

NRCS and Drought

Conservation Planning & Implementation to Address Drought

Pima County LDIG
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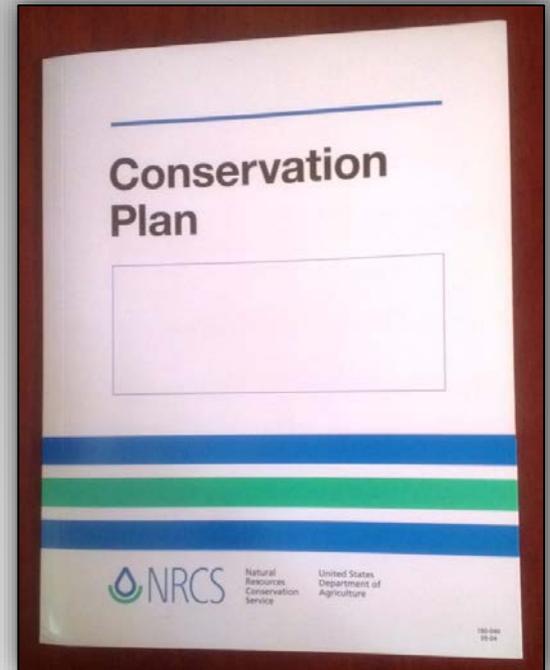
Conservation Plan

- ❖ At the land owners 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>