NRCS and Drought

Conservation Planning & Implementation to Address Drought

Pima County LDIG
July 8, 2020
Conservation Plan

- At the land owner's request, the NRCS employee will visit the farm or ranch.

- NRCS employee will:
  - Meet with the owner/operator to discuss the agricultural operation.
  - Do a complete inventory of the resources on the property.
  - Collect data in the field.
  - Create documents to be included in a conservation plan.
  - Make recommendations and formulate alternatives.
  - Present and discuss alternatives.
  - Document the decisions and develop a "schedule of operations".
  - Provide the owner/manager with a complete conservation plan packet.
Conservation Plan

- Once a conservation plan is in place it can be used as a “conservation guide” to the farm or ranch.

- The practices listed in the conservation plan do not have to be implemented all at once.

- It is important to maintain the conservation plan.

- Because conservation plans may be spaced out over many years, it may be necessary to evaluate and update the plan from time to time.
  - Make sure planned practices are being implemented and maintained.
  - Determine if there are new concerns that need to be addressed.
  - Be sure to apply monitoring activities on a regular basis to determine the success of completed practices.
Implementing Practices

- It is time to start planning projects!

- The owner/operator may choose to implement practices without any financial assistance and just request technical assistance.

- Or, the owner/operator may need both technical and financial assistance to implement practices.
  - This is where Farm Bill Programs, like EQIP, come in.
  - There may also be opportunities to get financial assistance through another agency or organization.

- Practices implemented with the help of NRCS must follow NRCS standards, specifications and designs.

- Implemented practices must be maintained for the entire life expectancy of the particular practice and some practices may require additional monitoring.

- If a ranch consists of a combination of private, state and federal land a Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP) may be required to qualify for funding sources, like EQIP.
Coordinated Resource Management Plans

- Land management in southern Arizona often requires the involvement of multiple state and federal government agencies.

- “CRM” planning provides the mechanism for individuals or groups to get assistance from multiple agencies in planning or implementing on the ground projects.

- The “Arizona Coordinated Resource Management Handbook & Guideline” and the “Arizona NRCS Coordinated Resource Management Plan Guidance” document are two sources that can help you to develop a CRM plan.
Priority Resource Concerns

- **Soil Condition**: Compaction, Organic Matter Depletion, Rangeland Site Stability
- **Water Quantity**: Insufficient Use of Irrigation Water, Rangeland Hydrologic Cycle
- **Plant Condition**: Excessive Plant Pest Pressure, Undesirable Productivity, Health & Vigor
- **Water Quality**: Excessive Suspended Sediment and Turbidity in Surface Water
- **Domestic Animals**: Inadequate Stock Water, Inadequate Feed & Forage

OTHER APPLICABLE

- **Fish and Wildlife**: Fish and Wildlife Species Listed or Proposed for Listing Under the Endangered Species Act
Other Resource Concerns

- **Soil Erosion**: Irrigation Induced Erosion, Wind Erosion, Concentrated Flow
- **Water Quality Degradation**: Excessive Sediment in Surface Water, Excess Pathogens From Manure
- **Degraded Plant Condition**: Inadequate Structure and Composition
- **Fish and Wildlife**: Habitat Degradation
What Kind of Practices Could Be Used on a Ranch?

Some common practices on rangeland include:

- **Brush Management**
  - Chemical
  - Mechanical

- **Fence Development**
  - Prescribed Grazing Management

- **Water Development**
  - Well, Pumping Plant, Pipeline, Storage, Trough
  - Wildlife and Livestock

- **Prescribed Grazing**
  - Grazing Management Plan
  - Deferred Grazing Following Treatment

- **Erosion Control Structures**
  - Check Dams
  - Drop Structures
What Kind of Practices Could Be Used on a Farm?

- Some common practices on farmland include:
  
  **Irrigation System**
  - Micro Irrigation
  - Sprinkler
  - Irrigation Pipeline
  - Structure for Water Control
  - Irrigation Ditch Lining

  **Management System**
  - Irrigation Water Management
  - Conservation Crop Rotation
  - Nutrient Management
  - Integrated Pest Management
  - Forage Harvest Management
  - Residue and Tillage Management
Contact the NRCS Field Office

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https://www.usda.gov/topics/disaster/drought