Conservation on Your Land

California's Introduction to Planning Workbook

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NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

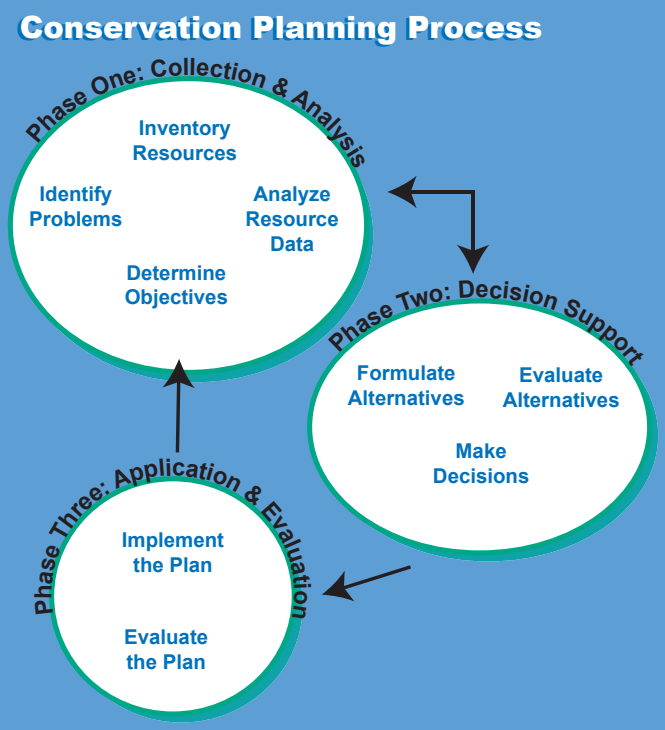
What is a Conservation Plan?

A Conservation Plan is a tool that helps manage your land profitably while protecting your natural resources. Soil erosion, water quality, and waste management are just a few of the resource concerns that could be addressed with a plan. The completed conservation plan will describe each of the conservation practices you select to manage your natural resources. The choice to develop or not develop a conservation plan is yours - it is a voluntary process. You make the decisions. You implement the plan.

Conservation planners provide the technical assistance needed to develop and implement your plan. Their help is free. Creating a plan does not provide public access to your property. You control all rights of entry and use. All of the information developed by you belongs to you.

A Conservation Plan consists of nine steps and is relatively complex. This workbook does not result in a complete plan, however it assists you with the preliminary self-assessment and fact gathering needed for a plan. You need to commit to the process in order for it to work.

After completing this preliminary self-assessment, contact your local United State's Department of Agriculture Service Center to be put in contact with a conservation planner. The conservation planner will assist you, or you may employ a qualified private consultant, to complete a plan.



The Process....

Conservation planning may lead to changes in your management. Physical or structural practices are designed to facilitate the changes you desire. These nine steps outline the structure of a conservation plan. This workbook allows you to begin **Phase One** of the planning process.

What are the Benefits of a Conservation Plan?

- Saves money as your land becomes more productive.
- Ensures better natural resource quality for you, your animals and your neighbors.
- Increases your property value.
- Enhances open space and wildlife habitat.
- Improves animal health.
- Prevents off-farm impacts.
- Contributes to plant health and vigor.
- Makes your land more attractive and promotes good neighbor relations.
- Promotes health and safety for your family.

Set Your Objectives

The best place to start planning is to set objectives. Objectives will keep you focused and provide you with a measurement tool to determine progress. Set realistic objectives that can be reached with small achievable steps. State clearly what you want to happen on your land and where you want to be within a selected time frame. Clear objectives will help the conservation planner develop a plan that is right for you.

Natural Resource Objective

Short Term: _____

_____

Long Term: _____

_____

Production & Economic Objectives

Short Term: _____

_____

Long Term: _____

_____

Quality of Life Objective

Short Term: _____

_____

Long Term: _____

_____

What do you want your land to look like in five years?

_____

_____

_____

Resource Concerns & Problems

Conservation planning provides the opportunity to address a broad reach of resource concerns. Briefly describe your soil, water, air, plant, animal and human resource concerns.

Soil: (e.g. erosion, condition, contaminants) _____

_____

Water: (e.g. quantity, quality) _____

_____

Air Quality: (e.g. ozone, PM10, chemical drift, odors) _____

_____

_____

Plant: (e.g. wildfires, invasive species, plant health) _____

_____

_____

Animal: (e.g. wildlife habitat, domestic animal habitat) _____

_____

_____

Human Considerations: (e.g. land ownership, economics, available labor, personal objectives) _____

_____

_____

Additional Notes & Concerns

_____

_____

_____

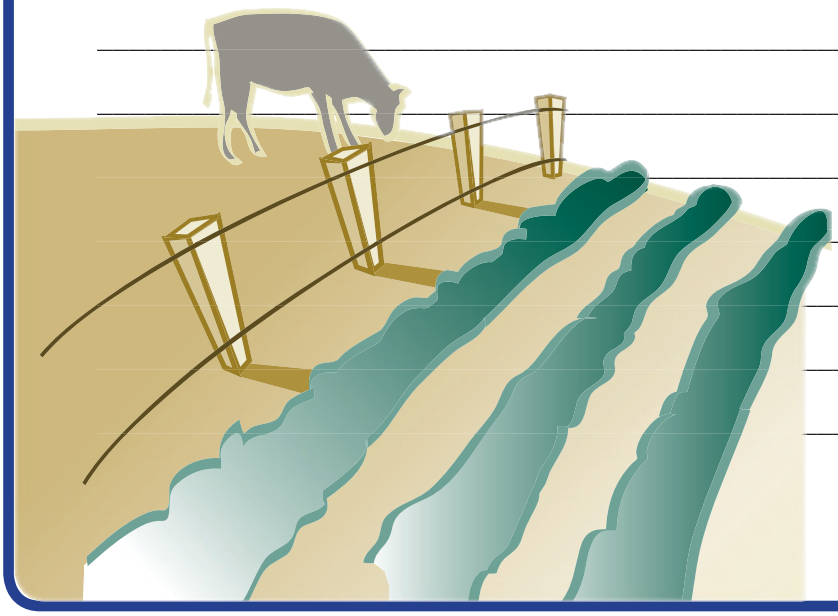
_____

_____

_____

_____

_____



Information about Your Land

Complete the following questions the best you can. Make note of any concern or questions you have for the conservation planner. The more information you supply the easier it will be to help you.

Name of Landowner (s): _____

Name of Manager: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Site Location: _____

Watershed: _____

Describe your land's climate: _____

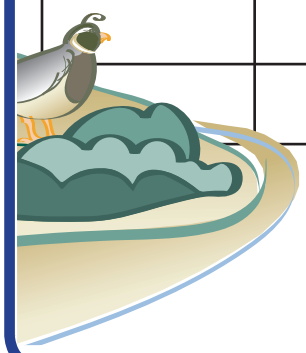
_____

Describe any known archaeological, historical or cultural features present on your land: _____

_____

Describe each of your fields on the chart below.

Field	**Acres**	**Land Use** (crop, homestead, forest, wildlife, etc.)	**Field Characteristics** (production, operation constraints, soil characteristics, etc.)



Water and Wildlife

List streams or creeks running through or adjacent to your land:_____

_____

Describe any flood concerns you may have:_____

_____

Describe wetland and waterway areas:_____

_____

List the fish, wildlife or plant species of concern on or near your land (game, seasonal wildlife, threatened species, etc.): _____

_____

What is your domestic water source (well or public system): _____

Results of last well water test: _____

Last date septic system serviced: _____

Assistance Information

List contracts, easements, and/or agreements entered into for technical or financial assistance which restrict land management practices: _____

_____

List conservation practices you have applied: _____

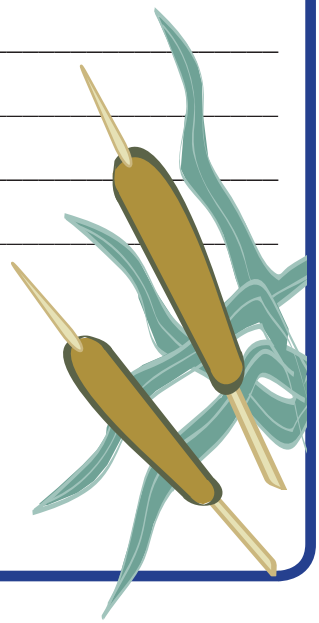
_____

List conservation practices you have considered applying: _____

_____

List funding programs in which you are interested, if known:_____

_____



Information Requests

Check the box if you would like additional information on:

- ☐ **Cropland**
- ☐ **Livestock & Dairies**
- ☐ **Irrigation Water Management**
- ☐ **Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning**
- ☐ **Forest and Rangeland Management**
- ☐ **Water Quality Assessment**
- ☐ **Wildlife Management**
- ☐ **Wetland Restoration**
- ☐ **Air Quality**
- ☐ **Soil Quality**

Notes & Questions

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Cropping Supplement

Crops grown in a typical year	Average Yield/Units	Total Acres	Plant Date	Harvest Date

Crop Rotation Description

Field #	Acres	Typical Cropping Sequence

Tillage & Other Field Operations

Tillage or other field operation	Implement	Crop	Date

Most recent soil test date: _____

Please bring current soil test results to your planning meeting.

Cropping Supplement

Fertilizers

Field(s)	Fertilizer	Rate	Method of Applications	Date	Acres

Please bring your ***pesticide and method of application information*** to your planning meeting. A conservation planner will evaluate your program and estimate the risk of pesticide loss.

Do you use Integrated Pest Management?

If yes, list the IPM practices you use.

Livestock Supplement

Livestock Kind	Class	Numbers	Average Weight	# Days Held Annually

Describe your livestock management: (forages and roughages used, season of use, grazing system)

_____

_____

Describe your manure storage and applications: _____

_____

Describe your livestock watering system: _____

_____

Dairy Supplement

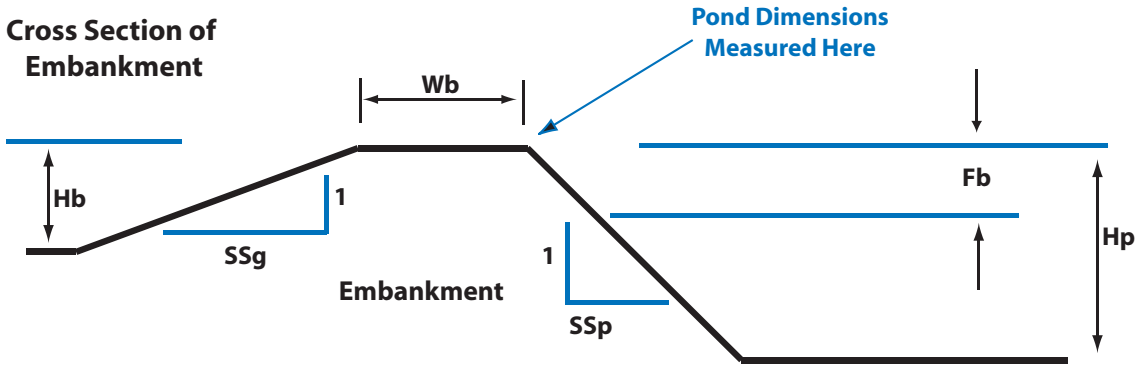
Animal Description

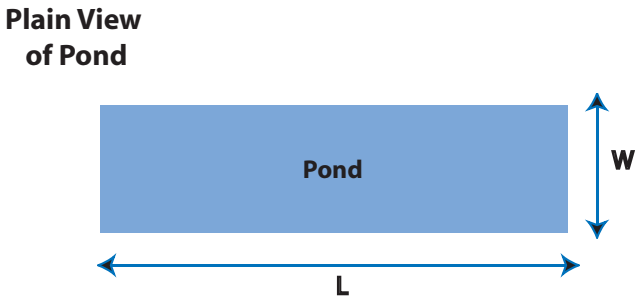
Breed of cows: _____

Stage of cows	Number	Housing (Freestall, Drylot, etc.)
Milking cows		
Dry cows		
Bred heifers		
Heifers, 1 year to breeding		
Calves, 3 months to 1 year		
Calves, birth to 3 months		

Pond Information

	Measurements	Pond #1	Pond #2
Hb	Embankment height	ft.	ft.
Wb	Embankment width	ft.	ft.
Fb	Freeboard	ft.	ft.
Hp	Depth of Pond (freeboard + design depth)	ft.	ft.
SSg	Side slope (ground side)		
SSp	Side slope (pond side)		
L	Pond length (measured at top, inside edge of embankment)	ft.	ft.
W	Pond width (measured at top, inside edge of embankment)	ft.	ft.





Irrigation Supplement

List your irrigation source(s): _____

What is your irrigation method (flood, sprinkler, drip or describe type): _____

Surface Irrigation Systems

Field Number								
Crop								
Number acres per set								
Number of furrows irrigated per set								
Width of furrows (feet)								
Length of field (feet)								
Ave. flow rate (cfs or gpm)								
Time water takes to reach end of field (hrs)								
Time to irrigate one set (hrs)								
Time to irrigated field (days)								
Interval between irrigations								

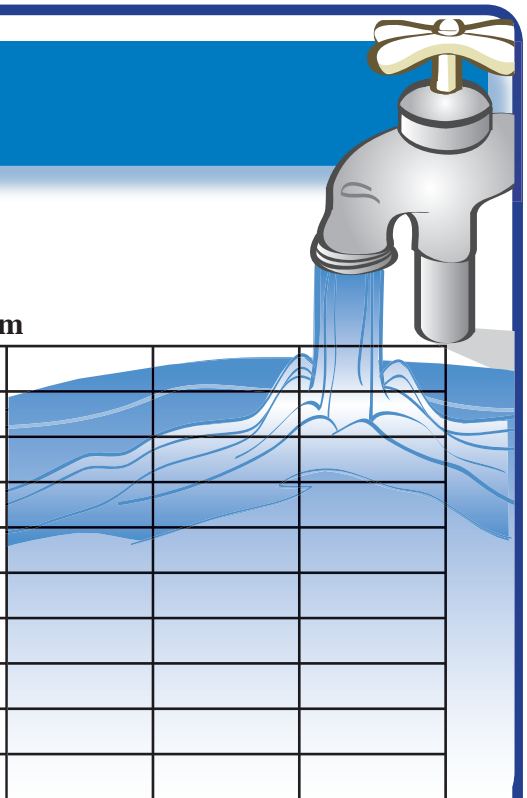
Sprinkler Irrigation System

Field Number							
Field Size (acres)							
Typical Crop							
Length of lateral(s) (feet)							
Distance between laterals or move distance (feet)							
Number of sets per field							
Number of laterals per set							
Number sprinklers per set							
Sprinkler flow rate (gpm)							
Flow rate to each set (gpm)							
Time to irrigate each set (hours)							
Interval between irrigations (days)							

Pump Information

Booster Pump	Yes or No
Deep well	Yes or No
HP	
Flow rate (cfs or gpm)	

Irrigation Supplement



Micro-Sprinkler/Drip Irrigation System

Field Number						
Field Size (acres)						
Typical Crop						
Length of laterals (feet)						
Number of laterals per row						
Distance between laterals (feet)						
Number of sets per field						
Number of laterals per set						
Emitter flow rate (gph)						
Flow rate to each set (gpm)						
Time to irrigate each set (hours)						
Interval between irrigations (days)						

Pump Information

Booster Pump	Yes or No
Deep well	Yes or No
HP	
Flow rate (cfs or gpm)	

Forest & Rangeland Supplement

1. What is your project area: _____

2. What is your interest? (fuel load reduction, forest stand improvement, improved range land condition, grazing, etc.) _____

3. What is your land use? (timber, range, wildlife, recreation, etc.) _____

_____

4. Do you currently have any management or timber harvesting plans on the site? Y or N

5. What is the initial plant cover? (*identify the main species on site and their proportions)*: _____

_____

6. Is this a Class I or II timber site? Y or N *(If yes go to #7, if no skip to #14)*

7. Are you clearing a block or a fuel break? _____

8. How do you plan to clear brush? _____

9. Do you need critical area treatment? _____

10. Do you propose tree planting? If so what kind? _____

11. Identify streams on the site for waterway buffer zones. Are they class I, II or III creeks? _____

_____

12. What type of treatment do you plan to use to stop resprouting? _____

13. Are there other wildlife conservation practices you are considering? _____

_____

continued...

Forest & Rangeland Supplement

Have you completed a ranch plan in conjunction with UCCE and/or a NRCS workshop? If so, stop here and revisit your implementation plan in that document.

14. What class of livestock graze on this property? _____

15. What is the season of livestock use for this property? _____

_____

16. How would you describe your grazing operation? (e.g. cow-calf, stocker, replacement heifers) _____

_____

17. Are additional acreages used in conjunction with this property for livestock rotation or herd management?

If so, should these acreages be incorporated into your conservation plan? _____

_____

18. Who is the day-to-day operator for this livestock operation?_____

19. Will the operator contribute to conservation planning, plan refinement and plan implementation? _____

20. Circle any or all of the following you are concerned with:

Forage Quality Forage Quantity Noxious Weeds