Local Work Group Overview

Adapted from presentation by the Nevada Conservation District Program

Locally Led Conservation

NRCS is unique since its work efforts are directed by local input. The types of conservation planning and the Farm Bill program dollars applied are all directed by recommendations submitted by the Conservation Districts (CD) and Local Work Groups (LWG).

The locally led conservation effort is the foundation of the NRCS' conservation program delivery process. These discussions help direct USDA conservation activities and programs that will coordinate with other Federal, State, tribal and local conservation programs. This provides a coordinated effort to address conservation concerns specific to the local area.

What is a Local Work Group?

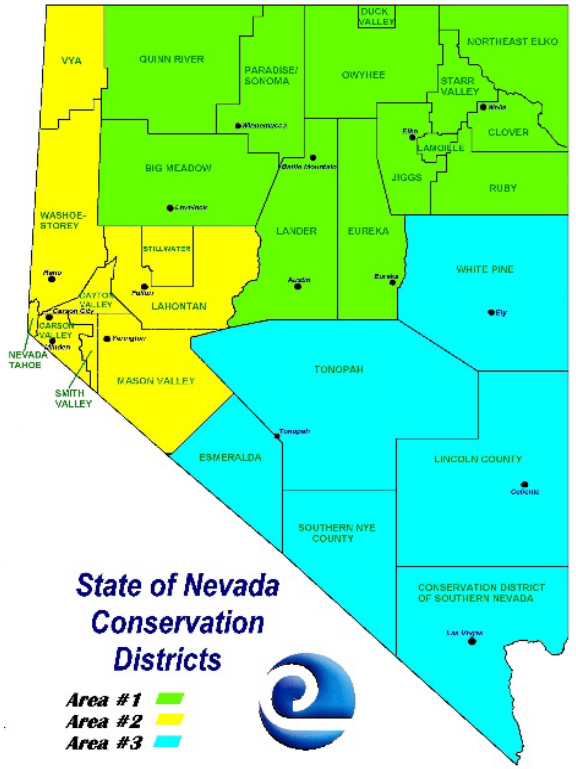
Locally led conservation is based on the principle that community stakeholders are best suited to identify and resolve local natural resource problems.

Local Work Group (LWG)

Convened by local CD's and NRCS, the Local Work Group responsibilities include:

- Identifying the biggest conservation needs in our counties.
- Prioritizing those conservation needs that can be addressed by USDA programs.
- Recommending USDA conservation program application and funding criteria and focus of NRCS funding efforts.
- Assisting NRCS with public outreach and information efforts.
- Providing recommendations to the NRCS State Technical Advisory Committee based on resource data.
- **Guidance on the LWG can be found in NRCS Programs Manual Title 440 Parts 500 and 501.**

Conservation District Responsibilities



ROLES

- Develop Agenda for meeting
- Develop Stakeholders List
- Identify LWG needs

THE MEETING

- Host the meeting
- Provide meeting participants of the LWG meeting the list of identified Resource Concerns
- Send NRCS locally identified resource concerns

Public Involvement

- Anyone can participate
- Local, state, and federal agencies
- Agricultural organizations
- Local agri-businesses
- Impacted stakeholders

State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) and LWG

How Do These Meetings Fit Together?

- LWG sets the local priorities
- STAC helps determine state priorities
- LWG and STAC share the same members
- Both identify resource concerns
- Both determine resource concern priorities

What is a “Resource Concern?”

Every piece of property is unique with opportunities to improve natural resources and address any areas of concern.

Human activities contribute to the condition of natural resources on the land -- they can help improve them or contribute to their decline, which can result in what we refer to as a “resource concern.”

Most landowners or operators have several goals in mind on their operation. It may be to improve forage production or build a pond or improve wildlife habitat. A resource concern is something that may be preventing you from reaching those goals.

What is a “Resource Concern?”

NRCS staff are experts trained at evaluating natural resources on the land – soil, water, air, plants and animals (SWAPA +HE) and determining if any of those resources could use a little improvement.

Resource Concern lists can be found in the NRCS Nevada Field Office Technical Guide

https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/state/NV/documents/section=3&folder=37456

There are 6 main categories resource concerns are placed within:

- **Soil,**
- **Water,**
- **Air,**
- **Plants,**
- **Animals and**
- **Energy**

Resource Concerns

Soil

1. Sheet and rill erosion
2. Wind erosion
3. Ephemeral gully erosion
4. Classic gully erosion
5. Bank erosion from streams, shorelines, or water conveyance channels
6. Subsidence
7. Compaction
8. Organic matter depletion
9. Concentration of salts or other chemicals
10. Soil organism habitat loss or degradation
11. Aggregate instability

Resource Concerns

Water

12. Ponding and flooding
13. Seasonal high-water table
14. Seeps
15. Drifted snow
16. Surface water depletion
17. Groundwater depletion
18. Naturally available moisture use
19. Inefficient irrigation water use
20. Nutrients transported to surface water
21. Nutrients transported to groundwater
22. Pesticides transported to surface water
23. Pesticides transported to groundwater
24. Pathogens and chemicals from manure, biosolids, or compost applications transported to surface water
25. Pathogens and chemicals from manure, biosolids, or compost applications transported to groundwater
26. Salts transported to surface water
27. Salts transported to groundwater
28. Petroleum, heavy metals, and other pollutants transported to surface water
29. Petroleum, heavy metals, and other pollutants transported to groundwater
30. Sediment transported to surface water
31. Elevated water temperature

Resource Concerns

Air

32. Emissions of particulate matter (PM) and PM precursors
33. Emissions of greenhouse gasses (GHGs)
34. Emissions of ozone precursors
35. Objectionable odors
36. Emissions of airborne reactive nitrogen

Plants

37. Plant productivity and health
38. Plant structure and composition
39. Plant pest pressure
40. Wildfire hazard from biomass accumulation

Resource Concerns

Animals

41. Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates
42. Aquatic habitat for fish and other organisms
43. Feed and forage imbalance
44. Inadequate livestock shelter
45. Inadequate livestock water quantity, quality and distribution

Energy

46. Energy efficiency of equipment and facilities
47. Energy efficiency of farming/ranching practices and field operations

Examples from a Conservation District

Resource Concerns Prioritized

1) **DROUGHT ISSUES/ LOW WELLS** = Water Quantity (Irrigation Pipeline/ Sprinkler, Irrigation Land Leveling)
2) **HIGH GAS/ELECTRIC PRICES** = Energy (Pumping Plant)
3) **RANGE TROUGHS NEEDED ON BLM** = Water Quality (Livestock Watering System and Seeding)
4)**WEEDS and FINE FUELS FOR FIRE** = Degraded Plant Condition (Herbaceous Weed Control + Seeding)

Past Top Resource Concerns

1. Insufficient Irrigation water (drought, wells, pumping, water delivery, fixing irrigation ditches, expense of updates and long wait for engineers)

2. Soil degradation (wind erosion, loss of organics, land leveling, loss of vegetation, incorrect soils for growing)

3. Degraded plant condition (weeds, fine fuels, disturbed areas with no restoration)

4. Energy sufficiency _(pumps, wells, solar, and access)

For More Information contact

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