i>	75
<i>Foundational Competencies – State Conservationist</i>	76
<i>Recommended Foundational Experience – State Conservationist</i>	77
<i>Leadership Competencies – State Conservationist</i>	78
<i>Occupational Competencies – State Conservationist</i>	83
<i>Recommended Occupational Experience – State Conservationist</i>	84
<i>Recommended Trainings – State Conservationist</i>	86
<i>Recommended Education/Certifications – State Conservationist</i>	88
<i>Professional Associations – State Conservationist</i>	89
Appendix	90
<i>Job Level Definitions</i>	90
<i>Proficiency Scale Definitions</i>	93

Introduction

NRCS Career Mapping

These Career Maps will allow incumbents to identify the steps needed to qualify for higher-level positions in their current career group. Each career map has a career guide that will provide sample training and developmental activities needed to meet competency gaps between the incumbent's current position and his or her desired position. In addition, these maps will be used for recruitment purposes, explaining what a candidate needs to qualify for various positions.

Each occupation's Career Guide will include:

- A list of competencies with proficiency ratings identified for each position
- A sample list of training and experiential activities linked to developing each competency
- Clear guidance about how positions relate to each other

Together, these elements will help inform NRCS employees' and candidates' decisions about their careers at NRCS.

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the knowledge area requirements and associated training and developmental experiences associated with each position in the Soil Conservation career group. The Career Guides are not intended to be all encompassing, but rather to give users an overview and snapshot of each job within NRCS.

Career Group Description

This is an overall description of the career group.

Table 1. Soil Conservation Career Group Description

Description
These positions are responsible for working with landowners through conservation planning and assistance designed to benefit the soil, water, air, plants, and animals that result in productive lands and healthy ecosystems.

Jobs within Soil Conservation

Table 2. Job Titles within Soil Conservation

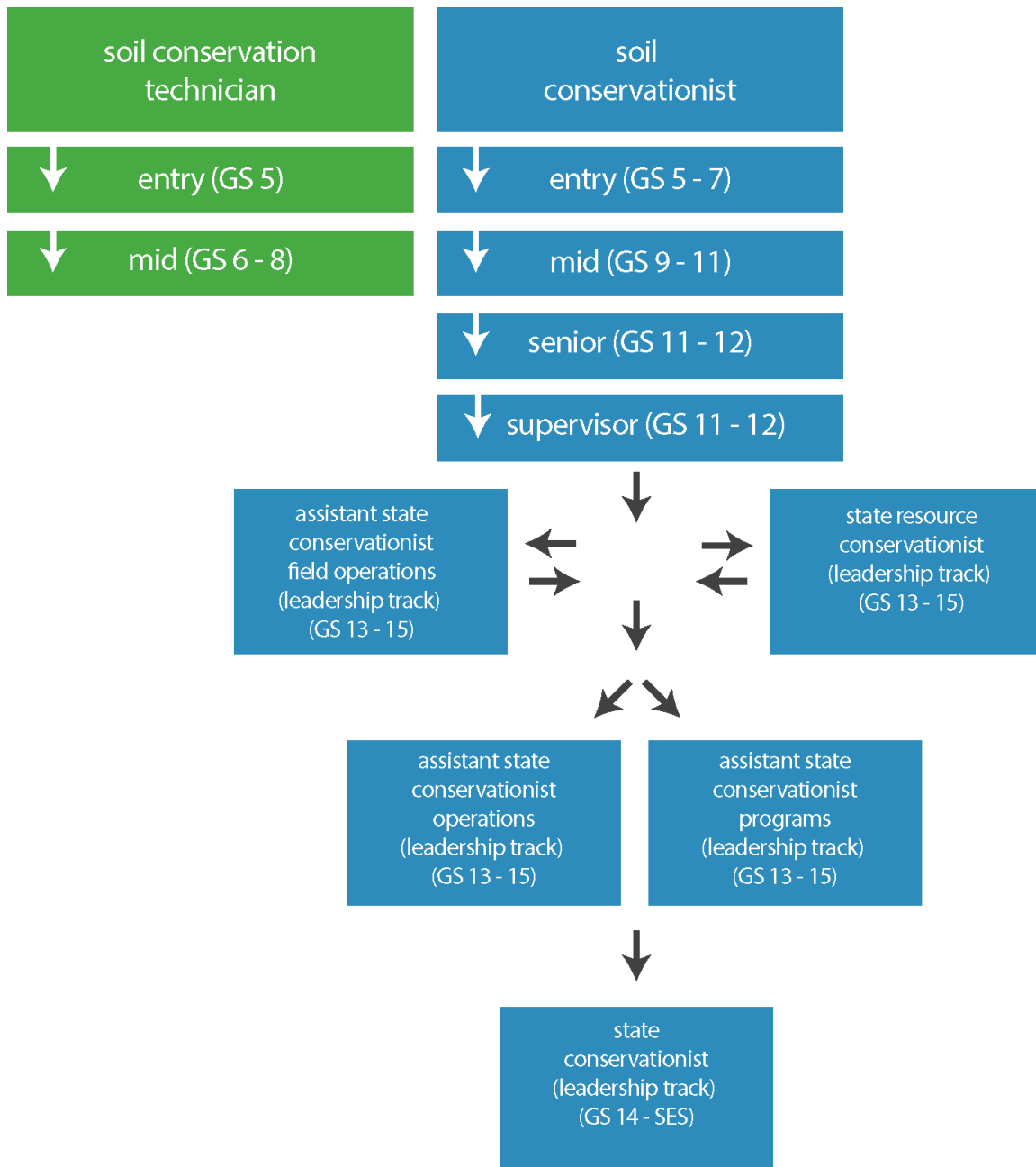
OPM Series Code	Job Title
0458	Soil Conservation Technician
0457	Soil Conservationist
0457	Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations
0457	Assistant State Conservationist – Programs
0457	Assistant State Conservationist – Operations
0457	State Resource Conservationist
0301	State Conservationist

Crosswalk of Career Levels to the General Schedule

The table and career map below reflect the General Schedule (GS) levels associated with the individual Career Level labels. Definitions of the Career Levels are included in the Appendix.

Table 3. GS by Career Level

Job	Entry	Mid	Senior	Sup	Mgr
Soil Conservation Technician	GS 5	GS 6-8			
Soil Conservationist	GS 5-7	GS 9	GS 11	GS 11-12	
Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations					GS 13-15
Assistant State Conservationist – Programs					GS 13-15
Assistant State Conservationist – Operations					GS 13-15
State Resource Conservationist					GS 13-15
State Conservationist					GS 14 - SES



Soil Conservation Job Descriptions

This is a general overview of each Soil Conservation job, intended to provide a common framework for describing what the job is.

Table 4. Soil Conservation Job Descriptions

Job	Description
Soil Conservation Technician	This person assists soil and district conservationists in the implementation of total resource management system plans; providing assistance in conservation planning. This person is responsible for surveying, staking, information gathering, designing, engineering plan preparation, and construction inspection as well as providing training to NRCS and SWCD in these areas.
Soil Conservationist	This person is a line officer who plans the application of total resource management systems; providing conservation planning assistance from initial evaluation to completion. This person possesses a practical knowledge of the methods and techniques of soil, water, and environmental conservation as they relate to agricultural operations and land use measures. This person also helps landowners deal with issues such as soil, water, air, plant, and animal resource concerns.
Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations	This person is a line officer who provides supervision, guidance, and assistance to all field offices and/or designated managerial units in the designated state. This person supervises the area staff and district conservationists at the field office level and/or managerial unit, coordinating a well-balanced resource conservation program.
Assistant State Conservationist – Programs	This person is responsible for improving delivery of financial assistance programs, improving contract management, and accelerating conservation implementation.
Assistant State Conservationist – Operations	This person is responsible for improving the state’s day-to-day operations management, and for data management, quality assurance activities, and streamlining business practices.

Job	Description
<p>State Resource Conservationist</p>	<p>This person is responsible for the coordination, direction, and training of science and technology. This person provides leadership in the conservation planning process and development of policies.</p>
<p>State Conservationist</p>	<p>This senior manager provides leadership and management direction of all USDA NRCS administrative and technical functions involved in planning, organizing, and implementing complex soil, water, and natural resource conservation for the state. This person develops and manages partnerships with public and private entities and prioritizes natural resource concerns for the state to ensure that staff and resources are in alignment to have the greatest impact.</p>

Overall Soil Conservation Job Duties

Below are three major duties associated with all Career Levels in a job.

Table 5. Overall Soil Conservation Job Duties

Job	Duty 1	Duty 2	Duty 3
Soil Conservation Technician	Assists in field investigations to determine the problems landowners face and collects the data needed for field offices to develop structural solutions	Implements and verifies completed practices to determine if goals were met and continually follows up to determine if additional interventions are required	Conducts survey and design activities for the implementation of conservation practices
Soil Conservationist	Works with landowners to develop, implement, maintain, and revise conservation plans	Implements initiatives to promote Farm Bill programs to support conservation plans	Evaluates the implementation of conservation plans and their alternatives
Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations	Coordinates the development of complex team activities and resource planning and management plans in the state	Guides teams in developing and maintaining effective working relationships with federal, state, and local agencies to improve conservation partnerships	Manages staff resources by preparing long- and short-range schedules for staff activities, preparing and monitoring budgets and organizing work

Job	Duty 1	Duty 2	Duty 3
<p>Assistant State Conservationist – Programs</p>	<p>Serves as the conservation program and Farm Bill state expert providing direction to program managers</p>	<p>Assists the State Technical Committee and partners in carrying out quality Farm Bill programs and other conservation programs</p>	<p>Oversees the financial distribution of the Farm Bill programs as well as the technical assistance and budgetary management of these programs</p>
<p>Assistant State Conservationist – Operations</p>	<p>Develops internal staffing and training strategies and evaluates their effectiveness</p>	<p>Develops and implements a system of operational and program assessments and reviews to evaluate effectiveness of conservation planning and practices</p>	<p>Develops and maintains effective working relationships with conservation districts and state-level natural resources agencies</p>
<p>State Resource Conservationist</p>	<p>Provides leadership for the planning and technical training of all employees</p>	<p>Reviews and updates technical standards and specifications</p>	<p>Communicates with internal and external customers to ensure technical and research knowledge is shared</p>
<p>State Conservationist</p>	<p>Provides overall soil, water, and natural resource conservation leadership including coordination and collaboration to establish appropriate state-specific policy, standards, and procedures needed to resolve state natural resource concerns</p>	<p>Manages fiduciary and civil rights requirements associated with directing financial and administrative programs including procurement and property, human resources, budget and financial management, and communications to staff and external stakeholders</p>	<p>Builds partnerships for the agency and enters into and maintains various effective relationships at the local, state, tribal, and federal levels and with private organizations that share our common conservation goals</p>

Specifics by Job – Soil Conservation Technician

Job Duties by Career Level – Soil Conservation Technician

These are three major duties associated with individual Career Levels for the Soil Conservation Technician job. In general, these are slight deviations of the Overall Duties, intended to show the differences in responsibility between the Career Levels.

Table 6. Career Level Duties – Soil Conservation Technician

Job Duty	Entry	Mid	Senior
Assists in collecting data for field offices to develop structural solutions	✓		
Assists in checking completed practices to determine if goals were met	✓		
Assists in survey and design activities for the implementation of conservation practices	✓		
Assists in field investigations to determine the problems landowners face and collects the data needed for field offices to develop structural solutions		✓	
Checks completed practices to determine if goals were met and continually follows-up to determine if additional interventions are required		✓	
Independently conducts surveys and designs of conservation practices		✓	

Foundational Competencies – Soil Conservation Technician

These are the more significant foundational competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. The set of more significant foundational competencies and associated proficiency levels should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes the more significant competencies.

Table 7. Foundational Competencies – Soil Conservation Technician

Foundational Competency	Proficiency Rating	
	Entry	Mid
1. Attention to Detail	1	3
2. Accountability	1	3
3. Organizing and Prioritizing Work	1	3
4. Technology Management	1	3
5. Organizational Awareness	1	3
6. Continuous Learning	1	3
7. Initiative	1	3
8. Integrity and Honesty	1	3
9. Oral Communications	1	2
10. Interpersonal Skills	1	3
11. Decisive Judgment and Decision Making	1	2
12. Information Management	1	3
13. Customer Service	1	3

Recommended Foundational Experience – Soil Conservation Technician

These are the more significant experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Foundational Competencies, that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

Table 8. Recommended Foundational Experience – Soil Conservation Technician

Foundational Experience	Career Level	Foundational Competency
Teaches entry-level Soil Conservation Technicians how to perform their primary job duties	Mid	Continuous Learning
		Initiative
		Oral Communication

Occupational Competencies – Soil Conservation Technician

These are the more significant occupational competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. These should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes all occupational competencies associated with the Soil Conservation Technician job.

Table 9. Occupational Competencies – Soil Conservation Technician

Occupational Competency	Proficiency Rating	
	Entry	Mid
1. Conservation Planning – Data Collection	2	3
2. Conservation Planning – Analysis	2	3
3. Surveying	2	3
4. Conservation Planning – Engineering Design	2	4
5. Conservation Planning – Engineering Implementation	2	4
6. Conservation Planning – Follow-up and Maintenance	2	3

Recommended Occupational Experience – Soil Conservation Technician

These are the more significant experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Occupational Competencies, that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

Table 10. Recommended Occupational Experience – Soil Conservation Technician

Occupational Experience	Career Level	Occupational Competency
Completes a survey independently	Entry	Conservation Planning – Data Collection
		Conservation Planning – Analysis
		Surveying
Completes a survey job from start to finish independently with few or no errors	Mid	Conservation Planning – Data Collection
		Conservation Planning – Analysis
		Surveying
		Conservation Planning – Engineering Design
		Conservation Planning – Engineering Implementation
Implements a design completed by someone else	Mid	Conservation Planning – Engineering Implementation
Conducts project follow-up	Mid	Conservation Planning – Follow-up and Maintenance

Recommended Trainings – Soil Conservation Technician

These are the recommended trainings for individuals applicable at all Career Levels. The set of recommended trainings and associated competencies should provide specific opportunities for individuals to better prepare themselves for jobs at their desired job level. Competency Definitions are included in the appendix.

Table 11. Recommended Trainings – Soil Conservation Technician

Recommended Training	Career Level	Competencies
Computer Security Awareness	Entry	Technology Management (F)
Effective Interpersonal Skills	Entry	Interpersonal Skills (F)
		Conflict Management (F)
		Teamwork (F)
		Stress Tolerance and Resilience (F)
Effective Presentations	Entry	Oral Communication (F)
Introduction to NRCS	Entry	Organizational Awareness (F)
Team Training	Entry	Teamwork (F)
Introduction to Ecological Principles: A Basic Biology Course	Entry	Conservation Planning – Engineering Design (O)
Hydrology Training Series – Module 101 – Introduction to Hydrology	Entry	Conservation Planning – Engineering Design (O)
Hydrology Training Series – Module 102 – Precipitation	Entry	Conservation Planning – Engineering Design (O)
Hydrology Training Series – Module 103 – Runoff Concepts	Entry	Conservation Planning – Engineering Design (O)
Hydrology Training Series – Module 104 – Runoff Curve Number Computations	Entry	Conservation Planning – Engineering Design (O)
Hydrology Training Series – Module 105 – Runoff Computations	Entry	Conservation Planning – Engineering Design (O)

Recommended Training	Career Level	Competencies
Hydrology Training Series – Module 106 – Peak Discharge	Entry	Conservation Planning – Engineering Design (O)
Hydrology Training Series – Module 151 – EFM2 Microcomputer Program	Entry	Conservation Planning – Engineering Design (O)
Hydrology Training Series – Module 206A – Time of Concentration	Entry	Conservation Planning – Engineering Design (O)
Hydrology Training Series – Module 206B – Peak Discharge Graphical Method, TR-55	Entry	Conservation Planning – Engineering Design (O)
Hydrology Training Series – Module 251 –TR-55 Microcomputer Program	Entry	Conservation Planning – Engineering Design (O)
Soil Mechanics Training Series – Module 1	Entry	Conservation Planning – Engineering Design (O)
Soil Mechanics Training Series – Module 2	Entry	Conservation Planning – Engineering Design (O)
Soil Mechanics Training Series – Module 3	Entry	Conservation Planning – Engineering Design (O)
Cultural Resources Training	Entry	Conservation Planning – Data Collection (O)
Structure Planning for Technicians (In-State)	Entry	Conservation Planning – Engineering Implementation (O)
Hydraulics for Technicians (In-State)	Entry	Conservation Planning – Engineering Implementation (O)
Tech 211 – Economics of Natural Resource Planning	Entry	Conservation Planning – Analysis (O)

Recommended Training	Career Level	Competencies
Boot Camp Orientation	Entry/Mid	Representing the Agency (F)
		Organizational Awareness (F)
		Customer Service (F)
		Problem Solving (F)
		Conservation Planning – Data Collection (O)
		Conservation Planning – Analysis (O)
		Surveying (O)
		Conservation Planning – Engineering Design (O)
		Conservation Planning – Follow-up and Maintenance (O)
Survey Design Training	Entry/Mid	Surveying (O)
Toolkit/PRS Training	Mid	Conservation Planning – Data Collection (O)
		Conservation Planning – Analysis (O)
		Surveying (O)
		Conservation Planning – Engineering Design (O)
		Conservation Planning – Engineering Implementation (O)
		Conservation Planning – Follow-up and Maintenance (O)
WI Construction Inspection (In-State)	Mid	Conservation Planning – Engineering Implementation (O)
Conflict Resolution	Mid	Conflict Management (F)
Tech 505 – Soil Bioengineering	Mid	Conservation Planning – Engineering Design (O)
Tech 115 – Fundamentals of Concrete	Mid	Conservation Planning – Engineering Design (O)
Soil Mechanics Training Series – Basic Soil Properties Module 4 – Volume-Weight Relations – Level II	Mid	Conservation Planning – Engineering Design (O)
Soil Mechanics Training Series – Basic Soil Properties Module 5 – Compaction – Level II	Mid	Conservation Planning – Engineering Design (O)

Recommended Training	Career Level	Competencies
Conservation Marketing Skills	Mid	Representing the Agency (F)
		Organizational Awareness (F)
		Oral Communication (F)
		Influence and Negotiating (F)
		Customer Service (F)
Conservation Planning Course	Mid	Organizing and Prioritizing Work (F)
		Problem Solving (F)
		Customer Service (F)
		Conservation Planning – Engineering Design (O)

F = Foundational Competency and O = Occupational Competency.

Recommended Education/Certifications – Soil Conservation Technician

These are the recommended education/certification requirements to attain each level of the Soil Conservation Technician job. These recommendations are based on Office of Personnel Management (OPM) guidelines as well as Subject Matter Expert recommendations.

Table 12. Recommended Education and Certifications – Soil Conservation Technician

Education/Certifications	Career Level	
	Entry	Mid
1. Successful completion of 1 year of study including at least 6 semester hours in courses such as range management or conservation, agriculture, forestry, wildlife management, engineering, biology, mathematics or other natural or physical sciences	✓	
2. Successful completion of a bachelor's degree (a) majoring in forestry, range management or a field directly related to the position, or (b) that included at least 24 semester hours in any combination of courses such as those shown above		✓
3. Experience can replace bachelor's degree		✓

Professional Associations – Soil Conservation Technician

These are three professional associations recommended as resources for individuals interested in the Soil Conservation Technician job.

Table 13. Professional Associations – Soil Conservation Technician

Soil Science Society of America (SSSA)
The Wildlife Society
Resource Conservation & Developmental Councils

Specifics by Job – Soil Conservationist

Job Duties by Career Level – Soil Conservationist

These are three major duties associated with the individual Career Levels for the Soil Conservationist job. In general, these are slight deviations of the Overall Duties, and are intended to show differences in responsibility between the Career Levels.

Table 14. Career Level Duties – Soil Conservationist

Job Duty	Entry	Mid	Senior	Sup
Works with landowners to develop, implement, maintain, and revise conservation plans that are simple and clear-cut with the assistance of a higher-graded conservationist	✓			
Explains conservation programs with direct guidance using straightforward narrations of facts and uncomplicated descriptions of practices	✓			
Assists in evaluating the implementation of conservation plans and their alternatives	✓			
Works with landowners to develop, implement, maintain, and revise complex conservation plans without the assistance of others		✓		
Promotes, markets, and implements Farm Bill initiatives and maintains positive relationships with local, state, and federal agencies		✓		
Evaluates the implementation of conservation plans and their alternatives		✓		
Works with landowners to develop, implement, maintain, and revise the most complex conservation plans and trains others in these areas			✓	

Job Duty	Entry	Mid	Senior	Sup
Promotes, markets, and implements multiple Farm Bill initiatives and develops and maintains positive relationships with local, state, and federal agencies			✓	
Provides recommendations based on the evaluations of conservation plans and alternatives			✓	
Provides leadership for overall field coordination to apply planning, practice design, and implementation of varied conservation practices				✓
Supervises the implementation of Farm Bill initiatives and serves as NRCS representative to outside local organizations				✓
Supervises the evaluation of conservation plans and alternatives, and assesses recommendations based on performance results				✓

Foundational Competencies – Soil Conservationist

These are the more significant foundational competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. The set of more significant foundational competencies and associated proficiency levels should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes the more significant competencies.

Table 15. Foundational Competencies – Soil Conservationist

Foundational Competency	Proficiency Rating			
	Entry	Mid	Senior	Sup
1. Attention to Detail	2	3	4	4
2. Accountability	2	3	4	4
3. Organizing and Prioritizing Work	1	3	3	4
4. Representing the Agency	1	3	3	4
5. Technology Management	2	2	3	4
6. Organizational Awareness	1	3	3	4
7. Adaptability and Flexibility	2	3	3	4
8. Continuous Learning	2	3	3	4
9. Initiative	2	3	3	4
10. Integrity and Honesty	2	3	3	4
11. Stress Tolerance and Resilience	2	3	3	4
12. Oral Communication	1	3	4	4
13. Written Communication	2	3	4	4
14. Influence and Negotiating	1	2	3	4
15. Conflict Management	1	3	3	4
16. Interpersonal Skills	2	3	4	4
17. Creativity and Innovation	1	2	3	4
18. Decisive Judgment and Decision Making	1	2	3	4
19. Information Management	2	3	3	3

Foundational Competency	Proficiency Rating			
	Entry	Mid	Senior	Sup
20. Problem Solving	1	3	3	3
21. Customer Service	2	3	4	4

Recommended Foundational Experience – Soil Conservationist

These are the more significant experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Foundational Competencies, that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

Table 16. Recommended Foundational Experience – Soil Conservationist

Foundational Experience	Career Level	Foundational Competency
Writes news releases or conducts radio spots about conservation initiatives	Entry	Oral Communication
		Written Communication
		Interpersonal Skills
Creates and maintains a training or individual development plan	Entry/ Mid/ Senior	Accountability
		Organizing and Prioritizing Work
Speaks at meetings and workshops and gives presentations on various conservation initiatives	Mid	Oral Communication
		Interpersonal Skills
Provides conservation salesmanship	Mid	Representing the Agency Initiative
		Integrity and Honesty
		Oral Communication
		Influence and Negotiating
		Interpersonal Skills
Handles conflict, such as with compliance reviews	Mid	Conflict Management
		Interpersonal Skills

Foundational Experience	Career Level	Foundational Competency
Conducts, reviews, and communicates the results of a compliance status review	Mid	Attention to Detail
		Conflict Management
		Interpersonal Skills
Provides suggestions for change	Senior	Attention to Detail
		Technology Management
		Initiative
		Oral Communication
		Written Communication
		Influence and Negotiating
		Interpersonal Skills

Leadership Competencies – Soil Conservationist

These are the more significant leadership competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. The set of leadership competencies and associated proficiency levels should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes the more significant competencies.

Table 17. Leadership Competencies – Soil Conservationist

Leadership Competency	Proficiency Rating			
	Entry	Mid	Senior	Sup
1. Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work	NR	NR	3	4
2. Developing Others	NR	NR	3	3
3. Human Resource Management	NR	NR	2	2
4. Team Building	NR	NR	2	3
5. External Awareness	NR	NR	2	2
6. Vision	NR	NR	2	2
7. Strategic Thinking and Action	NR	NR	1	2
8. Relationship Management	NR	NR	NR	NR
9. Leveraging Diversity	NR	NR	2	3
10. Public Service Motivation	NR	NR	2	2

Recommended Leadership Experience – Soil Conservationist

These are the more significant experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Leadership Competencies, that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

Table 18. Recommended Leadership Experience – Soil Conservationist

Leadership Experience	Career Level	Leadership Competency
Serves in a leadership role	Mid	Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work
Represents the District Conservationist at a soil water conservation district meeting	Mid	External Awareness
		Political Savvy
Serves as an active District Conservationist	Mid	Fiscal Responsibility
		Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work
		Developing Others
		Human Resource Management
		Team Building
		External Awareness
		Political Savvy
		Strategic Thinking and Action
		Relationship Management
		Leveraging Diversity
Public Service Motivation		

Leadership Experience	Career Level	Leadership Competency
Works with new soil conservationists to help them improve their skills	Mid	Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work
		Developing Others
		Human Resource Management
		Team Building
		Relationship Management
		Leveraging Diversity
		Public Service Motivation
Serves on state committees (e.g., the civil rights committee as a special emphasis program manager (SEPM))	Mid	External Awareness
		Political Savvy
		Public Service Motivation
Provides training to other soil conservationists	Senior	Developing Others
Attends leadership team meetings and provides input (e.g., leveraging diversity)	Senior	Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work
		Team Building
		Strategic Thinking and Action
		Leveraging Diversity
		Written Communication
Provides input to help state leadership teams with decision making	Senior	External Awareness
		Political Savvy
		Strategic Thinking and Action
		Vision

Occupational Competencies – Soil Conservationist

These are the more significant occupational competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. These competencies should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes all of the occupational competencies associated with the Soil Conservationist job.

Table 19. Occupational Competencies – Soil Conservationist

Occupational Competency	Proficiency Rating			
	Entry	Mid	Senior	Sup
1. Defining Objectives	1	3	3	4
2. Data Collection and Analysis	2	3	4	4
3. Decision Support	1	3	4	4
4. Engineering Design and Implementation	1	2	3	4
5. Management Practice Application	1	3	4	4
6. Vegetative Practice Application	1	3	4	4
7. Follow-up and Maintenance	1	3	4	5
8. Financial Assistance Programs Management	1	3	4	4

Recommended Occupational Experience – Soil Conservationist

These are the more significant experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Occupational Competencies, that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

Table 20. Recommended Occupational Experience – Soil Conservationist

Occupational Experience	Career Level	Occupational Competency
Conducts on-farm resource inventory	Entry	Defining Objectives
		Data Collection and Analysis
Calculates soil loss	Entry	Data Collection and Analysis
		Vegetative Practice Applications
Documents landowner objectives	Entry	Defining Objectives
		Financial Assistance Programs Mgmt
Gains exposure to common engineering practices in the work unit	Entry	Engineering Design and Implementation
Gains a basic understanding of the Farm Bill program (i.e. works with the DC and other staff to see how they work with producers; reviews informational resources; attends field days, workshops, and area meetings) and conservation technical experience	Entry	Defining Objectives
		Financial Assistance Programs Management
Receives training on conservation planning tools (i.e. toolkit, working with other staff, receiving training on planning tools)	Entry	Data Collection and Analysis
		Decision Support
		Engineering Design and Implementation
		Management Practice Application
		Vegetative Practice Application
		Follow-up and Maintenance
		Financial Assistance Programs Management

Occupational Experience	Career Level	Occupational Competency
Shadows conservation staff to get to know the community and environment that they will be working in	Entry	Financial Assistance Programs Management
Works with other agencies to better understand how NRCS interacts with other agencies	Entry	N/A
Learns and understands the basics of all practices (e.g., stock water systems, irrigation systems, grazing systems, grass waterway, filter strip, tree planting, terraces, crop rotation, and tillage). Specifics will be based on common practices in the region	Entry	Defining Objectives
		Data Collection and Analysis
		Decision Support
		Engineering Design and Implementation
		Management Practice Application
		Vegetative Practice Application
		Follow-up and Maintenance
Gains exposure to the soil water conservation district and attends meetings	Entry/Mid	N/A
Completes conservation planning steps 1-9	Mid	Defining Objectives
		Data Collection and Analysis
		Engineering Design and Implementation
		Management Practice Application
		Vegetative Practice Application
Completes approved conservation plan and works toward Cert Planner Status	Mid	Follow-up and Maintenance
		Engineering Design and Implementation
		Management Practice Application
		Vegetative Practice Application

Occupational Experience	Career Level	Occupational Competency
Completes conservation plans including all job sheets, designs, etc. (achieves agronomic EJAA (if applicable)); this can vary by state	Mid	Defining Objectives
		Data Collection and Analysis
		Decision Support
		Engineering Design and Implementation
		Management Practice Application
		Vegetative Practice Application
		Follow-up and Maintenance
		Financial Assistance Programs Management
Performs conservation planning and implements full-cycle program sign-up, ranking, contracting, payments	Mid	Financial Assistance Programs Management
Learns how to serve as the District Conservationist when the District Conservationist is absent	Mid	Defining Objectives
		Data Collection and Analysis
		Decision Support
		Engineering Design and Implementation
		Management Practice Application
		Vegetative Practice Application
		Follow-up and Maintenance
Learns how to complete work products requiring little revision	Mid	Defining Objectives
		Data Collection and Analysis
		Management Practice Application
		Vegetative Practice Application
Follow-up and Maintenance	Mid	Financial Assistance Programs Management
Conducts program sign ups	Mid	Financial Assistance Programs Management
Conducts rankings	Mid	Defining Objectives

Occupational Experience	Career Level	Occupational Competency
Completes full applications and contracts	Mid	Decision Support
		Financial Assistance Programs Mgmt
Shadows conservation district board members to learn more about the business of local agriculture	Mid	Financial Assistance Programs Management
Independently designs basic practices (e.g., waterways and buffer strips)	Mid	Defining Objectives
		Data Collection and Analysis
		Engineering Design and Implementation
		Management Practice Application
Deals with more complex planning situations (i.e., agronomic situations, working 10-20 counties at once)	Senior	Vegetative Practice Application
		Defining Objectives
		Data Collection and Analysis
		Decision Support
		Engineering Design and Implementation
		Management Practice Application
Performs spot checks of other field offices	Senior	Vegetative Practice Application
		Follow-up and Maintenance
Approves engineering designs	Supervisor	Decision Support
		Engineering Design and Implementation
Reviews engineering designs	Supervisor	Engineering Design and Implementation
Reviews conservation plans as a certified planner	Supervisor	N/A
Reviews conservation activity plans (CAP) prepared by technical service providers for accuracy	Supervisor	Decision Support

Occupational Experience	Career Level	Occupational Competency
Designs complex practices that may vary by region (e.g., preliminary for waste storage structures)	Supervisor	Defining Objectives
		Data Collection and Analysis
		Engineering Design and Implementation
		Management Practice Application
		Vegetative Practice Application
Performs large scale conservation planning (e.g., landscape planning)	Supervisor	Defining Objectives
		Data Collection and Analysis
		Decision Support
		Engineering Design and Implementation
		Management Practice Application
		Vegetative Practice Application

Recommended Trainings – Soil Conservationist

These are the recommended trainings for individuals applicable at all Career Levels. The set of recommended trainings and associated competencies should provide specific opportunities for individuals to better prepare themselves for jobs at their desired job level. Competency Definitions are included in the appendix.

Table 21. Recommended Trainings – Soil Conservationist

Recommended Training	Career Level	Competencies
Leading for Excellence	Entry	Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work (L)
Computer Security Awareness	Entry	Technology Management (F)
Effective Presentations	Entry	Oral Communication (F)
Introduction to NRCS	Entry	Organizational Awareness (F)
Team Training	Entry	Teamwork (F)
Cultural Resources Training	Entry	Resource Management (F)
Effective Interpersonal Skills	Entry	Interpersonal Skills (F)
		Conflict Management (F)
		Teamwork (F)
		Stress Tolerance and Resilience (F)
Toolkit/PRS Training	Entry	Defining Objectives (O)
		Data Collection and Analysis (O)
		Decision Support (O)
		Engineering Design and Implementation (O)
		Management Practice Application (O)
		Vegetative Practice Application (O)
		Follow-up and Maintenance (O)
		Financial Assistance Programs Management (O)

Recommended Training	Career Level	Competencies
Introduction to Ecological Principles: A Basic Biology Course	Entry	Vegetative Practice Application (O)
Boot Camp	Entry/Mid	Representing the Agency (F)
		Organizational Awareness (F)
		Customer Service (F)
		Problem Solving (F)
		Defining Objectives (O)
		Data Collection and Analysis (O)
		Decision Support (O)
		Engineering Design and Implementation (O)
		Management Practice Application (O)
		Vegetative Practice Application (O)
		Follow-up and Maintenance (O)
Financial Assistance Programs Management (O)		
General Economics of Resources Planning	Entry/Mid	Management Practice Application (O)
Conservation Marketing Skills	Entry/Mid	Representing the Agency (F)
		Organizational Awareness (F)
		Oral Communication (F)
		Influence and Negotiation (F)
		Customer Service (F)
Hydrology Training Series – Module 101 – Introduction to Hydrology	Mid	Engineering Design and Implementation (O)
Hydrology Training Series – Module 102 – Precipitation	Mid	Engineering Design and Implementation (O)
Hydrology Training Series – Module 103 – Runoff Concepts	Mid	Engineering Design and Implementation (O)
Hydrology Training Series – Module 104 – Runoff Curve Number Computations	Mid	Engineering Design and Implementation (O)

Recommended Training	Career Level	Competencies
Hydrology Training Series – Module 105 – Runoff Computations	Mid	Engineering Design and Implementation (O)
Hydrology Training Series – Module 106 – Peak Discharge	Mid	Engineering Design and Implementation (O)
Soil Mechanics Training Series – Module 1	Mid	Vegetative Practice Application (O)
Soil Mechanics Training Series – Module 2	Mid	Vegetative Practice Application (O)
Soil Mechanics Training Series – Module 3	Mid	Vegetative Practice Application (O)
Soil Properties and Interpretations – Module 1 – Introduction	Mid	Vegetative Practice Application (O)
Soil Properties and Interpretations – Module 2 – Texture	Mid	Vegetative Practice Application (O)
Soil Properties and Interpretations – Module 3 – Organic Matter	Mid	Vegetative Practice Application (O)
Soil Properties and Interpretations – Module 6 – Structure	Mid	Vegetative Practice Application (O)
Soil Properties and Interpretations – Module 9 – Permeability	Mid	Vegetative Practice Application (O)
Soil Properties and Interpretations – Module 16 – Slope	Mid	Vegetative Practice Application (O)
Soil Properties and Interpretations – Module 18 – Soil Temperature	Mid	Vegetative Practice Application (O)
Land Use Training (AgLearn)	Mid/Senior	Financial Assistance Programs Management (O)
Public Participation (Dealing with the Public)	Mid/Senior	Public Service Motivation (L)
TECH 505 – Soil Bioengineering	Senior	Vegetative Practice Application (O)
Team Building Training	Senior	Teamwork (F)
		Team Building (L)
		Developing Others (L)

Recommended Training	Career Level	Competencies
Conflict Resolution	Senior	Conflict Management (F)
		Relationship Management (L)
Managing for Excellence	Supervisor	Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work (L)
		Developing Others (L)
		Human Resource Management (L)
		Team Building (L)
		Relationship Management (L)
		Leveraging Diversity (L)
Supervising for Excellence	Supervisor	Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work (L)
		Developing Others (L)
		Human Resource Management (L)
		Team Building (L)
		Relationship Management (L)
		Leveraging Diversity (L)
Capitol Hill Workshop	Supervisor	Political Savvy (L)
Effective Interpersonal Skills	Supervisor	Leveraging Diversity (L)
Appropriations Law	Supervisor	Fiscal Responsibility (L)
Situational Leadership Training (Supervising for Excellence)	Supervisor	Developing Others (L)
Roadmap to Problem Solving	Supervisor	Relationship Management (L)
Civil Rights Compliance in Program Delivery	Supervisor/Manager	Leveraging Diversity (L)

F = Foundational Competency; L=Leadership Competency; and O = Occupational Competency.

Recommended Education/Certifications – Soil Conservationist

These are the recommended education/certification requirements to be able to attain each level of the Soil Conservationist job. These recommendations are based on Office of Personnel Management (OPM) guidelines as well as Subject Matter Expert recommendations.

Table 22. Recommended Education and Certifications – Soil Conservationist

Education/ Certifications	Career Level			
	Entry	Mid	Senior	Sup
1. Bachelor’s degree in soil conservation or related agricultural or natural resource discipline such as agronomy, soil science, forestry, agricultural education, or agricultural engineering; the study must have included 30 semester hours in a natural resource or agricultural field, including at least 12 semester hours in a combination of soils and crops or plant science; of the 12 semester hours, a minimum of 3 semester hours must have been in soils and 3 semester hours in crops or plant science	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. In some instances, a bachelor’s degree can be substituted for the specific semester hours listed above, plus appropriate experience or additional education	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Certified conservation planner (within 12 months of employment)		✓	✓	✓

R = Education/licensure that is recommended but not required to obtain the job at the specified level

Professional Associations – Soil Conservationist

These four professional associations are recommended as resources for individuals interested in the Soil Conservationist job.

Table 23. Professional Associations – Soil Conservationist

Forest Guild
Society of American Foresters
Society for Range Management
Soil and Water Conservation Society

Specifics by Job – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations

Job Duties by Career Level – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations

These are three major duties associated with the individual Career Levels for the Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations job. In general, these are slight deviations of the Overall Duties, intended to show the differences in responsibility between the Career Levels.

Table 24. Career Level Duties – Assistant State Conservationist –Field Operations

Job Duty	Mgr
Coordinates the development of complex team activities and resource planning and management plans in the state	✓
Guides teams in developing and maintaining effective working relationships with federal, state, and local agencies to improve conservation partnerships	✓
Manages staff resources by preparing long and short range schedules for staff activities, preparing and monitoring budgets, and organizing work	✓

Foundational Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations

These are the more significant foundational competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. The set of more significant foundational competencies and associated proficiency levels should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes the more significant competencies.

Table 25. Foundational Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations

Foundational Competency	Proficiency Rating
	Mgr
1. Organizing and Prioritizing Work	3
2. Representing the Agency	4
3. Organizational Awareness	4
4. Adaptability and Flexibility	4
5. Integrity and Honesty	5
6. Stress Tolerance and Resilience	4
7. Oral Communication	4
8. Influence and Negotiating	4
9. Conflict Management	4
10. Interpersonal Skills	4
11. Teamwork	4
12. Decisive Judgment and Decision Making	4

Leadership Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations

These are the more significant leadership competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. The set of more significant leadership competencies and associated proficiency levels should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes the more significant competencies.

Table 26. Leadership Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations

Leadership Competency	Proficiency Rating
	Mgr
1. Fiscal Responsibility	3
2. Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work	3
3. Human Resource Management	3
4. External Awareness	3
5. Vision	3
6. Strategic Thinking and Action	3

Recommended Leadership Experience – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations

These are the more significant experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Leadership Competencies, that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

Table 27. Recommended Leadership Experience – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations

Leadership Experience	Career Level	Leadership Competency
Completes details to different leadership assignments in various leadership positions	Manager	Fiscal Responsibility
		Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work
		Developing Others
		Human Resource Management
		Strategic Thinking and Action
		Relationship Management
Interprets leadership direction and disseminates information to the field	Manager	Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work
Works through complex situations (e.g., efficiency problems, behavioral problems, shortage of needed resources, staffing of different projects)	Manager	Fiscal Responsibility
		Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work
		Human Resource Management
		External Awareness
		Political Savvy
		Vision
		Strategic Thinking and Action
		Relationship Management
Leveraging Diversity		

Leadership Experience	Career Level	Leadership Competency
Manages and develops a staffing plan	Manager	Fiscal Responsibility
		Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work
		External Awareness
		Vision
		Strategic Thinking and Action
		Leveraging Diversity
Manages and implements budget (e.g., pre- and post-budget, coordinates budgets with all leadership team members)	Manager	Fiscal Responsibility
		External Awareness
		Political Savvy
		Vision
		Strategic Thinking and Action
Responds to Congressional requests	Manager	Political Savvy
		Public Service Motivation

Occupational Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations

These are the more significant occupational competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. These competencies should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes all occupational competencies associated with the Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations job.

Table 28. Occupational Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations

Occupational Competency	Proficiency Rating
	Mgr
1. Conservation Planning and Natural Resource Disciplines	3
2. Program Management and Implementation	3
3. Quality Assurance	3

Recommended Occupational Experience – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations

These are the more significant experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Occupational Competencies, that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

Table 29. Recommended Occupational Experience – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations

Occupational Experience	Career Level	Occupational Competency
Reviews Contract Application before promoting to Obligated/Approved; Conducts training sessions to train others (peers/subordinates)	Manager	Conservation Planning and Natural Resource Disciplines
		Program Management and Implementation
		Quality Assurance
Conducts Quality Assurance Reviews	Manager	Quality Assurance
Reviews processes for efficiency	Manager	Conservation Planning and Natural Resource Disciplines
		Program Management and Implementation
		Quality Assurance
Reviews and approves contract modifications	Manager	Conservation Planning and Natural Resource Disciplines

Recommended Trainings – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations

These are the recommended trainings for individuals working to become an Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations. The set of recommended trainings and associated competencies should provide specific opportunities for individuals to better prepare themselves for the Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations job. Competency Definitions are included in the appendix.

Table 30. Recommended Trainings – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations

Recommended Training	Career Level	Competencies
Appropriations Law	Manager	Fiscal Responsibility (L)
Leading for Excellence	Manager	Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work (L)
Capitol Hill Workshop	Manager	Political Savvy (L)
Civil Rights Hiring Authority Training	Manager	Leveraging Diversity (L)
Leading Through Transition and Change	Manager	External Awareness (L)
Change Management	Manager	Human Rights Management (L)
Team Training	Manager	Team Building (L)
Emerging Leaders Development Program	Manager	Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work (L)

L=Leadership Competency.

Recommended Education/Certifications – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations

These are the recommended education/certification requirements to be able to attain the Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations job. These recommendations are based on Office of Personnel Management (OPM) guidelines as well as Subject Matter Expert recommendations.

Table 31. Recommended Education and Certifications – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations

Education/ Certifications	Career Level
	Mgr
1. Bachelor’s degree in soil conservation or related agricultural or natural resource discipline such as agronomy, soil science, forestry, agricultural education, or agricultural engineering; the study must have included 30 semester hours in a natural resource or agricultural field, including at least 12 semester hours in a combination of soils and crops or plant science; of the 12 semester hours, a minimum of 3 semester hours must have been in soils and 3 semester hours in crops or plant science	✓
2. In some instances, a bachelor’s degree can be substituted for the specific semester hours listed above, plus appropriate experience or additional education	✓

R = Education/licensure that is recommended but not required to obtain the job at the specified level

Specifics by Job – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs

Job Duties by Career Level – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs

These are three major duties associated with the individual Career Levels for the Assistant State Conservationist – Programs job. In general, these are slight deviations of the Overall Duties, and are intended to show the differences in responsibility between the Career Levels.

Table 32. Career Level Duties – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs

Job Duty	Mgr
Serves as the conservation program and Farm Bill state expert providing direction to program managers	✓
Assists the State Technical Committee and partners in carrying out quality Farm Bill programs and other conservation programs	✓
Oversees the financial distribution of the Farm Bill programs as well as the technical assistance and budgetary management of these programs	✓

Foundational Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs

These are the more significant foundational competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. The set of more significant foundational competencies and associated proficiency levels should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes the more significant competencies.

Table 33. Foundational Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs

Foundational Competency	Proficiency Rating
	Mgr
1. Attention to Detail	4
2. Accountability	4
3. Representing the Agency	4
4. Organizational Awareness	4
5. Adaptability and Flexibility	4
6. Initiative	4
7. Integrity and Honesty	5
8. Stress Tolerance and Resilience	4
9. Written Communication	4
10. Conflict Management	4
11. Interpersonal Skills	5
12. Teamwork	4
13. Creativity and Innovation	4
14. Decisive Judgment and Decision Making	4

Leadership Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs

These are the more significant leadership competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. The set of more significant leadership competencies and associated proficiency levels should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes the more significant competencies.

Table 34. Leadership Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs

Leadership Competency	Proficiency Rating
	Mgr
1. Fiscal Responsibility	3
2. Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work	4
3. Developing Others	3
4. Human Resource Management	4
5. Political Savvy	3
6. Vision	4
7. Strategic Thinking and Action	3
8. Leveraging Diversity	4
9. Public Service Motivation	3

Recommended Leadership Experience – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs

These are the more significant experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Leadership Competencies, that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

Table 35. Recommended Leadership Experience – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs

Leadership Experience	Career Level	Leadership Competency
Completes details to different leadership assignments in various leadership positions	Manager	Fiscal Responsibility
		Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work
		Developing Others
		Human Resource Management
		Strategic Thinking and Action
		Relationship Management
Works through complex situations (e.g., efficiency problems, behavioral problems, shortage of needed resources, staffing of different projects)	Manager	Leveraging Diversity
		Fiscal Responsibility
		Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work
		Human Resource Management
		External Awareness
		Political Savvy
		Vision
		Strategic Thinking and Action
Relationship Management		
Leveraging Diversity		

Leadership Experience	Career Level	Leadership Competency
Manages and develops a staffing plan	Manager	Fiscal Responsibility
		Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work
		External Awareness
		Vision
		Strategic Thinking and Action
		Leveraging Diversity
Manages and implements budget (e.g., pre- and post-budget, coordinates budgets with all leadership team members)	Manager	Fiscal Responsibility
		External Awareness
		Political Savvy
		Vision
		Strategic Thinking and Action
Serves as the acting State Conservationist	Manager	Fiscal Responsibility
		Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work

Occupational Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs

These are the more significant occupational competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. These competencies should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes all of the occupational competencies associated with the Assistant State Conservationist – Programs job.

Table 36. Occupational Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs

Occupational Competency	Proficiency Rating
	Mgr
1. Program Fund Management	3
2. Program Planning and Implementation	4
3. Program Analysis, Evaluation, and Quality Control	3
4. Conservation Planning for Program Delivery	3

Recommended Occupational Experience – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs

These are the more significant experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Occupational Competencies, that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

Table 37. Recommended Occupational Experience – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs

Occupational Experience	Career Level	Occupational Competency
Manages EQIP/WHIP (Farm Bill Program(s) for statewide implementation	Manager	Program Fund Management
		Program Planning and Implementation
		Program Analysis, Evaluation, and Quality Control
		Conservation Planning for Program Delivery
Completes Acting Assignment/Detail to another state to compare delivery techniques	Manager	Program Analysis, Evaluation, and Quality Control
Makes policy change recommendations	Manager	Program Fund Management
		Program Analysis, Evaluation, and Quality Control
		Conservation Planning for Program Delivery
Assists Oversight and Evaluation (O&E) Team in evaluating multiple state delivery methods	Manager	Program Analysis, Evaluation, and Quality Control

Recommended Trainings – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs

These are the recommended trainings for individuals working to become an Assistant State Conservationist – Programs. The set of recommended trainings and associated competencies should provide specific opportunities for individuals to better prepare themselves for the Assistant State Conservationist – Programs job. Competency Definitions are included in the appendix.

Table 38. Recommended Trainings – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs

Recommended Training	Career Level	Competencies
Appropriations Law	Manager	Fiscal Responsibility (L)
Leading for Excellence	Manager	Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work (L)
Capitol Hill Workshop	Manager	Political Savvy (L)
Civil Rights Hiring Authority Training	Manager	Leveraging Diversity (L)
Leading Through Transition and Change	Manager	External Awareness (L)
Change Management	Manager	Human Rights Management (L)
Team Training	Manager	Team Building (L)

L=Leadership Competency.

Recommended Education/Certifications – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs

These are the recommended education/certification requirements to be able to attain the Assistant State Conservationist – Programs job. These recommendations are based on Office of Personnel Management (OPM) guidelines as well as Subject Matter Expert recommendations.

Table 39. Recommended Education and Certifications – Assistant State Conservationist – Programs

Education/ Certifications	Career Level
	Mgr
1. Bachelor’s degree in soil conservation or related agricultural or natural resource discipline such as agronomy, soil science, forestry, agricultural education, or agricultural engineering; the study must have included 30 semester hours in a natural resource or agricultural field, including at least 12 semester hours in a combination of soils and crops or plant science; of the 12 semester hours, a minimum of 3 semester hours must have been in soils and 3 semester hours in crops or plant science	✓
2. In some instances, a bachelor’s degree can be substituted for the specific semester hours listed above, plus appropriate experience or additional education	✓

R = Education/licensure that is recommended but not required to obtain the job at the specified level

Specifics by Job – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations

Job Duties by Career Level – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations

These are three major duties associated with the individual Career Levels for the Assistant State Conservationist – Operations job. In general, these are slight deviations of the Overall Duties, and are intended to show the differences in responsibility between the Career Levels.

Table 40. Career Level Duties – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations

Job Duty	Mgr
Develops internal staffing and training strategies and evaluates their effectiveness	✓
Develops and implements a system of operational and program assessments and reviews to evaluate effectiveness of conservation planning and practices	✓
Develops and maintains effective working relationships with conservation districts and State level natural resources agencies	✓

Foundational Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations

These are the more significant foundational competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. The set of more significant foundational competencies and associated proficiency levels should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes the more significant competencies.

Table 41. Foundational Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations

Foundational Competency	Proficiency Rating
	Mgr
1. Attention to Detail	4
2. Organizing and Prioritizing Work	4
3. Representing the Agency	4
4. Organizational Awareness	3
5. Adaptability and Flexibility	4
6. Integrity and Honesty	5
7. Stress Tolerance and Resilience	4
8. Oral Communication	4
9. Influence and Negotiating	4
10. Conflict Management	4
11. Interpersonal Skills	5
12. Teamwork	4
13. Decisive Judgment and Decision Making	4
14. Information Management	4
15. Problem Solving	4

Leadership Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations

These are the more significant leadership competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. The set of more significant leadership competencies and associated proficiency levels should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes the more significant competencies.

Table 42. Leadership Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations

Leadership Competency	Proficiency Rating
	Mgr
1. Fiscal Responsibility	3
2. Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work	3
3. Human Resource Management	3
4. External Awareness	3
5. Leveraging Diversity	3
6. Political Savvy	3

Recommended Leadership Experience – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations

These are the more significant experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Leadership Competencies, that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

Table 43. Recommended Leadership Experience – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations

Leadership Experience	Career Level	Leadership Competency
Completes details to different leadership assignments in various leadership positions	Manager	Fiscal Responsibility
		Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work
		Developing Others
		Human Resource Management
		Strategic Thinking and Action
		Relationship Management
		Leveraging Diversity
Works through complex situations (e.g., efficiency problems, behavioral problems, shortage of needed resources, staffing of different projects)	Manager	Fiscal Responsibility
		Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work
		Human Resource Management
		External Awareness
		Political Savvy
		Vision
		Strategic Thinking and Action
		Relationship Management
Leveraging Diversity		

Leadership Experience	Career Level	Leadership Competency
Manages and develops a staffing plan	Manager	Fiscal Responsibility
		Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work
		External Awareness
		Vision
		Strategic Thinking and Action
		Leveraging Diversity
Manages and implements budget (e.g., pre- and post-budget, coordinates budgets with all leadership team members)	Manager	Fiscal Responsibility
		External Awareness
		Political Savvy
		Vision
		Strategic Thinking and Action
Monitors the FA and TA budgets for their specific programs for the state	Manager	Fiscal Responsibility
		Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work
		Strategic Thinking and Action
Assists the STC with alignment of budget and performance goals, staffing, and resource needs.	Manager	Fiscal Responsibility
		Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work
		Strategic Thinking and Action

Occupational Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations

These are the more significant occupational competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. These competencies should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes all of the occupational competencies associated with the Assistant State Conservationist – Operations job.

Table 44. Occupational Competencies – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations

Occupational Competency	Proficiency Rating
	Mgr
1. Quality Assurance	4
2. Operational Policy Development, Management, and Oversight	3
3. Business Planning and Execution	4
4. Data Analysis and Reporting	3
5. Operations Management	4

Recommended Occupational Experience – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations

These are the more significant experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Occupational Competencies, that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

Table 45. Recommended Occupational Experience – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations

Occupational Experience	Career Level	Occupational Competency
Has awareness and background knowledge of technical practices	Manager	Quality Assurance
		Operational Policy Development, Management, and Oversight
		Business Planning and Execution
		Data Analysis and Reporting
		Operations Management

Recommended Trainings – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations

These are the recommended trainings for individuals working to become an Assistant State Conservationist – Operations. The set of recommended trainings and associated competencies should provide specific opportunities for individuals to better prepare themselves for the Assistant State Conservationist – Operations job. Competency Definitions are included in the appendix.

Table 46. Recommended Trainings – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations

Recommended Training	Career Level	Competencies
Appropriations Law	Manager	Fiscal Responsibility (L)
Leading for Excellence	Manager	Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work (L)
Capitol Hill Workshop	Manager	Political Savvy (L)
Civil Rights Hiring Authority Training	Manager	Leveraging Diversity (L)
Leading Through Transition and Change	Manager	External Awareness (L)
Change Management	Manager	Human Rights Management (L)
Team Training	Manager	Team Building (L)

L=Leadership Competency.

Recommended Education/Certifications – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations

These are the recommended education/certification requirements to be able to attain the Assistant State Conservationist – Operations job. These recommendations are based on Office of Personnel Management (OPM) guidelines as well as Subject Matter Expert recommendations.

Table 47. Recommended Education and Certifications – Assistant State Conservationist – Operations

Education/ Certifications	Career Level
	Mgr
1. Bachelor’s degree in soil conservation or related agricultural or natural resource discipline such as agronomy, soil science, forestry, agricultural education, or agricultural engineering; the study must have included 30 semester hours in a natural resource or agricultural field, including at least 12 semester hours in a combination of soils and crops or plant science; of the 12 semester hours, a minimum of 3 semester hours must have been in soils and 3 semester hours in crops or plant science	✓
2. In some instances, a bachelor’s degree can be substituted for the specific semester hours listed above, plus appropriate experience or additional education	✓

R = Education/licensure that is recommended but not required to obtain the job at the specified level

Specifics by Job – State Resource Conservationist

Job Duties by Career Level – State Resource Conservationist

These are three major duties associated with the individual Career Levels for the State Resource Conservationist job. In general, these are slight deviations of the Overall Duties, and are intended to show the differences in responsibility between the Career Levels.

Table 48. Career Level Duties – State Resource Conservationist

Job Duty	Mgr
Provides leadership for the planning and technical training of all employees	✓
Reviews and updates technical standards and specifications	✓
Communicates with internal and external customers to ensure technical and research knowledge is shared	✓

Foundational Competencies – State Resource Conservationist

These are the more significant foundational competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. The set of more significant foundational competencies and associated proficiency levels should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes the more significant competencies.

Table 49. Foundational Competencies – State Resource Conservationist

Foundational Competency	Proficiency Rating
	Mgr
1. Attention to Detail	4
2. Accountability	4
3. Organizing and Prioritizing Work	4
4. Representing the Agency	4
5. Adaptability and Flexibility	4
6. Initiative	4
7. Integrity and Honesty	5
8. Stress Tolerance and Resilience	4
9. Written Communication	4
10. Influence and Negotiating	4
11. Conflict Management	4
12. Creativity and Innovation	4
13. Information Management	4
14. Problem Solving	4
15. Customer Service	4

Leadership Competencies – State Resource Conservationist

These are the more significant leadership competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. The set of more significant leadership competencies and associated proficiency levels should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes the more significant competencies.

Table 50. Leadership Competencies – State Resource Conservationist

Leadership Competency	Proficiency Rating
	Mgr
1. Fiscal Responsibility	3
2. Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work	4
3. Developing Others	3
4. Relationship Management	3
5. Leveraging Diversity	4
6. Public Service Motivation	3
7. Vision	4
8. Strategic Thinking and Action	3

Recommended Leadership Experience – State Resource Conservationist

These are the more significant experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Leadership Competencies, that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

Table 51. Recommended Leadership Experience – State Resource Conservationist

Leadership Experience	Career Level	Leadership Competency
Keeps up with new products and technology and disseminates that information upward and downward for implementation	Manager	Developing Others
		External Awareness
		Political Savvy
		Strategic Thinking and Action

Recommended Occupational Experience – State Resource Conservationist

These are the more significant experiences (e.g., stretch assignments) that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job. There are no Occupational Competencies for the State Resource Conservationist yet, so once these are developed the experiences will be examined again to ensure they are addressing the competencies at the desired proficiency level. However, the experiences below were identified by subject matter experts as being critical in successfully performing the job duties for the State Resource Conservationist.

Table 52. Recommended Occupational Experience – State Resource Conservationist

Occupational Experience	Career Level	Occupational Competency
Develops the state standards and job sheets for the state conservation practices	Manager	N/A
Develops the guidance for threatened and endangered (T&E) species	Manager	N/A
Develops the state policy on wetland mitigations and minimal effects	Manager	N/A
Works with partners outside of NRCS and makes sure their input is taken when developing standards	Manager	N/A
Takes the lead on higher level technical training	Manager	N/A

Recommended Trainings – State Resource Conservationist

These are the recommended trainings for individuals working to become a State Resource Conservationist. The set of recommended trainings and associated competencies should provide specific opportunities for individuals to better prepare themselves for the State Resource Conservationist job. Competency Definitions are included in the appendix.

Table 53. Recommended Trainings – State Resource Conservationist

Recommended Training	Career Level	Competencies
Appropriations Law	Manager	Fiscal Responsibility (L)
Leading for Excellence	Manager	Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work (L)
Capitol Hill Workshop	Manager	Political Savvy (L)
Civil Rights Hiring Authority Training	Manager	Leveraging Diversity (L)
Leading Through Transition and Change	Manager	External Awareness (L)
Change Management	Manager	Human Rights Management (L)
Team Training	Manager	Team Building (L)

L=Leadership Competency.

Recommended Education/Certifications – State Resource Conservationist

These are the recommended education/certification requirements to be able to attain the State Resource Conservationist job. These recommendations are based on Office of Personnel Management (OPM) guidelines as well as Subject Matter Expert recommendations.

Table 54. Recommended Education and Certifications – State Resource Conservationist

Education/ Certifications	Career Level
	Mgr
1. Bachelor’s degree in soil conservation or related agricultural or natural resource discipline such as agronomy, soil science, forestry, agricultural education, or agricultural engineering; the study must have included 30 semester hours in a natural resource or agricultural field, including at least 12 semester hours in a combination of soils and crops or plant science; of the 12 semester hours, a minimum of 3 semester hours must have been in soils and 3 semester hours in crops or plant science	✓
2. In some instances, a bachelor’s degree can be substituted for the specific semester hours listed above, plus appropriate experience or additional education	✓

R = Education/licensure that is recommended but not required to obtain the job at the specified level

Professional Associations – State Resource Conservationist

The professional association below is recommended as a resource for individuals interested in the State Resource Conservationist job.

Table 55. Professional Associations – State Resource Conservationist

American Society of Agronomy

Specifics by Job – State Conservationist

Job Duties by Career Level – State Conservationist

These are three major duties associated with the individual Career Levels for the State Conservationist job. In general, these are slight deviations of the Overall Duties, and are intended to show the differences in responsibility between the Career Levels.

Table 56. Career Level Duties – State Conservationist

Job Duty	Mgr
Provides overall soil, water, and natural resource conservation leadership including coordination and collaboration to establish appropriate state-specific policy, standards, and procedures needed to resolve state natural resource concerns	✓
Manages fiduciary and civil rights requirements associated with directing financial and administrative programs including procurement and property, human resources, budget and financial management, and communications to staff and external stakeholders	✓
Builds partnerships for the agency and enters into and maintains various effective relationships at the local, state, tribal, and federal levels and with private organizations that share our common conservation goals	✓

Foundational Competencies – State Conservationist

These are the more significant foundational competencies for the State Conservationist job. The set of top foundational competencies and associated proficiency levels should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Competency and Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes the top competencies.

Table 57. Foundational Competencies – State Conservationist

Foundational Competency	Proficiency Rating
	Mgr
1. Adaptability and Flexibility	4
2. Integrity and Honesty	5
3. Oral Communication	5
4. Written Communication	4
5. Influence and Negotiating	4
6. Interpersonal Skills	5

Recommended Foundational Experience – State Conservationist

These are the more significant experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Foundational Competencies, that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

Table 58. Recommended Foundational Experience – State Conservationist

Foundational Experience	Career Level	Foundational Competency
Communicate orally and in writing	Mgr	Oral Communication
		Written Communication
Speak in public and make presentations	Mgr	Oral Communication
		Written Communication
Demonstrate ability to give adequate amount of time to all tasks that need to be accomplished	Mgr	Adaptability and Flexibility
Demonstrate ability to prioritize tasks that need to be accomplished	Mgr	Adaptability and Flexibility

Many of the Occupational and Leadership experiences also address the foundational competencies. This list of foundational experiences focuses on those experiences that only address the foundational competencies.

Leadership Competencies – State Conservationist

These are the more significant leadership competencies for the State Conservationist job. The set of leadership competencies and associated proficiency levels should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Competency and Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix.

Table 59. Leadership Competencies – State Conservationist

Leadership Competency	Proficiency Rating
	Mgr
1. Fiscal Responsibility	4
2. Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work	4
3. Developing Others	4
4. Human Resource Management	4
5. Team Building	4
6. External Awareness	4
7. Political Savvy	4
8. Vision	4
9. Strategic Thinking and Action	4
10. Relationship Management	4
11. Leveraging Diversity	4
12. Public Service Motivation	4

Recommended Leadership Experience – State Conservationist

These are the more significant experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Leadership Competencies, that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

Table 60. Recommended Leadership Experience – State Conservationist

Leadership Experience	Career Level	Leadership Competency
Develop, debate, review, and execute the state conservation program budget	Mgr	Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work
		Fiscal Responsibility
		External Awareness
		Political Savvy
		Vision
		Strategic Thinking and Action
Facilitate business and/or community meetings with federal, state, local, tribal, or private organizations/partners	Mgr	Relationship Management
		External Awareness
		Public Service Motivation
		Political Savvy
Supervise multi-disciplinary staff	Mgr	Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work
		Human Resource Management
		Developing Others
		Relationship Management
Complete a detail to National Headquarters (3-6 months) at least once (e.g., Team Leader Management; Team Leader Strategic Planning; Team Leader Programs; Team Leader Civil Rights)	Mgr	External Awareness
		Political Savvy
		Strategic Thinking and Action
		Relationship Management
		Public Service Motivation

Leadership Experience	Career Level	Leadership Competency
Lead team building activities and utilize team building skills with staff	Mgr	Human Resource Management
		Developing Others
		Team Building
		Relationship Management
		Leveraging Diversity
Work with a diverse group of partners (e.g., NGOs, state agencies, federal agencies, tribes, and other groups trying to do conservation work)	Mgr	External Awareness
		Political Savvy
		Relationship Management
Participate in professional society activities to gain leadership skills	Mgr	External Awareness
		Relationship Management
Implement or manage Farm Bill conservation programs	Mgr	Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work
Develop, debate, review, and execute state staffing plans	Mgr	Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work
		Human Resource Management
		Strategic Thinking and Action
Serve as the Acting State Conservationist in a state other than the current duty location	Mgr	Fiscal Responsibility
		Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work
		Developing Others
		Human Resource Management
		Team Building
		External Awareness
		Political Savvy
		Vision
		Strategic Thinking and Action
		Relationship Management
		Leveraging Diversity
Public Service Motivation		

Leadership Experience	Career Level	Leadership Competency
Serve on an NRCS State Leadership Team at a state office	Mgr	Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work
		Team Building
		External Awareness
		Political Savvy
		Relationship Management
Draft responses to congressional inquiries	Mgr	Public Service Motivation
		External Awareness
		Political Savvy
		Strategic Thinking and Action
Examine demographics and participation rates in order to evaluate and determine the appropriate funding levels needed to achieve parity	Mgr	Relationship Management
		Fiscal Responsibility
		External Awareness
		Political Savvy
		Leveraging Diversity
Implement processes to attain diversity within the state that meet Civilian Labor Force (CLF) numbers as required in hiring, promotion, awards, etc.	Mgr	Public Service Motivation
		Human Resource Management
		External Awareness
		Political Savvy
Acquire knowledge of the minimum trainings needed for all job classifications within the state	Mgr	Leveraging Diversity
		Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work
Create, develop, manage, and execute a business plan	Mgr	Developing Others
		External Awareness
		Political Savvy
		Vision
Establish a relationship with the public affairs office to ensure timely and accurate information is distributed to the public regarding the conservation programs	Mgr	Strategic Thinking and Action
		External Awareness
		Strategic Thinking and Action
		Relationship Management
		Public Service Motivation

Leadership Experience	Career Level	Leadership Competency
Follow personnel law and work with appropriate agencies/investigators (e.g., OPM, OGC, MSPB, OSC) in an investigation	Mgr	External Awareness
		Political Savvy
		Strategic Thinking and Action
		Leveraging Diversity
Follow relevant natural resource issues at the local, state and national level to maintain political awareness	Mgr	External Awareness
		Political Savvy
		Relationship Management
		Public Service Motivation
Manage and resolve conflict between any conservation personnel or partners	Mgr	Developing Others
		Team Building
		Relationship Management
Write state agency policy related to conservation programs	Mgr	External Awareness
		Political Savvy
		Strategic Thinking and Action

Occupational Competencies – State Conservationist

These are the more significant occupational competencies for the State Conservationist job. These should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Competency and Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes all occupational competencies associated with the State Conservationist job.

Table 61. Occupational Competencies – State Conservationist

Occupational Competency	Proficiency Rating
	Mgr
1. Conservation Planning and Natural Resource Disciplines	4
2. Program Management and Implementation	4
3. Quality Assurance	4

Recommended Occupational Experience – State Conservationist

These are the more significant experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Occupational Competencies, that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

Table 62. Recommended Occupational Experience – State Conservationist

Occupational Experience	Career Level	Occupational Competency
Implement oversight and quality review processes throughout the state	Mgr	Program Management and Implementation
		Quality Assurance
Work in an NRCS field office/area office	Mgr	Conservation Planning and Natural Resource Disciplines
		Program Management and Implementation
Develop conservation plans using the 9 steps of conservation planning	Mgr	Conservation Planning and Natural Resource Disciplines
Implement or manage Farm Bill conservation programs	Mgr	Conservation Planning and Natural Resource Disciplines
		Program Management and Implementation
Perform conservation planning and watershed planning	Mgr	Conservation Planning and Natural Resource Disciplines
Perform conservation implementation and conservation practice design	Mgr	Conservation Planning and Natural Resource Disciplines
Perform contract negotiations	Mgr	Program Management and Implementation

Occupational Experience	Career Level	Occupational Competency
Follow mandated laws as they pertain to resource management (e.g., NEPA, NHPA) and maintain awareness of changes to the laws	Mgr	Conservation Planning and Natural Resource Disciplines
		Program Management and Implementation
Direct and provide resource support for an operational unit that is gathering watershed information, facilitating partnership/community support, and identifying and quantifying the natural resources attributes and concerns	Mgr	Conservation Planning and Natural Resource Disciplines
		Program Management and Implementation
Synthesize information and weigh alternative solutions in the formulation of policies, procedures, budgets, and staffing; and implement decisions based on this information to achieve the desired natural resource outcomes for the watershed	Mgr	Conservation Planning and Natural Resource Disciplines
		Program Management and Implementation

Recommended Trainings – State Conservationist

These are the recommended trainings for individuals working to become a State Conservationist. The set of recommended trainings and associated competencies should provide specific opportunities for individuals to better prepare themselves for the State Conservationist job. Competency Definitions are included in the appendix.

Table 63. Recommended Trainings – State Conservationist

Recommended Training	Competencies	Career Level
		Mgr
Strategic Leadership Development Program (SLDP)	Adaptability and Flexibility (F)	✓
	Integrity and Honesty (F)	
	Oral Communication (F)	
	Written Communication (F)	
	Influence and Negotiating (F)	
	Interpersonal Skills (F)	
	Fiscal Responsibility (L)	
	Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work (L)	
	Developing Others (L)	
	Human Resource Management (L)	
	Team Building (L)	
	External Awareness (L)	
	Political Savvy (L)	
	Vision (L)	
	Strategic Thinking and Action (L)	
	Relationship Management (L)	
Leveraging Diversity (L)		
Public Service Motivation (L)		

Recommended Training	Competencies	Career Level
		Mgr
Capitol Hill Workshop	Influence and Negotiating (F)	✓
	External Awareness (L)	
	Political Savvy (L)	
Appropriations Law	Fiscal Responsibility (L)	✓
	External Awareness (L)	
	Leveraging Diversity (L)	
Working Effectively with American Indians	Interpersonal Skills (F)	✓
	Relationship Management (L)	
	Leveraging Diversity (L)	
Civil Rights Compliance in Program Delivery	Leveraging Diversity (L)	✓
	Relationship Management (L)	
	Conservation Planning and Natural Resource Disciplines (O)	
	Program Management and Implementation (O)	
Areawide Conservation Planning	Conservation Planning and Natural Resource Disciplines (O)	✓
Toastmasters International Public Relations Manual	Oral Communication (F)	✓
	Interpersonal Skills (F)	

F = Foundational Competency; L = Leadership Competency; and O = Occupational Competency. Trainings with a * are represented in the Leadership Development Framework. Trainings with a ** do not currently exist so it would need to be developed (and may be included as part of the Leadership Development Framework).

Recommended Education/Certifications – State Conservationist

These are the recommended education/certification requirements for the State Conservationist job. These recommendations are based on Office of Personnel Management (OPM) guidelines as well as Subject Matter Expert recommendations.

Table 64. Recommended Education and Certifications – State Conservationist

Education/ Certifications	Career Level
	Mgr
1. Bachelor’s degree in soil conservation or related agricultural or natural resource discipline such as agronomy, soil science, forestry, agricultural education, or agricultural engineering; the study must have included 30 semester hours in a natural resource or agricultural field, including at least 12 semester hours in a combination of soils and crops or plant science; of the 12 semester hours, a minimum of 3 semester hours must have been in soils and 3 semester hours in crops or plant science	✓
2. In some instances, a bachelor’s degree can be substituted for the specific semester hours listed above, plus appropriate experience or additional education	✓

R = Education/licensure that is recommended but not required to obtain the job at the specified level

Professional Associations – State Conservationist

These are professional associations recommended as resources for individuals interested in the State Conservationist job.

Table 65. Professional Associations – State Conservationist

Soil and Water Conservation Society
National Association of Conservation Districts
State Association of Conservation Districts
Society for Range Management
Farm Bureau
NRCS Employee Associations

Appendix

Job Level Definitions

You will see “Entry”, “Mid”, “Sr”, “Dis Lead”, “Spv”, and “Mgr” career levels along with the necessary proficiency ratings for each of these levels. The table below explains the differences between each of the five possible career levels. Specifically, it provides an overview of each job level, followed by a high level description of the experience/knowledge associated with the job level, the type of duties performed at the job level, and supervisory responsibilities at the job level.

	Entry	Mid	Senior/ Technical	Discipline Specialist	Supervisor	Manager
Overview	Starting level of a career. Consists of individuals entering a field of work for the first time, as well as those still early in their career.	Full performance level. Individuals at this level are skilled enough to be independent contributors.	Advanced performance level. Individuals have enhanced technical knowledge or skills in a field.	Advanced performance level. Individuals have enhanced technical knowledge or skills in a field. Apply these knowledge/skills at a regional/national level	First-line supervisory level. These individuals supervise non-supervisors.	Advanced supervisory level. These individuals typically direct the work of an organizational unit, (including supervising supervisors) and are held accountable for the unit's progress.

	Entry	Mid	Senior/ Technical	Discipline Specialist	Supervisor	Manager
Experience/ Knowledge	Minimal work experience in the area and foundational knowledge to begin a career in the field.	Sufficient work experience and knowledge in the area to perform all core functions of the job.	Sufficient work experience and technical knowledge to be considered a subject matter expert in the field.	Sufficient work experience and technical knowledge to be considered a subject matter expert in the field from a regional and/or national perspective.	Sufficient work experience and knowledge in the area and organization to directly oversee the work of others.	Sufficient work experience and knowledge in the area and organization to direct the work of an organizational unit.
Duties	Performs basic position duties, often under close supervision.	Performs key duties of the position independently with little supervision.	Performs advanced position duties that may be based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced technical knowledge or skills in a field. • Extensive non-supervisory administrative responsibilities. 	Performs advanced position duties at the regional and/or national level that may be based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced technical knowledge or skills in a field. • Extensive non-supervisory administrative responsibilities. 	Performs first-line supervisory duties (e.g., supervising employees, performance appraisals and leave approvals).	Performs managerial duties such as managing work plans, schedules, and resources in order to meet organizational objectives.

	Entry	Mid	Senior/ Technical	Discipline Specialist	Supervisor	Manager
Supervisor Responsibilities	None	None	None	None	Supervision of some employees, but does not supervise other supervisors.	Supervision of other supervisors.

Proficiency Scale Definitions

We prepopulated the necessary proficiency ratings for each career level based on the competency models and proficiency ratings that you developed. The proficiency scale is a 5-point scale that is used to suggest how knowledgeable individuals should be on a particular competency:

1 – Basic

- Applies the competency in the simplest situations
- Requires close and extensive guidance
- Demonstrates awareness of concepts and processes

2 – Foundational

- Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations
- Requires frequent guidance
- Demonstrates familiarity with concepts and processes

3 – Intermediate

- Applies the competency in difficult situations
- Requires occasional guidance
- Demonstrates understanding of concepts and processes

4 – Advanced

- Applies the competency in considerably difficult situations
- Generally requires little or no guidance
- Demonstrates broad understanding of concepts and processes

5 – Expert

- Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations
- Serves as a key resource and advises others
- Demonstrates comprehensive, expert understanding of concepts and processes