



United States Department of Agriculture



Conservation Needs Assessment

July 10, 2019 | Steve Smarik, State Resource Conservationist

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

az.nrcs.usda.gov

What is a Conservation Needs Assessment?

- It is an NRCS policy term that can be found in the NRCS eDirectives under Locally Led Conservation.
<https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/RollupViewer.aspx?hid=27712>
- Locally led conservation adheres to the policy that community stakeholders are best suited to identify and resolve local natural resource problems



What is a Conservation Needs Assessment?

- **Comprehensive evaluation of the condition of the area's natural resource base**
- **Comprehensive analysis of the work that needs to be done to achieve broad conservation goals set by community stakeholders**
- **Antecedent to the development of the Conservation Action Plan**



Who can develop a CNA?



- **Ideally, the local Conservation District would lead the effort to develop a CNA due to their familiarity with resource concerns, solutions, and federal and state programs.**
- **However, policy states that a CNA can be led and/or developed by any community stakeholder.**
 - Unit of State or Local Government
 - Irrigation District
 - Flood Control District
 - Non-governmental Organizations



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

az.nrcs.usda.gov



Contents of a CNA



- **Assessment of natural resources involving soils, water, air, plants and animals and agricultural energy needs.**
- **Assessment of natural resource concerns, with metrics.**
 - Include acres affected, number of farms and ranches affected, population affected (numbers, socially disadvantaged), exceedances of environmental standards, associated lost income or revenue, cascading effects, impaired use of resources, lost opportunities
- **Consider visuals, graphics and maps to display extents of concerns**



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

az.nrcs.usda.gov



Contents of a CNA



- **Short analysis of alternative solutions**
 - Treatment considerations and costs, efficacy, expected outcomes, benefits and disadvantages, social acceptance, potential to affect threatened and endangered species, timeline for acceptable level of treatment
- **Potential Partners**
 - Units of government, NGOs, community groups
 - Consider who benefits and may find mutual interest
 - Consider research agencies where additional information/data is critical for success
- **Funding Opportunities for implementation**
 - Federal programs, State Programs, Grants



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service



Contents of a CNA



- **May include Executive Summary to list those involved in the development and to highlight profound discoveries**
- **May include Talking Points on most serious issues for conservation district board members and community leaders to advance/voice their concerns to the public, elected leaders and agency heads.**



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

az.nrcs.usda.gov



USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Include the FULL USDA Non-Discrimination Statement where space allows...



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

az.nrcs.usda.gov