

U.S. Department of Agriculture



Conservation on Your Land

*An Introduction to Conservation Planning
on Cranberry Lands*



**US Dept. of Agriculture
Natural Resources
Conservation Service**
in partnership with
**Wisconsin State Cranberry
Growers Association**



FOUNDED 1887

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What is a Conservation Plan?

A Conservation Plan is a tool to help you manage your land profitably while protecting your natural resources. Water conservation, water quality, and soil erosion are just a few of the resource concerns that can be addressed in a conservation plan. A complete conservation plan will describe each of the resource issues and the conservation practices you have selected to improve your operation and protect the natural resources.

- The choice is yours - it is a voluntary process. You make the decisions. You implement the plan.
- Conservation planners provide technical assistance to help you develop and implement your plan. Their help is free.
- The information you provide in your conservation plan is confidential and can not be released without your consent.
- A conservation plan does not in any way change your property rights, access or privacy.

The conservation planning process consists of nine steps. This workbook will help you with the first phase: data collection and analysis. Completion of the workbook does not constitute a complete conservation plan.

After completing this preliminary self-assessment, contact your local USDA NRCS office or the WSCGA to meet with a conservation planner. The conservation planner will assist you in completing your plan.

The Process....

Conservation planning may lead to changes in your management practices or to constructed conservation practices. These nine steps outline the process to develop a conservation plan. This workbook helps you to begin Phase One of the planning process.



Steps to Planning

Phase I - Data Collection and Analysis

1. Identify Problems
2. Determine objectives
3. Inventory resources
4. Analyze the resource data

Phase II - Decision Support

5. Formulate alternatives
6. Evaluate alternatives
7. Client decides

Phase III - Application

8. Client implements plan
9. Evaluate plan

What are the Benefits of a Conservation Plan?

- Saves money as your land becomes more productive.
- Ensures better natural resource quality for you and your neighbors.
 - Increases your property value.
 - Enhances open space and wildlife habitat.
 - Prevents off-farm impacts.
 - Contributes to plant health and vigor.
- Makes your land more attractive and promotes good neighbor relations.
 - Promotes health and safety for your family.

Set Your Objectives

The best place to start planning is to set objectives. Objectives will keep you focused and provide you with a measurement tool to determine progress. Set realistic objectives that can be reached with small achievable steps. State clearly what you want to happen on your land and where you want to be within a selected time frame. This is perhaps the most difficult— but probably the most important — step in the planning process. Be sure to include everyone who is involved in the decision-making process on the farm, and consider how a plan might affect others who are not directly making the decisions.

Natural Resource Objectives

Short Term: _____

Long Term: _____

Production & Economic Objectives

Short Term: _____

Long Term: _____

Quality of Life Objective

Short Term: _____

Long Term: _____

What do you want your land to look like in five years?

Information about Your Land

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

Farm/Marsh Name: _____

Year Established: _____

Year Acquired: _____

Type of Ownership (circle one): Individual Partnership Corporation Other: _____

Name(s) of Landowner(s): _____

Contact Person: _____

Home Phone: _____

Shop Phone: _____

Mobile Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Marsh Location (attach your Farm Service Agency map and/or other maps, if available):

Legal Description: _____

Physical Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

FSA Farm Number: _____

FSA Tract Number(s): _____

Total Property Land Area: _____ acres

Beds: _____ ac.

Dikes: _____ ac.

Other Cropland: _____ ac.

Reservoir/Storage Ponds: _____ ac.

Wetlands: _____ ac.

Forested Uplands: _____ ac.

Supportive (headquarters, shop, etc.): _____ ac.

Type of Production System (circle one):

Wetland (i.e. peat-based)

Upland

Combination

Explain: _____

Describe renovation plans and/or future development or expansion plans:

Describe each of your beds on the chart below. Attach additional pages if necessary.

Bed # or ID	Acres	Date Established or Renovated	Variety	Production Goal (bbl/ac)	Comments

Use this page to sketch a map of your property and bed layout. Attach additional pages or your "Exhibit A" maps (Ocean Spray growers), if available.

Nutrient Management:

*Date of most recent soil test: _____

*Date of most recent plant tissue test: _____

* Attach most recent results, if available.

Method of application of fertilizers: _____

Describe current nutrient management (fertilizer types, amounts, and timing of applications). Note any recent or planned changes to nutrient management program, and any observed variation in nutrient needs across the marsh or across individual beds in the *Comments* column.

Fertilizer Type or Blend (i.e. 9-20-19)	Rate (lbs/ac/yr)	Beds Applied to	Timing of Applications	Comments

Pest Management:

List problem insects, fungi, or other pests: _____

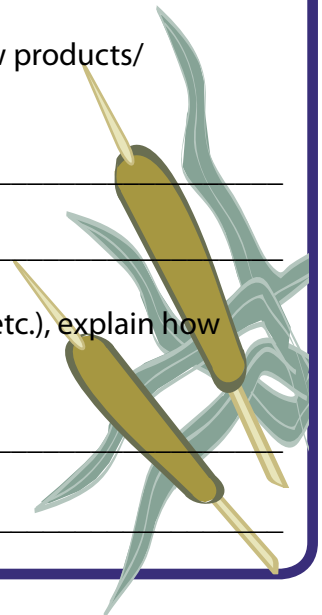
Describe your use of pesticides in the chart below:

Pesticide Type or Product	Application Rate	Beds Applied to	Target Pests	Years of Use	Application Method (spray, granular, wick, etc)

Describe current pest monitoring efforts (crop "sweeps"—including timing & species sampled for, mating disruption or pheromone trapping efforts, etc.):

Describe any planned changes to your current pest management program—use of new products/ technologies or loss of old products (i.e. a pesticide label is expiring).

List any cultural pest management practices that you currently use (sanding, flooding, etc.), explain how often you employ these practices, and describe their effectiveness in managing pests:



Water Management:

What is your source of water? _____

If directly from a reservoir, how is the reservoir filled/recharged? _____

At full capacity, how much water can be stored in your reservoir system? _____

[For an approximation, list total surface area of reservoir(s) and approximate average depth.]

Where does your "used" water discharge to? _____

Is it a "closed" or "pass-through" system? _____

Describe how your marsh deals with excess water (floods): _____

Describe how your marsh deals with water shortages (droughts): _____

Describe your harvest procedure (including acres flooded at one time, ability to reuse water, etc.):

Estimate the average annual water use required for the following practices:

Harvest: water depth (inches): _____, area flooded at one time (acres): _____

approximate total annual water use for harvest (acre-feet): _____

Winter flood: average water depth (feet): _____

Post-harvest frost floods: water depth (inches): _____, no. of floods per year: _____

Spring frost floods: water depth (inches): _____, no. of floods per year: _____

Fall/Spring trash floods: water depth (inches): _____, no. of floods per year: _____

Pest control floods: water depth (inches): _____, no. of floods per year: _____

Sprinkler frost protection: approximate hours per year: _____

Sprinkler irrigation: hours/event: _____, events per summer week: _____, events per year: _____



Irrigation Water Management:

Describe your irrigation system:

Beds	Year Installed	Spacing (ft)		Estimated Application Rate (in/hr)	Sprinklers			
		Between Laterals	Between Sprinklers		Make	Model	Riser Height	Nozzle Diameter

Describe the age & condition of your mainline and lateral lines: _____

What type of mainline and lateral lines do you have (i.e. buried aluminum, above-ground aluminum, buried PVC, buried high-density polyethylene, etc.)?

How often and for how long do you irrigate during average summer conditions? (Assume no rainfall or frost.)

Describe how you monitor soil moisture, and how you determine when to irrigate:

At what pressure do you operate your pump(s) for irrigation (psi)? _____ For frost protection? _____

Under typical operating conditions, what is the pressure at the sprinkler nozzles (psi)? _____

Soils:

Describe your soil type (coarse sand, fine sand, peat, etc.): _____

What is the approximate rooting depth of your cranberry plants? _____

At what depth below the surface of the beds is the water table? _____

Are you able to control the depth to the water table? _____

How much does this fluctuate throughout the growing season? _____

Describe the general condition of your dikes, and explain current dike maintenance activities: _____

Describe existing or potential erosion sources or unstable sites (streambanks, shorelines, ditch banks, sand stockpiles, etc.):

Wildlife:

List species of wildlife found on or near your property: _____

Describe current efforts to improve wildlife habitat: _____

Describe current efforts to control or limit damage from nuisance wildlife and animal pests: _____

Explain plans, goals, or objectives to continue to manage the wildlife found on your property: _____

Plants:

Do you actively manage your forested land? (circle one) Y N

Explain your goals or objectives for your forestland (if managed) or provide a general description of the uses or values provided by your forests that are important to you:

Describe your forests by listing known plant species, extents of forest types, etc.: _____

List any forestland conservation programs (WI Forest Landowner Grant Program, Forest Health Stewardship Incentives Program [SIP], Forest Landowner Enhancement Program [FLEP], etc.) or forest tax programs (Managed Forest Law, Forest Crop Law, etc.) that you participate in:

List noxious and/or invasive weeds that you find in or near your forests, and describe efforts to control them:

Do you farm other crops besides cranberries? If so, list those: _____

Air/Water Quality:

Describe where pesticides, fertilizers, and fuel are stored and mixed, including a description of your ability to contain a potential spill:

Do you have a plan in place to deal with hazardous spills, and an action plan and equipment in place to contain and clean up a spill? Who do you notify in the event of a spill? Describe:

Do you have a plan to properly treat accidental exposure in the event of human contact with chemicals during pesticide mixing or application? Explain: _____

How/where do you dispose of used containers, unused chemicals, and/or hazardous wastes? Explain:

List the certified pesticide applicator(s) for your marsh:

Human/Social Aspects:

Describe any special considerations or limitations with regards to land ownership (rented/leased land, pending purchases/sales, easements, rights-of-way, etc.), which may affect implementation of a conservation plan:

Are potential management changes or the implementation of new conservation practices limited by the availability of labor, equipment, or machinery? Describe:

List available equipment or special skills, which may be used to implement new practices:

Describe any known archeological, historical (50+ years old), or cultural features present on your land:

List any existing contracts, easements, or agreements involving technical or financial assistance, which may restrict new conservation practices or projects (i.e. do you have existing conservation contracts?):

Notes & Questions

Thank you and Congratulations!

You have taken the first steps towards the development of a Whole Farm Conservation Plan for your marsh.

A conservation plan is designed to accomplish the dual goals of
Resource Sustainability and Farm Profitability.

The completion of a conservation plan is also helpful as you consider applying for financial assistance through the variety of conservation programs that are available to help you implement your plan.

To complete your plan, please contact your local NRCS conservationist, (www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov) or the Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers Association (www.wiscran.org).

