

State Specific Training Module for Louisiana

Purpose of this Module

This module will provide some general information that TSPs need to conduct conservation planning in our state. This information is general in nature so the TSP may need to follow up with additional reading or training to make sure they have the knowledge, skill, licenses and certifications to conduct conservation planning in this state.

Conservation Planning Policy

National Planning Procedures Handbook (NPPH) Amendment 9: The purpose of the handbook is to provide guidance on the planning process for developing, implementing, and evaluating individual conservation plans.

- Document can be found in eDirectives Weblink: <https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/default.aspx>
- eDirectives > Handbooks > Title 180 – Conservation Planning and Application

National Conservation Planning Policy: NRCS policy for providing conservation planning assistance to clients.

- Document can be found in eDirectives Weblink: <https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/default.aspx>
- eDirectives > General Manual > Title 180 – Conservation Planning and Application > Part 409 – Conservation Planning Policy

National Resource Concern List and Planning Criteria: Official list of NRCS resource concerns and planning criteria that is used to determine resource treatment levels using the conservation planning process.

- Document can be found in eDirectives Weblink: <https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/default.aspx>
- eDirectives > National Instructions > Title 450 – Technology > NI 450-309 Resource Concerns and Planning Criteria

Review of State Laws

Louisiana state laws (R.S. 3:3203, R.S. 3:3246 and R.S. 3:3249) require that the competence of all nutrient management, pest management, and irrigation water management, planners be certified by the LA Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF).

Each agricultural consultant's license shall expire on December thirty-first of each year and may be renewed in accordance with rules adopted by the LDAF commissioner. See R.S. 3:3246 on certification and licensing of agricultural consultants.

Review of State eFOTG Requirements

The Electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG) is official the repository of conservation planning guidance documents for NRCS

eFOTG contains:

Section 1 – General References

Section 2 – Soil and Site Information

Section 3 – Conservation Management Systems

Section 4 – Practice Standards and Specifications

Section 5 – Conservation Effects

Review of State Planner Requirements

- If a TSP is seeking a conservation planner certification, then the TSP will be required to take the NRCS Louisiana in State Wetland Course. This course is an in-person training held in the classroom and field. This course is typically offered each summer.
- Louisiana requires the following state led course in order to address the wetland component of Fundamentals of Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Provisions Training. There are three web-based prerequisites required to receive a certificate of completion. 1) Wetland Identification for Food Security Act Purposes: Application of Principles (LA Course) a. Fundamentals of Highly Erodible Land & Wetland Conservation Provisions (Web-based) (Pre-requisite) b. Wetland Identification for Food Security act Purposes - Phase I: Basic Concepts (Web-based) (Pre-requisite) c. USDA Cross Training Programs: NRCS Wetland & Highly Erodible land Compliance (Web-based) (Pre-requisite)
- <https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/viewerFS.aspx?hid=44083>

Review of Major Land Ownership

Approximately 10.7% of this state is public lands. Most of the public land is managed for multiple use, and leases by individual ranchers is common. Conservation planning on private land may include a public component, however the opportunity for private individuals to construct permanent conservation practices on public lands is limited.

Major Land Use in Louisiana

- Rural land use in Louisiana is:
 - 55% Forest or Woodland
 - 20% Cropland
 - 12% Pasture and rangeland
 - 13% Other

Source - NRI (2010) summary data.

Farm Land Use In Louisiana

- Farm Land use in Louisiana consists approximately of:
 - 54% Cropland
 - 22% Pasture and rangeland
 - 16% Woodland
 - 8% Other
- With 25% of all cropland in irrigation

The Average Louisiana Farm

- The average farm in Louisiana:
 - Consists of 280 acres
 - Has a whole farm value of \$825,000, including land, building, machinery and equipment.
 - Has an annual Market value agricultural production of \$136,000.
- 52% of all farmland is rented or leased

Louisiana Farm Operators

- Are 30% Female
- 8% African American
- Have a primary occupation other than farming (60%)
- Live on their farms (70%)
- And average 56 years of age

Cropland in Louisiana

A diversity of major crops are grown in Louisiana.

They include:

- Rice
- Corn
- Soybeans
- Cotton
- Grain Sorghum
- Sugarcane
- Sweet Potatoes



Cropland in Louisiana

- Erosion in Louisiana is primarily driven by rainfall
- A sheet or rill erosion concern is identified by using the RUSLE2 model
- If sheet and rill erosion is above the soil loss tolerance (T value), declining fertility is expected



Cropland in Louisiana

Gully and streambank erosion also contribute to extensive soil loss in Louisiana, and are identified visually



Cropland in Louisiana

- Water Quality is the most important resource concern nationally.
- Nutrients and sediment from cropland are major contributors to water body impairments.
- It is imperative that significant improvements to cropland cultural practices continue to be made.

Cropland in Louisiana

Used together in a system, reduced tillage and cover crops are the most effective practices recommended to reduce erosion, improve soil health, and improve water quality



Review of Forestland Ownership

Approximately 81% of this state is owned by private landowners. Over 148 thousand individuals make up this ownership group and they own their land for a variety of reasons. Conservation planning on private land begins with the objectives of the owners for the property and the resources available on the site or that the site could sustain. The remaining forestland is owned by private forest companies (10%) and state/federal public ownership (9%). No matter the type of ownership, management begins with objectives or goals.

Management Practices Matter

- Each site is different and will require different management techniques
- Management objectives will drive prescribed treatments
- Prescribed treatments should be based on site evaluation, soil type, site index, species compatibility
- Variety in EQIP practices can provide flexibility in prescriptions for the property



Forest Management Planning

Get and keep an inventory of the property (not needed every year, but you need at least one good inventory)



Keep trees healthy by maintaining good stocking levels by proper intermediate cutting practices. Minimizes risk of damaging insects, disease, wildfires and other natural events.



Control understory vegetation to reduce fire hazard and improve wildlife habitat.

No management is a type of management, the forest is always changing, change it in your favor to meet your objectives while keep it healthy and minimizing risks.



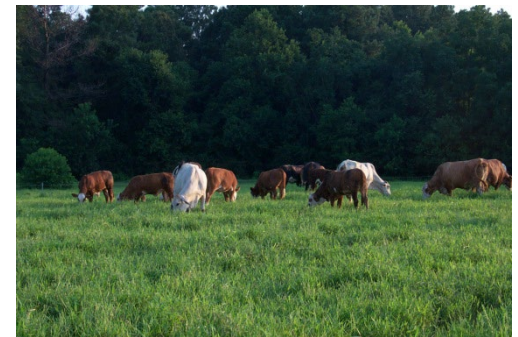
Forest Management Plan

- A forest management plan is a site specific plan developed for a client, which addresses one or more resource concerns on land where forestry-related conservation activities or practices will be planned and applied.
- The forest management plan will:
 - a) Meet Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) quality criteria for the identified resource concern(s).
 - b) Comply with federal, state, tribal, and local laws, regulations, and permit requirements.
 - c) Meet the client's objectives.



Grazingland

- Take and record inventory of grazingland resources (forage types, pasture/range condition, class of livestock, water sources, fences etc...)
- A proper **balance** between forage availability and livestock demand (more commonly known as **stocking rate**) is the most important factor to consider in a grazing plan.
- Identify client objectives (livestock production, wildlife, water quality, pasture/range condition) and plan sustainable grazing management that targets these goals.



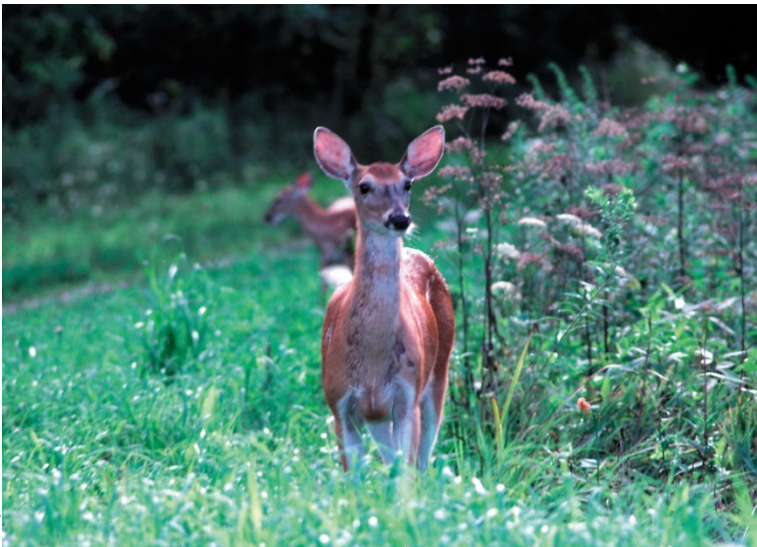
Grazingland Management Plan

- A grazingland management plan is developed for any land utilized by grazing livestock. The plan will include any conservation practices or management needed to address resource concerns and meet client objectives.
- The grazing plan will meet NRCS quality criteria for identified resource concerns and comply with federal, state and local laws. The plan will also meet tribal and local regulations and permit requirements.



PLANNING FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT

- ❖ Sound conservation planning is necessary for an attractive and productive wildlife habitat.
- ❖ Consider adequate planning for food, water and shelter which is essential for the survival of all species.
- ❖ Identify landowner objectives and primary species of concern during the wildlife planning process.



WILDLIFE HABITATS OF CONCERN

- **Certain habitats have and continue to be in decline and their restoration efforts should be considered during the planning process.**
 - **Riparian Buffers:** Restore trees and shrubs along water bodies to provide adequate food, nesting sites and travel corridors for various upland species.
 - **Longleaf pine:** Re-establishment of Longleaf Pine on suitable and historic sites.
 - **Upland Hardwood Forest:** Restore native upland hardwood within pine production areas.
 - **Vegetation Succession:** Disking of utility rights-of-way, moist soil units and other suitable openings to set back plant succession.
 - **Prairie Habitat:** Restoring native prairie sites to native grasses and forbs.



THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

Threatened or Endangered species and their habitat are identified by parish in Louisiana.

- ✓ Special considerations should be given when planning in the parish of occurrence of these species.
- ✓ The document, “[Conservation of At-Risk Species in Louisiana](#)” is found in Section II EFOTG and can guide you when planning involves these species.



Cultural Resources Planning

- NRCS is required by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (54 U.S.C. 100000, PL No. 89-665); and
- 36 CFR 800 (*Protection of Historic Properties*)
- To consider the effects of all the agency's undertakings on Cultural Resources

Cultural Resources Planning

Undertaking is a project, activity, or program funded in whole or in part under the direct or indirect jurisdiction of a federal agency

1. carried out by or on behalf of the agency
2. carried out with federal financial assistance
3. requiring a federal permit, license, or approval
4. subject to state or local regulation pursuant to delegation or approval by a federal agency

Cultural Resources Planning

- TSP will follow Guidance to Determine an Undertaking found in eFOTG, Section 2, Natural and Cultural Resources
- TSP will complete CR-1 Form and conservation map (map will follow all current standards).
- TSP will send the CR-1 Form and Map to Dr. Aubra Lee, State Archaeologist, or his designee for processing.

Expected TSP Workflow

- The State Resource Conservationist (SRC) will be responsible for reviewing TSP conservation planning for the National Planner Certification.
- Subsequent conservation plans will be reviewed by the District Conservationist (DC) at the local USDA Service Center.
- The SRC will conduct plan reviews for TSP planner certification renewals.
- TSPs will work with the local District Conservationist to make sure the proper environmental evaluations (NRCS.CPA.52) are completed.

Additional References or Training

- State Field Office Technical Guide at <https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/state/LA/documents>
- State Training on CNMP Development
- Louisiana State University Nutrient Management Guide
- State Statute (Acts 1980, No. 568, §1; Acts 1999, No. 396, §1; Acts 2003, No. 279, §5) when engineering license is need for planning conservation practices

Non-Discrimination Statement

Non-Discrimination Policy

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

To File an Employment Complaint

If you wish to file an employment complaint, you must contact your agency's EEO Counselor within 45 days of the date of the alleged discriminatory act, event, or in the case of a personnel action. Additional information can be found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_file.html

To File a Program Complaint

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9419, by fax at (202) 690-7442, or email at program.intake@usda.gov

Persons with Disabilities

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities and you wish to file either an EEO or program complaint please contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish).

Persons with disabilities, who wish to file a program complaint, please see information above on how to contact us by mail or by email. If you require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, etc.), please contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

For any other information dealing with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) issues, persons should either contact the USDA SNAP Hotline Number at (800) 221-5689, which is also in Spanish, or call the State Information/Hotline Numbers.

All Other Inquiries

For any other information not pertaining to civil rights, please refer to the listing of the USDA Agencies and Offices.

Certificate of Completion

After viewing the State Specific Training module, please print and sign the completion certificate on the following slide.

The certificate is your acknowledgement that based on the information provided in this module, you have the proper knowledge, skills and ability to conduct planning in this State.

Within your NRCS Registry profile, enter the training and upload the signed certificate to verify completion.

STATE SPECIFIC TRAINING MODULE COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

I, _____ hereby verify I have viewed and understand the content of *Louisiana State*
TSP Name
Specific Training Module and affirm I have the knowledge, skills, and ability to conduct conservation planning
services in this state.

TSP Signature

Date