

Conservation Planner Certification

Minimum Qualifications

Certified Conservation Planner Designation:

1. Conservation Planning – all modules
 - a. Part 1 – AgLearn online (modules 1-5)
 - b. Part 2 – In field (modules 6-8)
 - c. Part 3 – Field review of RMS plan (module 9)
2. Environmental Compliance for Conservation Assistance (EC Level 1) – AgLearn online
3. Cultural Resources Training Series – all modules
 - a. Part 1 – AgLearn online (modules 1-6)
 - b. Part 2 – In field (modules 7-8)
4. Introduction to the Field Office Technical Guide – AgLearn online
5. Introduction to Water Quality – AgLearn online
6. Basic Erosion Process – Two day workshop or approved equivalent
7. Basic RUSLE 2 Certification – Take home exercise
8. Nutrient Management Track 1, Part 1 (AgLearn online) or VA DCR Nutrient Management Plan Writing School (three-day session) or current certification by VA DCR Nutrient Management Planning.
9. Pest Management Track 2, Part 1 – AgLearn online
10. Prescribed Burn Awareness Course (one-day workshop) or certification by the VA Department of Forestry in Prescribed Burning.

Approved Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planner Designation:

1. An NRCS Certified Conservation Planner
2. Agricultural Waste Management Systems: A Primer – AgLearn online
3. Agricultural Waste Management Systems: Level 2 – AgLearn online
4. Air Quality, Climate Change, and Energy Course – AgLearn online
5. Air Quality Resource Concerns Course – AgLearn online

Certified CNMP Specialist – Manure and Wastewater Handling and Storage:

1. An appropriate level of NRCS engineering job approval authority (EJAA)
2. Agricultural Waste Management Systems: A Primer – AgLearn online
3. Agricultural Waste Management Systems: Level 2 – AgLearn online
4. Air Quality, Climate Change, and Energy Course – AgLearn online
5. Air Quality Resource Concerns Course – AgLearn online

Certified CNMP Specialist – Land Treatment:

1. An NRCS Certified Conservation Planner

Certified CNMP Specialist – Nutrient Management:

1. Certification by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation for Nutrient Management Planning.
2. Ability to apply the concepts and principles contained in the NRCS Introduction to Water Quality Course, or equivalent.
3. Skill in using erosion and risk assessment tools referenced in VA 590 Standard (phosphorus risk assessment, nitrogen risk assessment, and Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE2)).
4. Ability to apply the concepts and principles contained in the NRCS Nutrient and Pest Management Considerations in Conservation Planning Course, as it pertains to nutrient management, or equivalent.

Certified CNMP Specialist – Feed Management:

1. Professional animal scientist, independent professional animal nutritionist, or other professional who is proficient in animal diet technologies.

Certified Pest Management Specialist:

1. Conservation Planning Modules 1-5 - AgLearn Online
2. Introduction to Water Quality – AgLearn online
3. Pest Management Tract 2 - all modules
 - a. Part 1 – AgLearn online (modules 1-6)
 - b. Part 2 – In field (modules 6-8)
 - c. Part 3 – Field review of a pest management component of a plan (module 9)
4. Review of work completed demonstrating skill in using the Windows Pesticide Screening Tool (WIN-PST) and/or other appropriate pest management environmental risk screening tools by a Certified Conservation Planner that has Pest Management Certification or higher level specialist.
5. Review of a conservation plan demonstrating skill in developing the pest management component of a conservation plan based on the State Pest Management (FOTG Practice Code 595) conservation practice standard.

Field Review - Candidates who wish to be a Certified Conservation Planner or an NRCS-approved CNMP planner must complete at least one field reviewed plan with the ASTC-FO or designee and complete the minimum requirements. This is the final step in the certification process which will determine the planner's ability to demonstrate competency the planning process and plan development. See General Manual Title 180, Virginia Part 409 for specifics on this policy.

Training and Continuing Education Requirements - Training to maintain and update conservation planning skills must, at a minimum, occur once every three years. Certified planners and NRCS-approved CNMP planners must complete 36 hours of CEUs during the three year certification. CEU's may be acquired from the following sources as approved by the SRC:

1. Formal NEDC or other training related to conservation planning activities.
2. AgLearn or other on-line training courses of a technical nature.
3. Technical training at area or other NRCS/partnership meetings.
4. Field days and demonstrations related to conservation planning technical subject matter.

The SRC will determine what training is deemed creditable as Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for maintaining planner certification. CEU credit will be awarded as follows:

1. For formal classroom type training, one CEU will be awarded for every hour of approved training, subject to review by the SRC. (i.e. one SRC JED session may count as 4 CEU's for technical training).
2. AgLearn training one CEU will be awarded for every hour of "estimated completion time", as identified in AgLearn.
3. CEU for field days and demonstrations will be awarded as one CEU for every hour of technical presentation.
4. No CEU will be awarded for any training consisting of less than one hour.
5. For individual or small group's on-the-job type training, CEU's will be awarded at the discretion of the SRC.

Recertification Requirements - The SRC will notify the certified conservation planner or NRCS-approved CNMP planner before his/her certification is due to expire. The ASTC-FO or designee will review each certified planner's designation at least once every three years. During these reviews a sufficient number of conservation plans will be reviewed to determine that the conservations plans meet the NRCS planning policy and follow the procedures and guidelines contained in the NPPH. To renew the certification the planner will submit a record of CEUs obtained during the previous three years.