

## Part 517 – Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program

### Subpart A – General Information

#### 517.3 NRCS Responsibilities

**Figure 517-A3**

<p>Field Offices</p>	<p>Designated conservationists will provide leadership for WHIP activities in their area of authority (as delegated by the State Conservationist) with advice of the local working group, including the following responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serving as a member of the local working group, as outlined in 440-CPM, Part 501, by providing support and advice concerning technical issues, program statutes, and regulations, and other matters relating to conservation program delivery</li> <li>• Fulfilling the responsibilities of the conservation district, as outlined in 440-CPM, Part 501, where a conservation district is not present or chooses not to fulfill those responsibilities</li> </ul> <p>Provide recommendations to the State Conservationist considering the advice of the local working group (see 440-CPM, Part 501, Subpart A, USDA Conservation Program Delivery Section 501.02) on program delivery, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local resource priorities</li> <li>• Eligible conservation practices</li> <li>• Payment rates</li> <li>• Local screening tools and ranking questions</li> <li>• Program policy and procedures, and conservation practices targeted to critical wildlife habitats and species</li> </ul> <p>Provide local program leadership</p> <p>Make program policy recommendations to the State Conservationist</p> <p>Provide leadership in carrying out public outreach and information activities at the local level and document activities according to national outreach policy</p> <p>Analyze performance indicators and reports</p> <p>Monitor, evaluate, and report program impacts on natural resources</p> <p>Provide leadership for developing cooperative agreements with local conservation partners</p> <p>Implement policies and procedures in accordance with NRCS</p>
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	<p>rules and regulations</p> <p>Develop a process to evaluate WHIP applications based on advice from the local working group and announce application evaluation periods</p> <p>Accept applications and enter into ProTracts</p> <p>Verify individual or entity designation of applicants, as necessary</p> <p>Acquire all necessary signatures on Form NRCS-CPA-1200, Form NRCS-CPA-1202 (contract), and Form CCC-1202 (appendix)</p> <p>Determine applicant eligibility</p> <p>Determine land eligibility and update status in ProTracts</p> <p>Rank and select applications approved for funding and WHIP plan of operations (WPO) development</p> <p>Manage and administer WHIP contracts, including initial development, modification, and termination, as delegated by the State Conservationist</p> <p>Participate in appeal processes, as appropriate</p> <p>Document case file in accordance with NPPH (see 180-NPPH, Part 600)</p> <p>Ensure that the obligation of funds does not exceed the available fund allocations and that contract payments are not approved in excess of contract obligations</p> <p>Certify installation and checkout of completed structural practices, unless contracted for completion by a TSP</p> <p>Monitor and inform applicants of all payment limitations</p> <p>Monitor contract expiration dates and modify contracts, as necessary, to carry out program objective and consistent with agency policies</p> <p>Maintain effective working relationship with FSA</p> <p>Determine acceptability of and approve WPO</p> <p>Provide contract support, as defined in 440-CPM, Part 512, Subpart E, Appeals</p> <p>Execute other responsibilities, as assigned by the State Conservationist</p>
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