

Part 610 – National Environmental Compliance Handbook

Subpart H – Exhibits

610.113 Riparian Area Evaluation Procedure Guide Sheet

RIPARIAN AREA EVALUATION PROCEDURE GUIDE SHEET

STEP 1

Is a riparian area present in or near the planning area? (Definition can be found in Title 190, General Manual, Part 411.)

If "No," additional evaluation is not needed concerning riparian areas. **Document the finding on the NRCS-CPA-52 and proceed with planning.**

If "Yes," go to Step 2.

STEP 2

Does the proposed action or alternative conflict with the conservation values or functions of the riparian area?

If "No," go to Step 3.

If "Yes," explain the values and functions of riparian areas to the client, including their contribution to floodplain function, stream bank stability and integrity, nutrient cycling, pollutant filtering, sediment retention, and biological diversity, and present alternatives that will resolve the conflict (190-GM, Part 411, Section 411.3). **Then, go to Step 3.**

If "Unknown," refer to your State-specific protocols to determine the current status of ecological function of the riparian area and project future conditions if the practice is implemented. If further assistance is required, contact your State biologist. **Repeat Step 2.**

STEP 3

Does the proposed action or alternative maintain or improve water quality and quantity benefits and fish and wildlife benefits provided by the riparian area?

If "No," alternatives must be developed which maintain or improve water quality and quantity benefits, and fish and wildlife benefits (190-GM, Part 411, Section 411.3). When alternatives have been developed and discussed with the client, **go to Step 4.**

If "Yes," no additional evaluation is needed concerning riparian areas. **Document the finding on the NRCS-CPA-52 and proceed with planning.**

STEP 4

Is the client willing to modify the proposed action or alternative so that water quality and quantity benefits and fish and wildlife benefits provided by the riparian area are maintained or improved?

If "No," inform the client that NRCS policy requires that the conservation plan must maintain or improve water quality and quantity benefits, and fish and wildlife benefits of riparian areas where they exist (190-GM, Part 411, Section 411.3). If the client remains unwilling to modify the proposed action, NRCS must discontinue assistance on those portions of the plan impacting riparian areas. If assistance is terminated, indicate the circumstances in the "Remarks" section of the NRCS-CPA-52.

If "Yes," no additional evaluation is needed concerning riparian areas. **Document the finding along with any mitigation actions or modifications on the NRCS-CPA-52 and proceed with planning.**