

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Local Working Groups

What is a Local Working Group?

The locally led conservation effort is the foundation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) conservation program delivery process. The local working group supports the locally led conservation effort by coordinating USDA programs with other federal, state, tribal, and local conservation programs to provide an integrated solution to addressing natural resource concerns.

Purpose

Local working groups provide recommendations on local natural resource priorities and criteria for USDA conservation activities and programs. Convened by the local conservation district, the local working group responsibilities include:

- Develop a conservation needs assessment identifying broad conservation goals to solve natural resource problems
- Identify priority resource concerns that can be addressed by USDA programs
- Recommend USDA conservation program application and funding criteria, eligible practices (including limits on practice payments or units), and payment rates
- Assist the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the conservation district with public outreach and information efforts;
- Identify educational and producers' training needs
- Recommend program policy to the State Technical Committee based on resource data

Membership

Local working group membership should be diverse and focus on agricultural interests and natural resource issues existing in the local community. Membership should include agricultural producers representing the variety of crops, livestock, and poultry raised within the local area; owners of nonindustrial private forest land, as appropriate; representatives of agricultural

and environmental organizations; and representatives of governmental agencies carrying out agricultural and natural resource conservation programs and activities.

Local working group membership may include but are not limited to:

- NRCS designated conservationist
- Members of the conservation district board
- Members of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committee
- FSA county executive director
- Cooperative Extension (board members or manager)
- State or local elected or appointed officials
- Other federal and state government representatives
- Representatives of American Indian and Alaskan Native governments
- Agricultural business representatives

LWG Meetings

- Occur at least once each year
- Meetings are open to the public
- Meetings will be conducted as an open discussion among members
- Individuals attending the local working group meetings will be given the opportunity to address the local working group

For More Information

Contact NRCS or your local conservation district in your county for more information.