



August 18, 2016

WISCONSIN INSTRUCTION NO. 180-500

SUBJECT. FY17 Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) Requirements

Purpose. To provide:

1. Explanation of Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs)
2. Identify which Land use(s) and Resource Concern(s) are applicable to each CAP (Wisconsin Planning Criteria Assessment Tools - CAP Worksheet)
3. List of FY-2017 EQIP CAPs

Expiration Date: Until Replaced

History: Replaces 180-500 version, June 21, 2016

Wisconsin NRCS will continue to emphasize the importance of conservation planning to identify resource concerns by land use. Conservation planning may be done by agency/partner staff, Technical Service Providers (TSPs) not in TechReg, and TechReg TSPs following appropriate planning policy and criteria.

This document provides instructions regarding conservation planning through Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs) using TechReg TSPs. Section III of the e-FOTG - Wisconsin Planning Criteria Assessment Tools now contains a **revised** CAP worksheet (tab) to help District Conservationists (DCs) decide which CAP may be appropriate for contracting.

Once NRCS receives an application for a CAP, NRCS staff and partnering organizations will need to cease any technical assistance or conservation planning for which a client may hire a TSP. Information previously developed by NRCS, or partners, staff may be made available to a TSP by the applicant.

Prior to contracting CAPs, a CPA-52 and a Conservation Plan must be completed. The CPA-52 must list an eligible resource concern representing a potential risk, and which has not been addressed in previous conservation planning efforts (i.e. NRCS cannot pay for conservation planning that has already taken place). An NRCS employee must complete the CPA-52, but only a DC can approve, as the Responsible Federal Official (RFO), certifying proper completion and documentation of the planning process. A Conservation Plan and supporting documents, (e.g. conservation plan map, CAP criteria, etc.) will then need to be generated to support an Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contract.

Wisconsin EQIP CAPs that may be contracted include:

- 102 Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan
- 104 Nutrient Management Plan
- 106 Forest Management Plan
- 108 Feed Management Plan
- 110 Grazing Management Plan
- 112 Prescribed Burning Management Plan (STC has applied for a waiver to not offer CAP-112 in WI)
- 114 Integrated Pest Management Plan

- 118 Irrigation Water Management Plan
- 128 Ag Energy Management Plan
- 130 Drainage Water Management Plan
- 138 Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition
- 142 Fish and Wildlife Habitat Plan
- 146 Pollinator Habitat Enhancement Plan
- 154 IPM Herbicide Resistant Weed Conservation Plan

Once a CAP is contracted, a landowner-hired TSP will follow step-1 through step-7 of NRCS's conservation planning process contained in the National Planning Procedures Handbook. Steps 1 and 2 of the planning process will identify landowner objectives and potential resource concerns. During steps 3 and 4 of the planning process, TSPs will conduct field inventories using approved inventory methods identified in Section III of Wisconsin's e-FOTG. Benchmark conditions will be recorded in Sections F and G of the CPA-52, and compared to planning criteria for determining whether or not a resource concern exists. TSP's will identify conservation practices needed to address documented resource concerns in Section H of the CPA-52. Planned practices must meet NRCS practice standards and specifications found in Section IV of the e-FOTG. Effects of planned practices must be recorded by the TSP in Sections I and J of the CPA-52. Once completed, the TSP should Sign Section P above the NRCS signature block.

In addition to documenting the planning process on the CPA-52; TSPs must follow, and produce any required documentation outlined in CAP criteria. CAP criteria can be found in Section III of the e-FOTG. Please be reminded, only TSP's who are currently certified on TechReg are eligible to support a client through a CAP.

To accept a CAP as complete, there are two levels of acceptance required:

1. A completed CPA-52 with supporting documentation - only a DC, as RFO, can certify the CPA-52 complete and accurately documents the planning process. If all information is not included or complete, the RFO must return the CPA-52 to the landowner for TSP completion. When a complete CPA-52 is submitted, the RFO will certify in Section S of the CPA-52.
2. Documentation outlined in the CAP criteria – only an NRCS employee(s) with the appropriate credential(s) [see Section III of the e-FOTG - Wisconsin Planning Criteria Assessment Tools CAP worksheet (tab)] can certify information required in CAP criteria has been accurately submitted. If all material is not included or complete in the submittal, the reviewer must return the CAP to the landowner for TSP completion. When CAP criteria and supporting material has been satisfied it will be accepted by signing and dating the CAP cover page.

Planning Questions should be directed to John Ramsden (Engineering) Judy Derricks (Resources) or Tom Krapf (Programs)



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