

Part 620, Subpart A

NHCP Exhibit 3

Procedure for the Review or Development of a National Conservation Practice Standard

Step 1.—The national discipline lead (NDL) initiates the review or development of a conservation practice standard (CPS) and the associated documentation. (See footnote 1 for a list of these documents.) The NDL either conducts the review/development of a CPS as the national team lead (NTL) or assigns this task within NRCS. The NTL creates an interdisciplinary review (or development) team (IRDT) to review/develop the CPS. Members of the team must be selected from several geographic areas to ensure that the CPS is compatible across disciplines and is national in scope. The NTL is included in the IRDT throughout this exhibit.

Step 2.—The NDL provides revision instructions and all available information to the NTL, including documentation files, variance requests, and concerns submitted to the NDL since the last review. For a CPS that is developed from an interim CPS, the information includes the interim reports. The IRDT reviews the relevant technologies and adds all relevant information to the Documentation File (see exhibit 5 in this handbook). The IRDT prepares draft 1 and the NTL submits it to the NDL for review and concurrence.

Step 3.—The NDL submits draft 1 to the Quality Assurance Team (QAT). The QAT performs a review in accordance with exhibit 4 in this handbook. The IRDT works with the QAT to address the comments. Once all QAT comments are resolved, the NTL submits the draft to the NDL for review and concurrence.

Step 4.—The NDL submits draft 1 for internal review on the 15th day of the month to the internal review compositors (IRC). The IRC are typically State resource conservationists, State engineers, national technology support center (NTSC) technology specialists, and their delegates. Internal review refers to the CPS review by NRCS employees. The draft remains in review until the end of the following month (approximately 45 days). The IRC for each State or NTSC coordinates the review for that State or NTSC and submits the composite comments to the IRDT.

Step 5.—The IRDT uses the comments from the first internal review to prepare the next draft and the NTL submits the draft to the NDL for review and concurrence. If the IRDT determines that only minor changes are needed, skip to step 9 of this exhibit.

Step 6.—If significant revisions were needed, the NDL submits draft 2 to the IRC for a second 45-day internal review period as described in step 4 in this exhibit. The IRDT uses the comments from the second internal review to prepare the next draft and the NTL submits the draft to the NDL for review and concurrence. If the IRDT determines that only minor changes are needed, skip to step 9 of this exhibit.

Step 7.—If significant revisions are needed, the NDL submits draft 3 to the IRC for a third 45-day internal review period as described in step 4 of this exhibit. The IRDT uses the comments from the third internal review to prepare the next draft. If there are no remaining

issues, the NTL submits the draft to the NDL for review and concurrence, skip to step 9 in this exhibit.

Step 8.—If, following the internal review of draft 3, outstanding comments and issues are not resolved, the NTL submits this draft to the NDL with a description of the outstanding issues. The NDL resolves the outstanding issues with the assistance of NDLs from other disciplines, as needed. The NDL distributes draft 4 among the NDLs from other disciplines for final comments.

Step 9.—The IRDT (if arriving at step 8 from step 4, 5, or 6 of this exhibit), or the NDL (if arriving here from step 7 of this exhibit), incorporates the comments from the latest internal review to prepare the Federal Register (FR) review draft. The NDL submits the FR review draft to the QAT for the second quality review and approval. The QAT has 5 working days to complete its review. In addition, all supporting conservation practice documents (CPDs) must be reviewed by the QAT after the second QAT review of the CPS but before the CPS is submitted for the 450-NHCP-620 release.

Step 10.—The QAT and the IRDT work together to resolve any issues with the FR review draft. When all issues are resolved, the NTL submits it to the NDL. After review and concurrence, the NDL sends the FR review draft, along with a detailed description of changes and a summary of major changes, to the National Conservation Practice Standard Subcommittee (NCPSS) chairperson. After obtaining the necessary approvals, the NCPSS chairperson submits the CPS and the summary of major changes to the FR for public review and comment. The NCPSS chairperson provides a copy of all comments to the NDL after the 30-day comment period is complete.

Step 11.—The IRDT incorporates the public comments of technical relevance received during the FR review. The NTL submits the final draft of the CPS to the NDL. The NDL submits the final draft of the CPS to the QAT for the final style and format review. If there are no changes to the final draft after the FR review, the third QAT review will be omitted.

Step 12.—After the third and final QAT review of the CPS, the IRDT incorporates any changes to create the final CPS. The NTL submits the final CPS to the NDL. The NDL concurs with the final CPS, updates the Conservation Practice Data Entry System (CPDES) for the practice, and submits it to the NCPSS chairperson. The NDL must include all associated CPDs¹ with submission of the CPS. The NCPSS chairperson submits a 450-NHCP-620 notice to the Deputy Chief for Science and Technology for approval.

Step 13.—The NCPSS chairperson releases the completed CPS by issuing a 450-NHCP-620 notice. The 450-NHCP-620 notice, CPSs, and CPDs are posted on the internet.

Note: The Conservation Practice Documents-Document Management System is the tool that will be used to facilitate this procedure.

¹ At a minimum, the NDL must review the national Conservation Practice Physical Effects (CPPE), the practice narrative, the lifespan, the Network Effects Diagram, the Statement of Work, other supporting CPDs, and the national job approval authority criteria.

