

Exercise 2: Categories and CAP Criteria – Options

This exercise will use the Categories and Criteria Options and the CAPs Criteria Options documents you printed out in the Introduction to TechReg Section. Allow 15 minutes to complete this exercise.

Introduction

Conservation categories and all the various options for certification are based upon criteria for each natural resource discipline the TSP will be working in. After completion of this Exercise, you will understand the terminology and qualification standards used in the certification process.

Definitions:

Category Distinct classes of occupational fields or natural resource disciplines that you may certify in if you meet the qualifications.

Criteria: Qualifications required to be certified under a specific option. You must satisfy all the criteria for a single option before you will be certified for that respective category.

Options: Method by which you may qualify for certification. One or more options may be offered for each category, but only one option may be selected. The choices may include any combination of:

- Education
- Experience
- Licensing
- Organizational Certification
- Knowledge and training.

Conservation Activity Plan:

A conservation practice involving the development of a resource specific or practice specific conservation plan appropriate for the eligible land of an NRCS program participant. The conservation practice associated with plan development is known as a “conservation activity plan” or CAP.

Conservation Practices:

Numerous NRCS conservation practice names and codes are listed in relation to each Category and CAP. These are the conservation practices that are planned, designed, laid-out or inspected (checked-out) when a TSP is certified in that category. NRCS does not limit the practices a TSP can selected to provide service in, however, very few TSPs are qualified for every practice found in each category. More information about conservation practices are found in NRCS's [Field Office Technical Guide\(FOTG\)](#).

A. TSP “*Practice Categories and Eligibility Criteria Options*” for Certification

In the following exercise you will locate TSP categories, identify the Options and locate the Criteria references. It is important to click on each link.

1. Go to the [TSP Website](#)

Click on “Practice Categories and Eligibility Criteria Options” located in the middle of the page under *Conservation Practice Design, Installation and Checkout*. Click Open.

2. **Locate the “Agroforestry” Category.** You will find it at the top of page as the first entry of the “Technical Service Categories and Criteria Options for Certification.” Note that three Options are available for this category. Only one of the options is necessary to meet qualifications, however, all the criteria must be met under that option. We will look at each Option and its associated Criteria.

Option 1. Certification. This option has one criterion. It requires that the TSP applicant possess certification as a Certified Forester **by the Society of American Foresters, (SAF) or Association of Consulting Foresters of America, Inc. (ACF)**. Remember how to find these groups? Look for “Recommending Organizations” under *TSP Resources* in the middle of the TSP webpage.

Option 2. Experience. This Option has two criteria requiring that the TSP applicant possess specific experience and knowledge in Agroforestry planning, design and practices as well as be able to provide two references of work for NRCS to evaluate. Both criteria must be met prior to certification.

Option 3. Education. This Option has two criteria. The TSP applicant must have the appropriate education as well as experience and references to verify that the TSP is proficient in agroforestry-related work.

3. **Locate the Conservation Practices Associated with Agroforestry Category.** You will find them next to the Category Name at the top of the list. There are 5 practices listed along with the NRCS practice code number. The practice list associated with each category is not all inclusive. There may be other conservation practices that a TSP may need to recommend and associate with a conservation category depending upon specific site conditions and the objectives of the client. In all cases, you should have the qualifications to support the specific conservation practices addressed in your plans and designs.

B. Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) Criteria Options for Certification

- a. Go to the [TSP Website](#)

Click on “Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs)” located in the middle of the page.

- b. **Click on “CAP Eligibility Criteria” and open the eligibility criteria for the CAP 106- Forest Management Plan.** Note that two options are available for this CAP. Only one of the options is necessary to meet qualifications, however, all the criteria must be met under that option. We will look at each Option and its associated Criteria.

Option 1. Certification. This option has six criterion.

- i. It requires that the TSP applicant possess certification as a Certified Forester by the Society of American Foresters, (SAF) or Association of Consulting Foresters of America, Inc. (ACF).
- ii. The TSP must have successfully completed basic NRCS conservation planning Modules 1-5
- iii. The TSP must develop a CAP that meets plan development criteria. The plan may be a sample of actual work accomplished or a plan developed from a fictional scenario as long as it meets the plan development criteria. The CAP plan will be reviewed by a technical specialist and evaluated to see if the TSP has the competency to write a conservation activity plan.
- iv. The TSP must have a current license to practice Forestry in the State in which they are applying to be a TSP, if a license is required by the State.
- v. The TSP must have knowledge of the specific criteria addressed in the development and implementation of a Forest Mgt Plan as listed in the Field Office Technical Guide. This includes knowledge of standards and specifications of the associated practices that may be included in the Forestry plan such as Forest Site Preparation (490) and Forest Slash Treatment (384).
- vi. The TSP must possess a knowledge and understanding of National Planning Procedures as contained in the NPPH-Title 180, Part 600 This document is available under *TSP Resources- Technical Resources for TSPs*

Option 2. Education and Experience. This option has eight criterion, 4 of which are the same as listed in Option1.

- 1) The TSP must have successfully completed basic NRCS conservation planning Modules 1-5
- 2) The TSP must develop a CAP that meets plan development criteria. The plan may be a sample of actual work accomplished or a plan developed from a fictional scenario as long as it meets the plan development criteria. The CAP plan will be reviewed by a technical specialist and evaluated to see if the TSP has the competency to write a conservation activity plan.
- 3) The TSP must have either a bachelors or higher degree in forestry or related natural resources with a forestry emphasis or a forestry license if required by State law.
- 4) The TSP must have at least 5 years of experience and knowledge in the planning, designing, layout and inspection of forestry practices associated with the Forestry CAP. This can include volunteer work, or other experience that relates to these practices.
- 5) The TSP must provide two locations or customer references where technical service in the forestry –related practices have been performed.

These references will be used by the NRCS certifiers to confirm the TSP's proficiencies in planning, designing, installing and inspecting the forestry –related practices the TSP will be providing service in. If the TSP lists Forest Site Preparation (490), Forest Stand Improvement (666) and Forest Trails and Landings (655) in the application, then the references and locations listed should reflect the TSPs experience for these specific practices.

- 6) The TSP must have knowledge of the specific criteria addressed in the development and implementation of a Forest Mgt Plan as listed in the Field Office Technical Guide. This includes knowledge of standards and specifications of the associated practices that may be included in the Forestry plan such as Forest Site Preparation (490) and Forest Slash Treatment (384).
- 7) The TSP must possess a knowledge and understanding of National Planning Procedures as contained in the NPPH-Title 180, Part 600 This document is available under *TSP Resources- Technical Resources for TSPs*
- 8) The TSP must provide documentation in the application that he has the knowledge, skills, and abilities to use inventory and planning tools common to forest management.