



DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITY

Fish and Wildlife Habitat

DEFINITION

Plan, design and document the conservation practices needed to address a fish or wildlife habitat resource concern.

A fish and wildlife habitat Design and implementation Activity (DIA) is a site-specific plan developed for a client who wishes to plan and implement decisions with consideration for fish and wildlife habitat.

A Fish and Wildlife Habitat DIA:

- Meets Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) quality criteria for fish and wildlife habitat;
- Complies with federal, state, tribal and local laws, regulations and permit requirements; and
- Addresses the client's objectives.

CRITERIA

General Requirements

A DIA is the planning and designing of a single practice or any combination of structural, vegetative, or land management practices and management activities to treat one or more resource concerns.

The DIA documents the verification of the client's conservation plan, and the development of the implementation requirements or plans and specifications for each planned conservation practice.

The TSP will complete Implementation Requirements for vegetative and land management practices as outlined in each state adopted Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) and Statement of Work (SOW) found in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide for the state in which the practices are being implemented.

The TSP will maintain an ongoing record of DIA related discussions with the client. The TSP will document on a conservation assistance notes form (CPA-6) or other format that includes all components of the CPA-6 (client objectives, dates of assistance, all parties present, notes of significant information, alternatives considered, and decisions reached). Any correspondence between the TSP and the client related to the development of the DIA will be included in the record.

The TSP may use any of the Conservation Practice Documents, such as implementation requirements, templates, Standard Detail Drawings, etc. located in the state's Field Office Technical Guide.

The activity will meet the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) planning criteria for

one or more of the following resource concerns:

Terrestrial Habitat:

- Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates

Aquatic Habitat:

- Aquatic habitat for fish and other organisms
- Elevated water temperature

The activity will meet the state adopted NRCS Conservation Practice Standards (CPS) and Statements of Work (SOW) included in the client's conservation plan or EQIP Contract and include at least one of following:

- 395 Stream Habitat Improvement and Management
- 644 Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management
- 645 Upland Wildlife Habitat Management

DELIVERABLES

Two copies (hardcopy or electronic) of the plan must be developed—one for the client and one for the NRCS field office. At the client's request, Technical Service Provider (TSP) can deliver NRCS's copy to the NRCS Field Office. The client's copy must include the implementation requirements or plans, specifications, operation and maintenance, and quality assurance plan. The NRCS copy must include all items identified herein. An additional electronic copy of the plan should also be uploaded on NRCS Registry.

1. Cover Page

Cover page reporting the technical services provided by the TSP. Cover page(s) must include the following:

- a. Client information: Name, farm bill program, contract number, and contract item number.
- b. TSP information: name, address, phone number, email, TSP number, TSP expiration date; and county of service.
- c. Farm identification:
 - i. Farm name, owner name, street address, and county/state.
 - ii. Primary phone number of the client.
 - iii. List of all practice and/or scenario designs included in this plan.**
- d. Statement by TSP that services provided:
 - i. Comply with all applicable Federal, State, Tribal, and local laws and requirements.
 - ii. Meet applicable NRCS standards, specifications, and program requirements.
 - iii. Are consistent with the conservation program goals and objectives for which the program contract was entered into by the client.
 - iv. Incorporate alternatives that are both cost effective and appropriate to address the resource issues.
- e. TSP certification statement: signature and date.
- f. Client acceptance statement:
 - i. A statement that the plans and specifications adequately represent existing

conditions and the selected preliminary design alternatives, and the client understands and will abide with the operation and maintenance plans.

- ii. Signature of the client and date the client received the plans.
- g. Block for NRCS reviewer acceptance (to be completed by NRCS).

2. Conservation Assistance Notes and Correspondence

- a. Conservation Assistance Notes (NRCS-CPA-6) or other format that includes all components of the CPA-6.
 - i. Document the client's objectives.
 - ii. Document each interaction with the client, include notes and results of that interaction, date, and initials of the TSP.
 - iii. Document each site visit, activity in the field, results of each site visit, all parties present, date, and initials of the TSP.
- b. Any correspondence between the TSP and the client relating to the development of the DIA.

3. Maps

- a. Maps to include, but not be limited to:
 - i. General location map of the implementation areas
 - ii. Conservation Plan map (this may consist of several maps to account for the entire implementation area). This map will specifically include:
 1. Boundary lines for the Planning Land Units (PLUs) with labels (name, number, or both). A PLU is a unique geographic area, defined by a polygon, that has common land use and is owned, operated, or managed by the same client or clients. The PLU is the minimum unit for planning.
 2. Acreage of each PLU.
 3. Land uses (noting management activities associated with each land use)
 4. Delineation of vegetation communities present onsite
 5. Habitat features (rock piles, snags, den sites, nest boxes, etc.)
 6. Streams, surface waters, wetlands
 7. Fences, watering facilities
 8. Location of planned and applied conservation practices, using NRCS map symbols (see Title 170, National Map Symbol Handbook, Part 601).
 9. Resource maps of the PLU
 - a. Soils maps, and other resource maps as applicable.
 - b. An existing wetland delineation map, if any.
 - iii. Other maps, as needed, with appropriate interpretations.
- b. At a minimum, all maps developed for the DIA will include:
 - i. Title block showing:
 - Map title.
 - Client's name (individual or business).
 - Prepared with assistance from USDA – NRCS
 - Assisted By [TSP planner's name].
 - Name of applicable conservation district, county, and State.
 - Date prepared.
 - ii. Map scale.
 - iii. Information needed to locate the implementation area, such as geographic

- coordinates, public land survey coordinates, etc.
- iv. North arrow.
- v. Appropriate map symbols and a map symbol legend on the map or as an attachment.

4. Planning

- a. Include and update, when needed, the client's conservation plan.
- b. Document client objectives such as:
 - i. Manage working lands as habitat for fish and wildlife
 - ii. Improve habitat for aquatic, wetland and/or terrestrial species
 - iii. Increase fish and wildlife use of the property to enhance recreational enjoyment
- c. Detail history of existing fish and wildlife practices applied accompanied by a brief description of the history of the land and ownership including length of current ownership, past management activities and surrounding environment (whether property is developed, private woods, public forests, etc.). This information can be based on personal knowledge, property records and local information sources as well as evidence seen on the ground.
- d. Resource Inventory providing a broad inventory of fish and wildlife resources along with other existing conditions such as plants, riparian areas, forestland, etc.
- e. Provide a landscape setting explaining how surrounding management affects the property as well as how the landowner's actions impact their neighbors. Consider aesthetic quality, wildfire concerns, privacy, wildlife movement and habitat, noxious weeds, urban encroachment, if applicable.
- f. Results of the habitat assessment conducted (such as a Wildlife Habitat Assessment Guide or the Stream Visual Assessment Protocol), documenting both existing and planned condition for each alternative developed.
- g. Desired future conditions/goals.
- h. A record of the alternatives developed (a minimum of two alternatives must be developed.)
- i. A record of the preferred alternative for each habitat type, which includes:
 - i. PLU label (name, number, or both).
 - ii. Client objectives and desired future habitat condition.
 - iii. NRCS practice name and code.
 - iv. Amount to be applied.
 - v. Brief description of the planned practice (practice narrative).
 - vi. Date the planned practice is scheduled to be implemented.
 - vii. As needed, applicable "Conservation Practice Overview" sheets or other prepared material.
 - viii. Operation and maintenance agreements and procedures.
 - ix. Available maps, sketches, and designs resulting from the planning process that will be useful to the client in implementing the plan.

5. Documentation

- a. Provide documentation of the following:
 - i. Site-level resource inventory and assessment data and analysis used to formulate management alternatives.
 - ii. Reference to assessment information incorporated from a fish and wildlife management plan.

- iii. List of all Federal candidate, proposed, threatened and endangered species with the potential to occur onsite.
- b. Quality assurance activities that are required during the installation to ensure the materials and installations meet the CPS purpose, function properly and can be certified as meeting the plans and specifications.
- c. Other information as required in the CPS State of Work, including but not limited to, practice purpose, list of permits, facilitating practices, and state required items that affect safety and other environmental concerns.

6. Implementation Requirements

- a. Develop written Implementation Requirements for each planned (non-engineering) conservation practice included in the preferred alternative, including facilitating practices.
 - i. Include, as a minimum, all items listed in each CPS “Plans and Specifications” section.
 - ii. Include both visual / photographic and narrative descriptions of the work. Provide descriptive information on the quality of the completed work and the quantities of all materials and labor required for completion of the work.
 - iii. A location map, plan view and written information are required. These items may be included in a single document where all specification information is included on the plans, or in multiple documents where the specifications are independent of the plans.
- b. Prepare an operation and maintenance plan for each design that the client will use after implementation of the practices are complete.
 - i. Include, as a minimum, all items listed in each CPS “Operation and Maintenance” section.

References

- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Field Office Technical Guide.
<https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/>
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. National TSP Website.
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/technical/tsp/>
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. National TSP Resources.
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/technical/tsp/?cid=nrcseprd1417414>
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. National Planning Procedures Handbook.
<https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/viewerFS.aspx?hid=44407>
- National Biology Handbook
National Biology Manual
National Forestry Manual
National Forestry Handbook
National Environmental Compliance Handbook
<https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/viewerFS.aspx?hid=39467>