

Arkansas Conservation Districts Training Program

Locally Led Planning



Power Point 2





Leadership Required

“Most of the outstanding leaders I have worked with are neither tall nor especially handsome; they are often mediocre public speakers; they do not stand out in a crowd; and they do not mesmerize with their brilliance or eloquence.

Rather, what distinguishes them is the clarity and persuasiveness of their ideas, the depth of their commitment, and their openness to continually learn more.

They do not ‘have the answer.’ But they do instill confidence in those around them that, together, ‘we can learn whatever we need to learn in order to achieve the results we truly desire.’”

Peter Senge

Sloan School of Management

Massachusetts Institute of Technology



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Basic Steps

Reach out to the public and bring local stakeholders together

Prepare a **Conservation Needs Assessment** to analyze local resource needs and concerns

Set local priorities based on public input and needs assessment

Develop a **Conservation Action Plan**

Identify program resources available to implement Conservation Action Plan

Develop **Annual Work Plan**

Implement the plan

Review and evaluate needs and **report accomplishments**



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Engaging People

Does the district want a plan that gathers dust on the shelf or a dynamic plan with enthusiastic support? If the latter, engage people.

Personal invitation to participate – telephone call, letter or both

Provide participants with sound, science-based analysis before they start priority setting so they can make informed decisions

Use group process techniques so that everyone has an opportunity to speak and to be heard

Listen to participants – when they read the Conservation Needs Assessment and Conservation Action Plan – they should see evidence that they were heard

Make it a priority to develop a long-term relationships based on trust and mutual respect

Afterwards – ask what they thought about the process. Be prepared to listen.



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Who To Involve

USDA Local Work Group

Local partner organizations and agencies

Individuals who use Conservation District programs & services

Individuals who could but do not participate

Community and business leaders

Other stakeholders



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How To Involve People In Planning

The goal is to create a two-way ongoing dialogue

Advisory or steering committee

A series of public meetings

Public meetings in different locations

Focus groups by resource

Surveys – phone, mail or email

Keep people informed of progress through:

Email, website, radio, newspaper, etc.

Track how/what/when they participate so you can deepen their involvement over time by catering to their expressed interests



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Active Listening Required



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District Overview

Analyze current conditions and trends by resource and compile a District Overview

A starting place for public involvement

A portion of the Conservation Needs Assessment

Use resource inventories, resource data, socioeconomic data

Present as maps, graphs, photos, etc

Present to participants in planning process so they can make more informed choices

Providing sound, science-based information as the basis for informed discussion shows respect for participants



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Conservation Needs Assessment

Identify existing conditions and trends for each natural resource in your district.

Describe specific concerns by resource (e.g., excessive soil runoff into drainage ditches, salt water intrusion into groundwater, loss of riparian corridors for wildlife habitat, etc)

Rank resource concerns using group process techniques

Identify, agree to the extent possible and document community objectives by resource.

Analyze conservation needs and priorities.

Prioritize natural resource concerns.



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Measurable Objectives

Objectives – One or more measurable statements of intent to achieve a goal.

For example: “We will provide training on stormwater management to 20% of District cooperators with lands sloping from 2 to 6 percent.”

For example: We will develop plans to establish erosion control systems with ten cooperators on 2,000 acres of land each in each of the next five years. More than 60% of the cooperators who develop plans will fully implement those plans over five years.



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Conservation Action Plan

Using the Conservation Needs Assessment, stakeholders and community leaders develop a Conservation Action Plan, addressing the following elements:

- Identify priorities by resource

- Set measurable objectives

- Identify conservation technology needed to achieve objectives

- Determine who will be responsible

- Create a flexible timeline

- Identify federal, state, local government and non-governmental partners whose programs and services will be required to implement the Conservation Action Plan

- Identify resources that are not yet available. Explore ways to develop those resources through grant-writing, creative partnerships, seeking out in-kind services, etc.



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Annual Plan of Work

The plan of work includes:

- A list of key issues and goals

- Activities to be completed under each goal

- The person (s) responsible for carrying out the activity

- A timeline for completion

- Evaluation of expectations

- An annual budget



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Annual Plan of Work

The following is an **example** of how to address one issue in an annual plan of work

Priority Resource Issue: Reforestation

Objective: Increase the number of customers who purchase tree seedlings by 15% compared to last year in order to increase reforestation of bottomland hardwoods

Action: Promote & help coordinate the Tree Sale through group meetings and media

Partners: Arkansas Forestry Association, Forestry Commission, RC&D Council, Conservation District (Include names)

When: January - March 2008

Needed Budget: \$3000 (cost of mailing, advertising, printing, travel, etc)

Evaluation: At the board meeting following the tree sale



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NRCS Can Help

While NRCS cannot lead local planning, it can help in several ways:

- Assemble natural resource inventories, data, and socioeconomic data

- Analyze data by resource

- Provide logistical support for participatory planning

- Identify non-USDA program

- Interpret/clarify USDA programs

- Assist with evaluation

- Update data and analysis

- Help interpret the impact of conservation action plan implementation on the condition of the natural resource



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From this



To this



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