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April 13, 2012

GENERAL MANUAL
Title 180 – Part 409
Amendment NM 23

SUBJECT: CPA – CONSERVATION PLANNING POLICY

Purpose. To advise all employees of the official NM supplement to the General Manual.

Effective Date. April 13, 2012

Explanation of Changes. The following subparts have been amended:

- 409.9 Minimum Criteria to Achieve an NRCS Certified Conservation Planner Designation.

Filing Instructions. All official copies of New Mexico Supplements to the General Manual are located on our website at: <http://www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/manuals/manuals.html>. A complete log of all New Mexico Supplements to the General Manual is located at: <http://www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/general-manual/gm-log.html>.

A large, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Xavier Montoya".

J. XAVIER MONTOYA
State Conservationist

Attachment
Distribution: GM

PART 409 - CONSERVATION PLANNING POLICY

409.9 Minimum Criteria to Achieve an NRCS Certified Conservation Planner Designation.

(c) In New Mexico, certified conservation planners will be certified in cropland and grazing lands land use types of Resource Management System (RMS) plans. Planners required to develop animal feeding operations-comprehensive nutrient management plans or manure management plans (AFO-CNMP, MMP) will also need to be certified as a CNMP planner. If the RMS plan submitted for certification has more than one land use type present, certification can be made on the land use types adequately prepared. Candidates for the AFO-CNMP certification must have successfully completed the New Mexico CNMP Workshop in addition to the normal 9 module conservation planning course or obtain a waiver from the state resource conservationist.

(d) (4) In New Mexico, the Area Conservationist will be the designated reviewer of the RMS plan for a Conservation Management Units that will be used by a candidate for NRCS certification. The RMS plan will be reviewed and concurred by the supervisor. The reviewed and concurred plan will be submitted to the Area Conservationist for approval before delivery to the client. The Area Conservationist designee will serve as the qualified observer to accompany the candidate to meet with the decision maker on delivery of the plan. Exhibit A will be used to document approval of the plan. The employee's Job Approval Authority for Ecological Practices (NMCPA-219) will be updated to reflect the status of conservation planning certification. Each certified conservation planner upon the recommendation of the Area Conservationist will receive a Certified Conservation Planning certificate signed by the State Conservationist and State Resource Conservationist (Exhibit B). NRCS encourages professional discipline certification in professional organizations such as the Society for Range Management, Soil and Water Conservation Society and Agronomy Society of America. Professional society certification will be noted by the reviewer as knowledge, skills and abilities are reviewed and documented. Professional discipline certification will be noted on the Conservation Plan Review Worksheet and on the conservation planning certificate signed by the State Conservationist.

(e) (3) All New Mexico certified conservation planners will have five days of training, either internal or external, in subject matter related to land use conservation planning in a three year period.

(f) (4) Those certified conservation planners in their third year of certification will submit an RMS plan(s) for two land use types to their supervisor. In addition, a training history documenting previous three years of training will also be submitted to the supervisor. The RMS plan and training history will be reviewed and concurred by the supervisor. Once concurred by the supervisor, the supervisor will submit the RMS plan, training history and recommendation for certification to the Area Conservationist for approval. This approval will maintain certification for another three years. A field review is optional. A record of training received, since the last certification, will be maintained as part of the documentation.