

## § 700.5

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(ff) *RCWP Project*. The total system of BMPs, administrative support, institutional arrangements, cost-sharing, technical and community support that are authorized in a RCWP project application.

(gg) *Secretary*. The Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

(hh) *Silvicultural*. The science and art of cultivating (growing and tending) forest crops based on the knowledge of forestry. Silviculture-related pollution is included as agriculture nonpoint source pollution in the RCWP.

(ii) *Standards and Specifications*. Requirements that establish the minimum acceptable quality level for planning, designing, installing, and maintaining BMPs.

(jj) *State ASC Committee (STC)*. The State ASC Committee appointed by the Secretary in accordance with Section 8 b of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, as amended.

(kk) *Technical Assistance*. The preparation of the participant's water quality plan, the design, layout and implementation of BMPs to accomplish the purposes of the water quality plan, and water quality monitoring and evaluation.

(ll) *Water Quality Management Program*. A Federal-state-local program for addressing and solving point and non-point source pollution problems consistent with national clean water goals. The basic authority for this program is in section 208 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended, (Pub. L. 92-500).

[45 FR 14009, Mar. 4, 1980, as amended at 46 FR 29454, June 2, 1981]

### § 700.5 Responsibilities.

(a) *The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) shall:*

(1) Administer the RCWP by entering into contracts with land owners and operators to install and maintain BMPs to control agricultural nonpoint source pollution for improved water quality and:

(i) Consult with EPA in the selection of projects;

(ii) Obtain concurrence from EPA in approval of BMPs; and

(iii) Insure an adequate joint USDA/EPA monitoring and evaluation plan is carried out on selected projects.

(2) Provide technical assistance and share the cost of carrying out BMPs as specified in the contracts.

(3) Evaluate the overall effectiveness of the program in improving water quality.

(b) *The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will:*

(1) Participate on the NCC, SCC and LCC.

(2) Furnish information from the water quality management planning process which can assist in identifying areas with the most critical water quality problems for project applications.

(3) Participate in the approval of project applications for funding.

(4) Concur with the Secretary on BMPs recommended by the County and State ASC Committees and approved by the Secretary for funding, or recommended by the Secretary, with concurrence of the Administrator, EPA, and approved by the State and County ASC Committees.

(5) Assist USDA in evaluating the effectiveness of the program in improving water quality, including concurrence on projects selected for comprehensive monitoring and evaluation and development of the criteria for the comprehensive, joint USDA/EPA water quality monitoring, evaluation, and analysis program.

(c) *The Farm Service Agency shall:*

(1) Serve as chairperson of the NCC, SCC and LCC and be responsible for developing and administering the RCWP.

(2) Provide to the Secretary those project applications recommended for approval, including the recommendations of the NCC.

(3) Through County FSA Offices, provide the administrative support in all approved RCWP projects, such as accepting applications, preparing and approving contracts, carrying out funds control, issuing cost-share payments, otherwise administering contracts and payments, provide compliance oversight, maintain records and develop reports.

(4) Enter into agreements with Federal, State and local agencies and others as needed for support to be provided in an approved RCWP project.

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(5) Through County and Community ASC Committees work with landowners and operators in the project area to encourage participation.

(6) Develop cost-share rates for installing needed BMPs.

(7) Assure that RCWP is in addition to and is coordinated with other related programs.

(8) Provide guidance to State and County ASC Committees and coordinate the Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP), the Forestry Incentives Program (FIP), and related conservation programs, with RCWP.

(9) Allocate project funds to County ASC Committees in the approved project areas.

(10) Designate the State ASC Chairperson where a project area involves a part(s) of two or more States to chair the SCC, for that project.

(d) *The Soil Conservation Service (SCS) shall:*

(1) Participate on the NCC, SCC and LCC.

(2) Coordinate technical assistance and recommend appropriate agency or group to provide technical assistance on a project by project basis.

(3) Provide technical assistance for the appropriate BMPs.

(4) Assist the LCC in developing criteria for use by the County ASC Committees and the Conservation Districts in determining priorities of assistance among individual applicants for developing the water quality plan.

(5) Provide technical assistance in developing and certifying the technical adequacy of the participant's water quality plan.

(e) *The Forest Service (FS) shall:*

(1) Participate on the NCC and as appropriate, SCC and LCC.

(2) Have technical responsibility for forestry.

(3) Provide technical assistance for appropriate BMPs, by providing technical assistance through the State Forestry Agency (State Forester as appropriate) for planning, applying and maintaining forestry BMPs.

(4) Participate in the monitoring and evaluation as appropriate.

(5) As appropriate, assist in developing the water quality plan to assure that the most critical water quality problems are addressed.

(f) *The Science and Education Administration (SEA), through the State and County Extension Services, Appropriate, shall:*

(1) Participate on the NCC, SCC and LCC.

(2) Develop, implement, and coordinate informational and educational programs for agricultural nonpoint source water pollution control.

(3) Encourage the State and County Extension Services to develop and carry out a comprehensive educational and informational program.

(4) Provide technical assistance for appropriate BMPs including, but not limited to, fertilizer management, pest management, conservation tillage, and animal waste as appropriate.

(g) *The Economics and Statistics Service (ESS) shall:*

(1) Participate on the NCC and as appropriate, SCC and LCC.

(2) Assist in the economic evaluation of RCWP projects and BMPs.

(3) Make data available from existing and planned ESS surveys relating to water quality and related matters.

(4) Conduct socioeconomic research, within ESS authorities and funds, on relevant policy and program issues pertinent to RCWP.

(5) Assist in the annual program evaluation and be responsible for the economic component of the comprehensive evaluation of selected projects.

(h) *The Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) shall:*

(1) Participate on the NCC, SCC and LCC.

(2) Provide assistance and coordinate their farm loan and grant programs with RCWP.

(3) Assist in the annual program evaluation.

(i) *The National Rural Clean Water Coordinating Committee (NCC).* The NCC is chaired by the Administrator, FSA. Other members of the National Committee are Director, Office of Environmental Quality, the Administrators of, FmHA, and ESS; the Chief of FS, SCS; the Director of SEA; and the Assistant Administrator for Water and Waste Management, EPA. Nonfederal agencies such as Conservation Districts, State soil and water conservation agencies, State water quality management agencies, and other organizations

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may attend as observers. The duties of the NCC are to:

(1) Assist the Administrator, FSA, in developing the program regulations and procedures.

(2) Recommend to the Administrator, FSA, the project applications to be approved.

(3) Advise the Secretary on the maximum Federal contribution to the total cost of the project and establish the maximum cost-share levels of BMPs.

(4) Assist in coordinating individual agency programs with the RCWP.

(5) Make recommendations as appropriate on the technical aspects of the program.

(6) Recommend project areas and criteria for comprehensive joint USDA/EPA water quality monitoring, evaluation, and analysis.

(7) Annually review the plans of work and recommend changes in the projects.

(8) Annually review the progress in each project and periodically advise the Secretary, the Under Secretary for International Affairs and Commodity Programs, and Assistant Secretary for Natural Resources and the Environment on program and policy issues.

(j) *The State Rural Clean Water Coordinating Committee (SCC)*. The SCC is chaired by the STC chairperson. Members include a representative of the agency members on the NCC or their designee. Other members are the State water quality agency having responsibility for the water quality management program, the State soil and water conservation agency, the State Director, Cooperative Extension Service, and others, including those recommended by the Governor, and approved by the Chairperson of SCC. Other State and local agencies, and organizations, or individuals may attend as observers. The duties of the committee are to:

(1) Submit its recommendations for approval of project application(s) to the State ASC Committee for forwarding to the NCC, through the Administrator, FSA.

(2) Insure that each project application referred to the state ASC committee includes a water quality monitoring plan which specifies the organization(s) responsible for general moni-

toring, including cost and budget breakdown by organization(s).

(3) Assure coordination of activities at the project level by assisting in determining the composition and responsibilities of the LCC.

(4) Assure adequate public participation, including public meeting(s), and appropriate environmental evaluation in the preparation of RCWP applications.

(5) Provide oversight for the RCWP in the State and to assist USDA and EPA in their comprehensive, joint water quality monitoring and evaluation of selected project areas, including coordination with the LCC.

(6) Develop procedures for coordination between the RCWP and other water quality programs.

(7) Assist the State ASC Committee in developing the membership of the LCC. For multi county projects, there will be one LCC.

(8) Annually review and approve the plan(s) of work and changes proposed by the LCC and forward a copy to the NCC through the administrator, FSA.

(k) *The Local Rural Clean Water Coordinating Committee (LCC)*. The LCC is chaired by the County ASC Committee Chairperson. Other members include a representative of the agency members on the NCC, or their designee, where applicable, and a representative of the soil and water conservation district, the designated water quality management agency, State forestry agency, the Director, County Extension Service, and others recommended by the LCC and approved by the STC. (Where more than one county is in a project area only one LCC will be established in the project area.) The duties of the committee are to ensure that a process exists and actions are taken to implement any approved project. The duties will include, among others which may be outlined by the SCC, the following:

(1) Assure an adequate level of public participation in implementing the project.

(2) Provide project coordination, including development of the plan of work for implementing the approved project using various USDA agencies, local agencies and interested groups.

(i) Enlist resources from other agencies and local groups.

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(ii) Conduct informational and educational activities relating to the project.

(iii) Develop criteria with the SCC for use by the County ASC Committee and the soil conservation district to establish priorities among individual applications for developing water quality plans.

(iv) Assure the development of an adequate plan for project monitoring and evaluation.

(3) Consult with SCC for coordination with USDA State officials, State water quality official, and EPA regional representatives to develop criteria for project plan of work and project coordination.

(4) Review the project Plan of Work annually and recommend changes in the approved project to the SCC.

(1) *State ASC Committee shall:*

(1) Provide the chairperson for the SCC and be responsible for administration of the RCWP project(s) in the State.

(2) Submit those project applications recommended by the SCC to the Administrator, FSA.

(3) Provide overall administrative support for the RCWP through the County ASC Committee(s).

(4) Designate a County ASC Committee Chairperson to serve as Chairperson of the LCC in multi-county projects.

(5) Approve the BMPs for inclusion in project applications.

(6) Be responsible for all other administrative functions as provided in these regulations.

(m) *The Governor of each State, at the Governor's option, may:*

(1) Recommend to the SCC Chairperson appropriate additional individuals for membership on the SCC.

(2) Furnish to the SCC a listing of the water quality priority areas in the State which are to be used by the SCCs and LCCs in considering and developing project applications.

(n) *the State soil and water conservation agency will:*

(1) Participate on the SCC.

(2) Assist in preparing and submitting RCWP project applications.

(3) Carry out responsibilities of soil conservation districts, including par-

ticipation on the LCC, where no soil conservation district exists.

(o) *The State water quality agency will:*

(1) Participate on the SCC.

(2) Provide expertise in preparing RCWP project applications.

(3) Assist in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the water quality projects.

(p) *The County ASC Committee shall:*

(1) Be responsible for administration of the RCWP at the local level.

(2) Provide the chairperson of the LCC.

(3) Provide overall administrative support for the RCWP approved project through the FSA County Office, including accepting applications, administering the contracts and making payments and preparing reports.

(4) Recommend approval of BMP's.

(5) Together with the Soil Conservation District, determine the priority for technical assistance among individual applicants for water quality plans based on criteria developed by the LCC to assure that the most critical water quality problems are addressed.

(6) Establish the recommended cost share level for BMP's in the RCWP project applications in consultation with the LCC.

(7) Utilize the Community ASC Committee(s) and LCC in encouraging farmers in the project area to install needed BMPs on the priority basis developed by the LCC.

(8) Be responsible for developing, and annually reviewing, and carrying out the plan of work for the approved project.

(q) *The Soil Conservation District will:*

(1) Participate on the LCC.

(2) Assist in the preparation and submission of applications for the RCWP.

(3) Assist in the promotion of the approved RCWP project.

(4) Together with the County ASC Committee, determine the priority of technical assistance among individual applicants for water quality plans based on criteria developed by the LCC to assure that the most critical water quality problems are addressed.

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(5) Approve applicants' water quality plans and revisions.

[45 FR 14009, Mar. 4, 1980, as amended at 46 FR 29454, June 2, 1981; 59 FR 60299, Nov. 23, 1994]

### § 700.6 Officials not precluded from exercising authority.

Nothing in these regulations shall preclude the Secretary; Administrator, FSA; NCC; or Deputy Administrator, State and County Operations, FSA; from administering any or all phases of the RCWP programs delegated to the LCC, County ASC Committee, SCC, State ASC Committee or any employee(s) where the committee or employee fails to perform a function required in these regulations. In exercising this authority either the Secretary, Administrator, FSA, or Deputy Administrator, FSA, may delegate a person or persons to be in charge with full authority to carry out the program or other function(s) without regard to the LCC, ASC committee(s), or employee(s) for such period of time as is deemed necessary.

[59 FR 60299, Nov. 23, 1994]

## Subpart B—Project Authorization and Funding

### § 700.10 Applicability.

The RCWP is applicable in project areas that meet the criteria for eligibility contained in § 700.12 and are authorized for funding by the Secretary.

### § 700.11 Availability of funds.

(a) The allocation of funds to the County ASC Committee(s) in a project area is to be made on the basis of the total funds needed to carry out the approved project.

(b) The obligation of Federal funds for RCWP contracts with participants is to be made on the basis of the total contract costs.

### § 700.12 Eligible project areas.

(a) Only those project areas which reflect the water quality priority concerns developed through the established water quality management program planning process and have identified agricultural nonpoint source water quality problems are eligible for au-

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thorization under RCWP. Only those critical areas or sources of pollutants significantly contributing to the water quality problems are eligible for financial and technical assistance.

(b) An RCWP project area is a hydrologically related land area. Exceptions may be made for ease of administration, or to focus on concentrated critical areas. To be designated as an RCWP project area eligible for authorization, the area's water quality problems must be related to agricultural nonpoint source pollutants, including but not limited to, sediment, animal waste, irrigation return flows, runoff, or leachate that contain high concentrations of nitrogen, phosphorus, dissolved solids, toxics (pesticides and heavy metals), or high pathogen levels.

### § 700.13 Project applications.

Existing and subsequent project applications submitted for consideration must contain adequate information on each item specified in § 700.14. Instructions on such information requirements will be issued by the Administrator, FSA. Opportunity will be provided prior to final approval of a project for the LCC and the SCC, in consultation with the Governor, through the applicable County and State ASC Committees, for modification necessary to bring them into conformance with the provisions of these regulations.

### § 700.14 Review and approval of project applications.

(a) In reviewing applications and recommending priorities, the NCC will consider the following:

(1) Severity of the water quality problem caused by agricultural and silvicultural related pollutants, including:

(i) State designated uses of the water affected.

(ii) Kinds, sources, and effects of pollutants.

(iii) Miles of stream or acres of water bodies affected, extent of groundwater contamination.

(2) Demonstration of public benefits from the project, including:

(i) Effects on human health.