

Developing Your Skills to INVOLVE COMMUNITIES in Implementing Locally Led Conservation



CUSTOMIZABLE CURRICULUM

*Nine training modules
that can be delivered in workshops
either individually or in any combination*

VIDEO

Overview of the locally led process

SELF-SCORING EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

Evaluate your locally led conservation project

CUSTOMIZABLE CURRICULUM

Locally led conservation is based on the principle that community stakeholders are best suited to deal with local resource problems. It is driven by the community's natural resource conservation needs and requires involving people and organizations in the planning process and working to successfully execute a long-range plan.

The NRCS Social Sciences Institute in cooperation with Michigan State University and Michigan State University Extension presents a training program that can be *customized* to help you and your organization strengthen your skills for implementing locally led conservation



Your needs determine the content.

Do your team members need an introduction to community development? Is outreach to diverse audiences a priority? Are you concerned about conflicts within your organization or community? Together we can tailor the topics, exercises, and activities from the curriculum to meet your needs and to fit the context in which your team members work.

You determine the cost. You and your team decide the length of time devoted to the training and where it takes place. We will be happy to work with you to develop training that fits within your budget and still meets your needs.

Select from the following training module options based on your needs. Consider scheduling a single workshop in conjunction with an event or meeting. Use all nine modules in a 3 or 4-day training session--all at once or successively over time.

• The Nature of Community

Module T02A
Workshop length:
4 hrs. 15 min.

This program examines the nature of community and the essential roles that communities play in natural resource management. Tools are provided for determining the potential and actual impacts of environmental policies and programs.

• Community Issues Identification

Module T02B
Workshop length:
4 hrs.

Much of the work of NRCS and the conservation districts is done with community partners. Staff and directors need to understand how to identify communities of interest, their stakeholders, and their issues, in order to successfully engage communities in conservation planning. This module introduces participants to several methods for gathering input from local communities. Activities are included that give participants hands-on experiences with tools for encouraging community involvement.

“The locally led process builds networks to help stakeholders and their communities develop and implement long range conservation plans. ‘*Developing Your Skills to INVOLVE COMMUNITIES in Implementing Locally Led Conservation*’ is a valuable tool to understand the broad social aspects of a community and to identify issues and develop community profiles.

Tom Fedewa
Water Quality Project Specialist,
Environmental Stewardship Division
Department of Agriculture

• Community Profiling

Module T02C
Workshop length:
3 hrs. 20 min.

As NRCS staff and other conservation partners seek to involve communities in locally led conservation, information is needed to help “paint a picture” of where the community has been, where it is now, and where it is headed. The first step is understanding demographic and economic data about the community. This module introduces the necessary skills to accomplish this task. The team’s goal may be to make new or continued resources available to the community or to advance public relations efforts at the local, state, or federal level.



• Addressing Community Issues

Module T02D
Workshop length:
1 hr. 55 min.

As people become busier and as the need for community volunteers increases, it is important to look for new ways of working effectively with community groups. Developing locally based leadership within community groups is an essential step. Leadership potential does exist within each group—the challenge is to discover the best way to develop it.



• Power in Communities

Module T02E
Workshop length:
2 hrs.

Power is the ability to act to get things done. Traditionally, attention has focused on the idea of “power over,” meaning that when one person or group has power, others do not. Increasingly, the concept of shared power is recognized as a more sustainable and effective approach. The concept of power is examined by identifying the power sources and power structures that influence a community and the relationships that shape its collaborative efforts.

**• Preparing to Work
With Underserved
Audiences**

*Module T02F
Workshop length:
6 hrs. 20 min.*

The goal of this module is for participants to learn how to create a multicultural environment where differences are recognized, understood, and appreciated, ensuring the participation of all groups as a requisite for successful locally led conservation initiatives. To facilitate communication, a common language is introduced that is comprised of terms related to multicultural leadership development. By connecting the concepts of discrimination and oppression to actual experiences in their own lives, participants will better understand the use of alternative behaviors to relate with clientele of other cultures. Emphasis is placed on facilitating the workshop in an environment where participants will feel safe in sharing experiences and opening themselves to new possibilities and opportunities for growth and change.

“Developing Your Skills to INVOLVE COMMUNITIES in Implementing Locally Led Conservation is an excellent program. I highly recommend it to district conservationists and staff in the State office that deal with customers outside the Agency.”

*Fred Reaves, Midwest Region Outreach
Coordinator/Training Coordinator*

**• Networks and
Collaborations**

*Module T02G
Workshop length:
2 hrs. 40 min.*

This module highlights the importance of mutual understanding between and within groups, exploring variations in teamwork, which include networks, partnerships, and collaborations. It looks at differing styles of work; working alone versus working in teams. Finally, it looks at the ingredients necessary for successful collaborations and the signals of the predictable stages of team development.

**• Effective Community
Facilitation**

*Module T02H
Workshop length:
2 hrs.*

When a conservation-related problem requires group action or a group decision, it may be necessary for someone to facilitate the process. The way a facilitator works with a group to help them achieve a common goal can have a significant impact on the outcome. By understanding the role of the facilitator and practicing specific techniques, it is possible to help a group become an effective decisionmaking body. Learn facilitation skills that help build a sense of community and solve problems.

**• Conflict
Management**

*Module T02I
Workshop length:
1 hr. 50 min.*

The potential for conflict exists whenever and wherever people interact. As people organize to achieve a common goal, the chances increase for conflict to occur because individuals represent different values, beliefs, and customs. However, when these differences are brought together in groups (organizations, communities, families, etc.), there is as much potential for growth and progress as there is for dissatisfaction and conflict. Learn to identify positive and negative aspects of conflict. The goal of this module is to help you to help others achieve consensus.



Video Overview

“The Locally Led Planning Process: The Heart of Conservation” is a 20-minute video that outlines the locally led conservation process in relation to the roles played by The Conservation Partnership.

The video demonstrates how the sociologically oriented modules of the training curriculum fit into the broader view of the locally led process. Successful training recorded from locally led conservation planning sessions in urban and rural settings and the art of community involvement are included. Officials from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the National Association of Conservation Districts, and State agencies are interviewed.

This video provides the overview of the locally led process while the curriculum modules teach participants the details of how to:

- *profile communities*
- *identify and prioritize issues*
- *share community power*
- *develop networks*
- *work in multicultural environments*
- *facilitate groups*
- *manage conflict*

“As a result of the SSI training and implementing the locally led process, the districts doubled their allocation from the Michigan legislature last year.”

*Marilyn Shy, Executive Director,
Michigan Association of Conservation
Districts*

Self-Scoring Evaluation*

“Examine Your Locally Led Conservation Planning Activities”

Locally led conservation requires involving people and organizations in the community’s planning process and working to execute a long-range plan successfully.

This self-scoring evaluation tool asks respondents about elements that are part of the locally led planning process. These elements include:

- *involving stakeholders*
- *defining community issues*
- *developing social and economic community profiles*
- *using consensus-building techniques*
- *managing conflict*
- *understanding the nature of communities*
- *considering diversity*

After completing the evaluation, participants receive feedback on how well he or she is planning and implementing a locally led conservation initiative. Participants receive a “grand” score as well as scores in each of the nine categories that match the categories of the training modules.

If a score in a category indicates that significant improvement is needed in an area of planning, then the participant might consider scheduling a training session specific to that area(s). The State social sciences coordinator or State training officer can schedule hands-on training in the appropriate number of modules. In the short term, respondents can click on hyperlinks to receive domain-specific information as well as other information and resources helpful to the development of locally led conservation plans.

**This self-scoring evaluation is available on the Social Sciences Institute Web site, <<http://www.ssi.nrcs.usda.gov>>, or in a slightly modified version on a compact disc (CD).*

Program Availability

The curriculum materials have been distributed to designates in all of the states, territories, and regions. Contact your State social sciences coordinator or State training coordinator for information about workshops and training sessions in your area.

Curriculum description

The complete nine-module curriculum has been consolidated into one 3-ring binder that contains introductory information, a CD, and 3.5 inch floppy disks. The curriculum provides a teaching guide with leader information, a program overview, module content descriptions, learning objectives, pre/post tests, equipment list, timeline, speaker's notes, activities, handouts, references, and PowerPoint presentations.

The video overview and self-scoring evaluation are available separately or as part of the curriculum package.

For more information about the training program, your State designate, or to customize your training program, contact:

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People, Partnerships, & Communities Fact Sheet Series

This series was created to supplement the locally led training program and provide additional information on locally led and other topics. The purpose of these fact sheets is to assist The Conservation Partnership with the "people aspects" of conservation work. This series is available on the SSI Web site at: www.ssi.nrcs.usda.gov (click on fact sheets). You also can request hard copies of the series by calling 1-800-526-3227 ext. 2.

Collaborations and Community Building

- 9* How to Improve Diversity on Your Team
- 16* Managing Change and Transition
- 17* Requesting and Preparing for a Meeting with a Community Leader
- 18* Understanding Non-Profit Organizations
- 20* Developing and Maintaining a Network
- 21* Understanding Community Power Structures
- 22* Defining Communities: An Issue Based Approach
- 43* Working with Community Leaders
- 44* Social Profile

Communications

- 1* Focus Groups
- 3* Looking Good on Television
- 5* Running Effective Meetings
- 10* Running Public Meetings
- 19* Creating Effective Relationships with the Media
- 26* Working with People of Different Cultures
- 27* Delivering Effective Presentations
- 29* Social and Physical Aspects of Meetings and Conferences
- 31* Exhibiting: A Tool To Achieve Technology Transfer

Conservation Planning

- 7* The Adoption and Diffusion of Conservation Technologies
- 11* Prioritizing Issues or Concerns: Using the Paired Comparison Technique
- 14* Designing Surveys for Conservation Activities
- 24* Conducting Rapid Resource Appraisals of Watersheds

Negotiation Skills

- 4* Alternative Dispute Resolution
- 6* Listening Skills
- 12* Conflict Management
- 13* Dealing With Difficult People
- 28* Stress Management
- 42* Gaining Trust with Small Farmers

**For more information about the
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Product Catalog Available

Are you interested in other materials that assist you in implementing locally led conservation? Are you curious about other products available from the Social Sciences Institute?

For a free catalog, contact the Social Sciences Institute.
Telephone: (616) 942-1503
Email: barbara.wallace@usda.gov

Visit the SSI Homepage
www.ssi.nrcs.usda.gov/ssi/

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