

LOCAL WORKING GROUPS



**Conservation Districts' National Infrastructure for
Locally-Led Community Engagement**

January 2023

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Re-introduction



Over the next 5 years, an unprecedented influx of funding will be channeled through the United States' locally-led conservation delivery system to implement climate smart, sustainable, regenerative conservation practices on private lands across the country. Our existing Conservation District infrastructure allows community members to weigh in on natural resource funding, policy, and programmatic decisions being made at the local, state, and federal level. We are proud to invite you into this opportunity to reinvigorate the Local Working Group process, collecting usable data to inform and enable locally-led decision making.

- Your Local Conservation District





Value

Local Conservation Districts are long-standing national infrastructure for community engagement in natural resource and environmental decision making.

Vision & Mission

Locally-Led, Data-driven



Vision

Impacted communities are meaningfully involved in natural resource decision making



Mission

Harnessing quality data to turn the voice of the community into actionable plans

Local Working Groups

Subcommittees of the State Technical Committee

7 CFR §610.24

State Technical Committees (STC) provide information, analysis, and recommendations to appropriate officials of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) who are charged with implementing and establishing priorities and criteria for natural resources conservation activities and programs within each state.

Local Working Groups are subcommittees of the STC. The STC must review activities of the Local Working Groups to ensure priorities are being addressed locally.

[View STC Directives Here](#)

Composition of your LWG

7 CFR §610.25 (b)(1)



01

Agricultural Producers

Representing the variety of crops and livestock raised within the local area

02

Forest Land Stewards

Nonindustrial private forest land owners and stewards

03

Conservation District Officials

*Chairperson of the LWG

04

Other Professionals

Familiar with agricultural and natural resource issues in the local community, including local, state, and federal government representatives

*If the local Conservation District is unable or unwilling to serve as chairperson, the NRCS district conservationist fills this role.

LWG Participation Key Considerations

EDirectives M_440_501.12



Local Working Group representation should be diverse and focus on agricultural interests and natural resource issues existing in the local community.

Participation should include individuals from historically underserved groups including but not limited to women, persons with disabilities, socially disadvantaged and limited resource groups.

To become a listed participant of the Local Working Group, individuals or groups should submit a written request to the LWG Chairperson detailing their interest and credentials for serving on the LWG.

Ready to take your LWG to the next level?



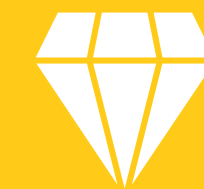
Local Conservation Needs Assessment

Comprehensive evaluation of the condition of the area's natural resource base, and basis for long range plan development. Resource-based, not program-based. Look to the [Local Working Group Toolkit](#) for guidance and examples.



Conservation Action Plan

Community stakeholders, with the leadership of the conservation district, plan for the needed programs and services to address the problems identified by their local conservation needs assessment. Review plan elements on the next page.



Value

When you have a strong LWG up and running, develop short and long-term assessments and plans for your county or watershed!

Conservation Action Plans

NRCS Programs Manual Title 440, §500.4

Identify natural resource
conservation priorities

Identify Federal, State, Tribal,
local, and nongovernment
programs and services
needed to address specific
conservation needs

Set measurable
conservation objectives

Identify responsibility
for action and create a
timeline for completion
of elements

Identify technology
needed to achieve goals

Identify need to develop
new programs or
processes to address those
problems not covered by
existing programs

Local Funding Pools

An exciting new opportunity

In Vermont, the USDA-NRCS has rolled out Locally Led Conservation Ranking Pools, an initiative to direct special EQIP funding to a particular watershed or county, allowing for applicants to be ranked without competing in statewide funding pools.

**Must be based
on local action
plans**

**Local Working Groups propose
ranking questions and points,
applicable land uses, resource
concerns and practice list**



Not sure what else to discuss with your Local Working Group?

There are many topics you can engage in! Like...

Coordinating with other federal, state, tribal, and local public and private activities

Identifying significant local, regional, and statewide geographic areas of concern

Need for public information and outreach campaigns

Technical guidance on conservation practices, including new, innovative practices

Identifying significant natural resource concerns

Guidelines for developing ranking criteria for evaluating applications

Identifying, monitoring and analyzing performance indicators

Technical programmatic recommendations

Guidance on eligible conservation activities

Evaluating and reporting program impacts on natural resources and the environment

***Be sure to send your LWG meeting minutes and reports to your State Technical Committee**

Get Connected With Us

Contact Information



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Find your District: www.vacd.org