

A Guide for Organic Farmers and Ranchers



NRCS State Technical Committees and Local Working Groups

2010

Welcome!

This Guide will show how you can help shape federal Farm Bill conservation programs to better serve organic farmers and ranchers in your state by participating as a member of the State Technical Committee (STC) or a Local Working Group (LWG) for USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The Guide provides basic information on the role of NRCS State Technical Committees and Local Working Groups. Organic farmers and ranchers must participate on NRCS State Technical Committees and Local Working Groups to educate NRCS on an on-going basis about organic farming and ranching systems and to have a voice in shaping the implementation of the conservation programs in their state. It also has information on how you can join with other organic farmers and ranchers, as well as sustainable and organic farming organizations and conservation groups, to ensure that the Farm Bill's conservation programs recognize and reward the benefits of organic farming and ranching systems in protecting natural resources.

The Guide is part of a larger collaborative project funded by Organic Valley's Farmers Advocating for Organics committee, and a critical step in the long march for respect and integration of organic agriculture into USDA's programs. We want to thank the members of Organic Valley and the Farmers Advocating for Organics Committee for supporting our work. Their help is greatly appreciated.

Our overall goal for this "Organic Integration" project is to build leaders in the organic community who will level the agricultural policy playing field for organic systems. We are starting with the federal Farm Bill conservation programs, as this is where we believe we can achieve the greatest impact for organic in the near term and also where we see the greatest need.

We have conducted workshops to inform organic farmers and ranchers on how to enroll in federal conservation programs and to encourage their participation. Some of our organizations have been involved in training NRCS staff on organic systems. But more is needed. We are currently conducting workshops for organic farmers and ranchers to delve into the workings of the STCs and LWGs and learn proactive and positive ways to influence their outcomes.

We know organic farming and ranching systems protect natural resources. They provide economic opportunities for beginning and small and mid-scale family farmers and ranchers. And they help build strong rural communities. Now it is time for these benefits to be fully reflected in our agricultural policy; this project is moving us in that direction.



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NRCS State Technical Committee or Local Working Group?

This Guide starts with information about participating on NRCS State Technical Committees (STCs), the state-level Advisory Committees to NRCS State Conservationists. It then discusses participating on NRCS Local Working Groups (LWGs), which are subcommittees of the STCs that provide advice about implementation of Farm Bill conservation programs at the local level. Some farmers and ranchers participate on both an LWG and the STC. Others decide about participating on either an STC or a LWG based on the time commitment, amount of travel required, specific issues addressed, and so forth. This Guide will discuss some of the differences between serving on an STC and a LWG. Increased participation by organic farmers and ranchers on both STCs and LWGs is critical.

NRCS State Technical Committees

What are NRCS State Technical Committees?

NRCS State Technical Committees (STCs) are advisory committees for NRCS State Conservationists. Each state has an NRCS State Conservationist who is responsible for implementing NRCS Farm Bill conservation programs at the state level. Many important decisions about conservation programs are made at the state level, and the federal Farm Bill requires NRCS State Conservationists to consider the advice of their STCs in making those decisions. In fact, the National NRCS office directs all State Conservationists to not only consider the advice of the STCs but also urges them to **give “strong consideration to the STC’s recommendations on NRCS programs, initiatives and activities.”**

Why should organic farmers and ranchers participate on STCs?

- 1 *To ensure full implementation of conservation program measures in the 2008 Farm Bill intended to provide organic farmers and ranchers with cost-share funding and conservation technical assistance for organic systems.*

Sustainable and organic farming organizations worked diligently for a 2008 Farm Bill that significantly increased the attention and resources for organic farmers and ranchers in NRCS conservation programs. Key measures include a new Organic Initiative in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and a requirement in the Conservation Stewardship Program to provide a crosswalk between the conservation plan for the program and the organic systems plan. In addition, NRCS has developed a Conservation Activity Plan for Organic Agriculture with recommended conservation practice standards and other administrative materials. NRCS will need advice from organic farmers and ranchers to ensure that these important provisions and measures for organic systems are implemented properly.

- 2 *To ensure that organic farmers and ranchers receive a fair share of Farm Bill conservation program funding and assistance that reflects the benefits of organic systems to environmental and natural resource protection.*

Organic farmers and ranchers are also eligible for the more general Farm Bill program funding available to all farmers and ranchers. Ranking of applications in many of the Farm Bill programs depends on NRCS recognition of the environmental benefits from different types of farming systems and practices. Organic farmers and ranchers must gain a voice on the STCs to help educate NRCS about the environmental benefits of organic systems so that these systems can be appropriately ranked.

- 3 *To increase the voice for organic agriculture within NRCS and other federal and state agencies and organizations.*

The 2008 Farm Bill revised the statutory provision for the State Technical Committees to require that NRCS includes agricultural producers representing the variety of crops and livestock or poultry raised within the State. NRCS recognizes that this representation is meant to cover different types of production systems, including organic systems. It is critical that organic farmers and ranchers accept this invitation to participate on STCs.

Who is eligible to participate on STCs?

The following groups and individuals are eligible for participation on STCs:

- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff
- USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) staff
- Members of the Farm Service Agency State Committee
- U.S. Forest Service staff
- USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture staff (research)
- Representatives of each of the federally recognized American Indian Tribal governments and Alaska Native Corporations encompassing 100,000 acres or more in the state
- Representatives of the Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts in the state
- State departments and agencies within the state, including the:
 - Agricultural Agency
 - Fish and Wildlife Agency
 - Forestry Agency
 - Soil and Water Conservation Agency
 - Water Resources Agency
- Agricultural producers representing the variety of crops and livestock or poultry raised within the state
- Owners of nonindustrial private forest land
- Nonprofit organizations with demonstrable conservation expertise and experience working with agricultural producers in the state (such as Trout Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, the Nature Conservancy, etc.)
- Agribusiness
- Other federal agencies and persons knowledgeable about economic and environmental impacts of conservation techniques and programs, as needed and invited by the NRCS State Conservationist.



With this new attention to organic in the 2008 Farm Bill, it is imperative to educate NRCS about organic farming systems and their benefit to natural resources protection.



Conventional farming organizations and agribusinesses with a stake in selling agricultural inputs to conventional farmers have been participating on STCs for years. Before the 2008 Farm Bill was enacted, organic farmers and ranchers got involved with NRCS in only a few key states. Their work in getting recognition and resources from the 2002 Farm Bill laid the groundwork for getting specific resources for organic systems in the 2008 Farm Bill.

With this new attention to organic in the 2008 Farm Bill, it is imperative to educate NRCS about organic farming systems and their benefit to natural resources protection. In addition, participation on STCs will enable organic farmers and ranchers to meet others in their states who need to learn more about the benefits of organic farming, including key people in state and federal agencies and non-profit sustainable agriculture and conservation organizations. Some of these agencies and groups have additional resources available for organic farmers and ranchers and can also be strong partners and allies in promoting organic agriculture in their state. For example, in Nebraska, the Department of Environmental Quality also participates on the STC. They understand the environmental benefits of organic farming systems and funded an education and outreach effort to provide additional support for the EQIP Organic Initiative.

On the flip side, many conservation groups do not necessarily understand organic agriculture and have established relationships with mainstream, conventional agriculture groups over the years. Through these relationships they have developed ways to support conservation in a manner that largely maintains the status quo. Therefore, it is critical that organic farmers and ranchers participate and work to develop these relationships as well. Some of these key conservation groups are just not aware of alternative ways of production, such as organic, that offer significant conservation benefits.

How do STCs operate?

The NRCS State Conservationist is the chair of the STC and is required to ensure the following:

- The State Technical Committee should meet at least twice a year at a time and place designated by the State Conservationist. Other meetings may be held at the discretion of the State Conservationist. Any USDA agency, however, can make a request of the State Conservationist for a meeting.
- State Technical Committee and subcommittee meetings are open to the public.
- The meetings are conducted as an open discussion among members, with focus on USDA programs and activities.
- The State Conservationist will inform the State Technical Committee about the decisions made in response to all State Technical Committee recommendations within 90 days. This notification will be made in writing to all State Technical Committee members and posted to the NRCS state website.

STC Subcommittees

The State Conservationists form subcommittees where members focus on a specific conservation program or issue and provide recommendations. For example, the subcommittee for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) focuses on that program and all its components and special initiatives (including the EQIP Organic Initiative, the Agriculture Water Enhancement Program and any state-specific special initiatives).

The subcommittee level is where the State Conservationist and the NRCS state staff who are managing a program seek specific input from the State Technical Committee members. As a member of the full State Technical Committee, you have the option to participate on any of the subcommittees.



The STC Subcommittees are very important in making progress on integrating organic provisions into the conservation programs.

The STC Subcommittees are very important in making progress on integrating organic provisions into the conservation programs. Usually the full STC does not add any new or additional ideas but accepts input provided by subcommittees. In order to really influence the STC process and ultimately the program implementation, organic farmers and ranchers must participate in these subcommittees.

Committee meetings may be in person or by conference call. If you cannot be a member of a subcommittee, you can still provide input by communicating directly to the subcommittee chair.

Each state chooses priority issues and the practices that address these issues. For example, if manure management is an issue, promoting grazing practices and composting of manure can be added to the practices cost-shared in the state in addition to the typical funding of large manure lagoons.

What kinds of issues do STCs address?

NRCS STCs meet regularly to provide information, analysis, and recommendations to the NRCS State Conservationist. The STCs have no implementation or enforcement authority but NRCS is directed to give strong consideration to the STC recommendations when administering the programs.

The STC provides input on the following federal conservation programs:

- The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), which includes other special projects or state selected set-asides that operate under EQIP.
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program Organic Initiative (EQIP OI)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- Cooperative Conservation Partnerships Initiative (CCPI)
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
- Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)
- Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP)
- Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)
- Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)
- Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)
- Technical Service Providers (TSPs)



How do you become a member of an STC?

Individuals or groups wanting to participate on an STC within a specific state may submit a request to the State Conservationist explaining their interest and outlining their credentials for becoming an STC member. See the contact information for your state in the back of this Guide.

The process works as follows:

- The State Conservationist will respond to requests for State Technical Committee membership in writing within a reasonable period of time, not to exceed 60 days.
- Decisions of the State Conservationist concerning membership on the committee are final and not appealable.
- State Technical Committee membership will be posted on the NRCS state website.

What kinds of recommendations do STCs provide?

Typical STC recommendations sought by State Conservationists include but are not limited to the following:

- **Priority natural resource concerns** (air quality, energy, plants, soil erosion, soil quality, water quality, water quantity) - the State Conservationist, with advice from the State Technical Committee, identifies their state's priority natural resource concerns which are used to help guide which applicants are awarded assistance through conservation programs. Identification of priority resource concerns significantly impacts the direction of both EQIP and the CSP.
- **Criteria for priority watersheds for program focus.** Some programs call for identification of priority watersheds in order to better target results. The State Conservationist will seek input from the STC on how those watersheds should be selected. The Cooperative Conservation Partnerships Initiative, for example, is a watershed scale program.
- **Mixing programs and practices intended to address resource concerns** can provide for creative ways to combine federal conservation resources with state programs and other local programs or initiatives. In Nebraska, for example, the STC provided input on how to target EQIP and the WHIP program to support the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project – a special project designed to conserve Nebraska's flora, fauna and natural habitats – and coordinated this effort with a state program for additional dollars in high priority areas.
- **Payment schedules** are a list of all eligible practice and/or activity payment rates for a defined geographical area. Usually states only have one payment schedule for each program, except where compelling economic differences among regions within a state justify the development of separate payment schedules. States are supposed to coordinate across state boundaries in order to ensure “reasonably consistent” cost data and payment rates within similar geographic areas. STCs review and provide important input on payment schedules.
- **Cost-share rates** are the percentages of the conservation practices costs that NRCS pays farmers to implement these practices. The STC provides input on cost-share rates for certain practices.
- **Criteria for ranking program applications.** STCs identify and provide input on the criteria for ranking applications for programs, including the type of farming systems and/or practices that are funded.
- **Conservation practice standards** are the descriptions and specifications of the conservation practices approved by NRCS for which farmers receive cost-share assistance to implement on their farms. NRCS Headquarters has a comprehensive list of practice standards. States, with input from STCs, determine which practice standards are available for specific programs in their states, and may also add criteria and requirements to the practice standards.
- **Innovative conservation practices and approaches.** STCs can recommend alternative practices that better reflect the diversity inherent in organic systems, or allow for a greater number of smaller contracts rather than a few very large contracts. For example, rather than using conservation dollars to fund large manure storage facilities, STCs can recommend funding composting operations or manure digesters shared by several farms.
- **Outreach to historically underserved populations.** Historically underserved populations are those that have not traditionally accessed or been served by NRCS conservation programs. This includes but is not limited to organic, minority, small-scale, women, immigrant, and limited resource producers. STCs can make recommendations about which populations in their state are historically underserved and provide suggestions on how to reach out to these groups.



Suggestions for integrating Organic Agriculture into STC input

The following are important ways to integrate organic agriculture into STC recommendations:

- Increase the ranking of conservation crop rotation and cover crops, especially in relation to conventional no-till practices.
- Recommend practices that encourage grass-based operations, such as prescribed/rotational grazing, animal walkways, and forage management.
- Encourage support for animal waste management practices consistent with grass-based systems; discourage practices that are part of large confinement operations such as liquid manure lagoons. Encourage more composting operations by increased ranking of and education about manure composting.
- Encourage recognition that organic farming practices, such as cover crops, provide more than one benefit and that rankings and payments should reflect the sum of contributions. For example, cover crops are used to control soil erosion, improve soil tilth and fertility, improve weed management, break disease and pest cycles and, in certain cases, provide the mulch for an organic no-till system.
- Increase the ranking of field borders and conservation cover crops, which provide pollinator habitat. These plantings can be put in place in the organic farmers' buffer zones and provide habitat for beneficial insects.
- Expand the interpretation of the NRCS pest management practice standard to increase the ranking of enhancements such as predator (bats and birds) habitat and housing, trapping, pheromone disrupters, and other non-chemical practices common in organic systems. Currently, organic farmers do not gain many ranking points under this standard, since the standard is interpreted to provide dollars only to those farmers who are lessening their use of toxic substances.
- Fund pastures per acre the same as row crops per acre, especially those that have been converted from row crops to permanent cover crops.
- Review job working sheets that require the use of conventional fertilizers, synthetic herbicides or treated seeds to implement a specific practice (such as seeding a riparian area) and allow for the use of organically approved fertility inputs and activities as well as untreated seed.
- Mandate that all NRCS district conservationists have organic training at least once per year.
- Improve training for crop consultants, nutrient management planners, conservation planners, pest management planners and technical service providers so they can work with existing organic farmers as well as provide the organic option to farmers who may be thinking of transitioning to organic or may not know that organic is an option for them.





NRCS Local Working Groups

What are NRCS Local Working Groups?

While the STCs provide input to the State Conservationist regarding implementation of federal conservation programs on a statewide level, NRCS Local Working Groups (LWGs) function at a much more local level. LWGs provide community-level input and recommendations to NRCS District Conservationists on the local implementation of federal conservation programs. The 2008 Farm Bill paved the way for this input at the local level by exempting LWGs from the Federal Advisory Committee Act which means they can now receive input from the public.

Additionally, the 2008 Farm Bill expanded the advisory role of the State Technical Committees to include input from LWGs, which means the input provided at the local level can also be directed to the State Conservationist to inform STC discussions.

District Conservationists are responsible for implementing NRCS conservation programs at the district level. NRCS districts usually coincide with county boundaries though occasionally a district will include two counties. In some states, such as Nebraska, they are based on watersheds.

Many decisions about how a federal conservation program works on the ground are made at the local level.



Why should organic farmers and ranchers participate on LWGs?

Many decisions about how a federal conservation program works on the ground are made at the local level. Organic farmers and ranchers need to participate at this level so that their interests are represented and they can be a source of knowledge and information for the District Conservationist. If knowledgeable organic producers don't show up and participate, then organic systems won't be recognized and supported appropriately.

Who can participate on LWGs?

The LWGs are chaired by the District Conservationist and are intended to include agricultural producers and members from a wide variety of natural resource and agricultural interests including individuals from soil, water, wetland, plant, forestry and wildlife sciences familiar with agriculture and natural resources issues in the local community. The LWG must also include historically underserved groups such as minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and socially and economically disadvantaged groups.

How do LWGs operate?

The District Conservationists must do the following:

- Ensure that LWGs provide recommendations to the District Conservationist (or Designated Conservationist) and the State Conservationist on local natural resource priorities and criteria for conservation activities and programs.
- Ensure that LWGs meet at least once each year.
- Ensure that LWG meetings are open to the public.
- Provide public notice of LWG meetings at least 14 calendar days prior to the meeting.
- Lead the LWG discussion.
- Ensure that one person speaks at a time and each person is allowed to speak.
- May establish timelines for speaking.
- May defer agenda items to the next meeting if time does not allow.
- Make LWG meeting minutes available within 30 days.
- Provide LWG recommendations to the State Technical Committee Chair/DC within 30 days.

How do you become a member of an LWG?

Individuals or groups wanting to become a member of a Local Working Group may submit a request to the Local Working Group Chairperson and the NRCS District Conservationist (or Designated Conservationist) that explains their interest and outlines their credentials for becoming a member of the Local Working Group. The District Conservationist (or Designated Conservationist) will assist the soil and water conservation district in making decisions concerning membership of the group. You can be a member of both the State Technical Committee and your Local Working Group.

What kinds of issues do LWGs address?

LWGs meet at least once a year to provide recommendations to the District Conservationist (or Designated Conservationist) and the State Conservationist on local natural resource priorities and criteria for conservation activities and programs.

Recommendations and input from LWGs for supporting organic agriculture is critical to ensuring federal conservation programs to appropriately recognize and support organic systems. So far, the experience has varied from state to state with some areas demonstrating success and others having less of an impact. More information on recommendations to move organic forward in federal conservation programs is presented below. STCs monitor what each LWG recommends and may adjust their priorities based on the issues identified on the local level.

Local Working Group recommendations have significant impact on the implementation of programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). For example, the EQIP program uses a general ranking that emphasizes both national and state priorities. The state priorities include the seven resource concerns developed from the State Technical Committee and EQIP Subcommittee. Points are assigned to those priority areas. The Local Working Groups can influence the number of points assigned to any one area and/or practice.

Participation on LWGs does not take a lot of time and you can make significant positive change in your local region.

The local working groups discuss the resource concerns in their county, which may change from year to year, as well as the best practices to deal with those concerns. For example, if soil quality and prevention of erosion is the main concern, the local working group can choose to rank filter strips, buffer strips or diversion dams as items that could rank high in their county. The NRCS also can target program funds to encourage producers to expand their rotations from strictly row crops to including small grains and legumes and/or the use of cover crops to increase water retention and hold soil throughout the calendar year. These NRCS financial incentives, such as those available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the special Organic Initiative, are useful to existing organic farmers, as well as those transitioning to organic.

Participation on LWGs does not take a lot of time and you can make significant positive change in your local region.





Suggestions for integrating Organic Agriculture into LWG input

The following are important ways to integrate organic agriculture into LWG recommendations:

- Promote practices that support small and mid-sized farm rather than large confinement operations.
- Set priorities for soil and water conservation that better reflect organic and sustainable farming practices such as conservation crop rotations instead of no-till with herbicides.
- Incorporate a holistic view of agriculture, giving higher ranking to practices that have multiple benefits such as cover crops which offer weed, disease and pest control in addition to protecting soil from wind and water erosion.
- Encourage local working groups to visit organic farms in your county so they can enhance their understanding of organic agriculture.
- Encourage a healthy discussion of conservation issues in the county and how they can be addressed in a positive manner through transition to organic agriculture.

State-by-State NRCS State Office Contact Information

Alabama

Natural Resources Conservation Service
PO Box 311
3381 Skyway Drive
Auburn AL 36830
Phone: 334-887-4500
Fax: 334-887-4551
www.al.nrcs.usda.gov

Alaska

Natural Resources Conservation Service
800 West Evergreen Avenue, Suite 100
Palmer AK 99645
Phone: 907-761-7760
Fax: 907-761-7790
www.ak.nrcs.usda.gov

Arizona

Natural Resources Conservation Service
230 North 1st Avenue, Suite 509
Phoenix AZ 85003
Phone: (602) 280-8801
www.az.nrcs.usda.gov

Arkansas

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Room 3416, Federal Building
700 West Capitol Avenue
Little Rock AR 72201
Phone: 501-301-3100
Fax: 501-301-3194
www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov

California

Natural Resources Conservation Service
430 G Street #4164
Davis CA 95616
Phone: 530-792-5600
Fax: 530-792-5790
www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov

Colorado

Natural Resources Conservation Service
655 Parfet Street, Room E200C
Lakewood CO 80215
Phone: 720-544-2810
Fax: 720-544-2962
www.co.nrcs.usda.gov

Connecticut

Natural Resources Conservation Service
344 Merrow Road, Suite A
Tolland CT 06084-3917
Phone: 860-871-4011
Phone: 860-875-6928
Fax: 860-871-4054
www.ct.nrcs.usda.gov

Delaware

Natural Resources Conservation Service
1221 College Park Drive, Suite 100
Dover DE 19904
Phone: 302-678-4160
Fax: 302-678-0843
www.de.nrcs.usda.gov

Florida

Natural Resources Conservation Service
2614 NW 43rd Avenue
Gainesville FL 32606
Phone: 352-338-9500
Fax: 352-338-9574
www.fl.nrcs.usda.gov

Georgia

Natural Resources Conservation Service
355 East Hancock Avenue
Stop Number 200
Athens GA 30601
Phone: 706-546-2272
Fax: 706-546-2120
www.ga.nrcs.usda.gov

Hawaii

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Prince Kuhio Federal Building
300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 4-118
Honolulu HI 96850
Phone: 808-541-2600
Fax: 808-541-1335
www.hi.nrcs.usda.gov

Idaho

Natural Resources Conservation Service
9173 West Barnes Drive, Suite C
Boise ID 83709
Phone: 208-378-5700
Fax: 208-378-5735
www.id.nrcs.usda.gov

Illinois

Natural Resources Conservation Service
2118 W Park Court
Champaign IL 61821
Phone: 217-353-6600
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www.il.nrcs.usda.gov

Indiana

Natural Resources Conservation Service
6013 Lakeside Boulevard
Indianapolis IN 46278
Phone: 317-290-3200
Fax: 317-290-3225
www.in.nrcs.usda.gov

Iowa

Natural Resources Conservation Service
693 Federal Building
210 Walnut Street
Des Moines IA 50309
Phone: 515-284-4769
Fax: 515-284-4394
www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov

Kansas

Natural Resources Conservation Service
760 South Broadway
Salina KS 67401
Phone: 785-823-4500
Fax: 785-823-4540
www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov

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Natural Resources Conservation Service
771 Corporate Drive, Suite 210
Lexington KY 40503
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Fax: 859-224-7399
www.ky.nrcs.usda.gov

Louisiana

Natural Resources Conservation Service
3737 Government Street
Alexandria LA 71302
Phone: 318-473-7751
Fax: 318-473-7626
www.la.nrcs.usda.gov

Maine

Natural Resources Conservation Service
967 Illinois Avenue, Suite 3
Bangor ME 04401
Phone: 207-990-9100, ext 3
Fax: 207-990-9599
www.me.nrcs.usda.gov

Maryland

Natural Resources Conservation Service
John Hanson Business Center
339 Busch's Frontage Road, Suite 301
Annapolis MD 21409
Phone: 410-757-0861
Fax: 410-757-0687
www.md.nrcs.usda.gov

Massachusetts

Natural Resources Conservation Service
451 West Street
Amherst MA 01002
Phone: 413-253-4350
Fax: 413-253-4375
www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov

Michigan

Natural Resources Conservation Service
3001 Coolidge Road, Suite 250
East Lansing MI 48823
Phone: 517-324-5270
Fax: 517-324-5171
www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov

Minnesota

Natural Resources Conservation Service
375 Jackson Street, Suite 600
St. Paul MN 55101
Phone: 651-602-7900
Fax: 651-602-7914
www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

Mississippi

Natural Resources Conservation Service
100 Capitol Street
Federal Building , Suite 1321
Jackson MS 39269
Phone: 601-965-5205, ext 130
Fax: 601-965-4940
www.ms.nrcs.usda.gov

Missouri

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Parkade Center Suite 250
601 Business Loop 70 West
Columbia MO 65203-2546
Phone: 573-876-0900
Fax: 573-876-0913
www.mo.nrcs.usda.gov

Montana

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10 East Babcock Street
Federal Building, Room 443
Bozeman MT 59715
Phone: 406-587-6811
Fax: 406-587-6761
www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov

Nebraska

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Room 152 Federal Building
100 Centennial Mall North
Lincoln NE 68508
Phone: 402-437-5300
Fax: 402-437-5327
www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov

Nevada

Natural Resources Conservation Service
1365 Corporate Boulevard
Reno NV 89502
Phone: 775-857-8500
Fax: 775-857-8525
www.nv.nrcs.usda.gov

New Hampshire

New Hampshire NRCS
Federal Building, 2 Madbury Road
Durham NH 03824
Phone: 603-868-7581
Fax: 603-868-5301
www.nh.nrcs.usda.gov

New Jersey

Natural Resources Conservation Service
220 Davidson Avenue, 4th Floor
Somerset NJ 08873
Phone: 732-537-6040
Fax: 732-537-6095
www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov

New Mexico

Natural Resources Conservation Service
6200 Jefferson NE
Albuquerque NM 87109
Phone: 800-410-2067
Fax: 505-761-4462
www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov

New York

Natural Resources Conservation Service
441 South Salina Street, Suite 354
The Galleries of Syracuse
Syracuse NY 13202
Phone: 315-477-6524
Fax: 315-477-6560
www.ny.nrcs.usda.gov

North Carolina

Natural Resources Conservation Service
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Fax: 919-873-2156
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North Dakota

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220 East Rosser Avenue
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Bismarck ND 58501
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www.nd.nrcs.usda.gov

Ohio

Natural Resources Conservation Service
200 North High Street, Room 522
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Oregon

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One Credit Union Place, Suite 340
Harrisburg PA 17110
Phone: 717-237-2100
Fax: 717-237-2238
www.pa.nrcs.usda.gov

Rhode Island

Natural Resources Conservation Service
60 Quaker Lane
Warwick RI 02886
Phone: 401-828-1300
Fax: 401-828-0433
www.ri.nrcs.usda.gov

South Carolina

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Strom Thurmond Federal Building
1835 Assembly Street Room 950
Columbia SC 29201
Phone: 803-253-3935
Fax: 803-253-3670
www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov

South Dakota

Natural Resources Conservation Service
200 4th Street Southwest
Federal Building, Room 203
Huron SD 57350
Phone: 605-352-1200
Fax: 605-352-1288
www.sd.nrcs.usda.gov

Tennessee

Natural Resources Conservation Service
675 US Court
801 Broadway
Nashville TN 37203
Phone: 615-277-2531
Fax: 615-277-2577
www.tn.nrcs.usda.gov

Texas

Natural Resources Conservation Service
W.R. Poage Federal Building
101 South Main Street
Temple TX 76501
Phone: 254-742-9800
Fax: 254-742-9819
www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov

Utah

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Wallace F. Bennett Federal Building
125 South State Street, Room 4402
Salt Lake City UT 84138-1100
Phone: 801-524-4550
Fax: 801-524-4403
www.ut.nrcs.usda.gov

Vermont

Natural Resources Conservation Service
356 Mountain View Drive, Suite 105
Colchester VT 05446
Phone: 802-951-6796
Fax: 802-951-6327
www.vt.nrcs.usda.gov

Virginia

Natural Resources Conservation Service
1606 Santa Rosa Road, Suite 209
Richmond VA 23229
Phone: 804-287-1691
Fax: 804-287-1737
www.va.nrcs.usda.gov

Washington

Natural Resources Conservation Service
316 W Boone, Suite 450
Spokane WA 99201
Phone: 509-323-2900
Fax: 509-323-2909
www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov

West Virginia

Natural Resources Conservation Service
75 High Street, Room 301
Morgantown WV 26505
Phone: 304-284-7540
Fax: 304-284-4839
www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov

Wisconsin

Natural Resources Conservation Service
8030 Excelsior Drive
Madison WI 53717
Phone: 608-662-4422
Fax: 608-662-4430
www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov

Wyoming

Natural Resources Conservation Service
PO Box 33124
100 East B Street, 3rd Floor
Casper WY 82602
Phone: 307-233-6750
Fax: 307-233-6753
www.wy.nrcs.usda.gov

RESOURCES: Where to find conservation program information

Below is information regarding where to learn more about federal conservation programs administered by NRCS. Most of this information is available via the internet. If you do not have access to the internet but need additional information about these programs, please contact Traci Bruckner with the Center for Rural Affairs by calling her at (402) 687-2103, Ext. 1016.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- NRCS website provides application information as well as information regarding previous years sign-up and contracts. Find more on their website at - <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/>
- Center for Rural Affairs Farm Bill Helpline can answer questions you have about the program. Call the Helpline at (402) 687-2100 and ask for the Farm Bill Helpline or email tracib@cfra.org
- National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition Farm Bill Guide can be found here - <http://sustainableagriculture.net/publications/grassrootsguide/conservation-environment/environmental-quality-incentives-program/>
- USDA Publication: Building Sustainable Farms, Ranchers and Communities - http://attra.ncat.org/guide/a_m/eqip.html
- MOSES Organic Info Line - 1-888-551-GROW (4769)

Environmental Quality Incentives Program Organic Initiative (EQIP OI)

- NRCS website provides application and program information. Find more on their website at
- ATTRA website program information can be found here - <http://attra.ncat.org/eqip/>
- Center for Rural Affairs Farm Bill Helpline can answer questions you have about the program. Call the Helpline at (402) 687-2100 and ask for the Farm Bill Helpline or email tracib@cfra.org
- Organic Farming Research Foundation's EQIP OI Resource Page can be found here - http://ofrf.org/policy/federal_legislation/farm_bill_implementation/eqip_oi_resource_page.html
- MOSES Organic Info Line - 1-888-551-GROW (4769)

Conservation Stewardship Program

- NRCS website provides application and program information. Find more on their website at - http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/new_csp/csp.html
- ATTRA website program information can be found here - <http://attra.ncat.org/csp/>
- Center for Rural Affairs Farm Bill Helpline can answer questions you have about the program. Call the Helpline at (402) 687-2100 and ask for the Farm Bill Helpline or email tracib@cfra.org
- National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition publishes a Farmers Guide to the CSP that you can find on their website at - <http://sustainableagriculture.net/>
- Organic Farming Research Foundation's CSP Resource Page can be found here - http://ofrf.org/policy/federal_legislation/farm_bill_implementation/csp_resource_page.html
- MOSES Organic Info Line - 1-888-551-GROW (4769)

Cooperative Conservation Partnerships Initiative (CCPI)

·NRCS website provides program information. Find more here - <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/ccpi/index.html>

·National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition provides information here -

<http://sustainableagriculture.net/publications/grassrootsguide/conservation-environment/cooperative-conservation-partnership-initiative/>

Conservation Reserve Program Transition Option

·Farm Service Agency provides program information here -

http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/newsReleases?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=pfs&newstype=prfactsheet&type=detail&item=pf_20100514_distr_en_tip10.html

·Center for Rural Affairs Farm Bill Helpline can answer questions you have about the program. Call the Helpline at (402) 687-2100 and ask for the Farm Bill Helpline or email tracib@cfra.org

Mississippi Healthy River Basin Healthy Watershed Initiative

·NRCS provides information on this special initiative on their website here -

http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/mrbi/mrbi_overview.html



you can make significant positive change

Notes

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Harriet Behar, Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service
Traci Bruckner, Center for Rural Affairs
Tracy Lerman and Mark Lipson, Organic Farming Research Foundation
Martha Noble, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
Hilde Steffey, Farm Aid

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