

National Bulletin: 360-24-10

Date: 3/29/2024

Subject: PER–Request for Participants: Rangeland Soil  
Health Pilot Training

**Action Requested By: April 19, 2024**

**Purpose:** This national bulletin requests state conservationists, directors of the Pacific Islands and Caribbean areas, and National Technology Support Center (NTSC) directors or their designees to submit participants for the Rangeland Soil Health pilot training course offered by the Soil Health Division (SHD).

**Expiration Date:** June 30, 2024.

**Background:** Based on requests from state conservationists, SHD has developed a Rangeland Soil Health pilot training course to meet the needs of conservation planners working on private, state, or tribal rangelands. There is a growing need for NRCS conservationists to provide producers and partners with technical assistance on identifying soil health indicators and viable conservation solutions for soil health concerns (including developing a soil health management system) on working rangelands.

**Explanation:** In response to changing climate and exacerbating effects of drought, wildfire, reduced soil moisture, and other factors, the in-person Rangeland Soil Health pilot training course serves to expand the knowledge and application of soil health practices and management systems on rangelands in the conservation planning process. The course will focus on soil health practices and principles related to climate-smart agriculture that improve rangeland soil-water-plant functional processes by enhancing soil health. Participants will learn how to identify biological diversity (above and below ground), reduce soil compaction, improve soil organic matter and aggregate stability, and recognize and assess specific soil health indicators. The course will also cover current science on soil health metrics, soil health principles, use and management principles to enhance soil health, and conservation practice design and implementation considerations. All content is designed to convey knowledge, confidence, and expertise to participants.

This pilot training course seeks input from state and NTSC specialists on the content, delivery, and efficacy of the course. Participants who attend the course will receive AgLearn credit for the course. Participant evaluations will be used to refine the content and delivery of the official Rangeland Soil Health course content.

**Prerequisites:** It is recommended, but not required, that participants for the pilot training course complete the Rangeland Ecology I: Principles and Applications, Course ID NRCS-NEDC-000026, before taking this new course. Participants should be rangeland specialists in area, state, or NTSC staff, as the target audience for the pilot training course is those who provide technical leadership for the states. Feedback should focus on the content, effectiveness, and quality of the course.

**Training Dates:** June 4–6, 2024, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CDT, all days

**Training Location:** NRCS Manhattan Plant Materials Center, 3800 S. 20<sup>th</sup> St., Manhattan, KS, 66502-9535

**Course Modules:**

1. Soil Health Resource Concerns on Rangeland
2. Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health, as it pertains to soil health
3. Tools for Assessing Soil Health on Rangelands
4. Rangeland In-Field Soil Health Assessment
5. Identification of Soil Characteristics and Soil Map Units
6. Identification of Ecological Sites
7. Rating Soil Health Indicators
8. Several Participant Exercises and Feedback Forums

**Actions:** State conservationists and NTSC directors or their designees should use the [Agriculture Conference Management System \(AgCMS\) Attendee Detailed Cost Analysis spreadsheet](#) to enter their selected attendees and associated cost data (in Columns B through Q) and the email address of the state training officer for each attendee (in Column R) by **April 19, 2024**. This should be completed only after obtaining supervisory approval for each recommended participant.

Participants and state training officers will be notified by Loretta Metz of their selection no later than **April 26, 2024**. SHD will submit the final AgCMS spreadsheet as required.

The appropriate state training officer for each participant must enroll the selected participants in the AgLearn course (NRCS-SHD-000006) no later than **May 3, 2024**. All information on course enrollment, course location, accommodations, airports, and other details will be provided in the April 26, 2024, selection notification.

**Contact:** For any questions on the Rangeland Soil Health pilot training course, email Loretta Metz, National Soil Health Program coordinator, at [loretta.metz@usda.gov](mailto:loretta.metz@usda.gov).