

What is Conservation Planning?

Conservation Planning is a comprehensive plan for your land unit or parcel that identifies natural resource problems and conservation solutions to address those problems. The planning process involves nine steps. Many good solutions to common resource problems have been developed over the years and are incorporated in Best Management Practices (BMP's).

Conservation Planning Process (9 Steps)

- Identify Problems
- Determine Objectives
- Inventory Resources
- Analyze Resource Data
- Formulate Alternatives
- Evaluate Alternatives
- Make Decisions
- Implement Plan
- Evaluate Plan



The Planning Process is used by the USDA- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) & Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) to assist landowners and land users develop their voluntary conservation plan.

Why Should I Develop a Conservation Plan?

An organized conservation plan will provide a roadmap of resource development opportunities over the next five to ten year period for your land. This will reduce the probability of making short-term decisions that may conflict with your long-term goal for your property.

Is a Conservation Plan Required?

No! The choice to develop a conservation plan is yours - It is voluntary.

How Can a Conservation Plan Help?

The unique approach to conservation planning enables land users to identify and address multiple natural resource requirements simultaneously, while facilitating a viable and sustainable operation. Conservation planning seeks to protect the natural resource base from further degradation, improve the economics of whatever land use operation is being used, while working to enhance the environmental quality of the property to the fullest extent possible.

Conservation Planning and other resource tools can help you to select appropriate conservation practices (Best Management Plans, or BMP's) that satisfy regulatory requirements for government agencies while helping make land use management choices provide a sustainable operation for the property.

Conservation planning activities were initially started by the US Department of Agriculture in rural areas to assist landowners making decisions about their farming operations. Since those early beginnings, it was found that conservation planning can assist **any** land user or landowner with **any land use**, helping them to make wise land management decisions for a parcel of land and improving their options of alternative choices.

For example, developing a plan has advantages in rural areas helping landowners meet certain government agency assistance program requirements, such as the USDA's Environmental Quality Incentives Programs (EQIP), which requires an approved conservation plan before cost-share assistance can be provided. A plan will also help you to meet your demands for sustainable land use.

How do I start the Conservation Planning Process on my Site?

If you are interested in developing a conservation plan for your particular unit of land, be it, a community, farm, subdivision, factory, park, home site, etc. contact the Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District and the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) at 317-786-1776 or Fax us at: 317-786-1757. We have many resources already available to you on our website: www.marionswcd.org. We are ready to help you start your conservation planning activities.