



Conservation Planning On Your Land

A Workbook for Producers and Landowners



Helping People Help the Land



NORTH CAROLINA

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This workbook will help you collect the information you need to complete a conservation plan. The questions are designed to gather information about your land, objectives, and management. *Although the information will be reviewed by a conservation planner, it is confidential and belongs to you. It will NOT be released to other agencies, groups or individuals.*

Conserving Your Land's Natural Resources Through Voluntary Conservation Planning

America's farmers are the working conservationists on private and tribal lands in our country. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is the federal agency that, for over 70 years, has had the privilege of providing technical assistance to these true conservationists as they make a voluntary commitment to apply conservation practices on their private lands.

Conservation Planning is a voluntary process that helps you develop a record of your natural resources management decisions. This record, a Conservation Plan, combines selected conservation practices into a system, which is laid out in a reasonable schedule that fits your timetable.

The conservation applied on private lands provides benefits to all citizens by reducing soil erosion, improving water quality and quantity, enhancing wildlife habitat, maintaining open spaces and aesthetic landscapes, and improving the health of the land for future generations.

Ten Ways a Conservation Plan Can Benefit You

1. Saves money as your land becomes more productive.
2. Protects the natural resource that supports your business.
3. Increases your property value.
4. Enhances open space and wildlife habitat.
5. Conserves soil and water for a sustainable future.
6. Prevents off-site impacts, and may help you comply with environmental regulations.
7. Saves you time, money, and labor.
8. Makes your land more attractive and promotes good neighbor relations.
9. Promotes health and safety for your family.
10. Helps you identify your eligibility for some USDA programs.



What is a Conservation Plan?

A Conservation Plan is a voluntary and dynamic tool that helps manage your lands profitably while protecting your natural resources. Soil erosion, water quality, and waste management are just a few of the resource concerns that could be addressed with a plan. The completed conservation plan will describe each of the conservation practices you select to manage your natural resources. The choice to develop or not develop a conservation plan is yours. It is a voluntary process. You make the decisions. You implement the plan.

Conservation planners provide the technical assistance needed to develop and implement your plan. Creating a plan does not provide public access to your property. You control all rights of entry and use. Information in your conservation plan is confidential and is not released to other agencies, groups or individuals. All of the information you develop belongs to you.

A Conservation Plan consists of nine steps and is organized into three phases. This workbook does not result in a complete plan. However, it assists you with the preliminary self-assessment and fact gathering needed for a plan. You need to commit to the process in order for it to work.

After completing this preliminary self-assessment, contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service office to be put in contact with a planner. The conservation planner will assist you, or you may employ a qualified private consultant, to complete a plan.

The Process...

Conservation planning may lead to changes in your management. Physical or structural practices are designed to facilitate the changes you desire. These nine steps outline the structure of a conservation plan. This workbook allows you to begin **Phase One** of the planning process.



General Information

1. Have you participated in any USDA programs before?

Yes No

2. Do you already have a conservation plan?

Yes No

3. Do you irrigate?

Yes No

If yes, what method? Drip Flood Furrow Sprinkler Border Other

Irrigation water source: Surface water (creek, stream, pond) Ground water (well, spring)

4. Do you have any streams, creeks, rivers, ponds on or adjacent to your land?

Yes No

5. Do you have any non-cropped area set aside for wildlife on your land?

Yes No

6. Do you have any wetland areas on your land?

Yes No

7. Have you noticed any areas where the soil erodes or is deposited in ditches, roads, etc.?

Yes No

8. Does water run off your fields or land in any location?

Yes No

9. Have you ever noticed algae blooms, high salinity, high temperatures, or other unusual circumstances in the streams, ponds, or ditches on your land?

Yes No

10. Do you handle or use any type of pesticides or herbicides on your land?

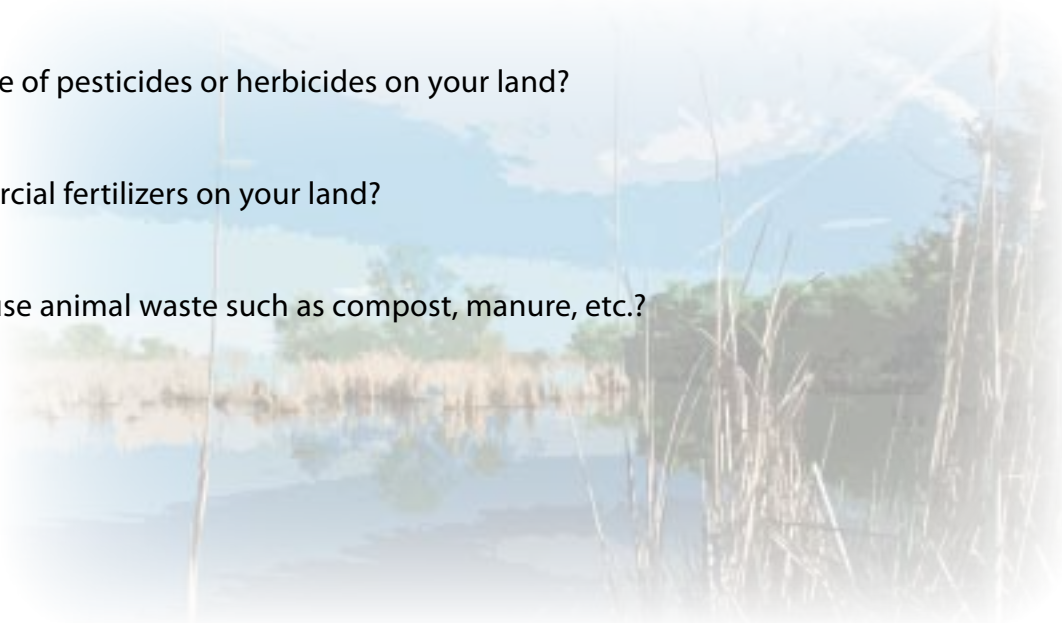
Yes No

11. Do you handle or use commercial fertilizers on your land?

Yes No

12. Do you handle, generate, or use animal waste such as compost, manure, etc.?

Yes No



General Information (cont.)

13. Have you ever noticed any areas on your property such as Native American/Indian sites, historic buildings, old mining areas, or other types of archaeological or cultural resources?
 Yes No Don't know
14. Have you ever noticed populations of invasive weeds or other unusual plants populations on your land?
 Yes No
15. Are you aware of any rare or endangered plants or animals on your land?
 Yes No Don't know
16. Have you ever installed or used measures to reduce erosion or fix any other things you viewed as a problem on your land?
 Yes No
17. Are you certified organic or transitioning to organic?
 Yes No
18. Are you currently using an Integrated Pest Management System on your property?
 Yes No



Information About Your Land

Complete the following questions the best you can. Make note of any concerns or questions you have for the Conservation Planner. The more information you supply the easier it will be to help you.

Name of Landowner (s): _____

Name of Farm: _____

Name of Manager (if different from landowner): _____

Cell Phone: _____ Business Phone: _____ Home

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____

Site Location (parcel number or section, township, range): _____

Total Acres: _____

Pastureland: _____

Forestland: _____

Dairy/Poultry/Swine: _____

Row Crops: _____

Orchard: _____

Vineyard: _____

Other: _____

Have you received assistance from your local Soil and Water Conservation District, NRCS, NC Cooperative Extension or consultant?

Yes

No



Goals and Opportunities

**Conservation plans are voluntary and begin with the unique goals of the landowner.
What are some of yours?**

List your goals (natural resources, production, economic, aesthetic, or other) for your property:



Describe each of your fields on the chart below.

Field #	Acres	Land Use & Crop Information (Crop, pasture, homestead, forest, wildlife, wetland, etc.)	Field Characteristics (Rotation, Production, operation constraints, soil characteristics, etc.)
Example 1	100	Cropland	3 yrs. alfalfa (8 tons ave. yield), 1 yr. tomatoes(33 tons ave. yield); irrigation water collects at north end of field; spotty areas of low yields
Example 2	200	Forestland	Stand harvested 20 years ago. Currently there is abundance of brush. Stand is even age and about 8 inches in diameter.

Energy Questions

Energy Efficiency

1. Have you ever had an energy audit? Yes No

If so when was it completed? _____

2. Are you interested in improving energy efficiency? Yes No

What aspects of the operation are you concerned about (lighting, irrigation, ventilation, field operations, farming practices, etc)? _____

3. Have energy costs increased over time? Yes No

If so by how much? _____

4. Do you follow equipment maintenance schedules? Yes No

Renewable Energy Production

1. Are you interested in renewable energy production? Yes No

If so what types? (solar, wind, geothermal, hydro)? _____

2. Have you explored opportunities for renewable energy production with a contractor or other entity?
 Yes No

If so what was the outcome? _____

Air Resources

1. Have you utilized no till, strip till, or mulch till strategies to reduce fugitive dust (dust in an undesired area or location)? Yes No Have you installed windbreaks? Yes No

2. Are your orchard or vineyard removals and/or prunings chipped? Yes No

3. How do you manage your field crop residues? _____

4. Has precision spray technology been applied to annual crops or orchard crops? Yes No

5. If you apply manure or compost to your crops, how do you determine application rate and timing?

Have you implemented any energy efficiency measures? (List below)

Measure	Yes / No	Description (If No indicate interest)
Irrigation system upgrades		
Lighting upgrades		
Refrigeration upgrades		
Ventilation system		
Controller/variable speed drive upgrades		
Motor or pump upgrades		
Air heating/building upgrades		
Drying upgrades		
Waste handling management or upgrades		
Air cooling upgrades		
Cultural practices upgrades (tillage, planting, driven equipment)		
Crop/feed storage upgrades		
Water management or upgrades		
Material handling upgrades		

Other Information

I'm interested in learning more about the following topics:

- Irrigation water efficiency and conservation.
- How to look up soil information for my property.
- How to reduce soil erosion on my property.
- How to best manage pests on my orchard / vineyard.
- What is a cover crop and its benefits.
- How to make improvements on my pasture.
- How to make improvements on my forestland.
- How to reduce wildfire danger on my forestland.
- Agricultural and recreational tourism.
- Marketing my products.
- Other _____

I'm interested in learning more about the following resources:

- How do I get free technical information and recommendations to make conservation improvements.
- Learn about financial assistance to make improvements.

Describe all other enterprises not already mentioned that are a part of your operations (e.g., aquaculture, hunting, traditional crafts, medicinal, etc.):

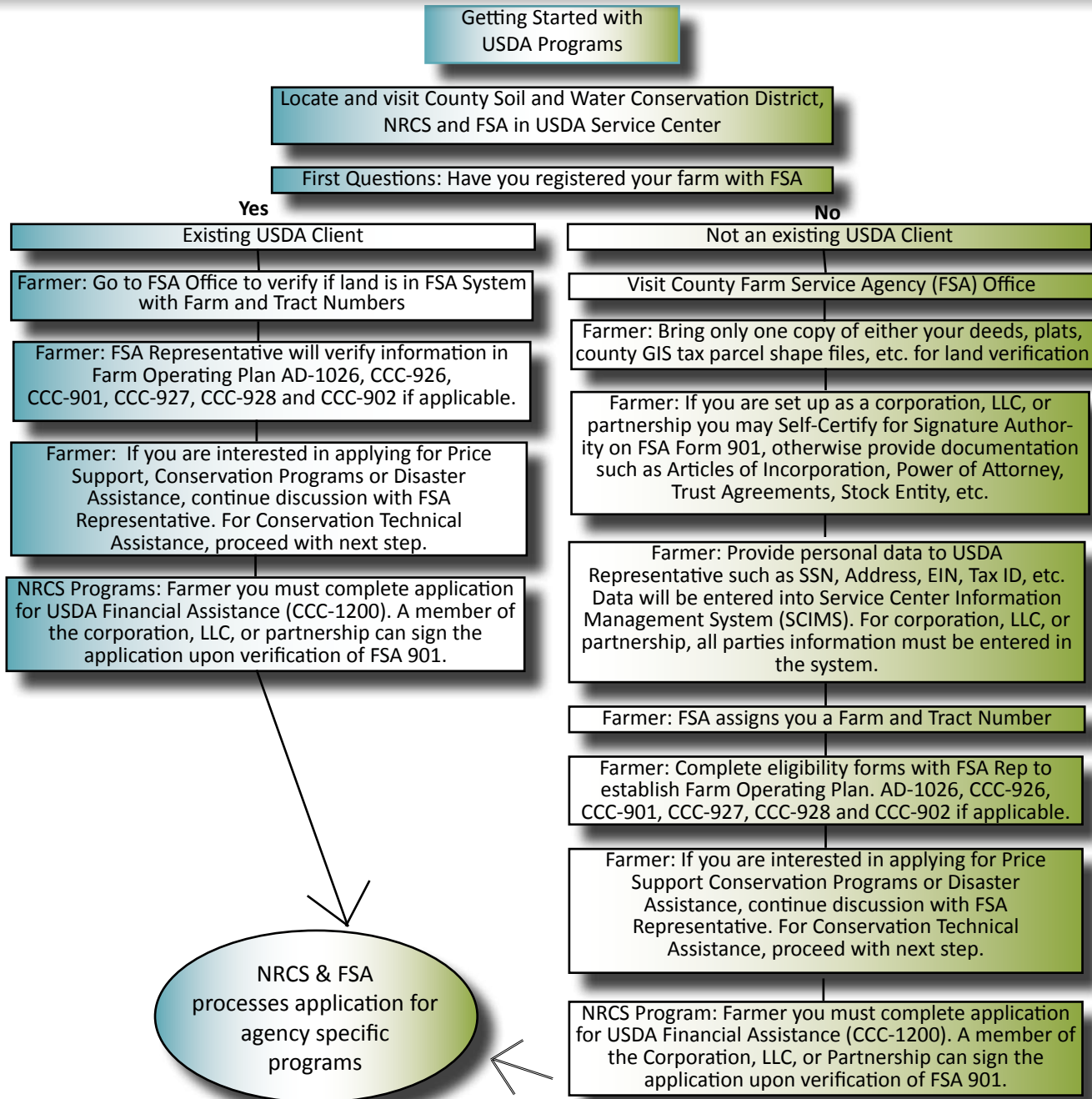
When complete, contact the local NRCS office below to schedule an appointment.

Contact Information for State, Area and Field Offices can be found on the North Carolina Web site at <http://www.nc.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/index.html>

What you need to know to get started

Eligibility and your Land

2008 Food, Conservation and Energy Act Helping People Help the Land
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