Working on Community Natural Resource Problem Priorities

Sustaining Local Farming While Protecting Natural Resources	**What 1-2 land uses does this mostly happen on?** **Examples:** Sugar bushes, pastures, hay lands, annual crop land, working forests/logging operations.	**If you had to choose, what would be the 2-3 feasible priority solution activities for addressing conservation needs in the next 3-5 years?** **Types of solutions categories:** Practice Installation Technical Assistance Outreach **Examples:** 1. Increase services to new small farmers and small livestock farms. 2. Provide a suite to crop improvement, soil health and NMP practices.	**What could feasibly be achieved in 3-5 years to meaningly address this problem?** **Example:** 1.Documented pH improvements on soil tests. 2. Supporting 6 retiring farms to reach new conservation goals. 3. Support 6 new direct sales farms to reach conservation goals. 4. Increase conservation equipment services. 5.Secure additional state funding to support direct market producers.
Assessment Context to Consider: -Balancing agricultural productivity with environmental responsibility. -Supporting small farms to enhance local food security and high quality feed. -Need for better financial support, grants, and incentives for local farmers. -High costs of land, equipment, and labor making small-scale farming unsustainable. -Concerns over pesticide and herbicide use affecting health and environment. -The decline of local farms due to economic pressures threaten biodiversity and sustainable land use.			
Are there NRCS practices or programs that could help solve this problem? □ Yes □ No □ Don't know List any practice recommendations you have. Please write your response on the "LWG Notes on NRCS Practices" sheet.			

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Streams and Rivers Water Quality & Pollution	**What 1-2 land uses does this mostly happen on?** **Examples:** Headwaters streams; unstable unvegetated mainstream rivers and lakeshores; unstable lakeshore and river banks; annual cropland	**If you had to choose, what would be the 2-3 feasible priority solution activities for addressing conservation needs in the next 3-5 years?** **Types of solutions categories:** Practice Installation Technical Assistance Outreach **Example**: 1.Conduct soil and water PFAS contamination testing. 2. Prioritize private lands stream crossing and road runoff. 3. Better understand corn growers limitations.	**What could feasibly be achieved in 3-5 years to meaningly address this problem?** **Example:** 1. Weekly news column on the topic. 2. Increased vegetative buffers around corn fields. 3. Increased community engagement work - workshops & events.
Assessment Context to Consider: -Addressing soil erosion, nutrient runoff, and water contamination into lakes, rivers, and aquifer. -Concerns over biosolids, chemical contamination, and phosphorus/nitrogen runoff. -The Coventry landfill -Protecting drinking water sources from agricultural and landfill pollutants. -Improving river systems -Wake Boats & Shoreline Erosion			

Are NRCS practices or programs that could help solve this problem?

- □ Yes
- □ No
- □ Don't know

List any practice recommendations you have. Please write your response on the "LWG Notes on NRCS Practices" sheet.

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Adapting to Climate Instability & Weather Challenges	**What 1-2 land uses does this mostly happen on?** **Examples:** Town centers, agricultural lands, unraveling headwater streams	**If you had to choose, what would be the 2-3 feasible priority solution activities for addressing conservation needs in the next 3-5 yrs?** **Types of solutions categories:** Practice Installation Staff capacity/Technical Assistance Outreach **Example:** 1.Clear identification of floodplains and wetland, and vulnerable headwater areas. 2. Showcase BMPs Farrow Farm.	**What could feasibly be achieved in 3-5 yrs to meaningly address this problem?** **Example:** 1.Complete at least 1 NRCS funded project that reduces high flows. 2.Work with other community organizations who are focused on flooring to share resources.
Assessment Context to Consider: -Unpredictable weather affecting annual and hay crop yields, pasture and farm resilience. -Increased flooding, droughts, and shifting growing conditions impacting food production and food security. -Increased extreme weather events, heavy rainfall, and outdated infrastructure (culverts, roads) have led to severe flooding, soil erosion, and habitat destruction across multiple towns. - Need for practices aimed at slowing high flows across the landscape. - Concern about air quality and wind effects on maple trees.			

Are NRCS practices or programs that could help solve this problem?

- □ Yes
- □ No
- □ Don't know

List any practice recommendations you have. Please write your response on the "LWG Notes on NRCS Practices" sheet.

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Invasive Species	**What 1-2 land uses does this mostly happen on?** **Examples:** Sugar bushes, working forests, riparian areas	**If you had to choose, what would be the 2-3 feasible priority solution activities for addressing conservation needs in the next 3-5 years?** **Types of solutions categories:** Practice Installation Technical Assistance Outreach **Examples:** 1. Targeted outreach to large landowners. 2. Continued dedicated NRCS Funding with more outreach.	**What could feasibly be achieved in 3-5 years to meaningly address this problem?** **Example:** 1.Secure places to get rid of culled or harvested invasives. 2.Educational resources provided to the towns for distributing to new residents, in Welcome Baskets.
Assessment Context to Consider: -Concerns over pesticide and herbicide use affecting health and environment. -Spread of invasive plants disrupting farmland and ecosystems -Climate Change is increasing the issue.			

Are NRCS practices or programs that could help solve this problem?

- □ Yes
- □ No
- □ Don't know

List any practice recommendations you have. Please write your response on the "LWG Notes on NRCS Practices" sheet.

NRCS Process Feedback - 6 questions

Small Group Priority Concern:

1. **PROGRAMING::** Based on your experience with NRCS, do you have any general conservation program recommendations:

2. **OPERATIONS:** Based on your experience with NRCS, do you have any general operational recommendations for NRCS conservation planning:

Examples:

Conservation	Business Operations
Decreases field office workload	Reduces the amount of contract modifications (potential to cut the number of modifications in half)
Increases time in the field	Reduces number of cancelled contracts
Increases conservation delivery on-the-ground	Allows more Farm Bill dollars to be Invested in the Pacific
Improves decision making	Gains administrative efficiencies
Provides funding certainty to field offices and partners	Improves audit readiness
Allows for more regulatory certainty	Increases opportunity to put additional 'boots on the ground'
Focuses on technical support	Improves future management projections

3. **NRCS RESEARCH:** Are there any specific conservation research topics that should be invested in for future years?

4. **NRCS PAYMENTS:** Based on your experience with NRCS, what conservation **program payment amount** recommendations do you have?
   Do you know of an NRCS payment rate that is too low?
   For example, an OCNRCD RCPP program for an 1000ft farm road drainage improvement and culvert upgrade was $9405 in cost share but the bid for the work was $26k.

5. **NRCS INVESTMENTS:** Based on your experience with NRCS and with other programs, **what current investments** (projects or state-wide fund pools) are working well and are gathering long-term data needs that NRCS **should continue to invest** in moving forward? Please be specific.

6. **NRCS TOOLS:** Can you think of any science based **Conservation Technologies** needed that we don't currently use well or have access to?