

PART 400 – RESOURCES INVENTORY

Subpart A – Purpose and Authorities

400.0 Purpose.

400.1 Authorities.

PART 400 – RESOURCES INVENTORY

SUBPART A – PURPOSE AND AUTHORITIES

400.0 Purpose.

- (a) This document establishes Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) policy for conducting natural resource inventories.
- (b) Additional policy, guidance, standards, and procedures may be obtained from the Resources Inventory Division.

400.1 Authorities.

- (a) This policy is based on and addresses the following legislative authorities:
 - (1) National Inventory of Soil and Water Conservation Needs – was established by the Secretary of Agriculture in Secretary’s Memorandum 1396, dated April 10, 1956. Using the authority of the Memorandum and the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act (e.g., Public Law 74-46, 16 U.S.C. 590 a-f, dated April 27, 1935), the Soil Conservation Service, currently renamed as the NRCS, conducted National Conservation Needs Inventories in 1958 and 1967;
 - (2) The Rural Development Act of 1972 (e.g., Public Law 92-419, section 302, title III (7 U.S.C. 1010a) dated August 30, 1972) – directed the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a survey of status and trends of the Nation’s soil, water, and related resources and issue a report of findings to Congress at intervals not to exceed five years. The Secretary of Agriculture assigned implementation of section 302 of the Rural Development Act to the former Soil Conservation Service;
 - (3) The Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977 (e.g., Public Law 95-192, sections 2, 3, and 5 (16 U.S.C. 2001 et seq.)) – directed the Secretary to appraise on a continuing basis the soil, water, and related resources of the Nation. The inventory and monitoring program is to include studies and surveys of erosion, sediment damage, floodplain identification, and land use changes and trends. The National Resources Inventory provides much of the data for these continuing appraisals. The Food Security Act of 1985 extended the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977 to 2008;
 - (4) The Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 – amended the Food Security Act of 1985 and stated that “. . . the Secretary shall assess the progress made toward thenational objective of non-degradation of soil resources through the implementation of the relevant provisions of this title . . . ;” and
 - (5) The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 – established the requirement of collecting resource inventory and monitoring data for the evaluation of agency programs’ effectiveness, direction, and current status (as referenced in section 2, Findings and Purposes; section 3, Strategic Planning, and section 306, Strategic Plans; section 4, Annual Performance Plans and Reports,

Title 290 – General Manual

section 1115, Performance Plans, and section 1116, Program Performance Reports).

- (b) This policy is additionally based on and addresses the following:
 - (1) Economy Act of June 30, 1932, as amended (e.g., 31 U.S.C. 1535-1536) – authorized agreements and cooperative efforts with other Federal agencies; and
 - (2) 16 U.S.C. 590 – authorized agreements with State (and equivalent) and local agencies.

Subpart B – Objectives and Policy

400.10 Objectives.

400.11 Policy.

SUBPART B – OBJECTIVES AND POLICY

400.10 Objectives.

The NRCS objectives in conducting natural resource inventories are as follows:

- (a) Fulfill legislative mandates;
- (b) Conduct all phases of the National Resources Inventory (NRI) in accordance with scientifically developed statistical principles, procedures, and practices;
- (c) Obtain scientifically credible, timely and relevant information about the Nation's natural resources and environmental conditions at national, regional, and sub-regional levels;
- (d) Collect and develop science-based, continuous natural resource information in support of NRCS strategic planning and accountability;
- (e) Provide information to evaluate the effectiveness of conservation programs;
- (f) Support development of agri-environmental policy and programs at national, regional, and local levels;
- (g) Provide information to the public on the status, condition, and trends of the Nation's soil, water, and related resources; and
- (h) Provide the scientific community with natural resource information to facilitate the development of models, analysis tools, and reports.

400.11 Policy.

(a) It is NRCS policy to operate the NRI program on the basis of rigorous, scientifically developed sample survey (e.g., statistical) principles and protocols, as follows:

- (1) Maintain a Statistical Unit that provides internationally recognized expertise in theoretical and applied aspects of survey design, survey operations, statistical estimation technique, and statistical analysis (See 400.21(g) for the definition.);
- (2) Structure and carry out inventory activities by adhering to a process that incorporates, "The Principal Steps in a Sample Survey," (as adapted from W. G. Cochran, Sampling Techniques, Wiley, New York, 1977) as follows:
 - (i) Determine objectives and information needs;
 - (ii) Develop survey context;
 - (iii) Design statistical techniques;
 - (iv) Establish a quality assurance process(es) and prepare for data gathering;
 - (v) Conduct data gathering;

Title 290 – General Manual

- (vi) Perform statistical processing; and
- (vii) Utilize data and information.

This process ensures that all inventory activities are conducted in a manner that fully considers customers' needs, scientific principles and credibility, availability of funds and staff, and operational constraints.

- (3) Utilize probability sampling techniques to ensure that inventory results are scientifically credible;
 - (4) Utilize inventory designs and protocols that provide efficient and credible methods for monitoring resource conditions – efficiency is evaluated on both a statistical and operational basis;
 - (5) Maintain and protect the integrity and confidentiality of data collection sites so that periodic monitoring of conditions at the sites continues to provide statistically valid data; and
 - (6) Prepare databases and provide statistical summaries that allow users of the data to make statistically valid analyses and inferences – present documentation of statistical reliability and other relevant inventory facets.
- (b) It is NRCS policy to conduct the NRI on a continuous basis, as follows:
- (1) Conduct annual inventories and studies to meet resource inventory objectives. (See 400.10.) Annual inventories are conducted within the framework of Inventory Collection and Coordination Sites (ICCS'). (See 400.21(b) for the definition.) State (and equivalent) data collection sites are established, as appropriate, to assist the ICCS' with the completion of data gathering activities. Data gathering includes onsite inspection and remote sensing, photo-interpretation, use of current high quality imagery, assimilation of preparatory and ancillary materials, editing, and review of data;
 - (2) Prepare a detailed Business Requirements Report by May of each year as part of the planning process and the scientific survey process, specified in 400.11(a)(2). (See 400.21(a) for the definition.); special ad hoc. inventories require a separate Business Requirements Report;
 - (3) Conduct all cycles and phases of the continuous inventory on one-, two-, and five-year plans based on the Business Requirements Report and formulated annually to address budgeting, staffing, technology development and testing, and training issues;
 - (4) Ensure that types of data collected are determined and clearly defined by NRCS management and partners, and are based upon a careful evaluation of current program needs and emerging natural resource concerns (See 400.10(d).);
 - (5) Monitor resource conditions and collect natural resources data in accordance with the resource inventory standards and applicable technical standards and procedures specified in published NRCS technical guides;

- (6) Maintain proper security and confidentiality of information and materials pertaining to locations of data-gathering sites; site locations (identified by coordinate systems, depicted by maps or photographs, or described by direct observation of survey location conditions, and other materials assembled for inventories) are not public information and shall be used only for official inventory purposes or for such purpose approved by the Secretary of Agriculture;
 - (7) Minimize activities that could lead to a particular condition and/or treatment of the site that results from the site's being part of the inventory; take precautions that these sites not be treated differently by landowners/operators and those offering technical assistance on conservation and production matters; and take care not to disrupt soils, vegetation, and runoff patterns of overland flow and deposition when making onsite visits;
 - (8) Maintain and archive all materials associated with the NRI data-gathering process. A case file will be maintained in each ICCS' or State (and equivalent) office, as appropriate, for each primary sample unit (PSU) (See 400.21(e) for the definition.); materials to be maintained indefinitely include the following:
 - (i) Imagery used for each data collection period;
 - (ii) Overlays and PSU's support maps stipulated by inventory procedures and instructions; and
 - (iii) All PSU's-specific ancillary data, notes, references, and other pertinent material used in the data gathering and interpretation process; this includes material from current and previous inventory cycles;
 - (9) Arrange for appropriate release of data obtained for each cycle of the continuous inventory; this includes release of information on current status, on short-term changes in natural resource conditions, and on long-term trends; and
 - (10) Maintain and archive a complete copy of the final database for each inventory cycle, at a location designated by the Resource Inventory Division. NRI data are not to be released to the public unless they have been converted into a statistical or aggregate form that does not allow identification of the individual landowner, operator, or specific NRI data-gathering location.
- (c) It is NRCS policy to operate the resources inventory program in a manner that provides for appropriate technical support for analysis and utilization of data collected via the continuous resources inventory process, and provides appropriate technical support for scientifically sound dissemination and reporting of survey results, as follows:
- (1) Prepare national-level summary tables and other statistical information for NRCS management, the Secretary of Agriculture, and Congress, as required to meet legislative mandates and support NRCS programs;
 - (2) Develop State (and equivalent)-level summary tables and other statistical information to support State (and equivalent)-wide conservation efforts, development of local policies, and NRCS programs and operations;
 - (3) Develop full, in-depth analyses for purposes of resources assessment, and make appropriate results available to internal and external customers;
 - (4) Support development of natural resource and agri-environmental policies;

Title 290 – General Manual

- (5) Provide appropriate database analysis tools, guidance, and support to internal and external customers to ensure that data are analyzed in a fashion that is consistent with the intentions and limitations of the NRI program; and
 - (6) Thoroughly investigate all inventory results to develop and test new statistical methodology, refine inventory operations and protocols, and identify existing gaps in the data.
- (d) It is NRCS policy to conduct resource inventory activities in a manner that provides the Department of Agriculture with results that are consistent with those provided by other programs, as follows:
- (1) Coordinate all resource inventory and monitoring activities conducted by NRCS, to ensure that all data-gathering efforts use compatible definitions and provide consistent information, so that program managers have credible, up-to-date data and information to support the decision-making process and NRCS programs, to report to Congress, and to use in informing the public about the conservation of natural resources;
 - (2) Coordinate NRI activities with those conducted by other Department of Agriculture component agencies, so that the Secretary of Agriculture is better able to address issues dealing with land use, conservation, and other natural resource concerns. Special emphasis will be given to the Forest Inventory and Analysis program conducted by the Forest Service and to data collection activities conducted by the National Agricultural Statistics Service; and
 - (3) Coordinate the NRI program with other Federal, State (and equivalent), Tribal, and local government resource inventory programs when feasible, practical, and consistent with NRCS' conservation mission. Special emphasis will be given to the National Wetlands Inventory Status and Trends program, conducted by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service.

Subpart C – Responsibilities and Definitions

400.20 Responsibilities.

400.21 Definitions.

SUBPART C – RESPONSIBILITIES AND DEFINITIONS

400.20 Responsibilities.

- (a) General.
 - (1) Officials at the National Headquarters, State (and equivalent), Inventory Collection and Coordination Sites (ICCS'), area, and field offices share the responsibility for formulating, initiating, conducting, and evaluating the resources inventory program. Officials at the appropriate levels share the responsibility to coordinate with other Federal, Tribal, State (and equivalent), and local governments or agencies, as well as academic institutions.
 - (2) Each office will keep other line offices and the ICCS' for their State (and equivalent) fully informed of planned activities and of the progress of any resources inventory.
 - (3) Coordination will be from the National Headquarters office to the State (and equivalent) offices and to the ICCS'.
 - (4) The integrity and confidentiality of PSU's and point locations will be protected and maintained at all organizational levels within the NRI program.
 - (5) All staff involved with the NRI are expected to explore ways to improve program efficiency and data quality and to make recommendations to NRI leadership to institute appropriate program changes.
- (b) The Chief of NRCS is responsible for:
 - (1) Reporting status and trends of the Nation's soil, water, and related resources to Congress;
 - (2) Effecting delegations of authority and organizational structure relative to the resources inventory program; and
 - (3) Allocating funding and staffing for program development and implementation.
- (c) The Deputy Chief for Soil Survey and Resource Assessment is responsible for:
 - (1) Ensuring overall policy development and program leadership for the NRI;
 - (2) Collaborating with other Deputy Chiefs in planning, correlating, and carrying out technical activities with other programs that impact or are impacted by the NRI;
 - (3) Making recommendations regarding budget formulation and funding allocations to ensure that funds are expended to accomplish NRI program objectives and to achieve maximum utilization of funds, as well as being responsible for the fund integrity of the NRI;
 - (4) Providing insight, guidance, and support in identifying resources inventory issues and developing the annual Business Requirements Report and working with Departmental and NRCS leadership to develop implementation strategies; and
 - (5) Identifying, in consultation with NRCS leadership, priority natural resource concerns to be monitored by the NRI for use in assessing natural resources.

(d) The Deputy Chief for Management, in support of the NRI program, is responsible for:

- (1) Developing national policies, procedures, guidelines, and standards for management services related to broad areas of human resource management and financial management; and
- (2) Making recommendations to facilitate and advance program operations.

(e) The Director, Resources Inventory Division, is responsible for:

- (1) Providing national leadership for the resources inventory program, establishing resources inventory policy, and establishing and implementing technical standards for all phases of natural resources inventories;
- (2) Ensuring that the resources inventory program is designed, developed, operated, and evaluated on the basis of NRCS policy and in accordance with scientifically developed statistical principles and NRCS inventory standards;
- (3) Providing national leadership to align the resources inventory program policy, budget, business plans, and standards with Departmental and agency-wide strategic needs;
- (4) Providing leadership in developing annual and multi-year resources inventory budgets and business plans and providing program oversight, in coordination with National Headquarters divisions, Centers and Institutes, the Statistical Unit, and States (and equivalent);
- (5) Developing the annual Business Requirements Report, in collaboration with appropriate staff and in accordance with objectives and needs established by the Department, NRCS, and external cooperators.
- (6) Implementing scientifically credible methods for acquisition and analysis of natural resources information;
- (7) Communicating national direction for resources inventory program activities and operations to States (and equivalent);
- (8) Recommending optimum numbers of ICCS' and staffing levels required to complete all phases of the NRI, in accordance with specified timeframes and established quality standards;
- (9) Maintaining relationships with Federal, Tribal, State, private agencies and groups, and serving on the Departmental and other committees and boards, as they relate to the technical and scientific aspects of the NRI program and activities;
- (10) Providing leadership for the identification of NRI research needs, transmitting needs to research entities, and transferring research findings to field applications;
- (11) Coordinating with other agencies on matters related to integrated inventory designs and procedures, joint data analysis, and inventory standards;

Title 290 – General Manual

- (12) Developing, implementing, and ensuring compliance with national, ICCS', and States (and equivalent)-level quality assurance plans for the resources inventory program;
 - (13) Maintaining the NRI database;
 - (14) Preparing summaries and evaluations of the status and trends of the Nation's soil, water, and related resources (i.e., this duty is shared with the Director and staff of the Resources Assessment Division);
 - (15) Establishing standards for the certification of NRI data collection staffs, as specified in the Resources Inventory Division policy, guidance, standards, and procedures;
 - (16) Developing imagery requirements, contracting methods, and budget requests for the national acquisition of high quality imagery products required to support the NRI program;
 - (17) Working through the Regional Conservationist's to designate a State Conservationist (and equivalent) from each region to serve on the NRI Advisory Group;
 - (18) Chairing the NRI Advisory Group (See 400.21(d) for the definition.); and
 - (19) Maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of PSU's and point locations.
- (f) The Director, Resources Assessment Division is responsible for:
- (1) Analyzing NRI data and preparing summaries and evaluations of the status and trends of the Nation's soil, water, and related resources (i.e., Technical reports and summaries are developed in collaboration with the Resources Inventory Division.);
 - (2) Identifying emerging issues for analysis that are relevant to the NRI and NRCS mission areas;
 - (3) Working collaboratively with the Director, Resources Inventory Division, to develop a detailed Business Requirements Report that clearly defines program support requirements for resource inventory activities;
 - (4) Serving on the NRI Advisory Group; and
 - (5) Maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of PSU's and point locations.
- (g) The Director, Strategic and Performance Planning Division, within the Deputy Chief for Strategic Planning and Accountability area, is responsible for:
- (1) Clearly articulating and defining the types of resource inventory data and information needed to support the strategic planning and accountability process;
 - (2) Identifying emerging issues for analysis that are relevant to the NRI and NRCS mission areas; and
 - (3) Working collaboratively with the Director, Resources Inventory Division, to develop a detailed Business Requirements Report that clearly defines program support requirements for resource inventory activities.

(h) State Conservationists and the Directors of the Pacific Basin and Caribbean Areas are responsible for:

- (1) Assigning staff and providing necessary support tools, technology, and resources to complete the NRI;
 - (2) Providing program oversight and assuring that the NRI is completed on schedule and in accordance with policy and written instructions and procedures from the Resources Inventory Division;
 - (3) Certifying that NRI data have been reviewed and analyzed and represent, to the best of his/her knowledge, the status and trends of resource conditions in their respective States (and equivalent);
 - (4) Analyzing, evaluating, and preparing relevant, credible, and statistically documented NRI data sets and information for dissemination to partners and the public on the status and trends of natural resources in their States (and equivalent);
 - (5) Providing input to the Director, Resources Inventory Division, on inventory needs and issues;
 - (6) Integrating resource inventory information into strategic planning for their States (and equivalent);
 - (7) Designating a staff member as the State (and equivalent) Resource Inventory Coordinator (See 400.21(f) for the definition);
 - (8) Maintaining staff technical capability to support NRCS programs;
 - (9) Providing required NRI program support to the ICCS' Leaders or State (and equivalent) Resource Inventory Coordinators to assure that resources inventory data collection staff are trained and certified in remote sensing techniques and NRI data collection procedures before performing in that capacity (See 400.21(c) for the definition of ICCS' Leaders);
 - (10) Ensuring compliance with national, ICCS', and State (and equivalent)-level quality assurance plans for the resources inventory program;
 - (11) Keeping partners at the State (and equivalent)-level informed on resources inventory activities and results;
 - (12) Maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of PSU's and point locations; and (and equivalent) needs. Copies of State (and equivalent) supplements are to be sent to the Director, Resources Inventory Division.
 - (13) Supplementing this policy, as needed, to provide specific guidance to meet State (and equivalent) needs. Copies of State (and equivalent) supplements are to be sent to the Director, Resources Inventory Division.
- (i) The NRI Advisory Group is responsible for:
- (1) Providing advice and recommendations on NRI policy and procedures and the goals and objectives for each inventory cycle;

- (2) Identifying emerging natural resources concerns and management issues for the NRI program; and
 - (3) Recommending ways to disseminate NRI information for best use by internal and external customers.
- (j) The Director, National Cartography and Geospatial Center is responsible for:
- (1) Providing technical assistance in cartography, photography, remote sensing, geospatial data services, data archival, and analysis, in support of resources inventory operations;
 - (2) Providing resources inventory products, services, and support to the ICCS' and other inventory units in order to assist with the data collection activities; and develop instructional and procedural materials and assist in training and quality assurance activities to meet inventory schedules and objectives, as specified in the Resources Inventory Division's multi-year resources inventory plan (See 400.11(b)(3).);
 - (3) Providing sufficient qualified staff to carry out functions and activities specified by the Director, Resources Inventory Division, to meet schedules and objectives of annual resources inventories; and
 - (4) Maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of PSU's and point locations.
- (k) The Director, Natural Resources Inventory and Assessment Institute is responsible for:
- (1) Developing, adopting, adapting, acquiring, and transferring technology to improve and enhance the NRI program and analysis of natural resources data;
 - (2) Evaluating inventory technology and analytical methodology to meet schedules and objectives as specified in the Resources Inventory Division's multi-year resources inventory plan (See 400.11(b)(3).);
 - (3) Providing sufficient and appropriate staff to carry out functions and activities specified by the Director, Resources Inventory Division, to meet schedules and objectives of annual resources inventories; and
 - (4) Maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of PSU's and point locations.
- (l) ICCS' Leaders are responsible for the following within their areas:
- (1) Planning, coordinating, and directing all data collection activities;
 - (2) Providing required training and ensuring certification of data collection staffs in remote sensing techniques and NRI data collection procedures, as specified in the Resources Inventory Division policy, guidance, standards, and procedures;
 - (3) Providing technical support and direction to the State (and equivalent) Resources Inventory Coordinators and data collection staffs;
 - (4) Coordinating with the State (and equivalent) Resources Inventory Coordinators to obtain ancillary materials and information necessary to support data collection activities, if applicable to ICCS' data collection plans, procedures, and program;

Title 290 – General Manual

- (5) Advising and assisting the State Conservationist(s) (and equivalent), State (and equivalent) NRI program leadership staff(s), and the State (and equivalent) Resources Inventory Coordinators in the implementation of policy, and the development of budgets and staffing plans that will adequately reflect ongoing responsibilities for the continuous inventory process;
 - (6) Developing and implementing the ICCS' Quality Assurance Plan and performing annual ICCS' quality assurance reviews;
 - (7) Providing technical oversight for all data collected;
 - (8) Maintaining communication with the NRI Help Desk system for obtaining support and assistance regarding NRI data collection issues and questions;
 - (9) Communicating and working with the Resources Inventory Division to identify and implement appropriate resource inventory program changes;
 - (10) Fostering communications, cooperative projects, and the sharing of resources inventory data with other Federal, Tribal, State (and equivalent) and local governments or agencies, as well as academic institutions;
 - (11) Providing training on the use of resource inventory data and working with the State (and equivalent) Resources Inventory Coordinator and State (and equivalent) technical staffs to produce NRI data sets and analysis for internal and external customers, in support of NRCS' conservation mission; and
 - (12) Maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of PSU's and point locations.
- (m) State (and equivalent) Resources Inventory Coordinators are responsible for the following within their States (and equivalent):
- (1) Providing necessary photography, ancillary materials, and digital data layers to the ICCS' for coordination of NRI data collection activities, if applicable to the States (and equivalent) data collection plans, procedures, and program;
 - (2) Planning, coordinating, and directing all data collection activities;
 - (3) Working with the ICCS' Leaders to ensure that all data collectors are certified in remote sensing techniques and NRI data collection procedures before performing in that capacity as specified in Resources Inventory Division policy, guidance, standards, and procedures;
 - (4) Advising and assisting the State Conservationists (and equivalent), State (and equivalent) NRI program leadership staffs, and the ICCS' Leaders in the implementation of policy and the development of budgets and staffing plans that will adequately reflect ongoing responsibilities for the continuous inventory process;
 - (5) Maintaining communication with the ICCS' Leaders and the NRI Help Desk system for obtaining support and assistance regarding NRI data collection issues and questions;
 - (6) Assuring that data collection performed by State (and equivalent) staffs conforms to NRCS NRI standards, policies, instructions, and procedures;

- (7) Providing cartographic, geographic information system, and global positioning system support for State (and equivalent) resource inventory activities, if applicable to State (and equivalent) data collection plans, procedures, and programs;
 - (8) Serving as a technical liaison to the ICCS' in the development of cooperative work agreements with other Federal, Tribal, State (and equivalent), and local governments or agencies, as well as academic institutions, for projects involving resource inventories and the use of resource inventory data;
 - (9) Fostering communications, cooperative projects, and the sharing of resources inventory data with other Federal, Tribal, State (and equivalent) and local governments or agencies, as well as academic institutions;
 - (10) Providing training on the use of resource inventory data and working with the ICCS' Leaders and State (and equivalent) technical staffs to produce NRI data sets and analysis for internal and external customers, and in support of NRCS' conservation mission;
 - (11) Working with the ICCS' Leaders to develop and implement a quality assurance plan and to perform annual quality assurance reviews; and
 - (12) Maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of PSU's and point locations.
- (o) Data collectors are responsible for:
- (1) Completing required training, as specified in Resource Inventory Division policy, guidance, standards, and procedures, to qualify as a certified data collector;
 - (2) Completing NRI data collection within a specified timeframe and according to established quality standards;
 - (3) Providing recommendations to the State (and equivalent) Resource Inventory Coordinators and/or the ICCS' Leaders on ways to improve program efficiency and quality of data collection; and
 - (4) Maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of PSU's and point locations.

400.21 Definitions

- (a) Business Requirements Report – A document that outlines National Resources Inventory objectives, inventory methodologies, and management considerations for a specified inventory activity.
- (b) Inventory Collection and Coordination Sites – Inventory Collection and Coordination Sites are the management units responsible for collecting and/or coordinating NRI data collection and quality assurance processes. ICCS' are responsible for program oversight and technical direction of NRI production-related activities within their boundaries. By design, ICCS' are centralized data collection sites with well-trained, full-time staffs of resource inventory specialists. The structure of the ICCS' is intended to consolidate data collection activities among groups of States (and equivalent) in order to manage the program with a smaller core group of staff. States (and equivalent) are responsible for

onsite data collection activities and are required to work within the technical management structure of the ICCS'. ICCS' data collection and quality assurance processes utilize remote sensing applications and procedures that are uniformly applied across the ICCS' area. Onsite visits are an important component of the data collection and quality assurance process within the ICCS'.

(c) Inventory Collection and Coordination Sites' Leaders – Individuals responsible for the operational management of ICCS'. Leaders are responsible for devising data collection plans and strategies that will be effective for coordinating all activities associated with data gathering, quality assurance, and data analysis and dissemination within the ICCS'. Their primary responsibility is managing remote sensing data gathering operations and coordinating onsite data gathering operations for all states within their ICCS area.

(d) National Resources Inventory Advisory Group – A group chaired by the Director, Resources Inventory Division, and consisting of the Director, Resources Assessment Division, and a representative State Conservationist (and equivalent) from each of the six NRCS Regions. The primary function of the Group is to provide advice and recommendations on National Resources Inventory policy, procedures, program goals and objectives, natural resources concerns, management issues, and information dissemination.

(e) Primary Sampling Units – Specific areas of land, typically square to rectangular in shape, which is approximately 40, 100, 160, or 640 acres in size. Within each of the Units, sample points are assigned. Certain data elements are collected for each of the entire Units' areas, while others are collected at the Units' points.

(f) State Resource Inventory Coordinators – Individuals responsible for the operational management of States (and equivalent) National Resources Inventory program. State Resource Inventory Coordinators work with the Inventory Collection and Coordination Sites Leaders to devise data collection plans and strategies that will be effective for their States. These Coordinators are primarily responsible for directing onsite data gathering operations for their states.

(g) Statistical Unit – An organizational unit which supports the NRCS in operating the Resources Inventory Program on the basis of rigorous, scientifically developed sample survey (statistical) principles and protocols, as specified by policy. This Unit is to provide internationally recognized expertise in theoretical and applied aspects of survey design, survey operations, statistical estimation techniques, and statistical analysis. This Unit can be either:

- (1) an entity within the Resources Inventory Division;
- (2) a highly recognized statistical laboratory or center at an accredited university;
- (3) a highly recognized statistical unit of a not-for-profit or commercial enterprise;
- (4) a statistical unit within another governmental unit;
- (5) some similar unit or entity; or
- (6) some combination of such units or entities.

Title 290 – General Manual