



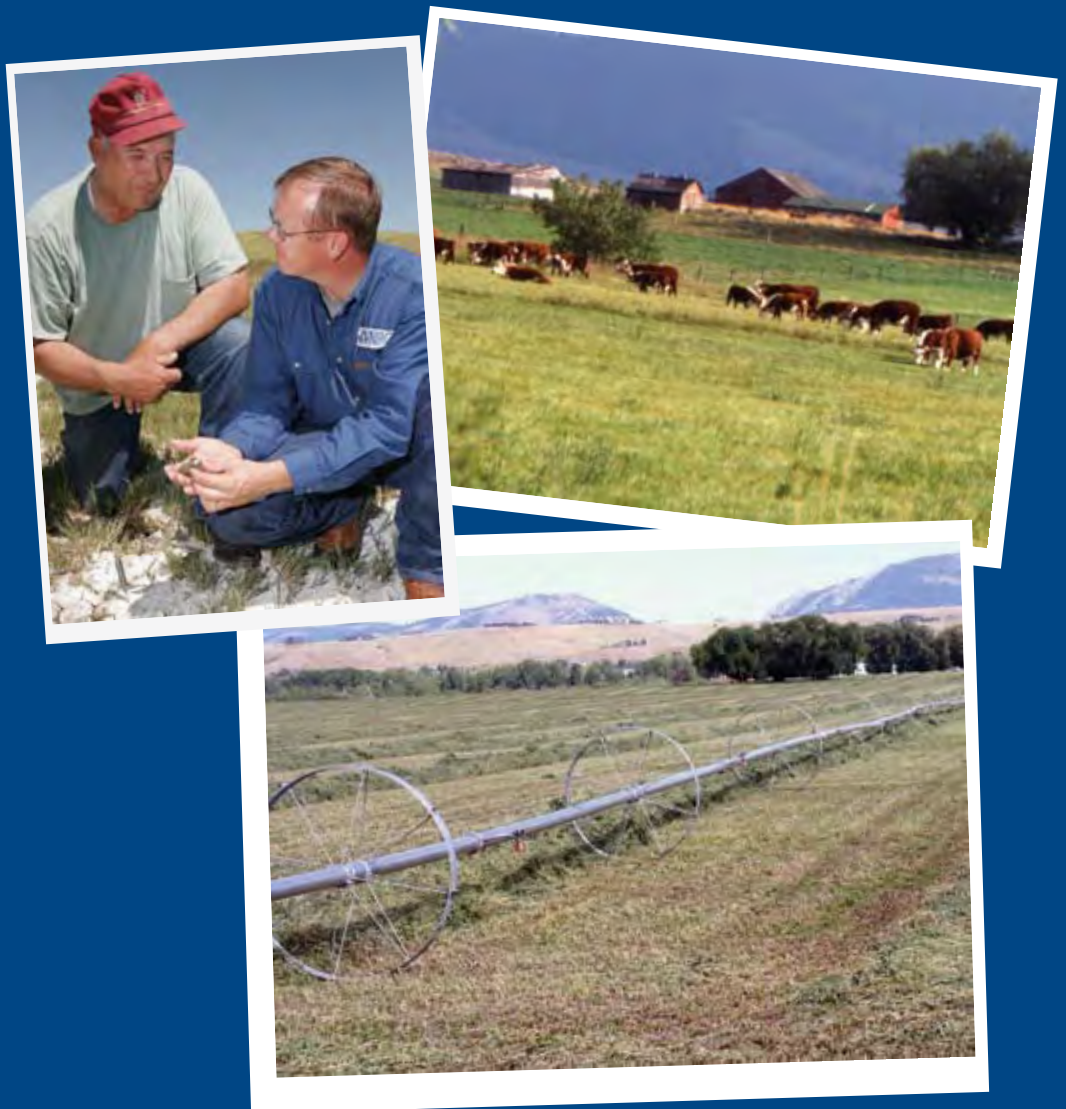
United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

Montana
April 2013

Conservation Planning Workbook

Helping People Help the Land





What is a Conservation Plan?

A conservation plan is a document that outlines the decisions you have made to protect and enhance the natural resources on the land you own and operate. A conservation plan, when completed, describes and schedules each of the conservation practices you've decided to apply to meet your goals and objectives. Developing a conservation plan is voluntary and relies on you making the decisions and implementing the plan.

NRCS conservation planners provide technical assistance at no cost to help develop and implement your plan. A conservation plan is protected by the Freedom of Information Act, and creating a plan does not provide public access to your property or information.

The conservation planning process consists of nine steps. This completed workbook is needed to start the planning process. After you fill in the workbook as completely as possible, the NRCS conservation planner will still need to gather additional information and make one or more visits to your farm in order to complete your conservation plan.

After completing this workbook, please contact your local NRCS field office to make an appointment to begin working on your conservation plan. Contact information for each NRCS field office is listed at the end of this workbook.

Potential Benefits of Implementing a Conservation Plan on your Farm/Ranch

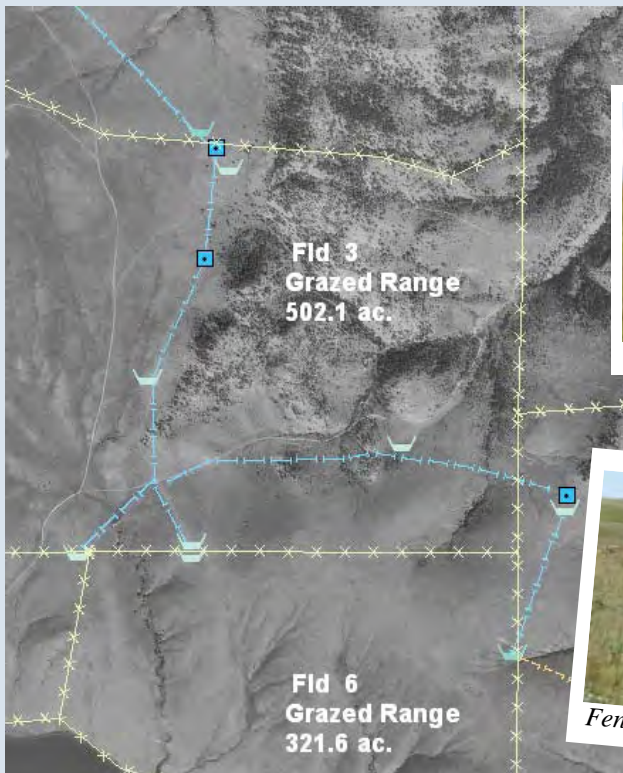
- Increase economic return on the operation
- Improve soil quality and plant production
- Control weeds
- Improve the water holding capacity of your soil for crops and native plants
- Sustain the natural resource quality for you, your animals, and your neighbors
- Increase your property value
- Enhance open space and wildlife habitat
- Improve animal health
- Prevent off-farm impacts
- Contribute to plant health and vigor
- Improve air quality
- Improve water quality
- Maximize water use efficiency
- Address environmental regulation issues



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Range inventory



Stock tank



Fence

Conservation Planning Documentation and Resource Assessment

Date: _____ Name of Decision Maker: _____

Business or Farm/Ranch Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ County: _____ ZIP Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

Township, Range, Section(s): _____

Farm and Tract Number(s): _____

Acres Owned and Operated: _____ Acres Rented/Leased (private and public): _____

Identify Your Objectives

What do you want to accomplish with your conservation plan? Conservation plans developed and implemented with clearly defined objectives are most successful. Set realistic objectives that can be reached with small, achievable steps. To have positive outcomes, you need to describe clearly what you want to happen on your land and where you want to be within a selected time frame. Ask yourself, "What do I want my place to look like in five years?" A clear objective statement will assist you and NRCS in developing a conservation plan that is right for you.

Natural Resource Objectives

Short term: _____

Long term: _____

Production and Economic Objectives

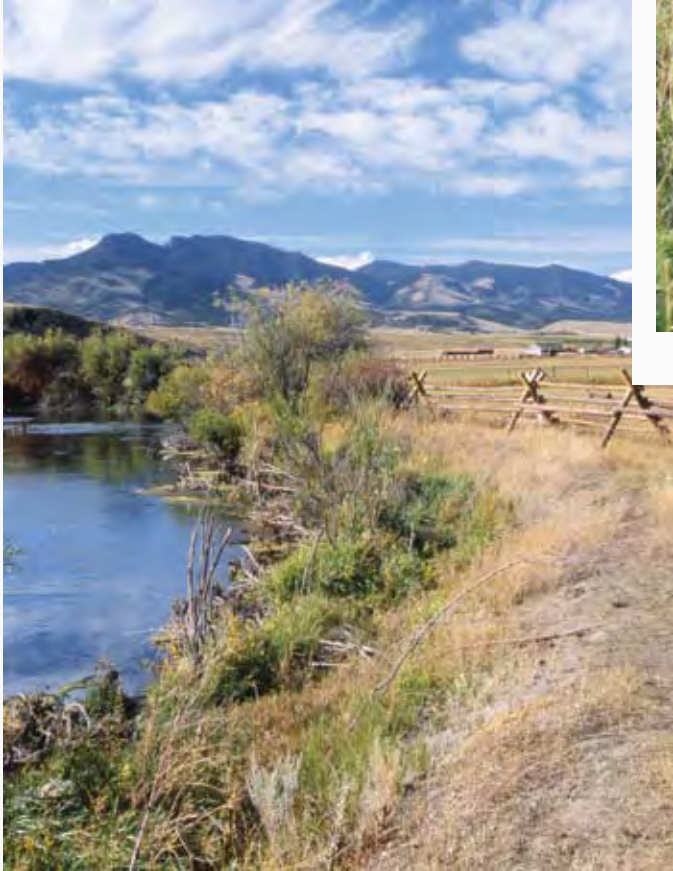
Short term: _____

Long term: _____

Quality of Life Objectives

Short term: _____

Long term: _____



Stream habitat improvement in Jefferson County, Montana.



Fish ladder.



NRCS conservationist and landowner discuss the success of the project.

Natural Resource Information

1. Do you have any streams running through or adjacent to your land? Yes ___ No ___
2. Do you have any woody draws and/or streamside tree/shrubs (riparian areas)? Yes ___ No ___
3. Do you have any natural or constructed ponds on your land? Yes ___ No ___
4. Do you have any wetlands? Yes ___ No ___
5. Do you use an irrigation system? Yes ___ No ___
6. If yes, what is your application method? flood ___ sprinkler ___ drip ___
 - Do you use fertigation? Yes ___ No ___
 - Do you apply liquid manure? Yes ___ No ___
 - Where do you get your irrigation water? _____

List contracts, easements, and/or agreements for technical/financial assistance that restrict land management options:

Identify Your Resource Concerns

Describe the natural resource concerns/problems that occur on your land. These can include but are not limited to soil condition/erosion, water quality/quantity, and plant and/or animal health/productivity:

Cropland: _____

Hayland: _____

Forestland: _____

Patureland: _____

Rangeland: _____

Wildlife land: _____

Farmstead – including feedlots, dairies, or other lands: _____



NRCS conservationist and landowner test soil moisture in a wheat field.

Cropland Information

1. Do you use a cover crop at any time during your regular crop rotation? Yes ___ No ___
(A cover crop is a temporary planting to protect the soil or improve soil health.
It is not harvested, but rather tilled under or sprayed down.)
If yes, what do you plant and when in the rotation? _____
2. Do you no-till any of your crops? Yes ___ No ___
If yes, what crops? _____
3. Do you apply herbicides and/or pesticides to your cropland? Yes ___ No ___
4. Do you apply nutrients (commercial or manure) and/or soil amendments to your cropland? Yes ___ No ___
5. Do you take soil tests? Yes ___ No ___
If yes, how often? _____
6. What is your typical crop rotation? _____
7. Do you have alfalfa or other legumes in your rotation? Yes ___ No ___
If yes, how many years are in alfalfa or other legumes? _____
8. What type of hay do you grow? None ___ Alfalfa ___ Grass/Alfalfa ___ Grass ___
9. Do you use "precision ag" and/or global positioning techniques on your farm/ranch? Yes ___ No ___
If yes, please explain _____

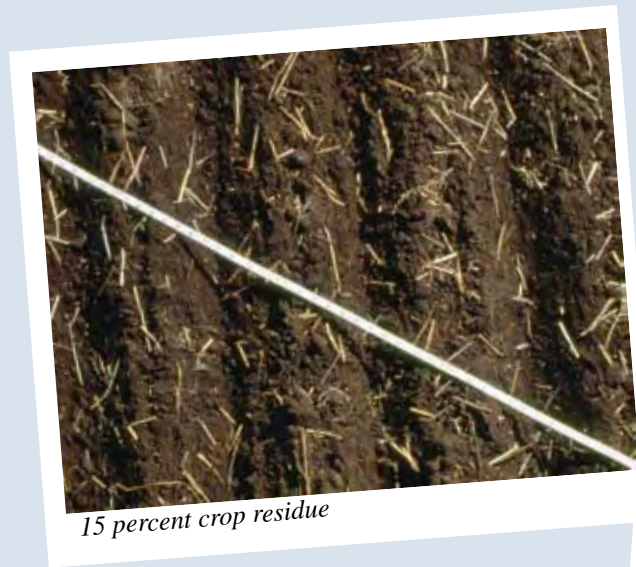
Farming Equipment

Check the specific type of equipment that you use.

1. Chisel: Straight Points ___ Twisted Shank ___ Sweeps ___
2. Planter: Double Disk Opener ___ Sweeps or Double Row Cleaning Disks ___ Hoe Openers ___
3. No-Till Planter: Offset Double Disk Openers ___ Smooth Coulter ___ Ripple Coulter ___ Fluted Coulter ___
4. Disk: Offset Light Duty ___ Offset Heavy Duty ___ Tandem Disk ___ One Way ___
5. Field Cultivator (primary tillage): Duckfoot Points ___ Sweeps or Shovels 6-12" ___ Shovels ___ Undercutter ___
6. Finishing Tools: Culti-mulcher ___ Harrow ___ Roller/packer ___ Rod weeder ___
7. Moldboard Plow: 6-8" Deep ___ >8" Deep ___ With Trash racks removed ___

Crop Residue Levels

Please select a photo from below that best represents the appearance of the seedbed at planting time and insert the percentage on the following chart in the column "Crop Residue Percent after Planting."



Forestland Information

Check either yes or no for each question and describe the situation.

1. Do you have a current Forest Stewardship Plan or a Forest Management Plan? Yes ___ No ___

2. Has there been any timber harvested from your land? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, when? _____

3. Have you installed any of the following forest practices? (mark applicable practices)

Tree Plantings ___ Forest Stand Improvement (Pre-Commercial Thinning) ___ Site Preparation ___

Prescribed Burning ___ Other Agro-Forestry Practices (Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment) ___ None ___

4. Do you graze livestock in your forestland? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, then fill out the "Rangeland, Pasture, and Grazed Forest Information" section as well.)

5. Do you have noxious weeds on your forestlands? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, what kind? _____

6. Check major vegetation types located in your forestlands.

Ponderosa Pine ___ Western Hemlock ___ White-Bark Pine ___ Douglas Fir ___ Western Red-cedar ___

Limber Pine ___ Lodgepole Pine ___ Engleman Spruce ___ Cottonwood/Aspen ___ Western Larch ___

Subalpine Fir ___ Ash ___ Western Juniper ___ Other ___

7. Are forest insects or diseases present? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, please identify type (if known) _____

8. Have your timber resources been recently impacted by a wildfire? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, when? _____



Rangeland and Pasture and Grazed Forest Information

1. Acres of rangeland: _____ Acres of pasture: _____ Acres of forest: _____
2. Kind and number of each class of grazing animals: _____
-
3. Approximate days per year on rangelands: _____ Approximate days per year on pasture: _____
Approximate days per year on forest: _____
Approximate days per year on hayland: _____ Approximate days per year fed hay: _____
4. Are there any streams going through your pasture, range, or forest? Yes ___ No ___
If yes, do livestock have access to the streams? Yes ___ No ___
If no, how do you water your animals? _____
5. Do you measure the stubble height to determine when to rotate livestock to another pasture? Yes ___ No ___
6. Do you use a rotational system to graze your rangeland, pasture, and forest? Yes ___ No ___
If yes, does it include any of the following?
• Identifying periods of grazing, rest, rotation, etc for each management unit. Yes ___ No ___
• Identifying and maintaining adequate plant cover or residue in each pasture and in sensitive areas (riparian, wetlands, or other habitats of concern). Yes ___ No ___
• Identifying and monitoring key areas and key plants to evaluate grazing management decisions. Yes ___ No ___
7. Do you balance forage availability with livestock and wildlife demands for each field? Yes ___ No ___
8. Total tons of hay fed per year (average): _____ Amount fed per head per year: _____
9. Do you apply nutrients and/or soil amendments to your pastureland? Yes ___ No ___
10. Do you have any noxious weeds on your rangeland? Yes ___ No ___
If yes, please identify (if known): _____
Are there poisonous plants that limit when you can graze in certain fields? Yes ___ No ___



Rangeland on the Northern Cheyenne reservation.

Livestock Information

Livestock	Number	Average Weight	Days/Years on Farm	Weaning Date	Selling Date
Horses					
Dairy					
Milking Cows					
Dry Cows					
Heifers					
Calves					
Beef					
Cows					
Calves					
Yearlings					
Bulls					
Replacements					
Feeders (if there is a feedlot)					
Sheep					
Ewes					
Rams					
Lambs					
Poultry					
Layers					
Pullets					
Broilers					
Turkeys					
Swine					
Lactating Sows					
Piglets					
Feeders					
Other					
i.e. llamas, goats, bison					

Wetland Information

1. Do you have persistently wet areas on your property? Yes ___ No ___
(i.e. - saturated soils or surface flooding/ponding for an extended period during the growing season)
2. Is the vegetation different than areas nearby? Yes ___ No ___
(i.e. - grasses are higher, sedges and rushes are seen growing there)
3. Are you utilizing this land for the following uses?
grazing ___ haying ___ cropping ___ other ___
4. What are your interests for this land? _____

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Information

1. Do you specifically manage all or part of your land for wildlife habitat? Yes ___ No ___
If yes, what areas are managed, how is it managed, and what wildlife species do you manage? _____

If no, would you like to? Yes ___ No ___
What wildlife species would you like to manage for? _____

2. Do you use your land for any recreational activities? (hunting, trapping, bird watching) Yes ___ No ___
Do you provide or allow for public access? Yes ___ No ___
Do you plant a wildlife food plot or leave a crop stand for this purpose? Yes ___ No ___
3. Do you consider wildlife needs during cropping, haying, and/or grazing? Yes ___ No ___
If yes, how? _____
4. Do you specifically manage cropping, haying, and/or grazing activities to protect riparian (streamside) wetland habitat for fish and wildlife? Yes ___ No ___
If yes, how? _____
5. Are you interested in managing your land for rare or declining wildlife species? Yes ___ No ___
6. Are predators a factor in the management of your operation? Yes ___ No ___
If yes, which species and when? _____

Farmstead Information

1. Do you generate and store any manure on the farmstead? Yes ___ No ___
2. Do animals have access to a stream in any concentrated feeding areas? Yes ___ No ___
3. Do you have a fertilizer/pesticide storage site and/or mixing and loading areas? Yes ___ No ___
4. Is your well at least 100 feet from your fertilizer/pesticide mixing/loading area?
From your feedlot? Yes ___ No ___
From your fuel storage area? Yes ___ No ___



Assistance Information

Please indicate if you are interested in any of the technical or financial assistance programs.

Plan Development and/or Implementation

Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)

CTA provides free technical assistance to help farmers and ranchers identify and solve natural resource problems on their farms and ranches. This might come as advice and counsel, through the design and implementation of a practice or treatment, or as part of an active conservation plan. This is provided through NRCS or your local conservation district.

Stewardship Programs

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

CSP is a voluntary program that provides stewardship and maintenance payments to farmers who agree to continue using good conservation practices on their production land. CSP also provides enhancement payments for farmers who go beyond the minimum requirements for protecting resources such as soil, water, air, energy, and plant and animal life on working lands. CSP is offered to selected watersheds each year, so not everyone is eligible to participate each year.

Cost-share Programs

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants in installing or implementing structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

WHIP is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wildlife habitat on their property through the implementation of conservation practices.

Easement Programs

Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)

GRP is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance grasslands on their property.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

WRP is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property. Easements and restoration payments are offered as part of the program.

Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program (FRPP)

FRPP is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect their farm and ranchlands with prime or unique soil or historic or archeological resources from conversion to non-agricultural uses.

Additional Information Required for Program Participation

If you are considering applying for any of the NRCS conservation programs, you must also have the following forms completed and filed at the USDA service center:

AD-1026 – Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation (HELIC/WC) Certification

CCC-933 – Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) Certification

CCC-901 – Member's Information (for entity and joint operations only)

CCC-902 – Farm Operating Plan for Corporations, Limited Partnerships, or other similar entities.

Signature Authority of an individual requesting benefits for an entity or joint operation.

NRCS Field Office Contact Information

Now that you have completed the Conservation Planning Workbook, please either stop in the office or call one of the following to get assistance in completing the conservation planning process. You can also find more information about NRCS and conservation at <http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/>.

Baker Field Office
22 South Fourth Street West
Telephone: (406) 778-2217

Big Sandy Field Office
200 1st Street North
Telephone: (406) 378-2298

Big Timber Field Office
225 Big Timber Loop Road
Telephone: (406) 932-5160

Billings Field Office
1629 Avenue D, Building A, Suite 4
Telephone: (406) 657-6135

Bozeman Field Office
3710 Fallon Street, Suite B
Telephone: (406) 522-4000

Broadus Field Office
114 North Lincoln Street
Telephone: (406) 436-2417

Browning Field Office
Blackfeet Tribal Headquarters
Telephone: (406) 338-3153

Chester Field Office
18 Main Street
Telephone: (406) 759-5778

Chinook Field Office
230 Ohio Street
Telephone: (406) 357-2320

Choteau Field Office
1102 Main Avenue NW
Telephone: (406) 466-5722

Circle Field Office
106 10th Street
Telephone: (406) 485-2744

Columbus Field Office
334 N. 9th Avenue
Telephone: (406) 322-5359

Conrad Field Office
406 Main Street
Telephone: (406) 278-7611

Crow Agency Field Office
Tribal Administration Building
(Casino Units)
Telephone: (406) 638-9102

Culbertson Field Office
508 6th Street East
Telephone: (406) 787-5232

Cut Bank Field Office
Third Street NE
Telephone: (406) 873-4292

Deer Lodge Field Office
1 Hollenback Road
Telephone: (406) 846-1703

Dillon Field Office
420 Barrett Street
Telephone: (406) 683-3800

Ekalaka Field Office
400 Mormon Street
Telephone: (406) 775-6355

Eureka Field Office
655 U.S. Hwy 93 North
Telephone: (406) 296-2233

Forsyth Field Office
270 S. Prospect Street
Telephone: (406) 346-7333

Fort Belknap Field Office
Telephone: (406) 353-8488

Fort Benton Field Office
1210 25th Street
Telephone: (406) 622-5627

Glasgow Field Office
54062 U.S. Highway 2 West, Suite 2
Telephone: (406) 228-4321

Glendive Field Office
102 Fir Street
Telephone: (406) 377-5566

Great Falls Field Office
123rd Street NW
Telephone: (406) 727-7580

Hamilton Field Office
1709 N. First Street
Telephone: (406) 363-5010

Hardin Field Office
724 Third St. West
Telephone: (406) 665-3442

Harlowton Field Office
809 Second Avenue NW
Telephone: (406) 632-5534

Havre Field Office
206 25th Avenue West
Telephone: (406) 265-6792

Helena Field Office
790 Colleen Street
Telephone: (406) 449-5000

Hysham Field Office
211 Elliott Avenue
Telephone: (406) 342-5510

Joliet Field Office
606 W. Front Street
Telephone: (406) 962-3641

Jordan Field Office
400 Main Street
Telephone: (406) 557-2232

Kalispell Field Office
133 Interstate Lane
Telephone: (406) 752-4242

Lame Deer Field Office
East Boundary Dr.
Telephone: (406) 477-6494

Lewistown Field Office
211 McKinley Street, Suite 3
Telephone: (406) 538-7401

Shelby Field Office
1125 Oilfield Avenue
Telephone: (406) 434-5234

Livingston Field Office
5242 Highway 89 South
Telephone: (406) 222-2899

Sheridan Field Office
209 South Main Street
Telephone: (406) 842-5741

Malta Field Office
1120 U.S. Hwy 191 South , Suite 2
Telephone: (406) 654-1334

Sidney Field Office
Highway 16 N
Telephone: (406) 433-2103

Miles City Field Office
3120 Valley Drive East
Telephone: (406) 232-7905

Stanford Field Office
121 Central Avenue
Telephone: (406) 566-2311

Missoula Field Office
3550 Mullan Road, Suite 106
Telephone: (406) 829-3395

Terry Field Office
410 East Spring St.
Telephone: (406) 635-5381

Pablo Field Office
51383 Hwy 93 North
Telephone: (406) 675-1245

Townsend Field Office
415 South Front Street
Telephone: (406) 266-3146

Philipsburg Field Office
105 S. Holland
Telephone: (406) 859-3291

Whitehall Field Office
3 Whitetail Road
Telephone: (406) 287-3215

Plains Field Office
102 Highway 200 West
Telephone: (406) 826-3701

White Sulphur Springs Field Office
4147 Highway 12
Telephone: (406) 547-3633

Plentywood Field Office
119 N. Jackson
Telephone: (406) 765-1801

Wibaux Field Office
502 2nd Avenue NW
Telephone: (406) 796-2211

Poplar Field Office
500 Medicine Bear Road
Telephone: (406) 768-3566

Winnett Field Office
16 South Broadway
Telephone: (406) 429-6646

Rocky Boy Field Office
Telephone: (406) 395-4066

Ronan Field Office
45358 Highway 93
Telephone: (406) 676-2841

Roundup Field Office
109 Railroad Avenue East
Telephone: (406) 323-2103

Scobey Field Office
131A Highway 5 East
Telephone: (406) 487-5366

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Workbook Evaluation

The intent of this workbook is to accelerate the conservation planning process by gathering resource information from you in advance. Please take a few moments to complete the evaluation below. Your feedback will be crucial in improving the workbook for future use.

If your answer to any question is “no,” please provide suggestions for improvement in the space provided. Your local NRCS conservationist will collect your comments when you return, with this workbook, to progress with the next steps in developing your conservation plan.

Was this workbook helpful in inventorying your natural resources? Yes ___ No ___

Did it help you to evaluate your conservation needs? Yes ___ No ___

Was the workbook useful in defining your conservation goals? Yes ___ No ___

Was the workbook easy to understand and use? Yes ___ No ___

Has completing the workbook been a worthwhile investment of your time? Yes ___ No ___

How long did it take you to complete the workbook? _____

What would you change about the workbook? _____

Optional

If we have any questions, may we contact you? Yes ___ No ___

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____