United States Department of Agriculture

Using Aglearn to track Conservation Planning Certification

Natural Resources Conservation Service

nrcs.usda.gov/

Required by policy

Departmental Regulation (DR 3620-001): USDA AgLearn Services, Courseware, and Content

- **6. POLICY**
  - a. AgLearn is the official system of record for training and contains training history of USDA employees, contractors, partners, political appointees, volunteers, affiliates, students, and customers.

General Manual Title 180 part 409

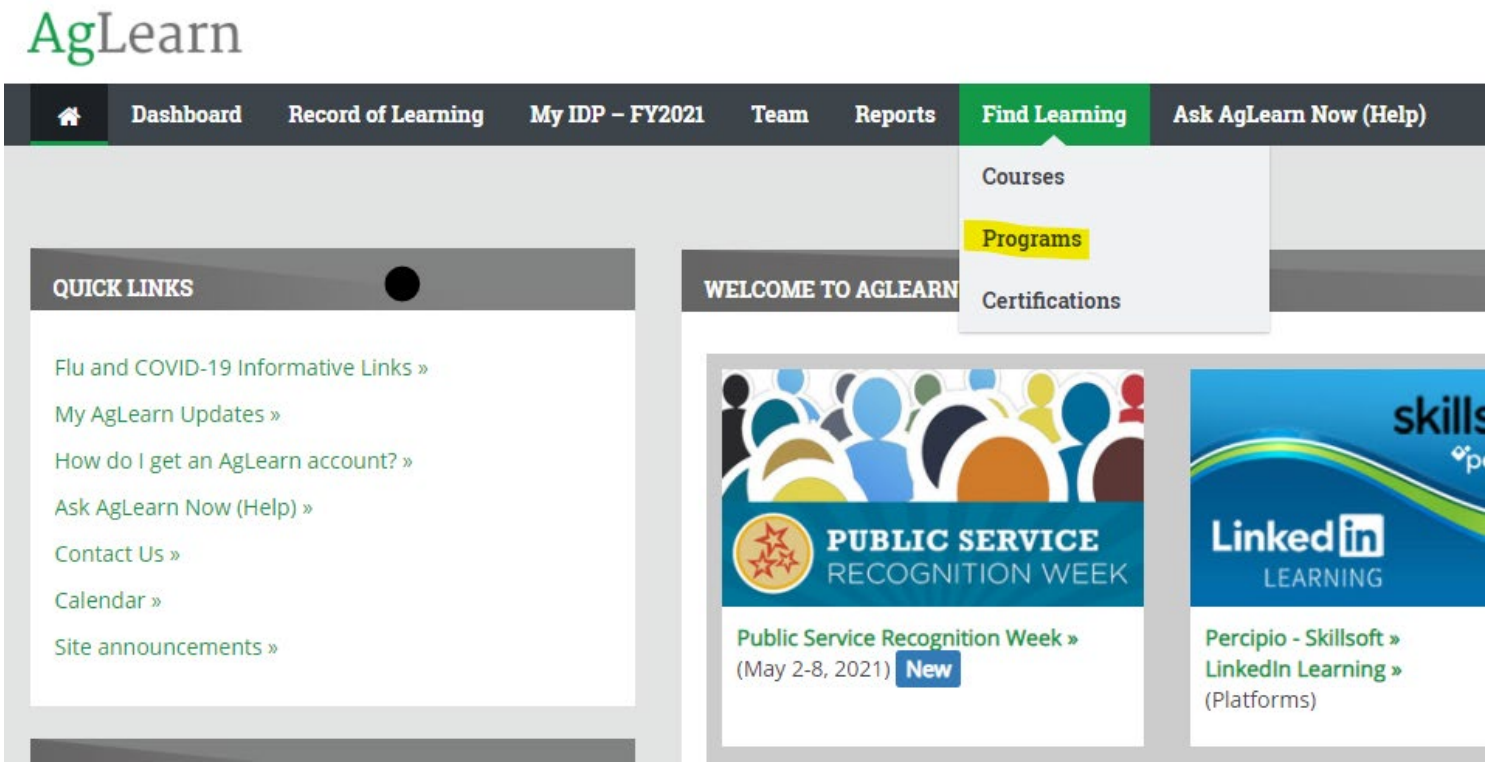
- **409.9 Criteria to Achieve an NRCS Conservation Planner Role Designation**
  - E. Maintaining Conservation Planner Role Designations
    - (8) Recordkeeping
      - (i) Planners are responsible for maintaining their own records and for providing documentation that contact-hour requirements needed for re-designation are met during the 3-year designation period. In addition, planners should record the details of the training in NRCS's official learning management system (AgLearn). Please see the employee guide for additional information.
      - (ii)Planners should consult their supervisor or training officer for additional information and assistance.

Training records in Aglearn

- **The Conservation Planner Core Competencies and Course Requirements for Level I, III and IV Conservation Planner Designations as outlined in GM 180 409.15 Exhibit 3 are listed and tracked in Aglearn**
    - Aglearn automatically adds and tracks lower-level requirements that are needed at the higher level (i.e., when Level III is requested, the required courses for Level I are included).

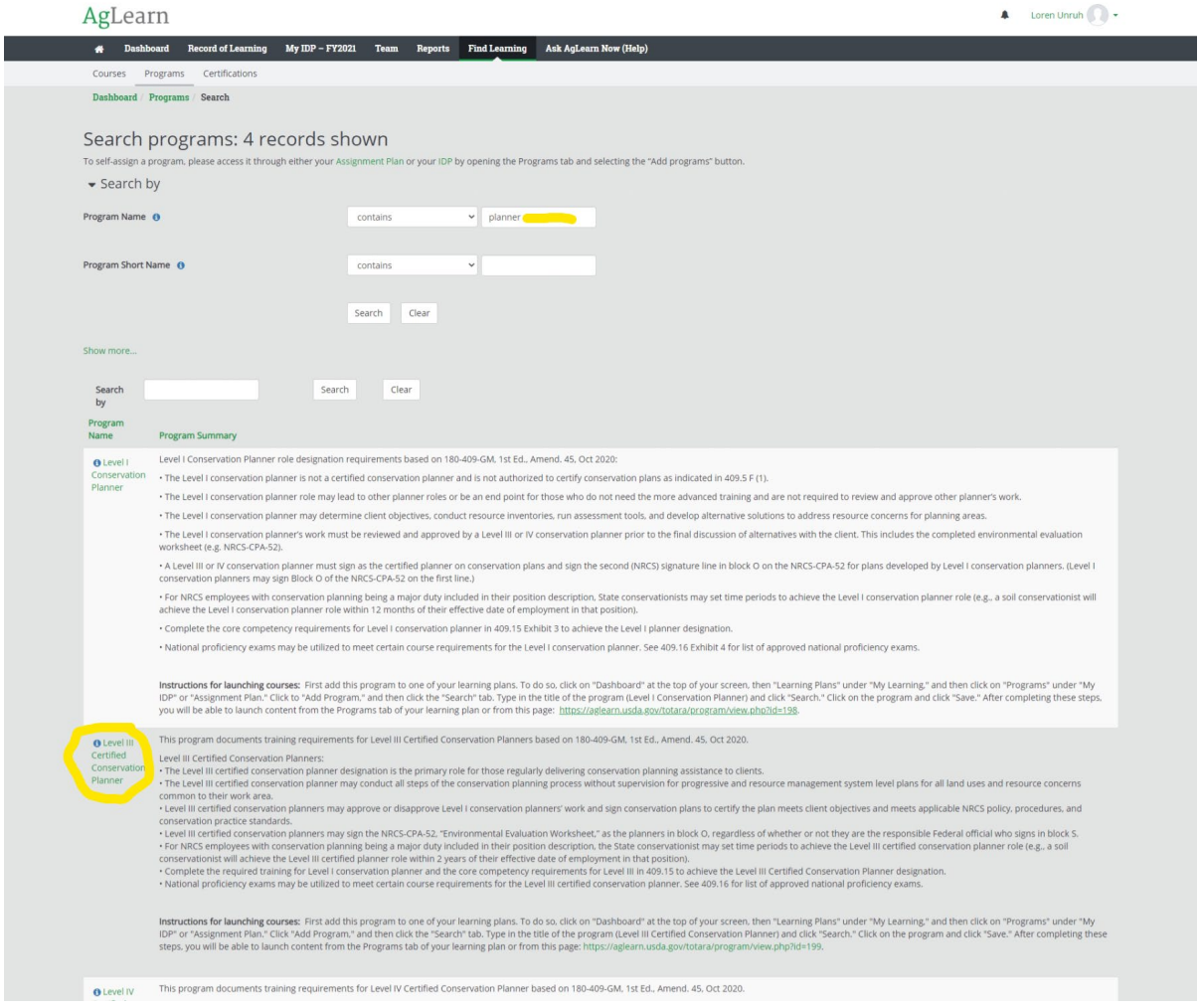
Instructions for adding the planner program and launching courses

Note that the Conservation Planner Certifications are found as Programs:



Instructions for adding the planner program and launching courses

You can search the programs for planner:



Instructions for adding the planner program and launching courses

Then note the instructions for launching courses:

AgLearn

[redacted]

Dashboard | Record of Learning | My IDP – FY2021 | Team | Reports | Find Learning | Ask AgLearn Now (Help)

Dashboard / Find Programs / USDA / FPAC / NRCS / NRCS-NHQ / Level III Certified Conservation Planner

Level III Certified Conservation Planner

Date assigned: May 06, 2021 Due date: No due date set Progress:

This program documents training requirements for Level III Certified Conservation Planners based on 180-409-GM, 1st Ed., Amend. 45, Oct 2020.

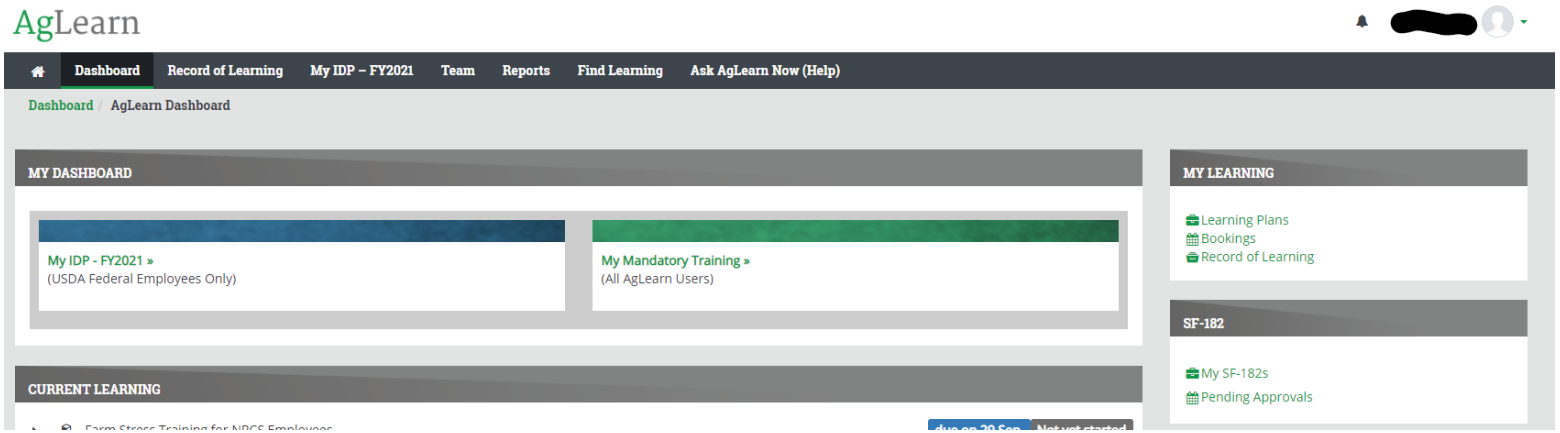
Level III Certified Conservation Planners:

- The Level III certified conservation planner designation is the primary role for those regularly delivering conservation planning assistance to clients.
- The Level III certified conservation planner may conduct all steps of the conservation planning process without supervision for progressive and resource management system level plans for all land uses and resource concerns common to their work area.
- Level III certified conservation planners may approve or disapprove Level I conservation planners' work and sign conservation plans to certify the plan meets client objectives and meets applicable NRCS policy, procedures, and conservation practice standards.
- Level III certified conservation planners may sign the NRCS-CPA-52, "Environmental Evaluation Worksheet," as the planners in block O, regardless of whether or not they are the responsible Federal official who signs in block S.
- For NRCS employees with conservation planning being a major duty included in their position description, the State conservationist may set time periods to achieve the Level III certified conservation planner role (e.g., a soil conservationist will achieve the Level III certified planner role within 2 years of their effective date of employment in that position).
- Complete the required training for Level I conservation planner and the core competency requirements for Level III in 409.15 to achieve the Level III Certified Conservation Planner designation.
- National proficiency exams may be utilized to meet certain course requirements for the Level III certified conservation planner. See 409.16 for list of approved national proficiency exams.

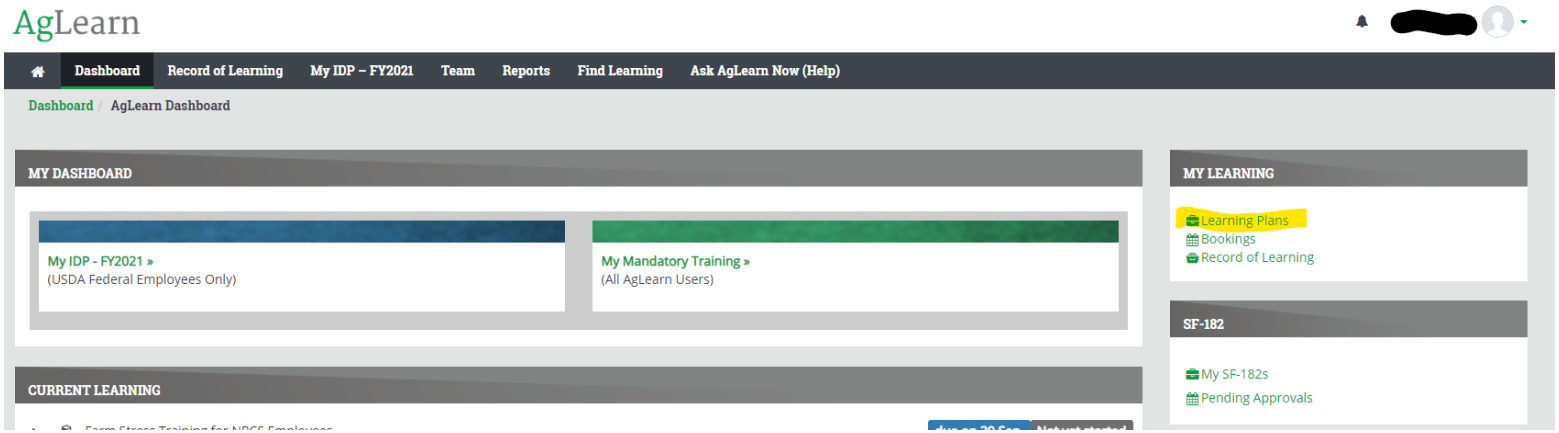
Instructions for launching courses: First add this program to one of your learning plans. To do so, click on "Dashboard" at the top of your screen, then "Learning Plans" under "My Learning," and then click on "Programs" under "My IDP" or "Assignment Plan." Click "Add Program," and then click the "Search" tab. Type in the title of the program (Level III Certified Conservation Planner) and click "Search." Click on the program and click "Save." After completing these steps, you will be able to launch content from the Programs tab of your learning plan or from this page: https://aglearn.usda.gov/totara/program/view.php?id=199.

Steps to add Planner Certification In Aglearn

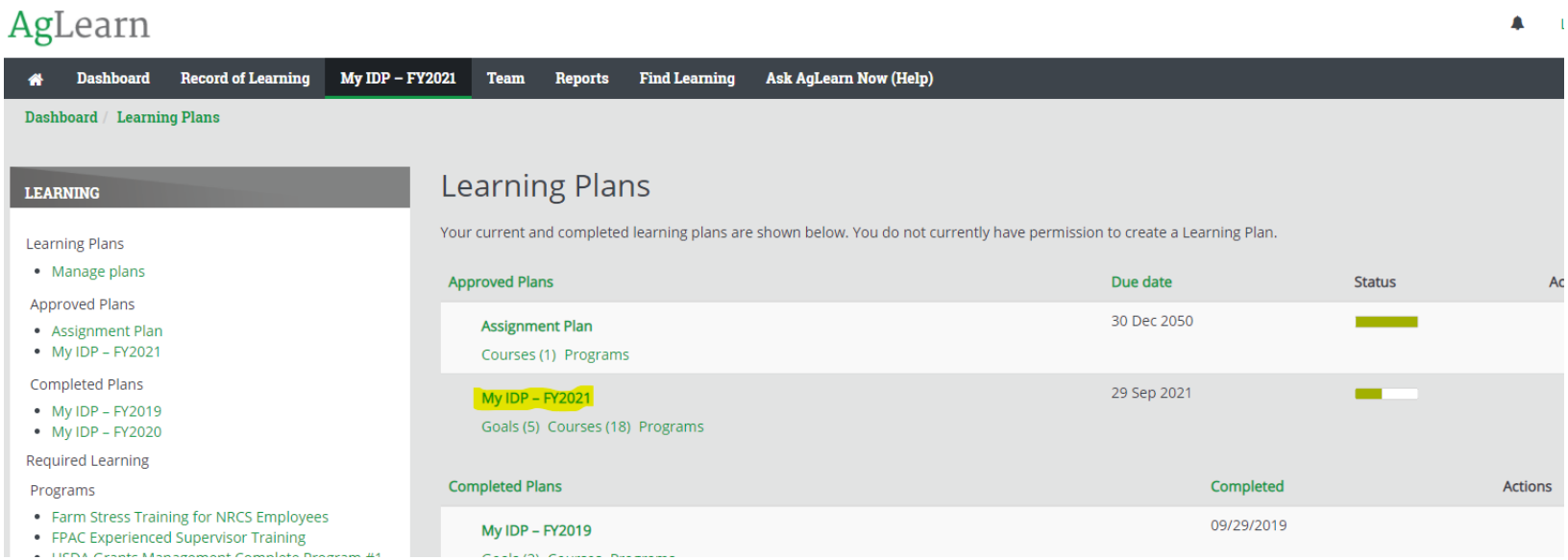
1. Login to Aglearn:



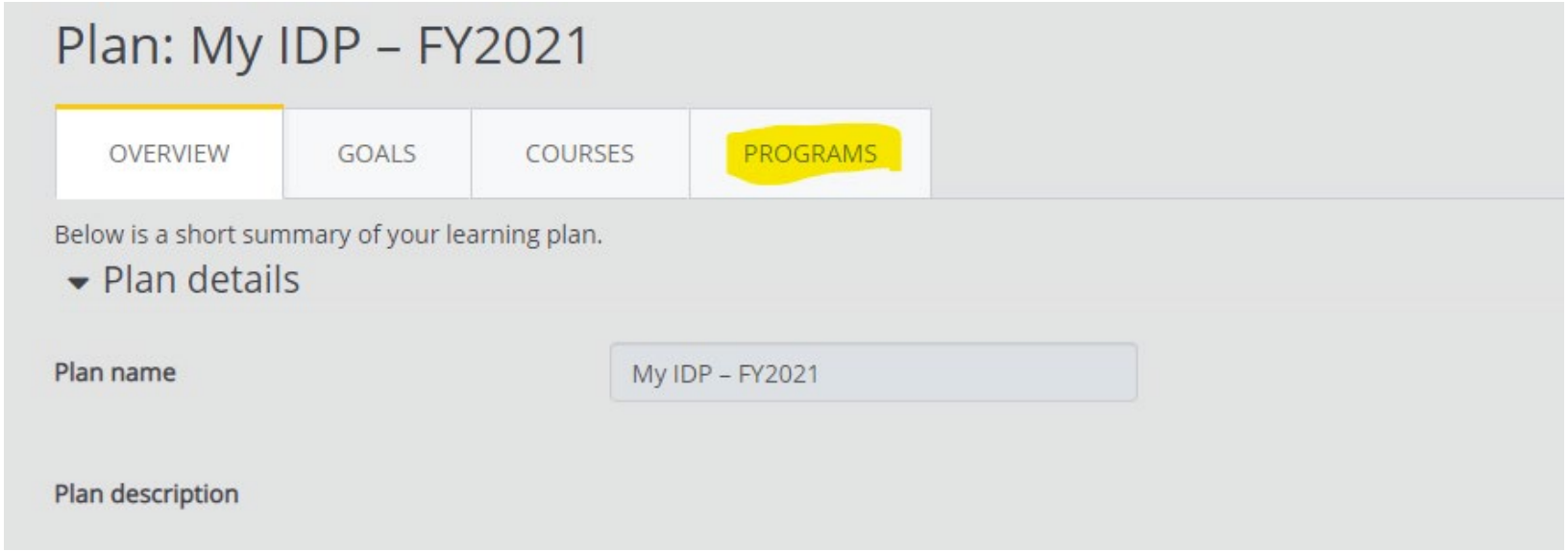
2. In Dashboard select Learning Plans:



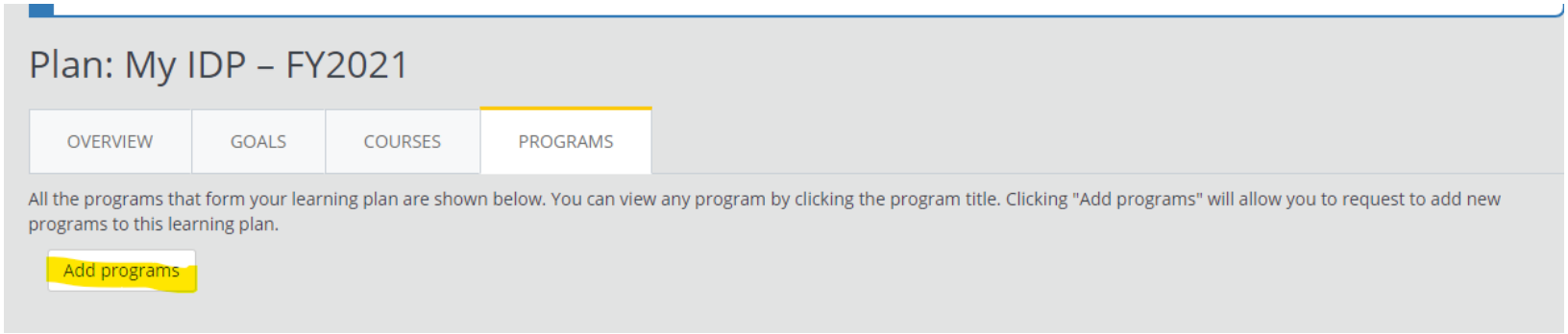
3. Select the appropriate learning plan:



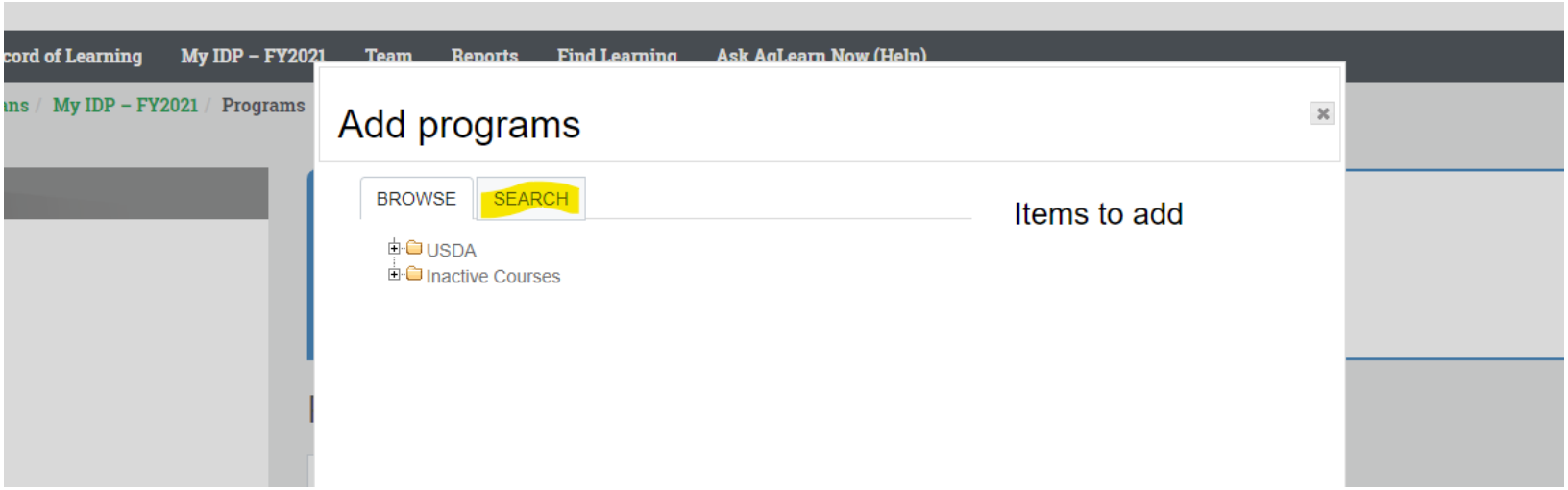
4. Select PROGRAMS



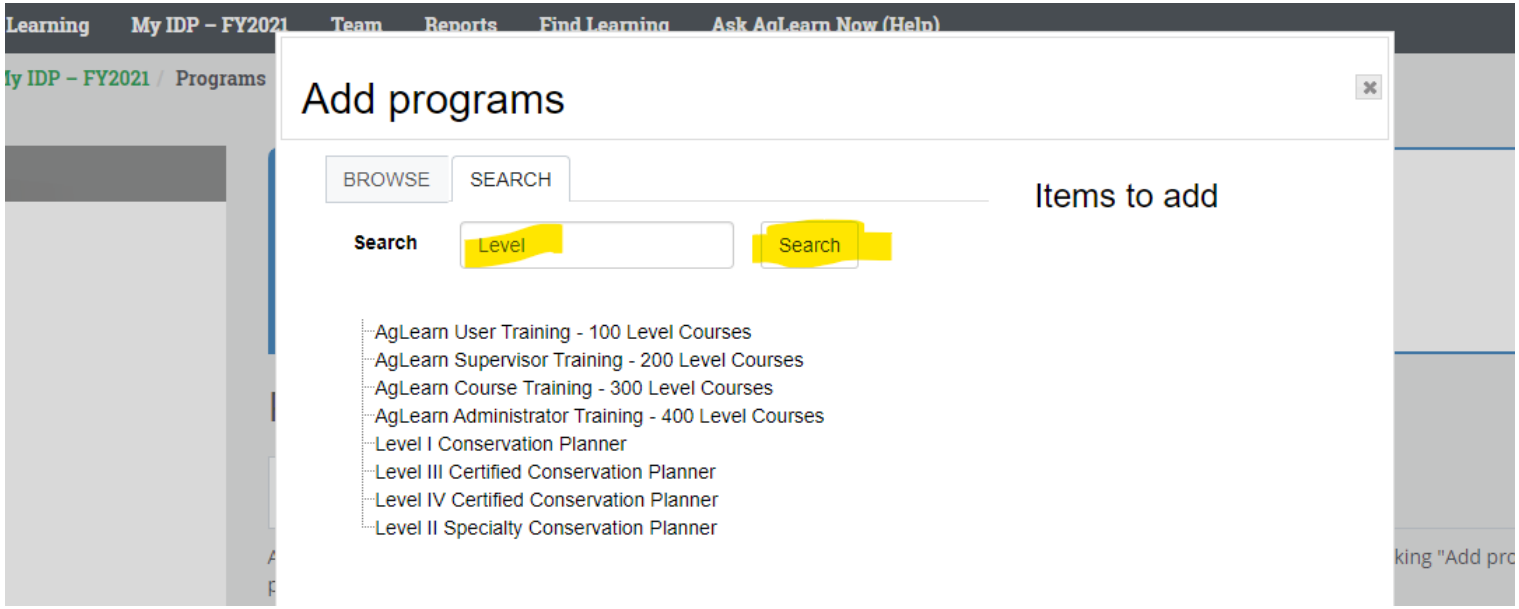
5. Select Add programs:



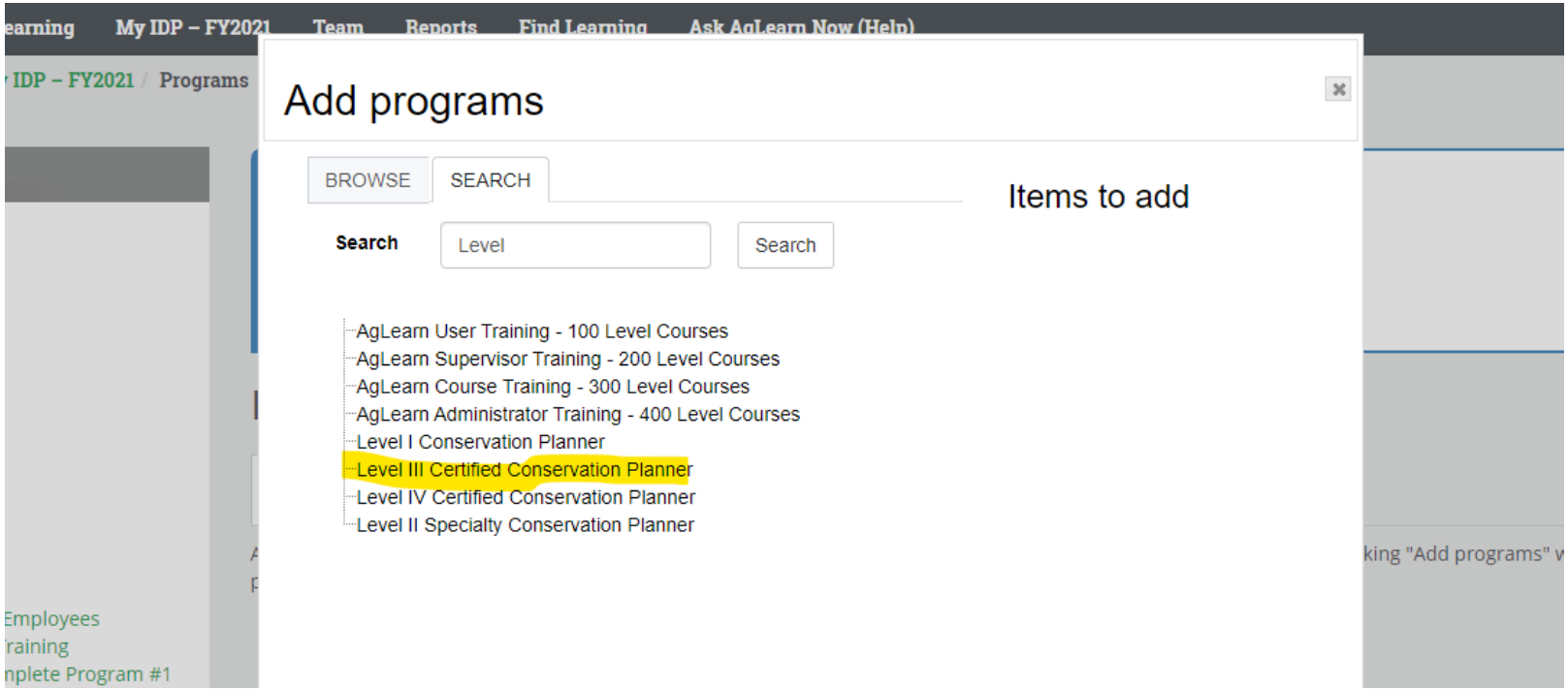
6. Select SEARCH:



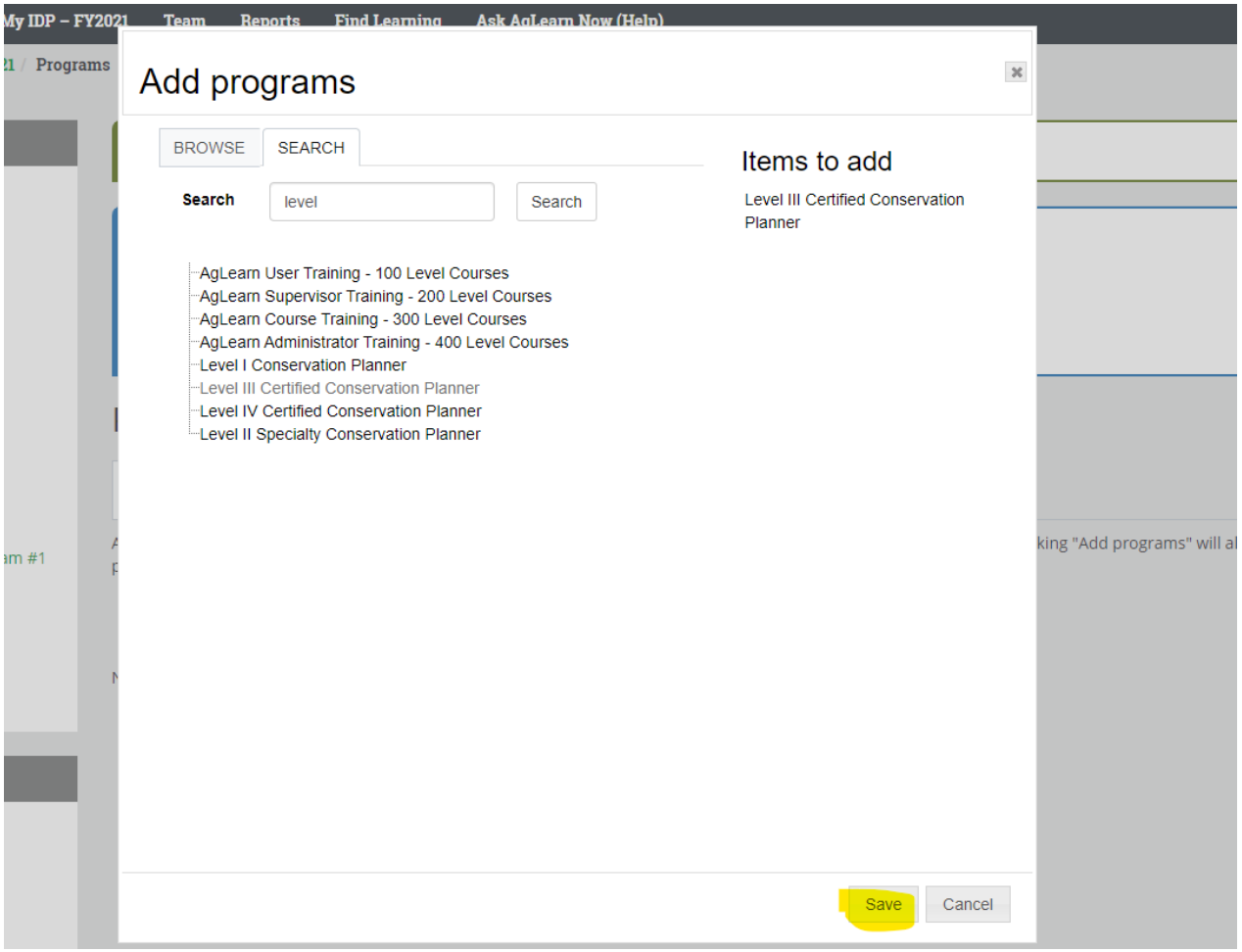
7. Search for the appropriate planner level:



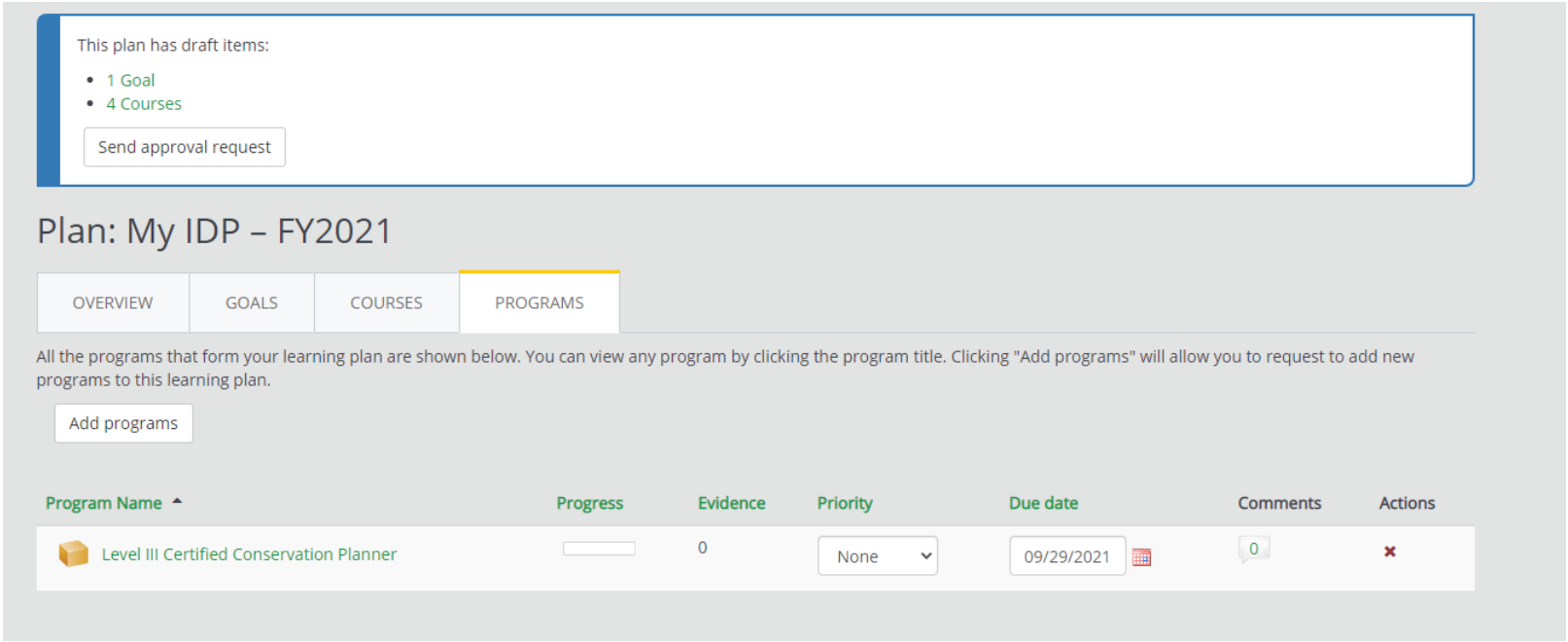
8. Select the appropriate level:



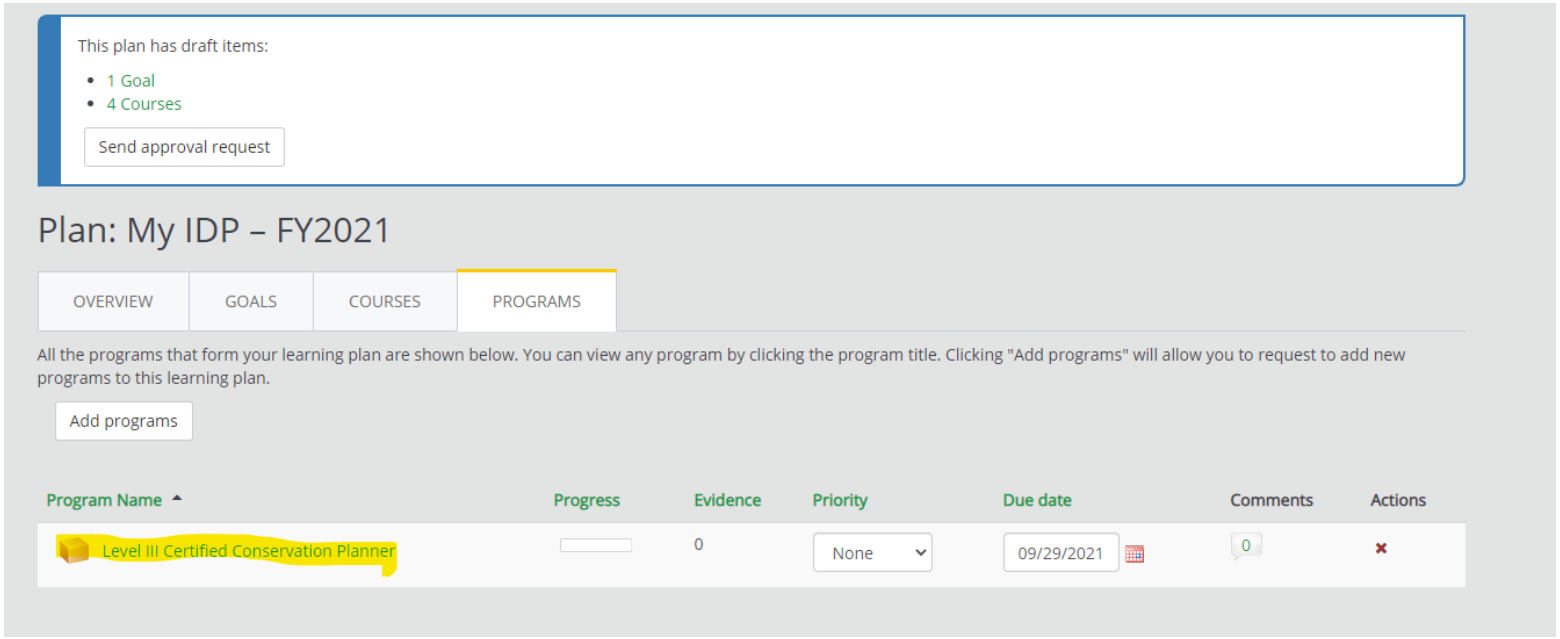
9. Select save:



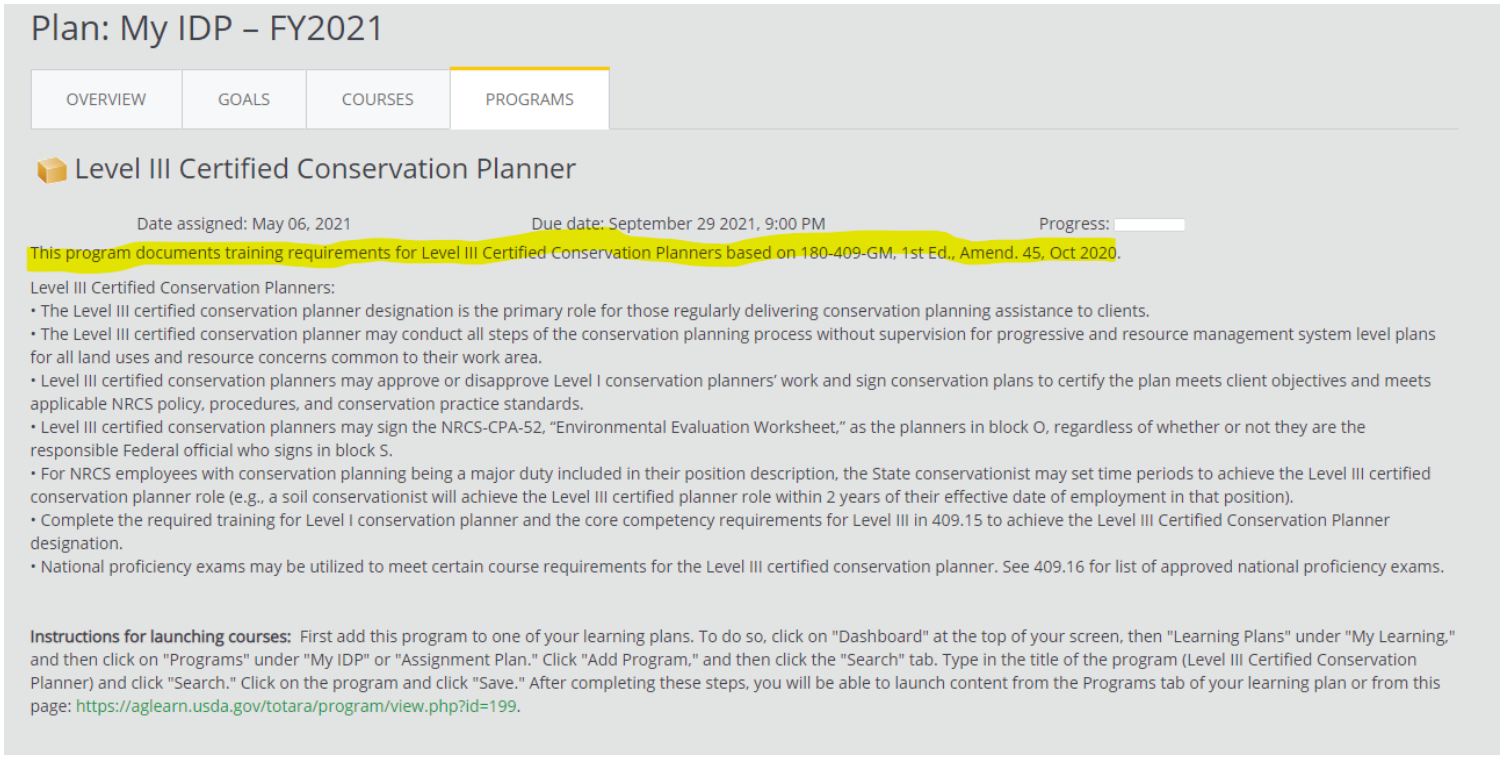
The certification record is now part of the IDP



10. To view the Certification Record, select the program:



11. Note all requirements according to GM 180 part 409.9 are displayed:



Plan: My IDP – FY2021

OVERVIEW | GOALS | COURSES | PROGRAMS

Level III Certified Conservation Planner

Date assigned: May 06, 2021 Due date: September 29 2021, 9:00 PM Progress:

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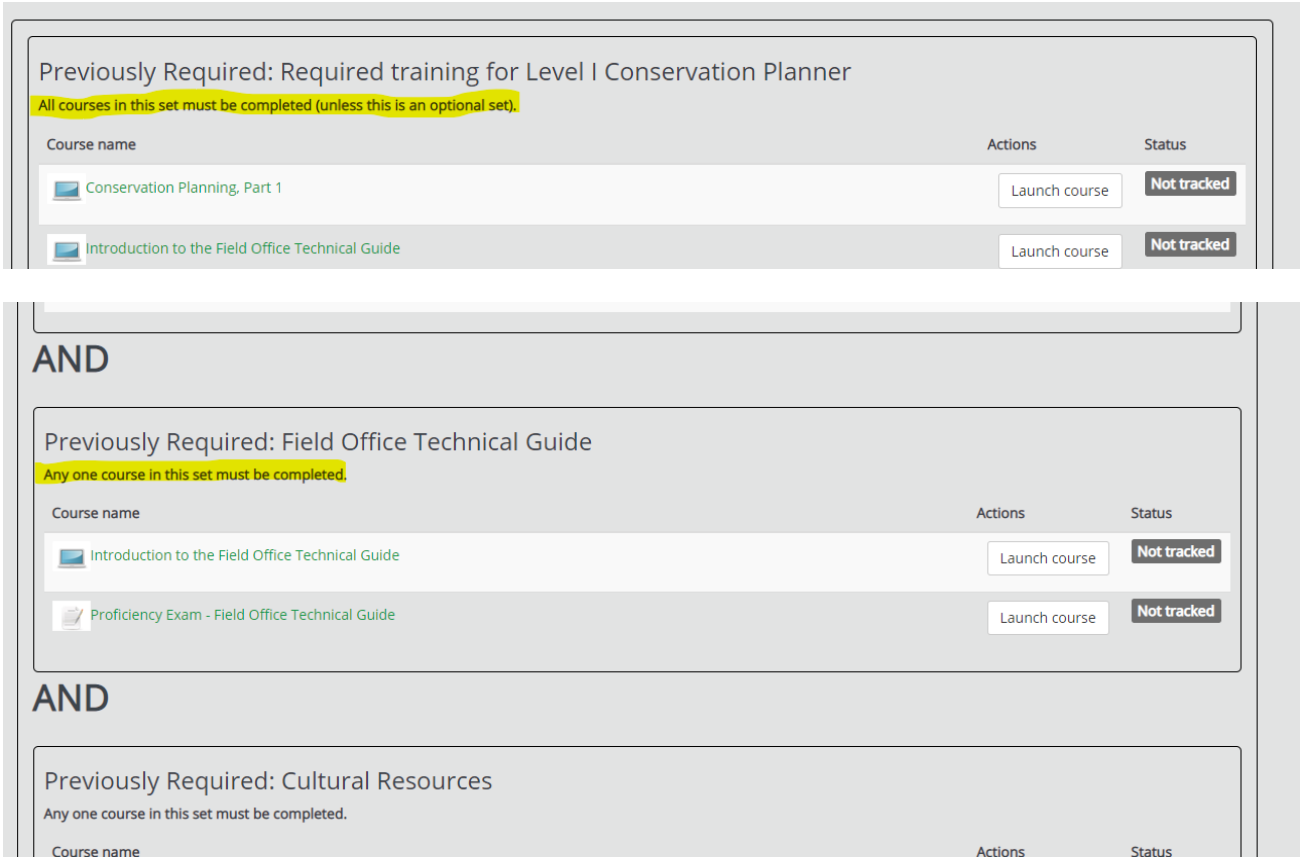
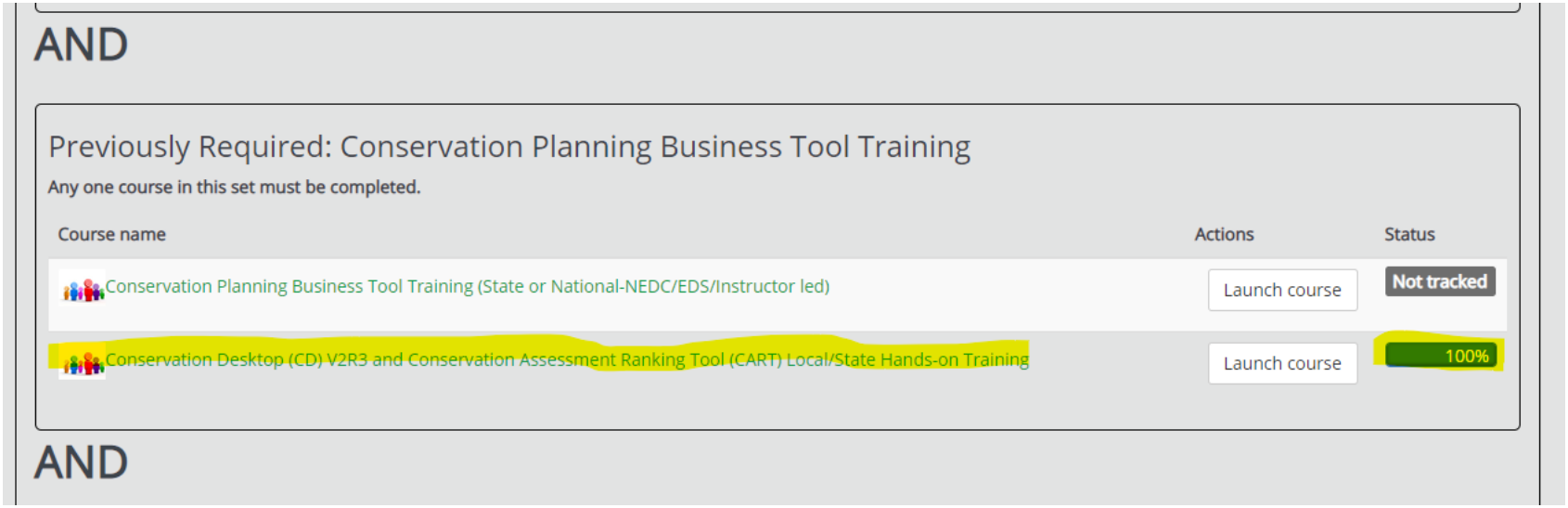
12. The courses are clearly displayed, and options given where appropriate:



12. Any previously completed courses are documented:



Advantages of tracking the Certified Planner training in Aglearn:

- **Aglearn is the official record of training**
- **Certification requirements are clearly displayed and recorded**
- **Training history and records are maintained as employees transfer**
    - Especially important as employees move from one state to another
- **Training officers can search Aglearn records to discover training needs**
    - Recertification training and dates can be appropriately tracked
- **Approved local training can be recorded when appropriate**
- **The planner is responsible for maintaining their records**

Aglearn challenges to planner certification tracking:

- **Training history prior to 2016 may not be recorded**
- **Certification dates need to be manually entered by new employees**
- **Recertification date is based on when the first course is started**
    - Recertification date is re-set when the planner meets the last requirement for one of their certification levels
- **For Level IV, the required five advanced natural resources courses are not clearly tracked**

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