

409.15 Exhibit 3 - Core Competencies and Course Requirements for Level I, II, III and IV Conservation Planner Designations

* Note: Conservation Planning, Part 2 curriculum is available in the EDS course library for states to use. Access to the library can be obtained by submitting a ticket through Service Now. State deviation from the nationally approved Conservation Planning, Part 2 curriculum (beyond the State flexibility already built into the national curriculum) will require a course equivalency approval and should be added to the state supplement.

**Note: Technical Service Provider (TSP) specific requirements are noted where applicable. Additional Technical Service Provider Designation and Maintenance Requirements are outlined in 180-GM-409, part 409.9(D)(11) and part 409.9(E)(10).

Level I Conservation Planner

Core Competencies	Course Requirement	Source(s)	Course Name and Number
Conservation Planning and Field Office Technical Guide Basics	NRCS Planners: Conservation Planning Part 1	AgLearn/Web-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Planning Part 1 (NRCS-NEDC-000019)
	**Technical Service Providers only: TSP Orientation and Conservation Planning	AgLearn/Web-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **Technical Service Provider Planners only: TSP Orientation and Conservation Planning (NRCS-NEDC-000191)
	Planning Criteria Training	AgLearn/Web-based	Complete one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Criteria Training (NRCS-NHQ-000008) • Using Planning Criteria in Conservation Planning (NRCS-NEDC-000486)
	Conservation Planning Business Tools Training (e.g. CD and CART) – This training must cover the use of business tools through step 7 of the conservation planning process.	One-on-One/local-Self-Certified or State or National courses	Complete one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Planning Business Tool Training (NRCS-NHQ-LOCAL-000002) • CD V2R3 and CART Local/State Hands-on Training (NRCS-NHQ-000068)
	** Technical Service Providers are not required to complete this training		
	Introduction to Field Office Technical Guide	AgLearn/Web-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Field Office Technical Guide (NRCS-NEDC-000149)

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Core Competencies	Course Requirement	Source(s)	Course Name and Number
Cultural Resources Basics	Cultural Resources Training Series, Part 1	AgLearn/Web-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Resources Training Series, Part 1 (NRCS-NEDC-000141)
Environmental Evaluations Basics	Environmental Evaluation Webinar Series No 1: Primer on NRCS Environmental Compliance	S&T Webinar Training Library for content; Completion marked/self-certified in AgLearn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Evaluation Webinar Series No 1: Primer on NRCS Environmental Compliance (NRCS-NHQ-000011)
	Environmental Evaluation Webinar Series No 2: Documenting the Environmental Evaluation	S&T Webinar Training Library for content; Completion marked/self-certified in AgLearn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Evaluation Webinar Series No 2: Documenting the Environmental Evaluation (NRCS-NHQ-000012)
Soils Basics	Basic Soils & Web Soil Survey to Interpret Land Capabilities & Limitations	State-Led/Self-Certified or online course	<p>Complete one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic Soils and Web Soil survey to Interpret Land Capabilities and Limitations (NRCS-NHQ-000009) Using Basic Soil Survey Information in Conservation Planning (NRCS-NEDC-000416)
Water Quality Basics	Water Quality Series 1: Overview of Water Quality Resource Assessment	AgLearn/Web-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Quality Series 1: Overview of Water Quality Resource Assessment (NRCS-NHQ-000038)
	Water Quality Series 2: Nitrogen Management and Concerns	AgLearn/Web-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Quality Series 2: Nitrogen Management and Concerns (NRCS-NHQ-000039)
	Water Quality Series 4: Sediment Management	AgLearn/Web-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Quality Series 4: Sediment Management (NRCS-NHQ-000041)
	Water Quality Series 5: Water Bodies	AgLearn/Web-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Quality Series 5: Water Bodies (NRCS-NHQ-000042)
State Specific Requirements	State Specific Training & Required Deliverables-Level I Planner **Technical Service Providers must take	OJT/local-Self-Certified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Specific Training & Required Deliverables-Level I Planner (NRCS-NHQ-000024)

Core Competencies	Course Requirement	Source(s)	Course Name and Number
	State Specific Training listed on the TSP Website		
Demonstrated Competence	Supervisor certification for Level I Conservation Planner Role **Does not apply to Technical Service Providers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisor certification for Level I Conservation Planner Role (NRCS-NHQ-000025)

Level II Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planner

Core Competencies	Course Requirement	Source(s)	Course Name and Number
Conservation Planning Procedures	Level 1 Conservation Planner	Planner Certification	N/A
	Conservation Planning Course, Part 2, Modules 6-8	Instructor Led by State or National	Complete one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Conservation Planning Course, Part 2, Modules 6-8 (NRCS-NHQ-LOCAL-000003) Conservation Boot Camp (NRCS-NEDC-000164)
Nutrient Management	Water Quality Series: Phosphorous Management and Concerns	AgLearn/Web-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Quality Series: Phosphorous Management and Concerns (NRCS-NHQ-000040)
	Nutrient Management Track 1, Part 1	AgLearn/Web-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nutrient Management Track 1, Part 1 (NRCS-NEDS-000083)
	CNMP Training	National Animal Manure Nutrient Management Team (NAMNMT) or State Equivalent AgLearn/S&T Training Library S&T Webinar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “CNMP Training” coordinated by NAMNMT or equivalent state level training OR the combination of all three following courses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “NRCS Agricultural Waste Management Systems - A Primer” (NRCS-NEDC-000115) “NRCS Agricultural Waste Management Systems - Level 2” (NRCS-NEDC-000116)

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Core Competencies	Course Requirement	Source(s)	Course Name and Number
		Training Library for content; Completion marked/self-certified in AgLearn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Air Quality Assessment Tool Webinar: Dairy, or Swine, or Poultry (Note: There is one webinar for each class of livestock – dairy, swine, and poultry. The minimum requirement is viewing a webinar for one of the livestock classes.)
	Assessment tools training for Erosion and Nutrient Management specific to the planner’s location	National, State or OJT	
**Technical Service Providers only: Additional Training Requirements	State-specific training module for each State where the TSP will be developing CNMPs	TSP Website	
	Additional training or licensing required by State laws or regulations in the State where work is being performed.		
Demonstrated Competence	<p>Supervisor certification for Level II Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planner Role</p> <p>**Supervisor Certification does not apply to Technical Service Providers</p> <p>Note: CNMP planner designation candidates (including Technical Service Providers) must provide two completed CNMPs for review and approval that will meet all criteria in 190-GM-405, “Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans.”</p>		

Level II Technical Specialist Planner

Core Competencies	Course Requirement	Source(s)	Course Name and Number
Conservation Planning Procedures	Level 1 Conservation Planner	Planner Certification	N/A
	Conservation Planning Course, Part 2, Modules 6-8	Instructor Led by State or National	Complete one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *Conservation Planning Course, Part 2, Modules 6-8 (NRCS-NHQ-LOCAL-000003) • Conservation Boot Camp (NRCS-NEDC-000164)
	Conservation Planning Course, Part 3, Module 9 Note: This involves completing a conservation plan, including RMS alternatives, that is related to the candidate’s position and area of expertise, then earning a satisfactory in-field review by the State conservationist’s designee	OJT-Self-Certified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Planning Course, Part 3, Module 9 (NRCS-NHQ-000015)
Cultural Resources Evaluation Fundamentals	Cultural Resources Training Series, Part 2	Instructor Led by State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Resources Training Series, Part 2 (NRCS-NHQ-LOCAL-000001)
Environmental Evaluation Fundamentals	Environmental Evaluation Webinar Series No 3-11	S&T Webinar Training Library for content; Completion marked/self-certified in AgLearn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Evaluation Webinar Series No 3-11 (NRCS-NHQ-000013)
Area of Expertise Specific Requirements	Complete two quality assurance activities that evaluate conservation plans and practice implementation related to their area or areas of expertise to the satisfaction of the technical supervisor.	OTJ/Local	

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Core Competencies	Course Requirement	Source(s)	Course Name and Number
	Deliver two State or national technical training programs that instruct other conservation planners in using NRCS planning procedures relative to their position's area of expertise.	OTJ/Local	
State Specific Requirements	State-identified training requirements that are applicable to the specialist's discipline area.	OTJ/Local	
Demonstrated Competence	Supervisor certification for Level II Technical Specialist Planner Role **Supervisor Certification does not apply to Technical Service Providers		

Level III Conservation Planner

Core Competencies	Course Requirement	Source(s)	Course Name and Number
Conservation Planning Procedures	Level 1 Conservation Planner	Planner Certification	N/A
	Conservation Planning Course, Part 2, Modules 6-8	Instructor Led by State or National	Complete one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Conservation Planning Course, Part 2, Modules 6-8 (NRCS-NHQ-LOCAL-000003) Conservation Boot Camp (NRCS-NEDC-000164)
	Conservation Planning Course, Part 3, Module 9	OJT-Self-Certified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation Planning Course, Part 3, Module 9 (NRCS-NHQ-000015)
Environmental Evaluation Fundamentals	Environmental Evaluation Webinar Series No 3-11	S&T Webinar Training Library for content; Completion marked/self-certified in AgLearn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Evaluation Webinar Series No 3-11 (NRCS-NHQ-000013)

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Core Competencies	Course Requirement	Source(s)	Course Name and Number
Cultural Resources Evaluation Fundamentals	Cultural Resources Training Series, Part 2	Instructor Led by State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Resources Training Series, Part 2 (NRCS-NHQ-LOCAL-000001)
Conservation Compliance Fundamentals	Fundamentals of Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Provisions training	State-Led/Self-Certified or online course	<p>Complete one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamentals of Highly Erodible Land & and Wetland Conservation Provisions (State-led) (NRCS-NHQ-000010) • Fundamentals of Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Provisions (Web-based) (NRCS-NEDC-000409)
Conservation Communication Fundamentals	Conservation Communications basics level course, such as Conservation Panning Part 2 (national approved curriculum), Boot Camp, or a state-led training approved as equivalent (if you've already completed a Working Effectively Series or the Conservation Communication proficiency exam, that meets this requirement)	AgLearn/Instructor Led	<p>Complete one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *Conservation Planning Course, Part 2, Modules 6-8 (NRCS-NHQ-LOCAL-000003) • Conservation Boot Camp (NRCS-NEDC-000164) • Working Effectively with Livestock Producers (NRCS-NEDC-000045) • Working Effectively with American Indians (NRCS-NEDC-000090) • Working Effectively with Alaskan Natives (NRCS-NEDC-000147) • Working Effectively with Hispanic Producers (NRCS-NEDC-000262) • Working Effectively with Asian-American Pacific Islander Producers (NRCS-NEDC-000334) • Improving Conservation Delivery to Women Landowners and Producers (NRCS-NEDC-000378) • Extending Outreach to All Customers (NRCS-NEDC-000247)

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Core Competencies	Course Requirement	Source(s)	Course Name and Number
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working Effectively with Organic Producers (NRCS-NHQ-000130) Working Effectively with Plain Sect Producers (NRCS-NHQ-000137)
Conservation Economics Fundamentals	Economics of Conservation Planning Course	AgLearn/Instructor Led	Complete one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economics of Conservation Planning (NRCS-NEDC-000017) Conservation Economics Webinar Series (NRCS-NEDC-000498)
Soils Health Fundamentals	Soil Health and Sustainability Training	AgLearn/Instructor Led by State	Complete one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soil Health and Sustainability for Field Staff course (NRCS-NEDC-000050, NRCS-NEDC-000488, and NRCS-NEDC-000430) Soil Health and Sustainability Training (State Equivalency) (NRCS-NHQ-LOCAL-000004) **Technical Service Provider Planners only: Soil Health Basics for TSPs (NRCS-NHQ-000132)
Water Quality Fundamental	Water Quality Series: Phosphorous Management and Concerns	AgLearn/Web-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Quality Series: Phosphorous Management and Concerns (NRCS-NHQ-000040)
	Water Quality Series: Pest Management and Water Quality Implications	AgLearn/Web-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Quality Series: Pest Management and Water Quality Implications (NRCS-NHQ-000043)
	Water Quality Series: Water Management	AgLearn/Web-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Quality Series: Water Management (NRCS-NHQ-000044)
Air Quality Fundamentals	Air Quality, Climate Change and Energy	AgLearn/Web-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Air Quality, Climate Change and Energy (NRCS-NEDC-000253)
State Specific Requirements	State Specific Training & Required	OJT/local-Self-Certified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Specific Training & Required Deliverables-

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Core Competencies	Course Requirement	Source(s)	Course Name and Number
	Deliverables-Level III Certified Planner **Technical Service Providers must take State Specific Training listed on the TSP Website		Level III Certified Planner (NRCS-NHQ-000027)
Demonstrated Competence	Supervisor certification for Level III Certified Conservation Planner Role **Does not apply to Technical Service Providers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisor certification for Level III Certified Conservation Planner Role (NRCS-NHQ-000023)

Level IV Conservation Planner

Core Competencies	Course Requirement	Source(s)	Course Name and Number
Conservation Planning Procedures	Level III Conservation Planner	Planner Certification	N/A
	Completed two state quality reviews	OJT-Self-Certified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NRCS-NHQ-000017
	Serve as an instructor along with one or more Level IV conservation planners or State Conservationist designees for two conservation planning training sessions (State or National)	OJT-Self-Certified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NRCS-NHQ-000018
Conservation Communication (Advanced)	Conservation Communications assumes the basic requirement has been met in Level III. Level IV requirement is at least one advanced level course, such as a Working Effectively Series, or completion of the Conservation Communication proficiency exam	AgLearn/Instructor Led	<p>Meet Level III basic conservation communications requirement AND complete one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working Effectively with Livestock Producers (NRCS-NEDC-000045) Working Effectively with American Indians (NRCS-NEDC-000090) Working Effectively with Alaska Natives (NRCS-NEDC-000147)

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Core Competencies	Course Requirement	Source(s)	Course Name and Number
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Effectively with Hispanic Producers (NRCS-NEDC-000262) • Working Effectively with Asian-American Pacific Islander Producers (NRCS-NEDC-000334) • Improving Conservation Delivery to Women Landowners and Producers (NRCS-NEDC-000378) • Extending Outreach to All Customers (NRCS-NEDC-000247) • Working Effectively with Organic Producers (NRCS-NHQ-000130) • Working Effectively with Plain Sect Producers (NRCS-NHQ-000137)
Conservation Economics	Economics of Conservation Planning Course	AgLearn/Instructor Led	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economics of Conservation Planning Course (NRCS-NEDC-000017)
Advanced Resource Concerns and/or discipline knowledge	<p>Completed at least 5 advanced natural resources and/or discipline knowledge courses</p> <p>Note: Courses meeting this requirement must be approved by the State conservationist or their designee</p>	AgLearn/Instructor Led/Web-based/State-Led/ State Departments of Agriculture/ Cooperative Extension Services/ State Natural Resource Agencies/Tribal Natural Resource Agencies/Scientific discipline-related professional organizations and societies/ Community Colleges, Colleges, and Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS-NHQ-000136
State Specific Requirements	State Specific Training & Required Deliverables-Level IV Certified Planner **Technical Service	OJT/local-Self-Certified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Specific Training & Required Deliverables-Level IV Certified Planner (NRCS-NHQ-000029)

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Core Competencies	Course Requirement	Source(s)	Course Name and Number
	Providers must take State Specific Training listed on the TSP Website		
Demonstrated Competence	Supervisor certification for Level IV Certified Conservation Planner Role **Does not apply to Technical Service Providers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisor certification for Level IV Certified Conservation Planner Role (NRCS-NHQ-000026)

409.16 Exhibit 4 - Proficiency Exams

Core Competencies	Course Requirement	Course Number	Proficiency Exam
Conservation Planning and Field Office Technical Guide Basics	Introduction to Field Office Technical Guide	NRCS-NEDC-000149	Field Office Technical Guide Basics (NRCS-NHQ-000081)
Cultural Resources Basics	Cultural Resources Training Series, Part 1	NRCS-NEDC-000141	Level 1 Cultural Resources (NRCS-NHQ-000073)
Environmental Evaluations Basics	Environmental Evaluation Webinar Series No 1: Primer on NRCS Environmental Compliance	NRCS-NHQ-000011	Level 1 Environmental Evaluation (NRCS-NHQ-000075)
	Environmental Evaluation Webinar Series No 2: Documenting the Environmental Evaluation	NRCS-NHQ-000012	
Soils Basics	Basic Soils & Web Soil Survey to Interpret Land Capabilities & Limitations	NRCS-NHQ-000009 or NRCS-NEDC-000416	Soils Interpretations (NRCS-NHQ-000077)
Water Quality Basics	Water Quality Series 1: Overview of Water Quality Resource Assessment	NRCS-NEDC-000038	Level 1 Water Quality Resource Assessment (NRCS-NHQ-000078)
	Water Quality Series 2: Nitrogen Management and Concerns	NRCS-NEDC-000039	
	Water Quality Series 4: Sediment Management	NRCS-NEDC-000041	
	Water Quality Series 5:	NRCS-NEDC-000042	

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Core Competencies	Course Requirement	Course Number	Proficiency Exam
	Water Bodies		
Environmental Evaluation Fundamentals	Environmental Evaluation Webinar Series No 3-11	NRCS-NHQ-000013	Level 2 Environmental Evaluation (NRCS-NHQ-000080)
Conservation Compliance Fundamentals	Fundamentals of Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Provisions training	NRCS-NHQ-000010	HELC/WC Compliance Provisions (NRCS-NHQ-000082)
Conservation Communication	Conservation Communications (Working Effectively Series meets this requirement)	NRCS-NEDC-000045 or NRCS-NEDC-000090 or NRCS-NEDC-000147 or NRCS-NEDC-000262 or NRCS-NEDC-000334 or NRCS-NEDC-000378 or NRCS-NEDC-000247 or NRCS-NEDC-000164 or NRCS-NHQ-000130 or NRCS-NHQ-000137	Conservation Communication (NRCS-NHQ-000072)
Conservation Economics Fundamentals	Economics of Conservation Planning Course	NRCS-NEDC-000017 or NRCS-NEDC-000498	Conservation Economics (NRCS-NHQ-000074)
Soils Health Fundamentals	Soil Health and Sustainability Training	NRCS-NHQ-LOCAL-000004	Soil Health and Sustainability (NRCS-NHQ-000076)
Water Quality Fundamental	Water Quality Series: Phosphorous Management and Concerns	NRCS-NHQ-000040	Level 2 Water Quality Resource Assessment (NRCS-NHQ-000079)
	Water Quality Series: Pest Management and Water Quality Implications	NRCS-NHQ-000043	
	Water Quality Series: Water Management	NRCS-NHQ-000044	
Air Quality Fundamentals	Air Quality, Climate Change and Energy	NRCS-NEDC-000253	Air Quality Conservation Basics (NRCS-NHQ-000070)