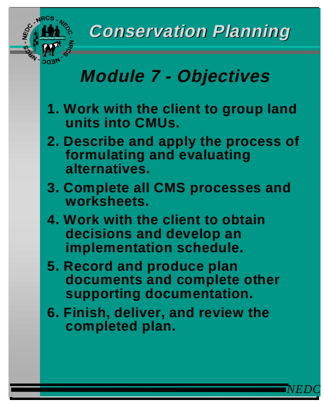
Module 7

Phase II of the Planning Process

Objectives

At the end of this module, the participant will be able to:

1. Work with the client to group land units into CMUs.
2. Describe and apply the process of formulating and evaluating alternatives.
3. Complete all RMS processes and worksheets.
4. Work with the client to obtain decisions and develop an implementation schedule.
5. Record and produce plan documents and complete other supporting documentation.
6. Finish, deliver, and review the completed plan.



Training Aids

Two Flip Charts

Overhead Projector

Method of Instruction

Presentation, Discussion, and Field Exercise

Total Time

16 Hours

Module 7—Table of Contents
Phase II of the Planning Process

Part 1—Classroom

Module 7—Table of Contents (cont.)
Phase II of the Planning Process

Module 7—Phase II of the Planning Process
(Classroom and Field)

Instructor Note

***Classroom* —approximately 2 hours**

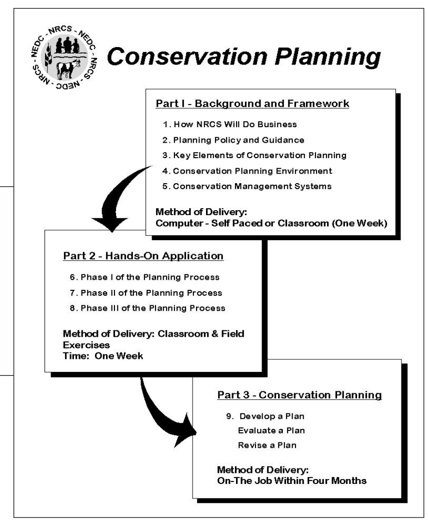
The following is a suggested list of key items to cover, briefly, in the classroom, in regard to phase II of the planning process.

States can tailor this list to meet their specific needs and are encouraged to develop site specific examples to illustrate key points.

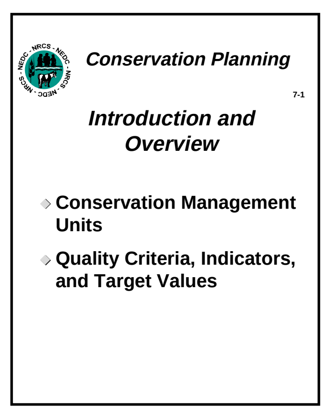
I. Introduction and Overview

Instructor Note and Module 'Flow Chart' Overhead

Display the overhead of the course module flow chart to track the progression of the course.



Overhead #7-1



A. Conservation management units.

- Define a CMU.

  A field, group of fields, or other land units of the same land use and having similar treatment needs and planned management.

- Why group land units into CMUs?

  To simplify planning activities and facilitate development of conservation management systems.

- How are land units grouped into CMUs?

Instructor Note

Show a couple of examples on overheads. States should develop two examples, that are relevant to their situation, as to how land units are grouped into CMU's.

Example 1 -

Example 2 -

B. Quality criteria, indicators, and target values.

What are they?

- Quality criteria are quantitative or qualitative statements of a treatment level required to achieve a RMS for identified resource considerations for a particular land area.

- An indicator is a description or measurement of a resource concern that demonstrates, or indicates, trends over time.

- A target value identifies a specific point or value to be achieved in conjunction with an indicator.

  Think of an indicator as the length measured on a yardstick and a target value as a point, 5 inches, to reach on that yardstick.

Instructor Note

Each state should develop examples that are meaningful for their area.

- Examples of how quality criteria, indicators, and target values are used....

  Example 1 -

  Example 2 -

- How do indicators and target values relate to quality criteria?

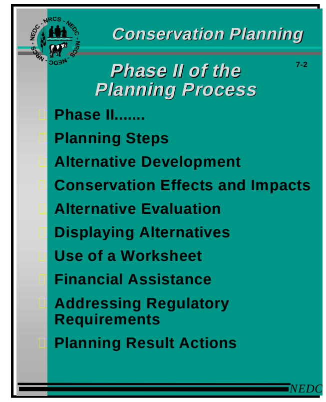
  Indicators and target values help measure change as a result of implementing RMSs to help determine if quality criteria is being reached.

- Additional information on quality criteria, indicators, and target values can be found in the FOTG and the NPPH.

Overhead #7-2

II. Phase II of the Planning Process

A. Phase II of the planning process....



- Is the decision support phase of the planning process.
- Provides the client with sufficient information to make decisions. This includes information about any programs that may be available to assist with plan implementation.

B. Phase II consists of three planning steps

5. Formulate Alternatives
6. Evaluate Alternatives
7. Make Decisions

- It is critical that a thorough effort of formulating and evaluating alternatives is completed in order to provide the client with a solid set of alternatives to consider.

C. Alternative development

- It is important to understand the cause of the problems identified from Phase I. If the cause is not understood at this point, return to Phase I to gather and analyze additional information.
- Develop a broad range of resource management system alternatives, including an appropriate mix of structural and non-structural measures. Alternatives may include instances where program cost share assistance is available and instances where it is not.

- The complexity of the alternatives developed should be commensurate with the complexity of the problems, opportunities, and objectives identified.

- Include economic and social considerations in the process.

- Develop several alternatives, whenever possible, to give the client a selection of options to consider.

- What is a reasonable number of alternatives to develop? Consider the following:

  - The complexity of the planning situation.

  - The needs of the client.

  - Technical knowledge available. Example—grazing management program on a riparian system.

  - The professional judgement of the planner.

- Develop alternatives to meet minimum quality criteria for an RMS, as appropriate, unless programs or legislation exist that define other levels of planning for specific resource issues.

- Where guidance documents do not exist for a particular situation or management system, develop them in accordance with FOTG procedures. These guidance documents can then become part of the FOTG for future use.

- Solicit input and feedback from the client before and during alternative development.

D. Conservation effects and impacts of the alternatives.

- Quantify and/or qualify the effects and determine the impacts on the resources and human concerns.
- Impacts are the differences between the benchmark effects and the anticipated effects of the proposed treatment.
- Consider the economic and social impacts of the alternatives, such as availability or non-availability of labor.
- Consider any off-site effects and impacts of the alternatives; positive or negative.
- Effects quantity and quality information is available through....
    - Discipline handbooks
    - Discipline specialists
    - The FOTG
    - Predictive formulas and models
    - Past experience
    - Previous evaluations
    - Other agencies

E. Evaluate the proposed alternatives to determine if they:

- Can solve the identified problems and address potential opportunities.
- Meet the client's objectives.
- Meet quality criteria.
- Meet regulatory requirements.

F. How can the alternatives and associated data be displayed in an understandable manner for the client?

- Conservation Effects Worksheets
- Graphs
- Tables
- On-the-ground, applied on another farm / ranch - show and tell
- Photography - pictures, slides, video
- Results of previous system and practice evaluations
- Research information and results

G. How can a conservation effects worksheet be used to help a client make a planning decision?

- For the RMS options developed:

  Develop a conservation effects worksheet for each RMS option showing the effects and impacts relative to the resource, economic, and social considerations in order to help the client reach a decision.

- If the client has selected, or is considering selecting, an option in which quality criteria for one or more resources will not be met, then:

  Develop a conservation effects worksheet reflecting the effects and impacts relative to the client's selection or consideration, and another conservation effects worksheet showing the effects and impacts for an alternative at the RMS level.

Review the conservation effects worksheets with the client to show the difference in the effects and impacts between the decision level and the RMS level.

Set the stage with the client to continue the planning process.

Keep working with the client in the progressive planning mode.

H. Help the client identify and consider potential sources of financial assistance.

- Identify potential sources of financial assistance and the requirements for participation.
- Keep in mind that economics generally play a substantial role in decisionmaking.
- However, don't let programs drive or overshadow the planning process.

I. What do we do when the client is hesitant about addressing regulatory requirements?

- Make sure the client understands the regulatory requirements and the client's role.
- Explain NRCS's roles and responsibilities regarding legal requirements.

- Point out the benefits of carrying out the mandatory requirements in relation to the resources and the client's operation.
- Keep working with the client to develop alternatives to meet the needs of the client and the resources within the legal constraints.
- Keep in mind that there may be a need to terminate planning assistance if the mandatory requirements won't be met.
- Keep the conservation district and appropriate NRCS personnel informed.

J. Depending on the decisions made or not made by the client, any number of actions may be necessary as a result of the planning effort.

- Complete the plan documents, including the implementation schedule
- Develop a conservation contract
- Revisit previous planning steps
- Continue planning in a progressive planning mode
- Terminate planning

III. Plan Format and Content

Overhead #7-3

A. Discuss the plan format and content desired in
____________ (state)

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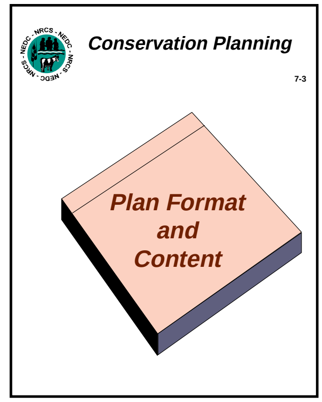


IV. Products of Phase II

Question

What are the key products expected from Phase II of the planning process?

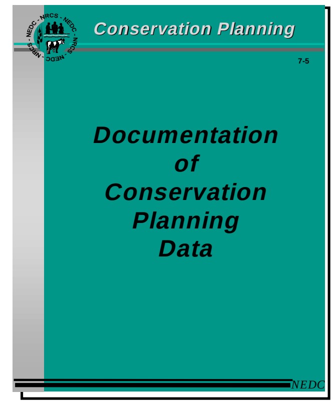
Overhead #7-4

- CMU groupings
- RMS options
- Conservation effects worksheets
- The plan document
- Schedule of conservation system implementation
- Conservation contract, if applicable
- Required legal documentation, such as NEPA

Overhead #7-5

V. Documentation of Conservation Planning Data

A. What to document in either hardcopy or electronic format:



- Assistance notes

- Conservation system alternatives and effects
    - Evaluate against benchmark effects for impacts

- Conservation plan (record of decisions) with effects
    - Evaluate against benchmark and provide effects data

- Conservation contract
    - Must have:
        - Conservation plan
        - Appropriate fund sources
        - Cost share components
        - Cost list

Field Exercise—Classroom Portion

Instructor Note

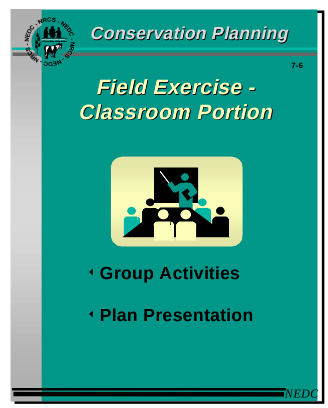
This is an example of how the field exercise could be set up and conducted.

States can tailor the field exercise, both the classroom portion and the field portion, to meet their specific needs.

Field Exercise - Classroom Portion - approximately .5 hours

Group activities

Overhead #7-6



Each group should develop a conservation plan for the entire farm / ranch at the RMS level - utilize the RMS process, including development of the SSPEW, RMS Options worksheet, and the Conservation Effects worksheet; develop and evaluate alternatives; present the alternatives to the substitute client (the instructor on the first site the group visited during phase I of the planning process); prepare the plan documents based on the decisions of the substitute client; present the finished plan to the substitute client.

Spend as much of the field exercise time on the farm / ranch as needed - gather additional resource information as needed; meet with the substitute client; measure slopes; conduct preliminary surveys; complete other measurements needed; conduct appropriate evaluations; etc.

The instructors for each site / land use should be available to consult with you and answer questions in the field or the classroom. When a particular group is in the field, the instructor serving as the substitute client for that group should be in the field also.

The group leaders should stay with their group and help guide them, as needed, through Phase II of the planning process, and help facilitate the teaching and learning process.

Plan Presentation

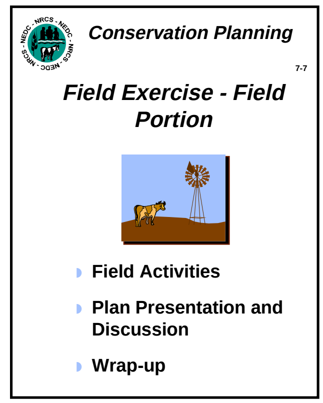
One member of each group should present their plan to their substitute client in the presence of the entire class and the instructors. The class should have an opportunity to ask questions and comment on the presentation and contents of the conservation plan. The real client may be invited to participate in this session.

Field Exercise—Field Portion

Approximately 15 Hours

Overhead #7-7

Field Activities



- Group fields into CMUs.
- Utilize the RMS process - including the SSPEW, RMS Options worksheet, and the Conservation Effects worksheet.
- Develop alternatives.
- Evaluate alternatives.
- Develop material to present to the substitute client.
- Discuss the alternatives with the substitute client and obtain the substitute client's decisions.
- Complete the plan documents.

Plan Presentation and Discussion

- One member of each group should present the plan to their substitute client, in the presence of the entire class and the instructors.
- Conduct a class discussion on the presentation and content of each plan, after it is presented.

Wrap-Up

- Determine if each group has met the planning standards for Planning Steps 5 - 7.