

Instructions for Completing the Environmental Evaluation Worksheet (Form NRCS-CPA-52)

INTRODUCTION

The Environmental Evaluation (EE) is “the part of planning that inventories and estimates the potential effects on the human environment of alternative solutions to resource problems”. (7 CFR 650.4 and GM 190 Part 410.4(D).) This form provides for the documentation of that part of the planning process, and was designed to assist the conservation planner with compliance requirements for applicable Federal laws, regulations, Executive Orders, and policy. The form also provides a framework for documenting compliance with applicable State, Tribal and local requirements.

NRCS is required to conduct an EE for all planning to determine if there is a need for an Environmental Assessment (EA) or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EE process results in a "Finding" or conclusion (see guidance for "Q" below) that, either further NEPA analysis is required (EA or EIS) or that no EA or EIS is required because: 1) There is no federal action; 2) The action is categorically excluded; or 3) There is an existing NRCS or NRCS-adopted NEPA document that has sufficiently analyzed the effects of this action. The EE applies to all assistance provided by NRCS (7 CFR 650.5 and GM 190, Part 410.5). The NRCS-CPA-52 form is used by NRCS to document the results of the evaluation and show compliance with NRCS regulations implementing NEPA at 7 CFR Part 650.

A copy of the NRCS-CPA-52, including supporting documentation such as Special Environmental Concerns Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheets, must be included in the administrative file. **Do not hesitate to attach additional documents if needed to meet environmental evaluation requirements.**

COMPLETING THE NRCS-CPA-52

A. Client Name

B. Conservation Plan ID # (as applicable)

Program Authority (optional): Identifying the program authority (EQIP, CSP, etc.) can help lead the planner to the appropriate NRCS NEPA document the planner may tier to as addressed later in section "R. Rationale Supporting the Finding".

C. Identification #: Record any other relevant client identification # (farm, tract, field #, etc.).

D. Client's Objective(s) (purpose): (Record results from planning step 2.) Briefly summarize the client's stated objective(s) [synonymous to "Purpose" under NEPA]. Refer to Step 2 of the NRCS planning process found in the NPPH, Part 600.22 for help, if needed. "Purpose" refers to a goal or desired future condition being pursued in the process of meeting the "Need", such as keeping the operation economically viable or meeting TMDL requirements. Clearly articulated purposes become the decision factors used to decide between the action alternatives.

E. Need for Action: (Record results from planning step 1.) Describe the underlying need being met. Why is the action being proposed? What is the root cause of the existing problem or opportunity? The underlying need will define and shape the alternatives and potentially justify the expenditure of federal funds; therefore it is important to accurately articulate the need(s) based on the identified resource concerns and the client objectives. All alternatives should clearly address an underlying need(s). In conservation planning, a "need" is usually a required improvement in the condition of a natural resource(s), such as when the quality of runoff water from a farm does not meet State standards, or inadequate forage supply and/or grazing strategies are resulting in poor livestock performance. Use information from Steps 3 and 4 of the Conservation Planning Process to help define the need. Identify here which Resource Concerns need to be addressed in the plan.

F. Resource Concerns and Existing / Benchmark Conditions:

Resource Concerns (Record results from planning steps 3 and 4.) Record the resource concerns that have been identified through the scoping and Resources Inventory and Analysis processes. Use the Resource Concern List and Planning Criteria Section 3 to identify Resource Concerns present and use approved Measurement and Assessment Tools to compare the potential environmental effects of alternatives. Include resource concerns that apply, adding additional sheets as necessary.

Documenting Existing/Benchmark Conditions (Record results from planning step 4.) Analyze the existing (benchmark) conditions for each relevant concern. Record the amount, kind, status, location and method of measurement for each identified concern. For example, if soil erosion were identified as a resource concern, the recorded benchmark might be "64 ac sheet & rill @ 6T/ac/yr, field 3, RUSLE 2." The benchmark is the baseline from which the change in resource condition under the no action and other alternatives is measured. Without it, there is no context for the degree of change.

Human - Below are some examples for what to consider when addressing Human Economic and Social Considerations.

Land use:

- Is the present land use suitable for the proposed alternative?
- Will land use change after practice(s) installation?
- How will a change affect the operation? (e.g., Feed and Forage Balance Sheet)
- Will the action affect resources on which people depend for subsistence, employment or recreation?
- Will land be taken in or out of production?

Capital:

- Does the producer have the funds or ability to obtain the funds needed to implement the proposed alternative?
- What are the impacts of the cost of the initial investment for this alternative?
- What are the impacts of any additional annual costs for Operation and Maintenance?
- What possible impact does implementing this alternative have on the client's future eligibility for farm programs?

Labor:

- Does the client understand the amount and kind of labor needed to implement, operate and maintain the proposed practice(s)?
- Does the client have the skills and time to carry out the conservation practice(s) or will they have to hire someone?

Management level:

- Does the client understand the inputs needed to manage the practice(s) and the client's responsibility in obtaining these inputs?
- Does the client understand their responsibility to maintain practice(s) as planned and implemented?
- Is it necessary for the client to obtain additional education, or hire a technical consultant, to operate and/or maintain the practice(s)?

Profitability:

- Profitability describes the relative benefits and costs of the farm or ranch operation, and is often measured in dollars. An activity is profitable if the benefits are greater than the costs.
- Is the proposed alternative needed and feasible?
- Do the benefits of improving the current operation outweigh the installation and maintenance costs (positive benefit/cost ratio)?
- Is there a reasonable expectation of long-term profitability/benefits for the operation if implemented?
- Will crop, livestock, or wildlife yield increase/decrease?

Risk:

- What is the potential for monetary loss, physical injury, or damage to resources or the environment?
- Will the proposed alternative aid/risk client participation in USDA programs?
- Is there flexibility in modifying the conservation plan at a future date?
- What issues are involved with the timing of installation and maintenance?
- What are the cash flow requirements of this alternative?
- What, if any, are the hazards involved?

Public Health and Safety:

- What effect (both positive or negative) will the action have on the client and community with regard to public health and safety?
- Are there any hazards associated with no action or any of the alternatives about which the client should be informed?

G. Special Environmental Concerns (Record results from planning steps 3 and 4.)

Under each Special Environmental Concern, document the current status or condition of the concern. Record the amount, kind, status, location, and method of measurement or source of information for each special resource concern. For example, if endangered species habitat is present, under Endangered and Threatened Species, the recorded benchmark condition is "64 ac, I-bat habitat-roosting cover, field 3, FOTG-2." If it is determined that no floodplains exist within the affected planning area, document the fact and cite the source. The benchmark condition would read "not present, FEMA flood map #xxx."

For guidance in addressing special environmental concerns, see NECH Subpart B and the Special Environmental Concern Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheets. Document any additional State and/or local special environmental concerns in "K. Other Agencies and Broad Public Concerns". Attach additional documentation if needed.

H. Alternatives (Record results from Planning step 5.)

Describe Alternatives Briefly summarize the practice/system of practices being proposed. The no action alternative is required. Alternatives should be formulated to meet the underlying need. Note that the no action alternative may not meet the underlying need and is still required to be evaluated and compared to other alternatives (see below). To the extent possible, the alternatives should also prevent additional problems from occurring and take advantage of available opportunities. *If there are unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of resources, appropriate alternatives that meet the underlying need must be developed.*

"No Action": Include a brief summary of the activities that would be implemented in the absence of USDA assistance (financial or technical). Unless a change in management direction or intensity will be undertaken, record effects of existing activities. The "No Action" alternative requires the same level of analysis as other alternatives. It should answer the question of what impacts are likely to occur (or what the predicted future condition of the identified resource concerns might be) under the client's current and planned management strategies without implementation of a federally assisted action.

"Alternatives 1,2,etc.": List here the practices or system of practices being proposed for each alternative. Indicate if the alternative meets RMS criteria based on your State's requirements. One or more other alternatives may be evaluated to aid in the decision-making process or at the request of the client. It is beneficial for one alternative to contain the practices that NRCS has determined best address all of the identified resource concerns (RMS alternative) so the client can consider potential future conservation actions. Use additional sheets if necessary.

It is important to quantify to the extent feasible the differences between each alternative, including the "No Action" alternative. See "Helpful Tips" in the NECH, Part 610.67 for guidance on narrowing the scope of your analysis when considering alternatives.

I. Effects of Alternatives (Record results from planning step 6.)

Under "Amount, Status, Description," record the effect of each alternative on the concerns listed, quantifying where possible. *Consider and document both short-term and long-term consequences for all foreseeable direct, indirect, and cumulative effects (described below).* If a change to the concern is predicted, then estimate the amount. Professional judgment should be used where Planning Criteria or other tools are not available.

Resource Concerns Use your State's FOTG Section III Planning Criteria to identify the established threshold levels for resource concerns. Professional judgment should be used where Planning Criteria or other tools are not available. Place a check in the "NOT meet PC" box for each resource concern to indicate when FOTG Section III Planning Criteria will not be met (i.e., where additional measures are needed to meet PC).

Analyze effects based on the combined effect of all practices on the resource concern. For example, if one proposed practice may impact the water quality of an adjacent stream, but another proposed practice such as a buffer may reduce or eliminate the impact, the overall effect is the one that should be recorded here. As mentioned above, one or more "Other Alternative(s)" may be evaluated to aid in the decision-making process or at the request of the client. Use additional sheets if necessary.

"No Action": Record the impacts that are likely to occur (or what the predicted future condition of the identified resource concerns might be) under the client's planned management strategies without implementation of a federally assisted action. Address impacts to each identified resource concern, quantifying where possible. If this information is found elsewhere in the conservation plan, simply provide a summary here.

"Alternatives 1,2, etc.": Record the impacts that are likely to occur under each alternative scenario. Document impacts to each identified resource concern, quantifying where possible. If this information is found elsewhere in the conservation plan, simply provide a summary here. Include both short and long-term consequences in the analysis.

Categories of Effects to Consider- There are three categories of effects that must be considered when predicting short- and long-term effects of an alternative on resource concerns:

Direct effects are caused by the alternative and occur at the same time and place.

Indirect effects are caused by the alternative and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable (e.g., "downstream" effects).

Cumulative effects are those that result from all past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. They can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time. Cumulative effects are most appropriately analyzed on a watershed or area-wide level.

Cumulative impacts ideally consider "...all actions in the area of potential effect, REGARDLESS of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions." (CEQ 1508.7)

The NECH, Part 610.70, "Effects Analysis," provides important information on describing effects so that an adequate analysis can be made and appropriate mitigation measures included when the proposed alternative has adverse effects. (See also Section L.)

J. Impacts to Special Environmental Concerns (Record results from planning step 6.)

Briefly describe the status and/or description of effects on all identified Special Environmental Concerns, and include supporting data as needed. Document the degree of change in amount/condition, using the same protocols and units of measure used to determine the benchmark condition. *It is important to consider and document both short-term and long-term consequences for all foreseeable direct, indirect, and cumulative effects on these resource concerns.*

Place a check in the "needs further action" box when effects have not been fully determined or when additional procedural action is needed, such as the need for a permit or completing required consultation with regulatory agencies. Where consultation with another federal agency is required (e.g., USFWS or NMFS) to determine potential environmental effects, follow established State protocols or contact the appropriate NRCS State Specialist for guidance. Neither the NEPA Finding in Section "Q" nor practice implementation should occur until all required consultations and coordination with the appropriate agency have been completed and all necessary permits provided. Planning and practice implementation may continue for practices not involved in required consultation/coordination efforts only if they are not connected to, or dependent on, the other action.

Complete applicable Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheets or other state specific documentation as needed and include them in the client's administrative file. If the Special Environmental Concern is not present in the project area then there is no need to attach the Guide Sheet. Completion of Guide Sheets is not mandatory, but appropriate documentation must be provided. Check your own States' guidance for compliance and planning requirements.

- K. Other Agencies and Broad Public Concerns:** List any necessary easements, permissions, or permits (e.g., Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, wetland mitigation easements, state or county permits) required to implement the alternatives. Remember that identifying needed permits for ALL alternatives may be an important decision criteria between alternatives and should be considered during the planning process.

Relay public concerns related to land-use, demographics, landscape characteristics, or other Federal, Tribal, State, and local laws/regulations. Document the impacts of each alternative on these issues. Responses will impact the selection of an alternative as well as issues surrounding "significance."

Document contact and communications with USFWS, NOAA-NMFS, Corps, EPA, SWCD's, NRCS State Office, State/Tribal/local environmental agencies, etc., and others consulted, including public participation activities. The NECH provides important information on public participation requirements.

Cumulative Effects. (See NECH Exhibit 610.126) A cumulative impact is defined as "the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time" (40 CFR 1508.70). Cumulative effects include the direct and indirect effects of a project together with the effects from reasonably foreseeable future actions of others. For a project to be reasonably foreseeable, it must have advanced far enough in the planning process that its implementation is likely. Reasonably foreseeable future actions are not speculative, are likely to occur based on reliable resources and are typically characterized in planning documents. Add additional pages as needed.

- L. Mitigation:** Include here any mitigation measures that are NOT already incorporated in the alternatives that will offset any adverse impacts. This may include conditions included in required permits. Briefly describe or reference all mitigation measures to be applied for each alternative. Mitigation actions for the preferred (selected) alternative must be included in the conservation plan, designs, and specifications.

As referenced in CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1508.20) and NECH (Part 610.71), mitigation includes:

- Avoiding the impacts altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action.
- Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree of magnitude of the action and its implementation.
- Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment.
- Reducing or eliminating impact over time by preservation/maintenance operations during action life.
- Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

- M. Preferred Alternative:** (Record results from planning step 7.)

Record the alternative to be implemented and indicate why it was chosen. Ultimately, the client will decide what actions will occur on their land, but NRCS funding or assistance may not always be appropriate for that action. For NRCS assistance to proceed, the alternative must clearly address the underlying need(s) as identified in "E". The Objective(s) (Purpose) stated in "D" serves as the decision factors between alternatives.

- N. Context:** Record the context used in the alternatives analysis. Significance varies with the setting of the proposed action. For instance, in the case of a site-specific action, significance would usually depend upon the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. Both short- and long-term effects are relevant.

Part "O" is completed by the planner and Parts "P" thru "S" must be completed by the Responsible Federal Official (RFO).

If NRCS is providing planning assistance for another federal agency, then the NRCS planner must sign Section "O" as the planner. The RFO for the lead agency (e.g., FSA for CRP) will complete everything below the planner's signature. For NRCS the State Conservationist is the RFO, but they may delegate that authority to a designated agency representative. Normally, the authority to serve as RFO is delegated to an Area or Field Office employee for farm bill program agreements. Check with your State Office or State Directives if you have questions.

- O. Signature (planner):** The individual completing Parts "A" thru "N" of the NRCS-CPA-52 must sign and date to indicate they have used the best available information. This may or may not be the same person as the agency representative. In cases where the planner is not an NRCS employee, they must sign in the first signature area and then the NRCS will sign in the second signature area to confirm and validate the information as the responsible agency. When NRCS plans on behalf of another agency, NRCS need sign only as the planner and then the lead agency RFO will complete the rest of the NRCS-CPA-52.
- P. Determination of Significance or Extraordinary Circumstances:** NRCS evaluates each action using its list of special environmental concerns along with the significance factors to determine whether an action has extraordinary circumstances. Action(s) that have potential for significant impacts on the human environment cannot be categorically excluded. Thus, in the absence of any extraordinary circumstances the actions can proceed without the preparation of an environmental assessment (EA) or environmental impact statement (EIS). Where extraordinary circumstances are determined to exist, the categorical exclusion will not apply.

Categorical Exclusions (CE): Before documenting the use of a categorical exclusion, it is important to read Section 610.46 of the NECH. This section provides a list of all categorical exclusions that apply to actions as well as more detailed considerations and requirements for their use. For an action to be categorically excluded, there must be appropriate documentation on the NRCS-CPA-52 indicating that the proposed action does not meet any of the criteria for "significance," as discussed above. These criteria are also known as "extraordinary circumstances" when discussing categorical exclusions. *If any part of a proposed plan involves actions that are NOT on the list of allowable categorical exclusions, the entire plan is not eligible for a categorical exclusion.*

To complete the determination on the NRCS-CPA-52, check "yes" or "no" for each of the questions. If you are not sure about the answer, contact your State Environmental Liaison for assistance. The NRCS-CPA-52 must provide evidence to conclude that the activity will not result in extraordinary circumstances or significant adverse environmental effects on the quality of the human environment, either individually or cumulatively. If any of the extraordinary circumstances are found to apply to the proposed action, then you should determine whether the proposal can be modified to mitigate the adverse effects and prevent the extraordinary circumstances. If this can be done and the client agrees to any necessary change(s) in the proposed action to avoid significant adverse impacts, then the proposed action is to be modified and implemented. If the proposed action cannot be modified or the client refuses to accept a proposed change, then Item 5 in Section "Q" must be checked for the NRCS NEPA Compliance Finding to indicate that additional analysis and documentation is needed.

- Q. NEPA Compliance Finding (check one):** This finding will determine the appropriate NEPA action required. Instructions below correspond to the option numbers in Section "Q" of the Form. In Section "R" document the rationale for your Finding.
- 1) Federal actions do NOT include situations in which NRCS (or any other federal agency) provides technical assistance (CTA) only. The agency cannot control what the client ultimately does with that assistance. Non-Federal actions include, but are not limited to:
 - NRCS providing HEL or wetland conservation determinations.
 - NRCS providing technical designs where there is **no** federal financial assistance.
 - NRCS providing planning assistance or other technical assistance and information to individuals, organizations, States, or local governments where there is no federal financial assistance or other control of the decision or action.

- 2) CE actions are a category of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment; therefore, neither an environmental assessment nor an environmental impact statement is required. First determine whether the proposed action is a categorically excluded action as identified in NRCS or USDA regulations implementing NEPA. (USDA and NRCS categorical exclusions are listed in the NECH, Part 610.46.) Note that there may be overarching or CE-specific side boards that must be met in order to apply a CE. If the proposed action is listed as a CE action, then assess whether there are any applicable extraordinary circumstances that would prevent the action from being eligible as a CE. Check this box only if the action is categorically excluded **AND** there are no EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES associated with the proposed action. (See NECH Exhibit 610.116, "How to Use NRCS's Categorical Exclusions.")
- 3) Check this box if there is an existing NRCS NEPA document that has sufficiently analyzed the action being proposed. A number of NRCS National Programmatic NEPA documents have analyzed effects of many practices planned under nationwide conservation programs. There may also be Regional, State, or area wide Programmatic NEPA documents that can be referred to. For information about "Tiering" to existing NRCS NEPA documents see the NECH Part 610.81.

Keep in mind that Programmatic EA's and EIS's are not site-specific so they do not attempt to describe every possible type of effect resulting from actions that could be taken. Thus, you must use your knowledge of site-specific conditions to decide if additional analysis is needed. Network diagrams illustrating general effects of conservation practices are associated with national or State EA's or EIS's. These diagrams may help in analyzing effects of practices. If the planner believes the site-specific impacts are outside the range of effects described in the programmatic EA or EIS, this box may not be checked.

Copies of NRCS national programmatic NEPA documents may be viewed on NRCS' Environmental Compliance web page.

- 4) It is possible to tier to NEPA documents prepared by other Federal agencies if those documents have been formally adopted by NRCS as outlined in the NECH 610.83 and CEQ regulations 40 CFR1506.3. NRCS must have prepared and published the agency's own Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for an EA or Record of Decision for an EIS in order for a NEPA document to be "adopted". For information about "Tiering" to NEPA documents see the NECH Section 610.81.
- 5) If 1), 2), 3), or 4) do not apply, the action may cause a significant effect on the quality of the human environment and an EA or EIS may be required. Additional analysis may be required to comply with NEPA. Contact the State Environmental Liaison or equivalent for guidance on completing this analysis and provide them with a copy of the NRCS-CPA-52 and supporting documentation.

R. Rationale Supporting the Finding: Explain the reasons for making the "Finding" in "Q".

If "Q 1)" was selected, explain why the action is NOT a federal action subject to NRCS regulations implementing NEPA.

If "Q 2)" was selected, document the categorical exclusion(s) applicable to the entirety of the proposed action and indicate that there are no extraordinary circumstances.

If "Q 3)" was selected, identify any applicable NRCS NEPA document. Record the citation of the NRCS NEPA document you are tiering to.

If "Q 4)" was selected, identify any applicable NRCS NEPA document that was officially adopted from another agency. Record the citation of the NRCS adopted NEPA document you are tiering to.

If "Q 5)" was selected, document your analysis and provide this information (NRCS-CPA-52 and supporting documents) to your State Environmental Liaison or equivalent.

S. Signature of Responsible Federal Official (RFO): The appropriate agency RFO must sign and date. The RFO should wait to make the finding until all consultations, permits, etc., are finalized. This signature certifies that the proposed action/plan complies with all NRCS policies implementing NEPA and all other applicable Federal, State, Tribal and local laws/Executive Orders.

F. Resource Concerns and Existing/ Benchmark Conditions (Analyze and record the existing/benchmark conditions for each identified concern)	I. Effects of Alternatives (continued)					
	No Action		Alternative 1		Alternative 2	
	Amount, Status, Description (Document both short and long term impacts)	✓ if does NOT meet PC	Amount, Status, Description (Document both short and long term impacts)	✓ if does NOT meet PC	Amount, Status, Description (Document both short and long term impacts)	✓ if does NOT meet PC
AIR		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC
		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC
		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC
		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC
PLANTS		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC
		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC
		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC
		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC
		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC
ANIMALS		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC
		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC
		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC
		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC
		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC
ENERGY		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC
		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC
		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC
		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC		<input type="checkbox"/> NOT meet PC
Human Economic and Social Considerations						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Use • Capital • Labor • Management Level • Profitability • Risk • Public Health & Safety • Other 						

Special Environmental Concerns: Environmental Laws, Executive Orders, Policies, etc.

In Section "G" complete and attach Environmental Procedures Guide Sheets for documentation as applicable. Items with a "●" may require a federal permit or consultation/coordination between the lead agency and another government agency. In these cases, effects may need to be determined in consultation with another agency. Planning and practice implementation may proceed for practices not involved in consultation.

G. Special Environmental Concerns (Document existing/ benchmark conditions)	J. Impacts to Special Environmental Concerns					
	<i>No Action</i>		<i>Alternative 1</i>		<i>Alternative 2</i>	
	Document all impacts (Attach Guide Sheets as applicable)	√ if needs further action	Document all impacts (Attach Guide Sheets as applicable)	√ if needs further action	Document all impacts (Attach Guide Sheets as applicable)	√ if needs further action
●Clean Air Act Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
●Clean Water Act / Waters of the U.S. Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
●Coastal Zone Management Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Coral Reefs Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
●Cultural Resources / Historic Properties Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
●Endangered and Threatened Species Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
●Essential Fish Habitat Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Floodplain Management Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Invasive Species Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
●Migratory Birds/Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Natural Areas Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Prime and Unique Farmlands Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Riparian Area Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Scenic Beauty Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
●Wetlands Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
●Wild and Scenic Rivers Guide Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

K. Other Agencies and Broad Public Concerns		No Action	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
K.1 Easements, Permissions, Public Review, or Permits Required and Agencies Consulted.				
K.2 Cumulative Effects Narrative (Describe the cumulative impacts considered, including past, present and known future actions regardless of who performed the actions)				
L. Mitigation (Record actions to avoid, minimize, and compensate)				
M. Preferred Alternative	✓ preferred alternative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Supporting reason			
N. Context (Record context of alternatives analysis) The significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human, national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality.				
O. Planner Signature - To the best of my knowledge, the data shown on this form is accurate and complete: An NRCS Certified Planner employee (Level 3 or above), must sign the second signature line to confirm and validate that the best available information was used to accurately complete the environmental evaluation. Any planner (not an NRCS Certified Planner employee (Level 3 or above)) who contributed or was actively engaged in the completion of this EE will sign and date the first signature line. When the preferred alternative is not a federal action where NRCS has control or responsibility, NRCS will sign only as the certified planner and provide a copy of this form to the lead agency responsible for documenting compliance with NEPA according to their own regulations and procedures.				
Signature (Other)		Title		Date
Signature (NRCS Certified Planner)		Title		Date
If preferred alternative is not a federal action where NRCS has control or responsibility and this NRCS-CPA-52 is shared with someone other than the client, then indicate to whom this is being provided.				
The following sections are to be completed by the Responsible Federal Official (RFO)				
NRCS is the RFO if the action is subject to NRCS control and responsibility (e.g., actions financed, funded, assisted, conducted, regulated, or approved by NRCS). These actions do not include situations in which NRCS is only providing technical assistance because NRCS cannot control what the client ultimately does with that assistance and situations where NRCS is making a technical determination (such as Farm Bill HEL or wetland determinations) not associated with the planning process.				
P. Determination of Significance or Extraordinary Circumstances To answer the questions below, consider the severity (intensity) of impacts in the contexts identified above. Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that on balance the effect will be beneficial. Significance cannot be avoided by terming an action temporary or by breaking it down into small component parts.				
If you answer ANY of the below questions "yes" then contact the State Environmental Liaison as there may be extraordinary circumstances and significance issues to consider and a site specific NEPA analysis may be required.				
Yes	No			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1) Is the preferred alternative expected to cause significant effects on public health or safety?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2) Is the preferred alternative expected to significantly affect unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3) Are the effects of the preferred alternative on the quality of the human environment likely to be highly controversial?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4) Does the preferred alternative have highly uncertain effects or involve unique or unknown risks on the human environment?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5) Does the preferred alternative establish a precedent for future actions with significant impacts or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6) Is the preferred alternative known or reasonably expected to have potentially significant environment impacts to the quality of the human environment either individually or cumulatively over time?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7) Will the preferred alternative likely have a significant adverse effect on ANY of the special environmental concerns? Use the Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheets to assist in this determination. This includes, but is not limited to, concerns such as cultural or historical resources, endangered and threatened species, wetlands, floodplains, coastal zones, coral reefs, essential fish habitat, wild and scenic rivers, clean air, riparian areas, natural areas, and invasive species.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8) Will the preferred alternative threaten a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements for the protection of the environment?		

Q. NEPA Compliance Finding (check one)		
The preferred alternative:		Action required
<input type="checkbox"/>	1) is not a federal action where the agency has control or responsibility.	Document in "R.1" below. No additional analysis is required
<input type="checkbox"/>	2) is a federal action ALL of which is categorically excluded from further environmental analysis AND there are no extraordinary circumstances as identified in Section "P" .	Document in "R.2" below. No additional analysis is required
<input type="checkbox"/>	3) is a federal action that has been sufficiently analyzed in an existing Agency state, regional, or national NEPA document and there are no predicted <u>significant adverse environmental effects or extraordinary circumstances</u> .	Document in "R.1" below. No additional analysis is required.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4) is a federal action that has been sufficiently analyzed in another Federal agency's NEPA document (EA or EIS) that addresses the proposed NRCS action and its' effects and has been formally adopted by NRCS . NRCS is required to prepare and publish its own Finding of No Significant Impact for an EA or Record of Decision for an EIS when adopting another agency's EA or EIS document. (Note: This box is not applicable to FSA)	Contact the State Environmental Compliance Liaison for list of NEPA documents formally adopted and available for tiering. Document in "R.1" below. No additional analysis is required
<input type="checkbox"/>	5) is a federal action that has NOT been sufficiently analyzed or may involve predicted significant adverse environmental effects or extraordinary circumstances and may require an EA or EIS.	Contact the State Environmental Compliance Liaison. Further NEPA analysis required. Explain in Notes Section.
R. Rationale Supporting the Finding		
R.1 Findings Documentation		
R.2 Applicable Categorical Exclusion(s) (more than one may apply)		
7 CFR Part 650 <i>Compliance With NEPA</i> , subpart 650.6 <i>Categorical Exclusions</i> states prior to determining that a proposed action is categorically excluded under paragraph (d) of this section, the proposed action must meet six sidebar criteria. See NECH 610.116.		
<i>I have considered the effects of the alternatives on the Resource Concerns, Economic and Social Considerations, Special Environmental Concerns, and Extraordinary Circumstances as defined by Agency regulation and policy and based on that made the finding indicated above.</i>		
S. Signature of Responsible Federal Official: <div> <div>_____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>_____</div> </div> <div> <div>Signature</div> <div>Title</div> <div>Date</div> </div>		
Additional Notes		

CLEAN AIR ACT
NECH 610.21
Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheet

Check all that apply to this Guide Sheet review: ☐ Alternative 1 ☐ Alternative 2 ☐ Other

Client/Plan Information:

NOTE: STEPS 1 and 2 help determine whether construction permitting is needed for the planned action or activity. STEP 3 helps determine whether the opportunity for emissions reduction credits exist. STEP 4 helps determine whether any other permitting, record keeping, reporting, monitoring, or testing requirements are applicable. Each of these steps should be updated with more specific language as needed, since air quality permitting and regulatory requirements are different for each state. In each step, if more information is needed or there is a question as to whether there are air quality requirements that need to be met, the planner or client should contact the appropriate air quality regulatory agency with permitting jurisdiction for the site to determine what air quality regulatory requirement must be met prior to implementing the planned action or activity.

STEP 1.

Is the action(s) expected to increase the emission rate of any regulated air pollutant?

NOTE: The definition of a “regulated air pollutant” differs depending on the air quality regulations in effect for a given site. For a federal definition of “regulated air pollutant,” please refer to the 40 CFR 70.2. Other definitions for “regulated air pollutant” found in state or local air quality regulations may be different. *States should tailor this question to the State air quality regulations and definitions since those will include any Federal requirements.*

- ☐ No **If “No,”** it is likely that no permitting or authorization is necessary to implement the proposed action or alternative. **Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used** and advise the client to contact the appropriate air quality regulatory agency with permitting jurisdiction for the site to either verify that no permitting or authorization is necessary or to determine what requirements must be met prior to implementing the planned action or activity. **Go to step 3.**
- ☐ Yes **If “Yes,” go to Step 2.**

STEP 2.

Can the action(s) be modified to eliminate or reduce the increase in emission rate of the regulated air pollutants?

NOTE: This Step is to prompt the planner to review the planned action or activity to see if there is an opportunity to either eliminate the emission rate increase (possibly remove a permitting requirement) or reduce the emission rate increase (possibly move to less stringent permitting).

- ☐ No **If “No,”** it is likely that permitting or authorization from the appropriate air quality regulatory agency will be required prior to implementing the planned action or activity. **Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used** and advise the client to contact the appropriate air quality regulatory agency with permitting jurisdiction for the site to either verify that no permitting or authorization is necessary or to determine what requirements must be met prior to implementing the proposed action or alternative. **Go to Step 3.**
- ☐ Yes **If “Yes,”** modify the proposed action or alternative and **repeat Step 1.**

CLEAN AIR ACT (continued)

STEP 3.

Is the action(s) expected to result in a decrease in the emission rate of any criteria air pollutant for which the area in which the site is located in an EPA designated nonattainment area for that criteria air pollutant?

NOTE: For an explanation of criteria air pollutants and nonattainment areas, refer to Section 610.21 of the NECH. Further information regarding nonattainment areas can also be found on the U.S. EPA nonattainment area Web page.

- ☐ No **If "No," go to Step 4.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes,"** the opportunity for obtaining nonattainment pollutant emission credits may exist. **Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used** and advise the client of that potential opportunity. If the client is interested in registering nonattainment pollutant emission credits, advise him/her to contact the appropriate air quality regulatory agency with permitting jurisdiction for the site to determine if and how credits can be documented and/or registered for potential sale. **Go to Step 4.**

STEP 4.

Is the action(s) subject to any other federal (e.g., New Source Performance Standards, National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants, etc.), State, or local air quality regulation (including odor, fugitive dust, or outdoor burning)?

NOTE: Refer to Section 610.21 of the NECH for a further discussion of air quality regulations.

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes,"** additional permits, authorizations, or controls may be needed before implementing the proposed action or alternative. **Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used** and advise the client to contact the appropriate air quality regulatory agency with permitting jurisdiction for the site to determine what requirements must be met prior to implementing the proposed action or alternative.

Notes:

**CLEAN WATER ACT/WATERS of the U.S.
NECH 610.22
Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheet**

Check all that apply to this ☐ Alternative 1
Guide Sheet review: ☐ Alternative 2 ☐ Other

Client/Plan Information:

NOTE: This guide sheet should be tailored to meet the specific needs of individual State and local regulatory and permitting requirements. It is important for each State to coordinate with their individual State and Federal regulatory agencies to tailor State-specific protocols in order to prevent significant delays in processing permit applications.

Complete both sections of this guide sheet to address Federal as well as State-administered regulatory requirements of the Clean Water Act (CWA).

SECTION I

Federally Administered Regulatory Program - Section 404 of the CWA

STEP 1.

Will the action(s) involve or likely result in the discharge or placement of dredged or fill material or other pollutants into areas that could be waters of the United States (including lakes, ponds, impoundments, rivers, streams, channels, some wetlands, and some water conveyances, including some small ditches)?
More detailed information regarding waters of the United States and Federal permitting programs under CWA is found in the NECH 610.22 and the link above.

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with Section II below.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," go to Step 2.**

STEP 2.

Is the action(s) an activity exempt from section 404 regulations (40 CFR Part 232)?

Note: the exemption should be verified with the local U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) district.

- ☐ No **If "No," go to Step 3.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used to verify the exemption applies and proceed with Section II below.**

STEP 3.

Can the action(s) be modified to avoid the discharge of dredged or fill material or other pollutants into waters of the United States?

- ☐ No **If "No," go to Step 4.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," modify the action to avoid discharge. Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with Section II below.**

CLEAN WATER ACT/WATERS of the U.S. (continued)

STEP 4.

Has the client obtained a section 404 permit (individual, regional, or nationwide) or a determination of an exemption from the appropriate Corps office?

- ☐ No **If "No,"** determine if the client has applied for a permit. If a permit has not been applied for, the client will need to do so. If a permit has been applied for, document this, and continue the planning process in consultation with the client and the regulatory agencies. The permit authorization should be reflected in the final plan and documentation. **Continue planning, but a permit is required prior to implementation. Complete Section II below.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and complete Section II below.** The final plan should not be contrary to the provisions of the permit authorization or exemption. Changes made during the planning process that may impact the applicability of the permit, such as amount or location of fills or discharges of pollutants should be coordinated with the Corps. **Complete Section II below.**

Notes:

SECTION II

State Administered Regulatory Programs, Sections 303(d) and 402 of CWA

STEP 1

Is the proposed action or alternative located in proximity to waters listed by the State as "impaired" under Section 303(d) of the CWA?

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed to Step 2.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes,"** insure consistency with any existing water quality or associated watershed action plans that have been established by the State for that stream segment. Even if TMDLs have not been established by the State for that stream segment, ensure that the action will not contribute to further degradation of that stream segment. **Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed to Step 2.**

STEP 2

Will the proposed action or alternative likely result in point-source discharges from developments, construction sites, or other areas of soil disturbance, or sewer discharges [e.g. projects involving stormwater ponds or point-source pollution, including concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) for which comprehensive nutrient management plans (CNMPs) are being developed]? *Section 402 of the CWA requires a permit for these activities through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program which the States administer.*

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," go to Step 3.**

CLEAN WATER ACT/WATERS of the U.S. (continued)

STEP 3

Has the client obtained a NPDES permit or a determination of an exemption from the appropriate EPA or State-regulatory office?

- ☐ No **If “No,”** determine if the client has applied for any necessary permits. If a permit has not been applied for, the client will need to do so. If they have applied, document this and continue the planning process in consultation with the client and the regulatory agency. Continue the planning process in consultation with the client and the regulatory agencies. The permit authorization should be reflected in the final plan and documentation. **Continue planning, but a permit is required prior to implementation.**
- ☐ Yes **If “Yes,” document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.** The final NRCS conservation plan should not be contrary to the provisions of the permit authorization or exemption. Changes made during the planning process that may impact the applicability of the permit should be coordinated with the appropriate State regulatory agency.

Notes:

COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT AREAS**NECH 610.23****Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheet**

Check all that apply to this ☐ Alternative 1
Guide Sheet review: ☐ Alternative 2 ☐ Other

Client/Plan Information:

STEP 1.

Is the action(s) in an officially designated "Coastal Zone Management Area" or have the potential to affect coastal resources?

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," go to Step 2.**

STEP 2.

Is the action(s) "consistent" with the goals and objectives of the State's Coastal Zone Management Program (as required by Section 307 of the Coastal Zone Management Act)?

- ☐ No **If "No," go to Step 3.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," document the finding, including the reasons, on the NRCS-CPA-52 and proceed with planning.**

STEP 3.

Is NRCS providing financial assistance or otherwise controlling the action?

- ☐ No **If "No," NRCS should provide the landowner with relevant information regarding any local and State compliance requirements and protocols (permitting, etc.) in special management areas as appropriate to comply with local Coastal Zone Management Programs. Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," the NRCS District Conservationist or an NRCS State Office employee must contact the State's Coastal Zone Program Office before the action is implemented to discuss possible modifications to the proposed action. NRCS may not provide assistance if the proposed action or alternative would result in a violation of a State's Coastal Zone Management Plan. NRCS shall provide a consistency determination to the State agency no later than 90 days before final approval of the activity. When concurrence is received from the State, document the agreed to items and reference or attach them to the NRCS-CPA-52.**

Notes:

CORAL REEFS NECH 610.24 Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheet	Client/Plan Information:
Check all that apply to this Guide Sheet review: <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Other	

STEP 1.

Are coral reefs or associated water bodies (e.g. embayment areas) present in or near the planning area?

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," go to Step 2.**

STEP 2.

Is there a potential for the action(s) to degrade the conditions of the coral reef ecosystem? (Refer to U.S. coral Reef Task Force Web site for local action strategies in your area.)

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," go to Step 3.**

STEP 3.

Can the action(s) be modified to reduce or avoid degradation to the coral reef ecosystem?

- ☐ No **If "No," identify the component(s) of the system which will cause the potential impacts. Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used. Go to Step 4.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," modify the action or alternative and repeat Step 2.**

STEP 4.

Is NRCS providing financial assistance or otherwise controlling the action(s)?

- ☐ No **If "No," and degradation of the reefs is unavoidable, provide the client with information regarding the current status of U.S. coral reefs and the documented causes of degradation (including sedimentation and nutrient runoff), and the beneficial aspects of maintaining coral reefs.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," the significance of the impacts must be determined. An Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) may be required. Contact your State Office for assistance.**

Need for

Notes:

CULTURAL RESOURCES / HISTORIC PROPERTIES
NECH 610.25
Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheet

Client/Plan Information:

Check all that apply to this Guide Sheet review: ☐ Alternative 1 ☐ Alternative 2 ☐ Other

NOTE: This guidesheet provides general guidance to field planners and managers. States may need to tailor this Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheet to reflect State Level Agreements (SLAs) with SHPOs or Tribal consultation protocols or operating procedures pertinent to your State or other State-specific protocols that reflect the terms of the current National Programmatic Agreement among NRCS, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Conference of SHPOs. For additional information regarding compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA and NRCS cultural resource policy refer to Title 420, General Manual (GM), Part 401, Cultural Resources; for current operating procedures see Title 190, National Cultural Resource Procedures Handbook (NCRPH), Part 601.

NOTE regarding consultations: When dealing with undertakings with the potential to affect cultural resources or historic properties, it is important to follow NRCS policy and the regulations that implement Section 106 and complete consultation with mandatory (SHPOs, THPOs, federally recognized Tribes, and native Hawaiians) and identified consulting parties during the course of planning. This consultation is not documented on this guide sheet but would occur with Steps 2, 3, 4, and 6 and these must be conducted in accordance with NRCS State Office operating procedures to ensure appropriate oversight by Cultural Resources Specialists who meet the Secretary of Interior's Qualification Standards.

STEP 1.

Is the action(s) funded in whole or part or under the control of NRCS? **To make this determination, answer the following:**

Is technical assistance carried out by or on behalf of NRCS? ☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ Unknown
 Is it carried out with NRCS financial assistance? ☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ Unknown
 Does it require Federal approval with NRCS as the lead federal agency (permit, license, approval, etc.)? ☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ Unknown
 Is it a joint project with another Federal, State, or local entity with NRCS functioning as lead federal agency? ☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ Unknown

- **If all of your responses are "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- **If any responses are "Yes," go to Step 2.**
- **If "Unknown," consult with your State Cultural Resources Coordinator or Specialist (CRC or CRS) to determine if this is an action/undertaking that requires review and then complete Step 1.**

STEP 2.

Is the action(s) identified as an "undertaking" (as defined in the 190-NCRPH and 420-GM) with the potential to cause effects to cultural resources/historic properties?

☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
☐ Yes **If "Yes," go to Step 3.**

STEP 3.

Has the undertaking's Area of Potential Effect (APE) been determined? **NOTE:** Include all areas to be altered or affected, directly or indirectly: access and haul roads, equipment lots, borrow areas, surface grading areas, locations for disposition of sediment, streambank stabilization areas, building removal and relocation sites, disposition of removed concrete, as well as the area of the actual conservation practice. Consultation is essential during determination of the APE so that all historic properties (buildings, structures, sites, landscapes, objects, and properties of cultural or religious importance to American Indian tribal governments and native Hawaiians) are included.

☐ No **If "No," or "Unknown," consult with your state specific protocols or the CRC or CRS to determine the APE.**
☐ Unknown
☐ Yes **If "Yes," go to Step 4.**

CULTURAL RESOURCES (continued)

STEP 4.

Have the appropriate records (National, State and local registers and lists) been checked or interviews conducted to determine whether any known cultural or historic resources are within or in close proximity to the proposed APE or project area? **Note:** This record checking does not substitute for mandatory consultation with SHPO, THPO, Tribes, and other identified consulting parties.

National Register of Historic Places?	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
State Register of Historic Places?	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
The SHPO's statewide inventory or data base?	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
Local/county historical society or commission lists?	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
Client knowledge of existing artifacts, historic structures, or cultural features?	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown

- **If any responses are "No" or "Unknown," work with your CRC or CRS** to be sure these files are checked (sometimes the SHPO will let only the CRS or CRC review the files). Follow all other operating procedures as required by NRCS policy and procedures, SLA, and Tribal consultation protocols or operating procedures, as appropriate.
- **If all responses are "Yes," and NRCS providing technical assistance only,** then use any known information, notify the landowner of any potential affects, and provide recommendations for consideration. **Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.** If NRCS is providing more than technical assistance **go to Step 5.**

STEP 5.

Did Step 4 reveal the existence of any known or potential cultural resources in the APE, or were any cultural resource indicators observed during the field inspection of the APE? **NOTE:** Field inspections or cultural resource survey will need to be conducted by qualified personnel in your state. Check with your State Cultural Resources Specialist to determine qualification criteria.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | If "Yes," contact the CRC or CRS. Do NOT proceed with finalizing project design or project implementation until the final CRS response is received. Go to Step 6. |

STEP 6.

Can the proposed actions or alternatives be modified to avoid effects on the known cultural resources?

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | If "No," go to Step 7. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | If "Yes," modify the planned actions or activities and proceed according to CRS guidance and document this on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below and continue with planning. |

STEP 7.

Has consultation with appropriate and interested parties been completed and documented? **NOTE:** The field planner completing the NRCS-CPA-52 generally does not do the consultation unless it is the CRS or CRC. Refer to the appropriate specialist for the documentation information.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | If "No" refer to State CRC or CRS for further consultation and recommendations to the State Conservationist. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | If "Yes," and all necessary historic preservation activities of identification, evaluation, and treatment have been completed, document any consultation and proceed with planning. |

Notes:

ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES
NECH 610.26
Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheet

Client/Plan Information:

Check all that apply to this Guide Sheet review: ☐ Alternative 1 ☐ Alternative 2 ☐ Other

STEP 1.

Are protected species and their habitat or designated Critical Habitat present in the area of potential effect?

Note: protected species include federally listed, proposed, and candidate species, as well as State and Tribal species protected by law or regulation. In addition, if a species' listing or status changes before implementation, you must complete this review again.

☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**

☐ Yes **If "Yes," document the species or area of designated Critical Habitat, and relevant benchmark data on NRCS-CPA-52, then proceed to the applicable section(s) listed below:**

- Section 1- Federally listed endangered or threatened species/habitats
- Section 2- Federally proposed species/habitats
- Section 3- Federal candidate species/habitats
- Section 4- State/Tribal species/habitats

SECTION 1: Federally listed endangered or threatened species/habitats

STEP 1.

What is the effect (i.e. beneficial/adverse, short-term/long-term, etc.) of the action(s) on endangered or threatened species or their habitat?

☐ No effect **If "No effect," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**

☐ May affect **If "May affect," meaning that the action might affect endangered and threatened species or their habitat in some way, or may have an adverse effect to designated Critical Habitat, go to Step 2.**

Federally listed endangered or threatened species/habitats (continued)

STEP 2.

Is NRCS providing financial assistance or otherwise controlling the action(s)?

- ☐ **No** If "No," and the effects are purely benign or beneficial, continue with planning but ensure the client is aware endangered and threatened species or Critical Habitat exists and conservation practices must be applied in a manner that avoids adverse effects. **Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ **No** If "No," and there is a possibility of short-term or long-term adverse effects then inform the client of NRCS's policy concerning endangered and threatened species and the need to use alternative conservation treatments to avoid adverse effects on these species or their habitat. Further, NRCS assistance will be provided only if one of the conservation alternatives is selected that avoids adverse effects or the client obtains a "take" permit from the FWS/NMFS. Refer the client to FWS/NMFS to address the client's responsibilities under Sections 9 & 10 of the ESA, for Federally listed species. **Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used. If assistance is continued, document how the alternative conservation treatments avoid adverse effects and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ **Yes** If "Yes," and the action will be implemented according to an existing informal consultation, biological opinion, or 4(d) special rule, document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.
- ☐ **Yes** If "Yes," and the action cannot be modified to avoid the effect, inform client that in order to proceed with the action NRCS must consult with FWS/NMFS. Contact your area or State biologist for consultation procedures. The action can only be implemented according to the terms of the consultation. **When consultation is complete, attach the consultation documents to NRCS-CPA-52 or reference them in the notes section below and proceed with planning.**

Notes for Federally listed endangered or threatened species/habitats:

SECTION 2: Federally proposed species/habitats

STEP 1.

What is the effect (i.e. beneficial/adverse, short-term/long-term, etc.) of the action(s) on proposed species or their habitat?

☐ No effect

If "No effect," additional evaluation is not needed concerning proposed species or proposed critical habitat. Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.

☐ May effect

If "May affect," meaning that the action might affect endangered and threatened species or proposed critical habitat in any way, **go to Step 2.**

STEP 2.

Is NRCS providing financial assistance or otherwise controlling the action?

☐ No

If "No," and the effects are purely benign or beneficial, continue with planning but ensure the client is aware proposed species or their habitat exists and conservation practices must be applied in a manner as to avoid adverse effects. **Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**

☐ No

If "No," and there is a possibility of short-term or long-term adverse effects then inform the client of NRCS's policy concerning proposed species and the need to use alternative conservation treatments to avoid adverse effects on these species or their habitat. Further, NRCS assistance will be provided only if one of the conservation alternatives is selected that avoids adverse effects, and to the extent practicable, provide long-term benefits to species and habitat. Should the client or landowner refuse to apply the recommended alternative conservation treatment, NRCS will inform the client and landowner of the NRCS policy and shall not provide assistance for the action or portion of the action affecting the proposed species.

☐ Yes

If "Yes," and the action will be implemented according to an existing conference report or conference opinion. Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.

☐ Yes

If "Yes," and the action cannot be modified to avoid the effect, inform client that the NRCS must conference with FWS/NMFS. Contact your area or State biologist for conference procedures. Further NRCS assistance can only be provided only if the client agrees to implement the conference recommendations to the extent practicable. **When the conference is complete, attach the conference documents to NRCS-CPA-52, or reference them in the notes section below, and proceed with planning.**

Notes for Federally proposed species/habitats:

SECTION 3: Federal candidate species/habitats

STEP 1.

What is the effect (i.e. beneficial/adverse, short-term/long-term, etc.) of the action(s) on candidate species or their habitat?

- ☐ No adverse effect If **"No adverse effect,"** additional evaluation is not needed concerning proposed species. **Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ May adversely effect If **"May adversely affect,"** recommend alternative treatments that avoid or minimize the adverse effects and, to the extent practicable, provide long-term benefit to the species. **Document the effects of the selected alternative on the NRCS-CPA-52 and proceed with planning.**

Notes for Federally proposed species/habitats:

SECTION 4: State/Tribal species/habitats

STEP 1.

What is the effect (i.e. beneficial/adverse, short-term/long-term, etc.) of the proposed action or alternative on State/Tribal species or their habitat?

- ☐ No adverse effect If **"No adverse effect,"** additional evaluation is not needed concerning State or Tribal species of concern. **Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ May adversely affect If **"May adversely affect,"** go to Step 2.

STEP 2.

Is NRCS providing financial assistance or otherwise controlling the action?

- ☐ No If **"No,"** and there is a possibility of short-term or long-term adverse effects then inform the client of NRCS's policy concerning State and Tribal species and the need to use alternative conservation treatments to avoid or minimize adverse effects on these species or their habitat. Further, NRCS assistance will be provided only if one of the conservation alternatives is selected that avoids or minimizes adverse effects to the extent practicable. **Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used.** If assistance is continued, document how the alternative conservation treatments avoid or minimize those adverse effects and proceed with planning.
- ☐ Yes If **"Yes,"** and the action cannot be modified to avoid the adverse effect, inform client that the NRCS must coordinate with State/Tribal government and receive concurrence on recommended alternatives. Contact your area or State biologist for coordination procedures. Further NRCS assistance will be provided only if the client agrees to implement a concurred upon alternative and obtains any required permits. **Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**

Notes for State/Tribal species/habitats:

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT NECH 610.28 Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheet	Client/Plan Information:

Check all that apply to this Guide Sheet review:	<input type="checkbox"/> Alternative 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Other
---	--

STEP 1.

Is the action(s) in an area designated as Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) or in an area where effects could indirectly or cumulatively affect EFH?

NOTE: Additional information regarding EFH Descriptions and Identification can be found on NMFS's website.

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," go to Step 2.**

STEP 2.

Will the action(s) result in short-term or long-term disruptions or alterations that may result in an "adverse effect" to EFH? [16 U.S.C. 1855(b)(2); Magnuson Stevens Act (MSA) Section 305(b)(2)]

- ☐ No If "No," consultation with NMFS and further evaluation is not needed concerning EFH unless otherwise specified by the State Biologist. **Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," go to Step 3.**

STEP 3.

Can the action(s) be modified to avoid the potential adverse effect?

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used. Go to Step 4.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," modify the action or activity and repeat Step 2.**

STEP 4.

Is NRCS providing assistance that would result in the funding, authorization, or undertaking of the action(s)? [MSA Section 305(b)]

- ☐ No **If "No," an alternative conservation system that avoids the adverse effect must be identified as the proposed action or NRCS must discontinue assistance.** If assistance is terminated, indicate the circumstances in the Remarks section of the NRCS-CPA-52 or
- Need for contact the NRCS State Office for assistance. (Title 190, General Manual, Part 410, Subpart A, Section 410.3)
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," inform the client that the NRCS District Conservationist or NRCS State Biologist must consult with NMFS before further action or activity can proceed [MSA, Section 305(b)(2)].**
- Note:** For specific information regarding consultation for EFH, see NMFS "Essential Fish Habitat Consultation Guidance," April 2004, available online.

Notes:

FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT NECH 610.29 Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheet	Client/Plan Information:
Check all that apply to this Guide Sheet review: <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Other	

NOTE: This Guide Sheet is intended for evaluation of "non-project" technical and financial assistance only (individual projects). For "project" assistance criteria (those assisting local sponsoring organizations), consult Title 190, General Manual, Part 410, Subpart B, Section 410.25.

STEP 1.

Is the project area in or near a 100-year floodplain?

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and go to Step 4.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," go to Step 2.**
- ☐ Unknown **If "Unknown," review the HUD/FEMA flood insurance maps and other available data such as soils information relating to flood frequency. If still "Unknown", contact the appropriate field or hydraulic engineer. Repeat Step 1.**

STEP 2.

Is the planning area in the floodplain an agricultural area that has been used to produce food, fiber, feed, forage or oilseed for at least 3 of the last 5 years before the request for assistance?

- ☐ No **If "No," go to Step 4.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," document the agricultural use history and go to Step 3.**

STEP 3.

Is the floodplain's agricultural production in accordance with official state or designated area water quality plans?

- ☐ No **If "No," advise the client of conservation practices or other measures that will bring the land into accordance with water quality plans and incorporate these into the conservation plan. Go to Step 4.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and go to Step 4.**

STEP 4.

Over the short or long term, will the proposed action or alternative likely result in an increased flood hazard, incompatible development, or other adverse effect to the existing natural and beneficial values of the floodplain or lands adjacent or downstream?

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," modify the action if possible to avoid adverse effects. Inform landuser of the hazards of locating actions in the floodplain and discuss alternative methods of achieving the objective and/or alternative locations outside the 100-year floodplain. If the action can be modified, describe the modification on the NRCS-CPA-52 and repeat 4. If the action cannot be modified to eliminate adverse effects, go to Step 5.**

FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT (continued)

STEP 5.

Is one or more of the alternative methods or locations practical?

- ☐ No **If "No,"** the District Conservationist will carefully evaluate and document the potential extent of the adverse effects and any increased flood risk before making a determination of whether to continue providing assistance. **Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and go to Step 6.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," and the client agrees** to implement the alternative methods or locations outside the floodplain, **document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," and the client DOES NOT AGREE** to implement the alternative methods or locations, advise the client that NRCS may not continue to provide technical and/or financial assistance where there are practicable alternatives. **Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and go to Step 6.**

STEP 6.

Will assistance continue to be provided?

- ☐ No **If "No,"** provide written notification of the decision to terminate assistance to the client and the local conservation district, if one exists. **Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes,"** the district conservationist should **design or modify the proposed action or alternative to minimize the adverse effects to the extent possible. Circulate a written public notice** locally explaining why the action is proposed to be located in the 100-year floodplain. **Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**

Notes:

INVASIVE SPECIES NECH 610.30 Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheet	Client/Plan Information:
Check all that apply to this Guide Sheet review: <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Other	

NOTE: Executive Order 13112 states that “a Federal agency shall not authorize, fund, or carry out actions that it believes are likely to cause or promote the introduction and spread of invasive species in the U.S. or elsewhere.” Remember that invasive species can include plants, fish, animals, insects, etc.

STEP 1.

Is the action(s) in an area where invasive species are known to occur or where risk of an invasion exists?

NOTE: Executive Order 13112 (1999) directs Federal agencies to "prevent the introduction of invasive species, provide for their control, and to minimize the economic, ecological, and human health impacts that invasive species cause."

☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**

☐ Yes **If "Yes," go to Step 2.**

STEP 2.

Conduct an inventory of the invasive species and identify areas at risk for future invasions (Title 190, General Manual, Part 414, Subpart D, Section 414.30). Delineate these areas on the conservation plan map and document management considerations in the plan or assistance notes. Have all appropriate tools, techniques, management strategies, and risks for invasive species prevention, control, and management been considered in the planning process?

☐ No **If "No," you must consider and include all appropriate factors relating to the existing and potential invasive species for the planning area and repeat Step 2.**

☐ Yes **If "Yes," describe strategies, techniques, and reasons on NRCS-CPA-52 and go to Step 3.**

STEP 3.

Is the action(s) consistent with the Executive Order 13112, the national invasive species management plan, and any applicable State or local invasive species management plan?

☐ No **If "No," modify the action and repeat Step 3. If the client is unwilling to modify the proposed action, NRCS must discontinue assistance. Document the circumstances on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, and in the case file.**

☐ Yes **If "Yes," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, Need for rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**

Notes:

**MIGRATORY BIRDS, BALD AND GOLDEN
EAGLE PROTECTION ACT, NECH 610.31
Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheet**

Check all that apply to this ☐ Alternative 1
Guide Sheet review: ☐ Alternative 2 ☐ Other

Client/Plan Information:

NOTE: This guide sheet includes evaluation guidance for compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Executive Order 13186 (2001), and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Both sections must be completed if eagles are identified within the area of potential effect.

SECTION I: MIGRATORY BIRD TREATY ACT & E.O 13186

In the lower 48 states, all wild birds except introduced species (House Sparrow, Rock Pigeon, European Starling, Eurasian Collared-dove) and resident game birds managed by State Wildlife Agencies are protected under the MBTA.

STEP 1.

Could the action(s) result in a take (intentionally or unintentionally) to any migratory bird, occupied nest or egg? The term **"take"** means to pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or attempt to pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect (50 CFR Section 10.12).

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning. Go to Section II.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," go to Step 2.**

STEP 2.

Have adverse effects on migratory birds been mitigated (avoided, reduced, or minimized) to the maximum practicable extent?

- ☐ No **If "No," modify the action and repeat Step 1.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," document mitigation measures on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, and in the plan. Go to Step 3.**

STEP 3.

Is it the purpose of the action(s) to intentionally "take" a migratory bird or any part, nest or egg (such as, but not limited to: controlling depredation by a migratory bird, or removal of occupied nests of nuisance migratory birds)?

NOTE: Migratory game birds taken under state and Federal hunting regulations are exempt.

- ☐ No **If "No," go to Step 4.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," document the effects, including the reasons, on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below. Inform the client that they must obtain all required permits before the action is implemented.**

MIGRATORY BIRDS TREATY ACT / BALD AND GOLDEN EAGLE PROTECTION ACT (continued)

STEP 4.

Will unintentional take of migratory birds result in a **measurable** negative effect on a migratory bird species' **population**?

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and go to Section II.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," additional principles, standards and practices shall be developed in coordination with USFWS to further lessen the amount of unintentional take (E.O. 13186(3)(e)(9)). Repeat Step 1. Document the effects, including the reasons, on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below.**

Notes:

SECTION II: BALD & GOLDEN EAGLE PROTECTION ACT

STEP 1.

Will the action(s) result in the take, possession, sale, purchase, barter, or offer to sell, purchase, or barter, export or import "of any bald or golden eagle, alive or dead, including any part, nest, or egg, unless allowed by permit"? (The term "**take**" is defined as "pursue, shoot, shoot at, poison, wound, kill, capture, trap, collect, molest or disturb" a bald or golden eagle. The term "disturb" under this act means to agitate or bother a bald or golden eagle to a degree that causes, or is likely to cause, based on the best scientific information available, injury to an eagle; a decrease in its productivity by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior; or nest abandonment by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior.)

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," go to Step 2.**

STEP 2.

Can the action(s) be modified to avoid the adverse effect? Refer to the National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines for measures that can be taken to avoid disturbing nesting bald eagles and their young.

- ☐ No **If "No," document the finding, including the reasons, on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below. Contact the NRCS State Biologist or appropriate NRCS official about working with the client and USFWS to permit the action or finding another alternative action to avoid adverse effects prior to providing final designs or implementing the proposed action or alternative. No permit authorizes the sale, purchase, barter, trade, importation, or exportation of eagles, or their parts or feathers. The regulations governing eagle permits can be found in 50 CFR Part 22.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," modify the alternative and repeat Step 1. If the client is unwilling to modify the action then NRCS may need to discontinue assistance. Contact the NRCS State environmental specialist or wildlife biologist for assistance. Document the effects, including the reasons, on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below.**

Notes:

NATURAL AREAS NECH 610.32 Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheet	Client/Plan Information:
Check all that apply to this Guide Sheet review: Alternative 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	

Natural Areas are defined as land and water units where natural conditions are maintained. They may be areas designated on Federal government, non-federal government, or on private land. Designation may be provided under Federal regulations, by foundations or conservation organizations, or by private landowners that specify it as such (GM 190. Part 410.23).

STEP 1.

Are there any designated natural areas present in or near the planning area?

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," go to Step 2.**

STEP 2.

Will the action(s) affect the natural area?

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," go to Step 3.**

STEP 3.

Are the effects consistent with maintaining, protecting, and preserving the integrity of the natural characteristics?

- ☐ No **If "No," Inform the client about the effects of the proposed action or alternatives on the identified natural areas. You must also encourage the client to consult with concerned parties to arrive at a mutually satisfactory alternative [GM 190, Part 410.23(c)4]. Document the effects of the action and any communications with the client on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**

Notes:

PRIME AND UNIQUE FARMLANDS
NECH 610.33
Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheet

Check all that apply to this Guide Sheet review: ☐ Alternative 1 ☐ Alternative 2 ☐ Other

Client/Plan Information:

STEP 1.

Using the criteria found in the FPPA Rule (7 CFR Part 658.5), does the action(s) convert farmland to a nonagricultural use? **NOTE:** Conversion does not include construction of on-farm structures necessary for farm operations. Also, form AD-1006 entitled "Farmland Conversion Impact Rating" and form NRCS-CPA-106 entitled "Farmland Conversion Impact Rating for Corridor Type Projects" are used to document effects of proposed projects that may convert farmland. If you are uncertain about the effects on prime and unique farmlands in your planning area, consult the State Soil Scientist.

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," go to Step 2.**

STEP 2.

Are prime or unique farmlands or farmlands of statewide or local importance present in or near the area that will be affected by the action(s)?

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," go to Step 3.**

STEP 3.

Can the action(s) be modified to avoid adverse effects or conversion?

- ☐ No **If "No," document the adverse effects on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," modify and repeat Step 1 or contact the State Soil Scientist for further assistance. Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**

Notes:

RIPARIAN AREA NECH 610.34 Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheet	Client/Plan Information:
Check all that apply to this Guide Sheet review: <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Other	

STEP 1.

Is a riparian area present in or near the planning area? (Definition can be found in Title 190, General Manual, Part 411.)

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," go to Step 2.**

STEP 2.

Do the action(s) address maintenance or improvement of water quality, water quantity, and fish and wildlife benefits provided by the riparian area?

- ☐ No **If "No," revise the plan to maintain or improve water quality, water quantity, and fish and wildlife benefits. Document the benchmark conditions and effects on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, go to Step 3.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," go to Step 3.**

STEP 3.

Do the action(s) conflict with the conservation values/functions of the riparian area?

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," inform the client of the values and functions of riparian areas, including their contribution to floodplain function, stream bank stability and integrity, nutrient cycling, pollutant filtering, sediment retention, and biological diversity, and present alternatives that will resolve the conflict. Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**

Notes:

SCENIC BEAUTY**NECH 610.35****Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheet**

Check all that apply to this Alternative 1 ☐
Guide Sheet review: Alternative 2 ☐ Other ☐

Client/Plan Information:

STEP 1.

Will the action(s) adversely affect the scenic quality of the general landscape or any specifically designated unique or valuable scenic landscape? (Consult Section II of the FOTG for a listing of any identified areas of scenic beauty.)

☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**

☐ Yes **If "Yes," go to Step 2.**

STEP 2.

Can the action(s) be modified to avoid the adverse effects on the scenic quality of the landscape? NOTE: NRCS must provide technical assistance with full consideration of alternative management and development systems that preserve scenic beauty or improve the landscape (GM 190, Part 410.24).

☐ No **If "No," consider any state or local requirements. Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**

☐ Yes **If "Yes," modify the planned action or activity and repeat Step 1.**

Notes:

WETLANDS NECH 610.36 Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheet	Client/Plan Information:

Check all that apply to this Guide Sheet review: <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Other

This guide sheet addresses policy found in Title 190, General Manual, Part 410, Subpart B, Section 410.26. Use the Clean Water Act Guide Sheet for addressing wetland concerns relating to the Clean Water Act.

STEP 1.

Are wetlands present in or near the planning area?

NOTE: Wetlands are areas that are inundated by surface or ground water with a frequency sufficient to support and, under normal circumstances, do or would support prevalence of vegetative or aquatic life that requires saturated or seasonally saturated soil conditions for growth and reproduction, except for irrigation or leakage-induced wetlands created in uplands.

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used.** (If the area could qualify as an "other water of the United States" such as lakes, streams, channels, or other impoundment or conveyances, a Clean Water Act Section 404 permit may be required from the Corps of Engineers. Refer to the Clean Water Act Guide sheet.)
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," document the extent and location of wetlands and go to Step 2.**

STEP 2.

Will the action(s) impact any wetland areas (this includes changing wetland types when considering wetland restoration projects)?

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," assess the wetland functions and describe (on the NRCS-CPA-52) the effects of the proposed activity on the wetland area. If effects are solely beneficial, continue with planning. If adverse effects exist, go to Step 3.**

STEP 3.

Do practicable alternatives exist that avoid adverse impact to wetlands?

- ☐ No **If "No," go to step 4.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," advise the client of the available alternatives. If the client chooses to implement the alternative that avoids adverse impact (including obtaining all necessary permits), document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.** Otherwise, NRCS shall terminate all assistance for the project.

WETLANDS (continued)

STEP 4.

Do other measures exist that will minimize adverse effects to wetlands?

- ☐ No **If "No," go to step 5.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes,"** advise the client of the minimization measures. If the client chooses to implement the minimization measures (including obtaining all necessary permits), **document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.** Otherwise, NRCS shall terminate all assistance for the project.

STEP 5.

Does the client wish to pursue an action that will result in adverse impacts to wetlands (where no practicable alternatives or minimization measures exist)?

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes,"** advise that client of the need to compensate for the lost wetland acres and functions. NRCS may assist the client in the development of a mitigation plan. If the client chooses to implement the compensation measures (including obtaining all necessary permits), **document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.** Otherwise, NRCS shall terminate all assistance for the project.

NOTE: Compensation is not required for irrigation or leakage-induced wetlands where no natural wetlands existed before the irrigation or waste management activity, though such areas may be regulated by other Federal agencies or State, Tribal, or local agencies.

Notes:

WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS NECH 610.37 Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheet	Client/Plan Information:

Check all that apply to this Guide Sheet review: <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Other

STEP 1.

Could the action(s) have an effect on the natural, cultural or recreational values of any nearby rivers?

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," analyze the potential effects and develop alternatives, as necessary, that would mitigate potential adverse effects, then go to Step 2.**

STEP 2.

Is there a Federal or State designated Wild, Scenic, or Recreational River segment or a river listed in the Nationwide Rivers Inventory (NRI) in or near the planning area?

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," and there is still potential for effect consult your State environmental liaison to assist with determining the nature and significance of the effect. Go to Step 3.**
NOTE: The State Office may request the administering federal or state agency (National Park Service in the case of NRI) to assist you in developing appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures.

STEP 3.

Could the proposed action or alternative have an adverse effect on the natural, cultural or recreational values of the wild, scenic, or recreational river segment that cannot be avoided or minimized?

- ☐ No **If "No," document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," go to Step 4.**

STEP 4.

Is NRCS providing financial assistance or otherwise controlling the action(s)?

- ☐ No **If "No," inform the client that a permit may be required** for their activities and they should consult with the administering federal or state agency. The permit authorization should be reflected in the final plan and documentation. Continue planning, but a permit is required prior Need for to implementation.
- ☐ Yes **If "Yes," consult with the administering federal or state agency** to determine whether the proposed action could foreclose options to classify any portion of the river segment as wild, scenic or recreational and to develop avoidance or mitigation measures. **Document on the NRCS-CPA-52, or notes section below, the finding, rationale, and information sources used and proceed with planning.**

Notes:

RESOURCE CONCERN CHECKLIST Field Inventory Guide Sheet (Optional)		Client/Plan Information:
Identify the resource concern(s) that need to be addressed and the assessment tool(s) used for the evaluation.		
SOIL	<input type="checkbox"/> Sheet & Rill <input type="checkbox"/> Wind Erosion <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Ephemeral gully erosion <input type="checkbox"/> Classic gully erosion <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Bank erosion from streams, shorelines or water conveyance channels <input type="checkbox"/> Subsidence <input type="checkbox"/> Organic matter depletion <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Compaction <input type="checkbox"/> Concentration of salts or other chemicals <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Soil organism habitat loss or degradation <input type="checkbox"/> Aggregate instability	
	Assessment tools, Problems & Notes:	
WATER	<input type="checkbox"/> Ponding and flooding <input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal High water table <input type="checkbox"/> Seeps <input type="checkbox"/> Drifted snow <input type="checkbox"/> Surface water depletion <input type="checkbox"/> Ground water depletion <input type="checkbox"/> Naturally available moisture use <input type="checkbox"/> Inefficient irrigation water use <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Nutrients transported to surface water <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrients transported to groundwater <input type="checkbox"/> Pesticides transported to surface water <input type="checkbox"/> Pesticides transported to groundwater <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens and chemicals from manure, bio-solids or compost applications transported to surface water <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens and chemicals from manure, bio-solids or compost applications transported to groundwater <input type="checkbox"/> Salts transported to surface water <input type="checkbox"/> Salts transported to groundwater <input type="checkbox"/> Petroleum, heavy metals, and other pollutants transported to surface water <input type="checkbox"/> Petroleum, heavy metals, and other pollutants transported to groundwater <input type="checkbox"/> Sediment transported to surface water <input type="checkbox"/> Elevated water temperature <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
	Assessment tools, Problems & Notes:	
AIR	<input type="checkbox"/> Emissions of particulate matter (PM) and PM precursors <input type="checkbox"/> Emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Emissions of ozone precursors <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Objectionable odors <input type="checkbox"/> Emissions of airborne reactive nitrogen	
	Assessment tools, Problems & Notes:	
PLANTS	<input type="checkbox"/> Plant productivity and health <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire hazard from biomass accumulation <input type="checkbox"/> Plant structure and composition <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Plant pest pressure <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
	Assessment tools, Problems & Notes:	
ANIMALS	<input type="checkbox"/> Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates <input type="checkbox"/> Aquatic habitat for fish and other organisms <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Feed and forage imbalance <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate livestock shelter <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate livestock water quantity, quality and distribution <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
	Assessment tools, Problems & Notes:	
ENERGY	<input type="checkbox"/> Energy efficiency of equipment and facilities <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Energy efficiency of farming/ranching practices and field operations	
	Assessment tools, Problems & Notes:	

Field Inventory Guide Sheet - Notes Section