

Part 409 – Conservation Planning Policy

MO409.0 General

- F. NRCS Conservation Planning Policy, General Manual (GM) 180-Conservation Planning Policy, (Part 409), requires that NRCS state conservationists (STCs) ensure conservation planners meet the minimum NRCS requirements as stated in national policy. This supplemental policy covers assistance provided by Missouri NRCS employees and our conservation partners.

MO409.3 Requirements for Providing Conservation Planning Assistance

A. Conservation Planner Designations.

- (5) State conservationists, or their designee(s), will determine the specific planner designation an individual must earn and maintain based on the individual's position, affiliation, and duties. In Missouri, all employees are required to achieve a minimum conservation planner role as defined below. The STC authorizes the area conservationist (AC) to specify additional roles for area office staff as needed to meet area and field office needs within the area. The STC also authorizes the Assistant State Conservationist for Water Resources and Easements (ASTC-WR&E) to specify additional roles for Wetland Emphasis Team (WET) staff and Water Resources and Easements staff.

i. Field Office Staff:

- Soil conservationists (SCs), resource conservationists (RCs), and district conservationists (DCs) will achieve a conservation planner role of Level III Certified Conservation Planner.
- Soil conservation technicians will achieve a conservation planner role of Level I Conservation Planner.

ii. Area Office Staff:

- Area RCs, area soil health specialists, and area foresters will achieve a conservation planner role of Level II Specialty Conservation Planner.
- Area resource soil scientists, area business tools specialists, engineers, civil engineering technicians, and other staff are not required to achieve a conservation planner role unless specified by the AC with concurrence from the STC. However, all these staff are encouraged to complete the training to improve their skills when assisting with conservation planning and technical assistance training and in completing quality assurance activities.
- Area conservationists will complete training and achieve conservation planning role status as directed by the STC.

iii. WET Staff:

- WET leaders, SCs, and RCs will achieve a conservation planner role of Level III Certified Conservation Planner.
- Civil engineering technicians and other staff are not required to achieve a conservation planner role unless specified by the ASTC-WR.

iv. State Office Staff:

- The state resource conservationist (SRC), technical specialists on the Field Technical Services staff, and the state business tools coordinator will achieve a conservation planner role of Level II Specialty Conservation Planner.
- Water Resources staff specialists will be required, on a case-by-case basis as determined by the ASTC-WR, to achieve a specified conservation planner role.

- Other state office staff may be required, on a case-by-case basis by their supervisor, and with concurrence from the STC, to achieve a specified conservation planner role. All state office staff, who assist field staff with conservation planning, technical assistance, quality assurance, and conservation program implementation are encouraged to complete the training in order to improve their skills when assisting with these activities.

MO 409.9 Criteria to Achieve an NRCS Conservation Planner Role Designation

D. Conservation Planner Role Designation Requirements

- (2) The Missouri STC delegates the role of designating certified planner roles to the Missouri SRC, based on the recommendation by the appropriate Missouri NRCS AC and area RC that each employee has attained all necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities, and has completed all required training. The Missouri STC delegates the role of evaluating each certified planner candidate's successful completion of Conservation Planning Course Part 3 – Module 9 to the AC and their staff.
- (3)
 - (i) Level I Conservation Planner
 - Complete the State, area, and/or Field Office Service Area hands-on training sessions approved by the AC and SRC on completion of the NRCS-CPA-52.
 - Missouri NRCS employees required to achieve the role of Level I Conservation Planner will do so within 2 years of their effective date of employment in that position, to the extent practical.
 - (ii) Level II Specialty Conservation Planner
 - Missouri NRCS employees required to achieve the role of Level II Specialty Conservation Planner will do so within 3 years of their effective date of employment in that position, to the extent practical.
 - (iii) Level III Certified Conservation Planner
 - Missouri NRCS employees required to achieve the role of Level III Certified Conservation Planner will do so within 3 years of their effective date of employment in that position, to the extent practical.
- (4) Although employees designated as any of the four conservation planner roles retain their designation when relocating to another State, they may not immediately have full privileges in that State. Conservation planners relocating from other states must have reached a proficiency to “work independently” in Missouri as demonstrated through OJT focusing on procedures specific to the state for the appropriate planner role.
 - (i) For staff pursuing Level III Certified Conservation Planner role, the state conservationist designates the area resource conservationist to complete a conservation plan review and make a recommendation for certification to the SRC for determination.
- (11) TSP National Conservation Planner Requirements
 - (i)
 - TSP candidates seeking one or more of the planner roles must be accompanied to the field by a NRCS Level III or Level IV Certified Conservation Planner to meet with the plan decision maker. The TSP requesting a planner designation is responsible for working with the Missouri State TSP Coordinator to schedule the field visit. The conservation plan will be submitted to the Missouri SRC, along with a letter from the review to acknowledge the recommendation for certification.

E. Maintaining Conservation Planner Role Designations

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- (2) The STC delegates the responsibility to review each planner’s designation to the appropriate NRCS AC and their staff in consultation with the employee’s direct supervisor as appropriate at least once every 3 years.
- (3)
 - (iii) Planner work to be reviewed will include records (2 plans) produced by the planner, in conjunction with quality assurance activities conducted in the state, or as part of ongoing OJT and assistance, or as otherwise deemed appropriate by the NRCS AC and their staff. A completed MO-Cons-2 form will be used to review the plans and provided to the SRC for approval.
- (7) Determination of Credit
 - (i) The SRC will be the designated person to authorize the approval of courses, credit, and other methods of earning credit towards planner role recertification.

MO 409.10 National Level II Conservation Planner Designations

A. NRCS Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planner

(3) Certification Requirements

(ii) Missouri NRCS employees who will be developing and/or approving comprehensive nutrient management plans (CNMP) must achieve the NRCS CNMP Designation. Area conservationists, in consultation with the SRC, will ensure that sufficient numbers of individuals are certified to write, review, and approve CNMPs in Missouri.

The SRC will be the designated person to maintain the national conservation planner database with these designations and will review and approve CNMP planner designations for individuals relocating to Missouri from another state.

(4) Training

(vi) Training specific to Missouri:

Core Competencies	Course Requirement	Source(s)	Course Information
Nutrient Management Planning for Manures and Commercial Fertilizer Products	The Missouri Nutrient Management Planning Course OR OJT as directed by Missouri SRC	University of Missouri-Columbia Instructors with NRCS State Specialists	
State-specific requirements— Assessment and Planning Tools	Missouri Phosphorus Index	Instructor-led by State Technical Lead	Facilitated Discussion
	Missouri Leaching Index	Instructor-led by State Technical Lead	Facilitated Discussion
	Manure Management Planner and Missouri Report Documents	Instructor-led by State Technical Lead	
Demonstrated Competence	Two CNMP plans for review/approval to the SRC meeting all criteria in 190-GM	Evaluated by State Technical Lead designated	

	Part 405.	by the SRC	
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(6) Maintaining Certification

(iii)

- A minimum of 12 contact hours of the required 40 contact hours for each certification period must in areas directly related to nutrient management topics. Planners are responsible for maintaining a list of contact hours logged, keeping related agendas, and providing the professional credentials of trainers.

B.

MO 409.11 State Equivalent Course List

The following figure provides the approved State equivalent courses for conservation planner designation training requirements.

Planner Designation	Required Course and ID	Approved Equivalent Course and ID	Approved for Past Delivery, Future Delivery, or Both
Level III Certified Conservation Planner	Conservation Planning Course; Part 2 – Modules 6-8, NRCS-NHQ-LOCAL-000003	Missouri NRCS Conservation Planner Course (2 week course) or Missouri Modules 1-5 online course and Missouri Modules 6-8 face to face training	Past Delivery
Level III Certified Conservation Planner	Conservation Planning Course; Part 2 – Modules 6-8, NRCS-NHQ-LOCAL-000003	Missouri Leadership Investing in Planner Success Course (MoLIPS) includes delivery of EDS Modules 6-8 Curriculum	Future Delivery
Level III Certified Conservation Planner	Soil Health and Sustainability Training, NRCS-NEDC-000050	Fundamentals of Soil Health, based on NRCS-NEDC-000050 syllabus	Both

MO 409.12 Missouri Level II Conservation Planner Designations

A. Nutrient Management Planner Designation Requirements for Missouri

- (1) Missouri NRCS employees who will be developing and/or approving nutrient management plans must achieve the NRCS Nutrient Management Planner Designation. Area conservationists, in consultation with the SRC, will ensure that sufficient numbers of individuals are certified to write, review, and approve nutrient management plans in Missouri.
- (2) The SRC will be the designated person to maintain the national conservation planner database with this designation.

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(3) Training Requirements

- (i.) In addition to the Core Competencies and Course Requirements for Level I Conservation Planners shown in 180-GM Part 409.15 Exhibit 3, Level II nutrient management planners in Missouri must meet additional requirements:

Core Competencies	Course Requirement	Source(s)	Course Number
Water Quality Fundamentals	Water Quality Series: Phosphorus Management and Concerns	AgLearn/Web-based	NRCS-NHQ-000040
	Water Quality Series: Pest Management and Water Quality Implications	AgLearn/Web-based	NRCS-NHQ-000043
	Water Quality Series: Water Management	AgLearn/Web-based	NRCS-NHQ-000044
Air Quality Fundamentals	Air Quality, Climate Change and Energy	AgLearn/Web-based	NRCS-NEDC000253
State-specific requirements	Missouri Phosphorus Index	Instructor-led by State Technical Lead	Facilitated Discussion
	Missouri Leaching Index	Instructor-led by State Technical Lead	Facilitated Discussion
	Manure Management Planner and Missouri Report Documents	Instructor-led by State Technical Lead	
Demonstrated Competence	Two nutrient management plans satisfying current criteria for Conservation Activity Plan 104 (Nutrient Management Plan) available on Missouri FOTG Section III.	Evaluated by State Technical Lead or Area staff approved by the SRC	

(4) Maintaining the Nutrient Management Planner Designation

- (i.) Follow guidance for maintaining conservation planner certifications in 180-GM Part 409.10 A(6).
- (ii.) A minimum of 12 contact hours of the required 40 contact hours for each certification period must in areas directly related to nutrient management topics. Planners are responsible for maintaining a list of contact hours logged, keeping related agendas, and providing the professional credentials of trainers.

B. Pest Management Planner Designation Requirements for Missouri

- (1) Missouri NRCS employees who will be developing and/or approving pest management plans must achieve the NRCS Pest Management Planner Designation. Area conservationists, in consultation with the SRC, will ensure that sufficient numbers of individuals are certified to write, review, and approve pest management plans in Missouri.

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(2) The SRC will be the designated person to maintain the national conservation planner database with this designation.

(3) Training Requirements

(i.) In addition to the Core Competencies and Course Requirements for Level I Conservation Planners shown in 180-GM Part 409.15 Exhibit 3, Level II pest management planners in Missouri must meet additional requirements:

Core Competencies	Course Requirement	Source(s)	Course Number
Water Quality Fundamentals	Water Quality Series: Pest Management and Water Quality Implications	AgLearn/Web-based	NRCS-NHQ-000043
	Water Quality Series: Water Management	AgLearn/Web-based	NRCS-NHQ-000044
Air Quality Fundamentals	Air Quality, Climate Change and Energy	AgLearn/Web-based	NRCS-NEDC000253
State-specific requirements and Assessment Tools	Missouri Pest Management Training Module 7 Facilitated discussion	Instructor-led by State Technical Lead	
	Windows Pesticide Screening Tool	Instructor-led by State Technical Lead	Facilitated discussion
Demonstrated Competence	Two pest management plans satisfying current criteria for Conservation Activity Plan 114 (Integrated Pest Management Plan) available on Missouri FOTG Section III.	Evaluated by State Technical Lead or Area staff approved by the SRC	

(4) Maintaining the Pest Management Planner Designation

(i.) Follow guidance for maintaining conservation planner certifications in 180-GM Part 409.10 A(6).

(ii.) A minimum of 12 contact hours of the required 40 contact hours for each certification period must be in areas directly related to pest management topics. Planners are responsible for maintaining a list of contact hours logged, keeping related agendas, and providing the professional credentials of trainers.