



Missouri Department of dnr.mo.gov

NATURAL RESOURCES

Michael L. Parson, Governor

Dru Buntin, Director

MEMORANDUM

2022-010

DATE: December 8, 2021

TO: All Soil and Water Conservation Districts

FROM: Kurt Boeckmann, Director
JB
for
Soil and Water Conservation Program

SUBJECT: District Specialist Progression Line

The updated District Specialist Progression line was presented as an informational report to the Soil and Water Districts Commission at their November 29, 2021 meeting. The progression line was reviewed and updated by the Program Delivery and District Operations committee at their October 2021 meeting. The Soil and Water Program Office would like to thank all SWCD board members and SWCD employees that serve on this committee. The updated progression line is attached and has been placed on the SWCD intranet site.

The changes to the progression line are summarized below and go into effect January 1, 2022:

- Introduction to Missouri Soil and Water Conservation Districts training by the district coordinator replaces Missouri Introduction to Conservation Planning for progression from a District Specialist I to a District Specialist II.
- The 12 hours of Conservation Planner training has been removed as a requirement for progression from a District Specialist II to a District Specialist III.
- District employees are now required to pass 5 of the 7 District Specialist test to progress from a District Specialist II to a District Specialist III.
- Reference to a Conservation Apprentice has been removed and replaced with Conservation Planner Level 1.

The progression line also reflects the new salary for the positions listed. The salary increase goes into effect on January 1, 2022. Any payroll received in January for hours worked in December must be paid at the previous state stipend amount. The board must document their approval of providing the increase to employees in board meeting minutes. The program office will update the allocation sheet for each SWCD to reflect the increase in stipend. SWCDs do not need to submit a Stipend Change Form for this increase.

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Also attached is the appendix for the progression line. The appendix provides information on 1) the requirements needed for each certification, 2) where the training or testing can be found, and 3) the documentation that must be submitted to the board, program office and/or NRCS to document the employee has completed the training or testing. The appendix will also be placed on the SWCD intranet site.

If you have any questions, please contact your district coordinator.

Attachments

DISTRICT SPECIALIST PROGRESSION

DS I

\$15.00/\$15.75*

DS II

\$15.75/\$16.50*

DS III

\$16.50/\$17.50*

DS IV

\$18.50/\$19.50*

1 year of service & SWCD
Employee Training

1 additional year of service, &
District Specialist Testing

3 additional years of service &
Plan, Design, and/or Report

* Higher amounts
reflected for each level
are for shared
employees

District Specialist Testing (Must pass 5 of 7)

Conservation Practices
Soils
Survey
Conservation Planning
District Operations
Financial
MoSWIMS

Fulfill 2 out of 3 categories and attend Grazing School

Plan

Conservation Planner Level 1

Design

Engineering Job Approval (Level 2) **OR** Grazing Job Approval
OR Nutrient Certification **OR** Ecological Sciences **OR**
Streambank Assessment

Report

Document Management System

State stipend only increased at the quarter (July 1, Oct 1, Jan 1
or Apr 1) only after testing and years of service criteria has been
met and appropriate forms received.

Appendix to District Specialist Progression Line

Section 1: District Specialist I to District Specialist II

- In order to progress from a DSI to DSII the employee must have served for at least one year and attend the Introduction to Missouri Soil and Water Conservation Districts training provided by your District Coordinator.
- To document your attendance at the Introduction to Missouri Soil and Water Conservation Districts training a certificate will be provided by the Soil and Water Conservation Program.

Section 2: District Specialist II to District Specialist III

- In order to progress from a DSII to DSIII the employee must have served for at least one additional year at the DSII level and pass five of the seven District Specialist Testing categories.
- District Specialist Testing includes passing five of seven test. The testing is administered by the Soil and Water Conservation Program and is held once a quarter in Jefferson City. The seven test include soils, conservation planning, district operations, MoSWIMS, financial, survey and conservation practices. A score of 70% or greater is needed to pass each test.

Section 3: District Specialist III to District Specialist IV

- In order to progress from a DSIII to DSIV the employee must have served for at least three additional years at the DSIII level, meet two of the three Plan, Design, and Report categories, and attend an MU/NRCS Grazing School.
- **The SWCD board should direct the SWCD employee to the certifications that will provide the most assistance to the landowners in their county.**
- Grazing School, the employee must attend a MU/NRCS grazing school. This applies to only SWCD employees that work for SWCDs that have funds in the grazing resource concern.
- **To meet the Plan category**, the employee must attain Conservation Planner Level I. Please refer to AgLearn for the requirements for Conservation Planner Level I. Instructions for adding the Level 1 planning program into the employee's IDP in AgLearn can be found on the NRCS Conservation Planning page at [NRCS Conservation Planning | Missouri Soil and Water \(mosoilandwater.land\)](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/soil-and-water-conservation-program/conservation-planning).
 - The certification from AgLearn will serve as the documentation that the employee has completed the required coursework for the Conservation Planner Level I. The Conservation Planner Level I training curriculum can be found in AgLearn.
- **To meet the Design category**, the employee must meet one of the following five options:

- Engineering Job Approval Authority (Level 2) –
 - In order to receive this certification the employee must be assigned engineering job approval authority level 2 for inventory and evaluation, design and construction responsibility for one practice defined by the standards in Section IV of the NRCS Technical Guide. See pages 3 and 4 for further guidance.
- Ecological Sciences Job Approval Authority (ESJAA)
 - In order to receive this certification the employee must attain the appropriate level of job class by practice for at least one of the three resource concerns. The three resource concerns are Sheet/Rill and Gully Erosion, Sensitive Areas, and Woodland Erosion. This will be documented on the appropriate resource concern ESJAA Certification Form found at <https://mosoilandwater.land/internal/forms-pubs>. See pages 4, 5 and 6 for further guidance.
- Grazing Job Approval Authority
 - In order to receive this certification the employee must attain the appropriate level of job class for each specific grassland management conservation practices and supporting practices that are utilized in the development of a prescribed grazing system. This will be documented on the Grazing Certification Job Approval Authority Form found at <https://mosoilandwater.land/sites/mosoilandwater/files/Grazing%20JAA%20Certification%20Form%208-2020.pdf>. See pages 6 and 7 for further guidance.
- Nutrient Management Certification
 - In order to receive this certification the employee must pass the Nutrient Management test administered by Lincoln University. See page 7 for further guidance.
- Streambank Assessment – Currently being developed
- **To meet the Report category**, the employee must demonstrate the ability to perform the following overarching tasks.
 - 1. Finalize documents to Scan and Upload to Document Management System (DMS) information
 - 2. Assemble Contract Files and Documentation
 - 3. Manage Correspondence (Letters)
 - 4. Data Entry for Conservation Desktop and Progress Reporting System Data Entry
 - See pages 8 and 9 for further guidance.

DESIGN CATEGORY

Engineering Job Approval Authority (Level 2)

Engineering Job Approval Authority policy is contained in NRCS Title 210 National Engineering Manual (NEM) Part 501, Subpart A and in Missouri supplement to Part 501, Subpart A – Review and Approval (<https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/>).

From NEM MO501.1 (March 2012):

Non-NRCS employees in Missouri operating under the technical supervision of an NRCS employee but who are not federal employees and who are not licensed to practice engineering in the state may be assigned job class I or II engineering approval authority for practices defined by the following standards in section IV of the Technical Guide:

- (i) Diversion (362)
- (ii) Grassed Waterway (412)
- (iii) Irrigation Land Leveling (464)
- (iv) Pipeline (516) (Except those connected to a source or supply used for human consumption)
- (v) Spring Development (574)
- (vi) Surface Drain Field Ditch (607)
- (vii) Terrace (600)
- (viii) Watering Facility (614)
- (ix) Underground Outlet (620)
- (x) Water and Sediment Control Basin (638) (Maximum fill height of 5 ft measured from natural ground at centerline of embankment)
- (xi) Well Decommissioning (351)

From NEM MO501.4 (March 2012):

(3) Missouri Engineering Job Approval Delegation

- (i) Engineering job approval authority may be provided for inventory and evaluation, design or construction responsibility. (See Section 501.9)
- (ii) Engineering job approval authority must be recommended by an NRCS engineer. Generally, the area engineer or service area engineer will recommend engineering job approval authority for area and field office personnel. The state conservation engineer will determine and assign engineering job approval for state office staff and area or service area engineers. The recommended engineering job approval authority chart for NRCS employees will be reviewed by the person's administrative supervisor. Job approval charts for non-NRCS employees will be reviewed by the district conservationist and by the organization employing the individual. In a case where the recommending engineer is the administrative supervisor, the State Conservation Engineer will concur with the engineering job approval chart.

(iii) Engineering job approval authority will be delegated to employees based on demonstrated competence, training received, and experience at the various stages of planning, design, and construction. A sustained workload is necessary to retain competence and engineering job approval authority for an engineering practice. When more than 3 years have passed since the employee designed a practice, or one with similar components, consideration should be given to reducing the level of delegated authority for that practice. Job approval authority for all employees must be reviewed at least once every 3 years.

(iv) The Missouri NRCS job approval database will be used to document a person's job engineering approval authority. The approval levels will be printed on the MO-ENG-C12 form. Signed copies of the printed forms will be given to the person receiving engineering job approval and a signed copy will be filed in the area office. The database with the engineering approval authority for all persons in Missouri will be maintained by the state conservation engineer.

(v) Employees must sign the Engineering Approval Authority ethics statement before the approval authority is valid.

Grazing School Requirement

Any SWCD employee that is employed by an SWCD that receives cost-share funds in the grazing resource concern must attend an NRCS/MU grazing school. A letter from the SWCD stating the employee's name and the dates of the grazing school they attend will serve as documentation for this requirement.

Ecological Science Job Approval Authority

Within this category, SWCP practices were grouped by resource concern and NRCS practices used to address these resource concerns were identified. The three resource concerns are Sheet/Rill and Gully Erosion, Sensitive Areas, and Woodland Erosion. In order to meet the ESJAA category, employees must attain the appropriate level of job class by practice phase for at least one of the three resource concerns. Design phase will include preparation of all associated documents that support the conservation plan and contract development. This will include Conservation Desktop developed plan, CPA-52, job sheets, specifications, etc. The conservation plan will need to be reviewed and signed by a Certified Conservation Planner.

Missouri Ecological Science Job Approval Authority Fact Sheets have been developed for each ecological science practice and provide additional information on job classes, controlling factors, knowledge, skills, abilities needed, and common associated practices. These fact sheets are found in the conservation practice standard folder in Section IV of the Missouri Field Office Technical Guide: <https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/details>

Specific ESJAA for each conservation practice needed to address the resource concerns are found in the following tables. **If a practice listed in the tables is not utilized in your district you only need to fulfill the Inventory and Evaluation requirement listed in the tables below.**

Ecological Science Job Approval Authority - Sheet/Rill and Gully Erosion			
Conservation Practices	Job Class by Practice Phase		
	Inventory and Evaluation (I&E)	Design and Development of Conservation Practice Requirements *	Installation Oversight and Certification
Access Control (472)	3	3	3
Conservation Crop Rotation (328)	1	1	1
Contour Buffer Strips (332)	2	2	2
Cover Crop (340) - <i>All Controlling Factors</i>	2	2	
Critical Area Planting (342) - <i>Type of Site Prep</i>	2	2	2
Critical Area Planting (342) - <i>Slope</i>	3	3	3
Fence (382)	3	2	2
Forage and Biomass Planting (512) - <i>All Controlling Factors</i>	4	4	4
Prescribed Grazing (528) - <i>All Controlling Factors</i>	3	3	3
Residue and Tillage Management No-Till (329)	1	1	1
Stripcropping (585) - <i>Slope</i>	2	2	2
Stripcropping (585) - <i>Crop Type</i>	1	1	1
Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)	3	2	2
Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490)	3	3	3
Windbreak (380)	3	2	2

Ecological Science Job Approval Authority - Sensitive Areas			
Conservation Practices	Job Class by Practice Phase		
	Inventory and Evaluation (I&E)	Design and Development of Conservation Practice Requirements *	Installation Oversight and Certification
Access Control (472)	3	3	3
Critical Area Planting (342) - <i>Type of Site Prep</i>	2	2	2
Critical Area Planting (342) - <i>Slope</i>	3	3	3
Fence (382)	3	2	2
Field Border (386)	3	2	2
Filter Strip (393) - <i>All Controlling Factors</i>	2	2	2
Forage and Biomass Harvest Management (511)	1	1	1
Riparian Forest Buffer (391) - <i>All Controlling Factors</i>	2	2	2
Riparian Herbaceous Cover (390) - <i>All Controlling Factors</i>	2	2	2
Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)	3	2	2
Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490)	3	3	3
Windbreak (380)	3	2	2

Ecological Science Job Approval Authority - Woodland Erosion

Conservation Practices	Job Class by Practice Phase		
	Inventory and Evaluation (I&E)	Design and Development of Conservation Practice Requirements *	Installation Oversight and Certification
Access Control (472)	3	3	3
Critical Area Planting (342) - <i>Type of Site Prep</i>	2	2	2
Critical Area Planting (342) - <i>Slope</i>	3	3	3
Fence (382)	3	2	2
Forest Trails and Landings (655)	3	3	3
Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)	3	2	2
Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490)	3	3	3

The certification form for ecological sciences must be signed by the employee, a SWCD board member and NRCS. This form is located on the SWCD intranet site at the following location.

<https://mosoilandwater.land/internal/forms-pubs>

Grazing Job Approval Authority

Within this category, specific grassland management conservation practices and supporting practices that are utilized in the development of a prescribed grazing system have been identified. In order to meet the Grazing JAA category, employees must attain the appropriate level of job class for each conservation practice identified in the table below. Design phase will include preparation of all associated documents that support the conservation plan and contract development. This will include Conservation Desktop developed plan, CPA-52, job sheets, specifications, etc. The conservation plan will need to be reviewed and signed by a Certified Conservation Planner.

Grazing Certification Job Approval Authority Matrix (Ecological Science and Engineering JAA)			
Conservation Practice	Job Class by Practice Phase		
	Inventory and Evaluation (I&E)	Design and Development of Conservation Practice Requirements *	Installation Oversight and Certification
<i>Grassland Practices</i>			
Brush Management (314)	2	2	2
Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315)	2	2	2
Fence (382)	3	3	3
Forage and Biomass Planting (512) - <i>All Controlling Factors</i>	4	4	4
Forage Harvest Management (511)	1	1	1
Prescribed Grazing (528) - <i>All Controlling Factors</i>	3	3	3
<i>Supporting Practices</i>			
Access Control (472)	3	2	2
Critical Area Planting (342) - <i>Type of Site Prep</i>	2	2	2
Critical Area Planting (342) - <i>Slope</i>	3	3	3
Heavy Use Area Protection (561)**	1	1	1
Integrated Pest Management (595) - <i>Pest. Loss Pathways</i>	2	0	0
Integrated Pest Management (595) - <i>Land Use</i>	1	0	0
Livestock Pipeline (516)**	2	2	2
Silvopasture Establishment (381)	1	0	0
Spring Development (574)**	2	1	2
Watering Facility (614)**	2	2	2

**Requires Engineering Job Approval Authority - Approval is based on the individual's training, experience, and demonstrated competence. Employees shall not approve designs or certify construction for practices that exceed their maximum approval limit. However, employees (working under the direction of person approving) can complete work on practices above their limit and submit for approval.

The certification form for grazing certification must be signed by the employee, a SWCD board member and NRCS. This form is located on the SWCD intranet site at the following location. <https://mosoilandwater.land/sites/mosoilandwater/files/Grazing%20JAA%20Certification%20Form%208-2020.pdf>

Nutrient Management Certification

The Soil and Water Conservation Program has contracted with Lincoln University to provide training on Nutrient Management. Lincoln University also administers a Nutrient Management test. SWCD employees must pass the Nutrient Management test in order to receive this certification. Nutrient Management training and testing are scheduled periodically.

Streambank Assessment

The Streambank assessment criteria is being developed at this time.

REPORT CATEGORY

The employee must demonstrate the ability to perform the following overarching tasks. NRCS will assist with providing the initial training to SWCD staff assisting field offices in the management of documents needed for Farm Bill contracts. Workload will vary across FOSAs. Local District Conservationists will assist by providing workload tasks.

1. Finalize documents to Scan and Upload to Document Management System (DMS) information
2. Assemble Contract Files and Documentation
3. Manage Correspondence (Letters)
4. Data Entry for Conservation Desktop and Progress Reporting System Data Entry

Within these tasks, activities may include the following as needed throughout a fiscal year:

Actions	Deliverables
Gathers appropriate contract folder information for CSP and EQIP program enrollments	Scan and upload CSP and EQIP contracts into DMS as per DMS User Guide
	Scan and upload contract documents prior to and after obligations
	Work with participants to obtain final signatures. Document signature dates in Protracts field. Scan and upload documents signed by participant
Work directly with field and Area Staff to insure transfer of information from Protracts is completed	Ensure that documents from Protracts are loaded directly to DMS as applicable. Including signed contract documents, completed payment checklists
Review contract forms, documents, notes, etc.	Assemble and maintain six part contract file folders- includes EQIP, CSP and CTA programs.
Work directly with field staff to insure proper documents are available for printing	Print and file documents relating to contract: 1202, contract reviews, etc.
Collect items needed for six part folder	Complete six part folder checklist
Identify with field and area staff those older contracts that need to be disposed of.	Complete disposition of older contracts in accordance to policy
Document in folder and electronically any actions that this position is involved with related to the individual contract	Complete written assistance notes within contracts of actions taken
Review with field and area staff as needed appropriate contract information for program participants	Print out contract information packet to provide to participants. Schedule appointments with participants as needed to review contracts with technical staff and insure final detailed plans are provided.

Reviews contract folder information and work with field/area staff to assist on required program letters. Different contract related letters will be needed based on the status of the contract.	Prepare, print and mail contract practice reminder letters. All letters are physically filed in contract folder
	Prepare, print and mail contract application deferral letters. All letters are physically filed in contract folder.
	Prepare, print and mail contract obligation letters. All letters are physically filed in contract folder.
	Prepare, print and mail program eligibility letters. All letters are physically filed in contract folder.
	Prepare, print and mail application approval letters. All letters are physically filed in contract folder.
	Prepare, print and mail status review notification letters.
Review with field and area staff need for contract cancellation and/or termination request packets	Scans needed cancellation and termination materials to Area Office
Reviews with field staff any requests (form AD-1026) for HELC/WC prepares administrative information as needed	Scan and copy HELC/WC AD-1026 determination requests
Collects from field staff HELC/WC determination materials	Print and mail determinations including certified determinations-includes letters, forms, maps, etc.
Reviews with field and area staff any requests for audit data calls	Gathers and submits required information for audit data calls
Review Program Applications-form CCC-1200	Enter Program Applications (Form CCC-1200) into Protracts
Conservation Desktop plan follow-up	Insure that practices are applied in Conservation Desktop after certification for all state cost share plans.
Reviews contracts as requested and identifies eligibility issues	Coordinates with FSA to address contracts with error messages on eligibility issues.
Manages Receipt for Service entries for Field Office as needed	Tracks and enters Receipt for Service entries to insure for services provided by local field offices as assigned.
Average Cost Database updating	Collects receipts and enters data into the average cost database based on annual deadlines for local field offices as assigned.

The certification form needed to document DMS is located on the SWCD intranet site at the following location https://mosoilandwater.land/sites/mosoilandwater/files/dms-certification_0.pdf.