

NOMINATIONS FOR RECOGNITION OF 2019 EXCELLENCE IN CONSERVATION PLANNING

Innovation Award

Objective

The objective is to recognize California NRCS and RCD employees and contractors who have exemplified outstanding service to farmers, ranchers, and forestry landowners in the form of conservation planning assistance. The awards celebrate conservation planning as the foundation of our services and distinguishes individuals, groups, and partnership devoted to improving the science, structure, and communication of the conservation planning process. Additionally, the awards recognize that planning is a team effort with volunteers, contractors and partnering agencies. The framework for the awards is found in the document, “Conservation Planning 2.0 Strategy” (February 2014).

Eligibility

All California NRCS and RCD employees and contractors are eligible to be nominated for the award. Nominations can be made by anyone active in conservation work such as supervisors, colleagues, RCD directors, partner organizations, ACES contractors, Farm Bill Assistants, Earth Team volunteers. Individuals can nominate themselves. Concurrence of nominee’s supervisor must accompany the application.

To Submit a Nomination

1. Please describe situations/examples where the nominee displayed excellence with conservation planning within the fiscal year 2019. The situation can be conservation planning at the watershed level to address a resource concern or a suite of resource concerns, technical assistance with one producer, or an effort to streamline the implementation of a conservation practice. Do not exceed 3 written pages. Use Times New Roman 11 pt. font.
2. Please do not include attachments, pictures or other supporting materials.
3. Submit only one award category for each nomination.
4. Follow the format of the example attached and submit by **August 23, 2019** to Hue.Dang@usda.gov, State Conservation Planning Leader, and Steve.Hill@usda.gov, Chair of Awards Committee.

Evaluation of Nominations

Winners will be determined strictly from the written nomination. After scoring, the committee will make a recommendation and the State Conservationist will make the final selection. A 100-point evaluation system will be used as follows:

Evaluation Criteria for the situation being described	Scoring Points Maximum per category
Degree of complexity and innovation being applied	45
Communications/Training/Outreach	10
Conservation benefits, Landowner cost savings and regulatory compliance	10
Partnerships	25
Degree of involvement beyond required duties and responsibilities	10
Total Possible Points	100

Explanation of Evaluation Criteria

- A. Degree of Complexity and Innovation:** Provide details of the technical complexity and innovative techniques used in the planning process. Describe how the nominee provided technical assistance to identify alternatives and assist with the decision making process to address the resource concern. Please explain if the implementation of the selected alternative was monitored and whether any future improvements to practice implementation were identified. Describe any scientific research promoted or incorporated into the planning process.
- B. Communications/Training/Outreach:** Explain how the nominee engaged with the stakeholders involved and methods needed to be adapted to the audience for this situation. Provide details of nominee's presentations, articles, speeches, tours, and outreach. Describe any outreach materials used or created, especially materials created because existing materials did not fit the unique situation. Please explain how the nominee promoted a consistent message about NRCS to the clients, shared materials with other staff or promoted a common look of NRCS informational and display materials across the state. Describe the informational relationships, communications and outreach that were developed for the community, partners, or legislatures for this scenario.
- C. Conservation Benefits, Landowner/Agency Cost Savings, and Regulatory Compliance:** Describe the conservation benefits and/or regulatory compliance that were provided by (or are expected from) the technical assistance. Describe how the approach used by the nominee provided a cost savings to the agency or the client. Specify the conservation benefit or cost savings determined by the nominee as part of the planning process (for example, energy savings, reduction in soil loss, etc.) and what the nominee used to quantify their findings.

D. Partnerships: Describe how the nominee worked with collaborative and diverse partnerships including various groups, individuals, organizations, agencies, Tribal and/or local governments in the scenario being described. Explain if new partnerships were formed for the situation. If partnerships already existed, describe how the partner relationship was improved or managed in the planning effort. Provide examples of how the partnership increased the visibility of NRCS as a technical agency. Describe what the partners did to convey a consistent and accurate message about NRCS planning services. Explain the nominee's leadership in their region for collaborative conservation planning. Describe whether the partners provided feedback on the NRCS planning process and whether their involvement in the planning process has increased as a result of the efforts of the nominee. Describe new grants, projects or research that partners have initiated as a result of the planning scenario.

E. Degree of Involvement beyond Required Duties and Responsibilities: Describe any extra-work activities that have assisted nominees in achieving outstanding application of conservation planning.

FORMAT FOR NOMINATION

Please use this template to for nomination. Do not exceed 3 pages. Use Times New Roman 11 pt. font.

Award being nominated for: INNOVATION AWARD CATEGORY

Summary of innovation: _____

Field Office(s) and RCD(s) Associated With: _____

Team, partnership, or individual being nominated and contact information:

Name / Organization: _____ Point of Contact: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Name of Person Making Nomination: _____ Email: _____

Description of a situation/scenario in fiscal year 2019 where the nominee demonstrated excellence in conservation planning assistance:

Degree of Complexity and Innovation:

Communication/Training/Outreach:

Landowner/Agency Cost Savings, Regulatory Compliance and Conservation Benefits:

Partnerships:

Degree of Involvement beyond Required Duties and Responsibilities:

Supervisor or ASTC-FO signature showing concurrence: _____

Supervisor or ASTC-FO's name: _____

Email: _____