

### § 700.3

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#### § 700.3 Administration.

At the national level, the Secretary of Agriculture will administer the RCWP in consultation with the Administrator, EPA, including EPA's concurrence in the selection of the BMPs, as provided in the 1980 Appropriations Act and subsequent appropriations. Authority to approve projects is reserved to the Secretary. The Secretary of Agriculture hereby delegates responsibility for administration of the program to the Administrator, Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the coordination of technical assistance to the Chief, Soil Conservation Service (SCS). FSA will be assisted by other USDA agencies in accordance with existing authorities.

(a) A National Rural Clean Water Coordinating Committee (NCC), chaired by the Administrator, FSA, will assist in carrying out the RCWP.

(b) A State Rural Clean Water Coordinating Committee (SCC) will assist the State ASC Committee in administering the program. The State ASC Committee Chairperson will chair the SCC. Where two or more States are involved in a project area the Deputy Administrator, State and County Operations (DASCO), FSA, shall develop a coordinating process.

(c) A Local Rural Clean Water Coordinating Committee (LCC) will be established to assure coordination at the project level. The LCC committee will be chaired by the County ASC Committee Chairperson and will assist the County ASC Committee as provided in these regulations and as otherwise developed by the SCC and the LCC. Where two or more counties are involved in a project area, the SCC shall develop a coordination process.

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

#### § 700.4 Definitions.

(a) *Adequate Level of Participation.* An adequate level of participation is reached when participants having control of 75 percent (unless a different level is approved by the Administrator, FSA, with the concurrence of the NCC), of the identified critical area(s) or source(s) of the agricultural nonpoint

source pollution problem in the project area, are under contract.

(b) *Administrative Services.* The administration of the RCWP except for the technical phases as assigned in § 700.5 of these regulations.

(c) *Agricultural Land.* That portion(s) of a farm or ranch used to produce: Grains, row crops, seed crops, vegetables, hay, pasture, orchards, vineyards, trees, field grown ornamentals, livestock or other agricultural commodities.

(d) *Agricultural Nonpoint Source Pollution.* Pollution originating from diffuse sources, including, but not limited to, land areas and return flows from agricultural lands such as:

(1) Animal waste areas and land used for livestock and/or crop production, or  
(2) Lands with silviculturally related pollution.

(3) Concentrated animal feeding operations defined as point sources in 40 CFR 125.1 and 125.51, are not eligible for assistance under RCWP.

(e) *Applicant.* A person in an approved project area who applies for RCWP assistance.

(f) *Average Cost.* The calculated cost, determined by recent actual local costs and current cost estimates, considered necessary for carrying out BMPs or an identifiable unit thereof.

(g) *Best Management Practice (BMP).* A single practice or a system of practices to improve water quality included in the approved RCWP application that reduces or prevents agricultural nonpoint source pollution.

(h) *BMP Costs.* The amount of money actually paid or obligated to be paid by the participant for equipment use, materials and services for carrying out BMPs or an identifiable unit of a BMP. Loss of income from crops during the first twelve months following the conversion of productive cropland to permanent vegetative cover or trees may be considered a part of the BMP cost for a project where it is determined that harvesting or grazing restrictions are necessary in order to establish properly the practice and the reimbursement for loss of income is necessary to provide incentives to achieve an adequate level of participation as defined in 7 CFR 700.4(a). If the participant uses personal resources, the cost

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includes the computed value of personal labor, equipment use, and materials.

(i) *BMP Life Span.* Each BMP shall have a life span of not less than 5 years unless otherwise approved by the Administrator, FSA.

(j) *Conservation District (CD).* A subdivision of a State or territory organized pursuant to the State Soil Conservation District Law, as amended. In some States these are called soil conservation districts, soil and water conservation districts, resource conservation districts, or natural resource districts.

(k) *Contract.* The document that includes the water-quality plan and is executed by the participant and approved by the County ASC Committee. Such document evidences the agreement between parties for carrying out BMPs on the participant's land.

(l) *Contract Period.* That period of time, 3 to 10 years, established as necessary to implement the BMPs needed to solve the water quality problems in the contract.

(m) *Cost-Share Level.* That percentage of the total cost of installing a BMP which is to be borne by the government under the RCWP.

(n) *Cost Share Rate.* The amount of money per unit (cubic yard, acre, etc.) to be paid for carrying out BMPs under the RCWP.

(o) *County ASC Committee.* The County ASC Committee elected by the farmers/ranchers in the county as provided for under section 8(b) of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act (16 U.S.C. 590h(b)).

(p) *Critical Areas or Sources.* Those designated areas or sources of agricultural nonpoint source pollutants identified in the project area as having the most significant impact on the impaired use of the receiving waters.

(q) *Direct Costs.* The costs that can be specifically identified with the program.

(r) *Farmer/Rancher.* An owner and/or operator who has a vested interest in the operation of the farm or ranch.

(s) *Federal Funds Authorized.* The total amount of funds authorized to approved projects.

(t) *Fiscal Year.* The fiscal year beginning October 1 and ending September 30.

(u) *Identifiable Unit.* A part of a BMP that can be clearly identified as a separate component in carrying out BMPs in the water quality plan.

(v) *Implementation.* The act of carrying out or executing a water quality plan, including both installation and maintenance of BMPs.

(w) *Maximum Payment Limitation.* The total amount of RCWP payments which a participant may receive for the full contract period. The total amount of such payments shall not exceed \$50,000.

(x) *Offsite Benefits.* Favorable effects of BMPs that occur away from the land of the participant receiving RCWP assistance and which accrue to the public.

(y) *Participant.* A land owner and/or operator who is an agricultural producer and applies for and receives assistance under RCWP.

(z) *Participant's Water Quality Plan.* The plan that identifies critical agricultural nonpoint sources of pollution, identifies water quality problems and schedules the application of BMPs which contribute to meeting the water quality objectives of the project.

(aa) *Plan of Work.* A written strategy for implementing the approved project, outlining the actions needed and to be taken by various USDA, State and local agencies and interested groups.

(bb) *Pooling Agreement.* An agreement between two or more participants or ranchers to pool their resources to treat a common critical area or source.

(cc) *Privately-Owned Rural Land.* Lands not owned by Federal, State, or local governments that include cropland, pastureland, forest land, rangeland, and other associated lands.

(dd) *Project Area.* The geographic determination included in the project application as agreed upon by the SCC and LCC, and approved by the Secretary, utilizing the water quality planning process which identifies agricultural nonpoint source water quality problems.

(ee) *Project Life Span.* The maximum total life span of a project shall be not greater than fifteen (15) years from the date RCWP funds are first made available for the project.

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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.