Conservation Planning: Protecting Our Investment Through Careful Planning

David Clapp
Agricultural Resource Specialist 3
COMMUNITY WIDE STEWARDSHIP

• Farmers account for .18% of the NJ population and manage 17% of our land base.

• Farmland in NJ is decreasing every year.

• Preserving farmland is only part of the picture. To truly preserve our farms we need to conserve their natural resources.
What is Conservation Planning

Careful planning to protect the soil, water, air, plant, animal, and human resources on a farm or other large tract of land.

A way to document what a land owner or farmer is doing on their property to protect and enhance the environment.

A tool to inform land use decisions.
Parts of a Conservation Plan

• Aerial Photography and diagram of your farm including the location of new and existing practices

• A list of your management decisions and a schedule for their implementation

• A soil map and descriptions

• Information sheets explaining how to carry out specific management decisions
Common Questions and Concerns

• Does signing a conservation plan give anyone access to my property?
• What if I want to change my crops?
• What if someone else is going to farm my land?
• Can I switch from growing crops to having animals?
• What if someone else buys my farm?
Conservation Practices

Conservation Practices are the tools a planner has that allow them to conserve natural resources.

Practices can be found in the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG)
Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG)

- Primary scientific references for conservation. It contains technical information about the conservation of soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources.
- Created nationally and edited by states to include local scientific data.
- SECTIONS
  I: General Reference
  II: Soil and Site Information
  III: Conservation Management Systems
  IV: Practice Standards and Specifications
  V: Conservation Effects

www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/efotg
NRCS NJ Irrigation Guide (10/20/2005)
NJ Agreement between NRCS and SHPO (10/20/2005)
This is the NJ State Level Agreement between the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), NJ and the NJ Office of Historic Preservation (SHPO)
...more (Last 30 days)

What’s in eFOTG?
Section I - General References
Section II - Natural Resources Information
Section III - Conservation Management Systems
Section IV - Practice Standards and Specifications
Section V - Conservation Effects

Draft eFOTG
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
NEW JERSEY
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

RIPARIAN FOREST BUFFER
(Acre)

CODE 391

DEFINITION
An area of trees and/or shrubs located adjacent to and up-gradient from water bodies.

PURPOSES
The following graphic describes the ranges of minimum widths for meeting specific buffer objectives.

Minimum Widths
Riparian Forest Buffer (391)

Zone 1: Minimum 15 feet from stream bank
Zone 2: Minimum 20-60 feet

Zones 1+2 combined – 100 feet or 30% of stream valley for a min 35 feet

Zone 3: Minimum of 20 feet wide or 10 feet wide + 1.5 feet per 1% slope
Riparian Forest Buffer

Some Reasons to have a Conservation Plan

Required for Farmland Preservation
Reduced Soil Erosion
Increased Air and Water Quality
Increased Profits
Eligibility for State and Federal Cost Share Programs
Good Defense in RTF/DEP issues
THE PLANNING PROCESS

1. Landowner or farmer requests assistance
2. Planner meets with land user on-site to discuss options and point out areas for improvement.
3. Develop several plan alternatives.
4. Discuss plan with land user, sign, and apply for funding if desired.

THE PLANNING PROCESS IS NOT A REGULATORY PROCESS
Horse Farm Example

12 acre Farm Management Unit

20 Horses

Located near two streams

Landowner would like to cover their riding rink.
CONSERVATION COLLEGE

• Some things to look at on your way home from the summit.
A Look From Above
USE EXCLUSION
ROOF RUNOFF CONTROL
HEAVY USE AREA PROTECTION
MORE INFORMATION

See handouts in your packets

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF AG
www.state.nj.us/agriculture/

NORTHERN NJ
Dave Clapp
Dave.Clapp@nj.usda.gov

SOUTHERN NJ
Hillary Barile
Hillary.Barile@nj.usda.gov
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

“Helping People Help the Land”

– www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov
– Field offices across the state to help you
Conservation in Action

Some examples practices already implemented across NJ
• Valley Sheppard - EQIP
Skillman Lane – Franklin Township
Mine Brook Park Riparian Buffer