

PRO 450-a: NRCS Farmland Assessment Procedure

See also: [NRCS web site, EM Section 450.06](#)

Effective: June 2012

Start task: Project Engineer’s Office (PEO) determines that right of way will be needed for a project with Federal funding.

End task: Site or corridor assessment score received from Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS).

Actor:	Action:												
PEO	<p>1. Collects design drawings from the Project Office. The drawing must identify existing and proposed ROW lines for all alternatives, jurisdictional boundaries, and topographic features, as well as appropriate Public Land Survey System labels (i.e., township, section and range).</p>												
PEO	<p>2. Overlays the design data on the GIS soil layer. Show all soil type labels and include descriptions in the legend. Providing the soil layer data and table is not a requirement, but it will speed up the analysis.</p> <p>a. Data is available to WSDOT on the Environmental Workbench GIS application. Contact the WSDOT Environmental Information Program for assistance.</p> <p>b. Include a table listing the total number of acres of each soil type within the proposed right of way take for each alternative from the GIS data.</p> <p>Example:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="467 1318 1414 1556"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="467 1318 634 1396">Soil Type</th> <th data-bbox="639 1318 894 1396">Alternative A</th> <th data-bbox="899 1318 1154 1396">Alternative B</th> <th data-bbox="1159 1318 1414 1396">Alternative C</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="467 1402 634 1480">Hoquiam Loam</td> <td data-bbox="639 1402 894 1480">1 acre</td> <td data-bbox="899 1402 1154 1480">0 acres</td> <td data-bbox="1159 1402 1414 1480">0.25 acres</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="467 1486 634 1556">Centralia Muck</td> <td data-bbox="639 1486 894 1556">0 acres</td> <td data-bbox="899 1486 1154 1556">0 acres</td> <td data-bbox="1159 1486 1414 1556">2.5 acres</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Soil Type	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Hoquiam Loam	1 acre	0 acres	0.25 acres	Centralia Muck	0 acres	0 acres	2.5 acres
Soil Type	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C										
Hoquiam Loam	1 acre	0 acres	0.25 acres										
Centralia Muck	0 acres	0 acres	2.5 acres										
PEO	<p>3. Downloads appropriate NRCS form(s). (Forms are available on the bottom of the NRCS webpage.)</p> <p>a. For linear projects (all rail and highway projects) use Form NRCS-CPA-106.</p> <p>b. For non-linear projects (mitigation sites) use NRCS Form AD-1006.</p>												
PEO	<p>3. Fills out all parts of the form with the note “To be completed by Federal Agency”. (Parts I, III and VI – see below). PEO fills out the</p>												

Actor:	Action:
	<p>forms and communicates with NRCS as the project sponsor for the lead Federal Agency.</p> <p>a. Part I: Provide a simple explanation of the project such as: highway widening, new highway corridor, or new sidewalk. Federal Agency Involved: Usually FHWA for highway projects, but include all federal agencies providing funding for your project (FTA, FRA, FAA)</p> <p>b. Part III: Estimate the acreage to be converted for each alternative. Although the form labels the columns as “Corridor A”, “Corridor B”, you can use these columns to show the acreages for each alternative. If you have more than 4 alternatives, you will need to use a second form. Be sure to provide a vicinity map that shows the location of each alternative and how they relate to each other.</p> <p>c. Part VI (This part of the form is filled out using the criteria on the back of the form); Score each alternative based on professional judgment. Use the maps created in Step 2 and make your best estimate. Apply the criteria consistently to all alternatives.</p>
PEO	<p>5. Submits the form to the NRCS local office.</p> <p>a. See web page for location and address</p> <p>b. Contact NRCS staff to determine if electronic submission is acceptable and get current email address.</p>
NRCS	<p>6. Determines which soil units in the project area are Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of State and Local Importance.</p> <p>7. Completes Parts II and IV of the form.</p> <p>8. Returns the completed form to PEO.</p> <p>a. NRCS has 45 days to complete the rating.</p> <p>b. CFR 658.4(a) states that if 45 days have passed without an evaluation and this may hold up the project, the applicant may proceed as if no farmland is being converted.</p>
PEO	<p>9. Completes Part VII of the form(s). The values in this section are calculations based on the farmland ratings given by NRCS in other sections of the form. It cannot be filled out until after NRCS has provided the rating in Part II and V, and returned the form to the PEO.</p> <p>a. “Relative Value of Farmland” is the score awarded by NRCS for</p>

Actor:	Action:
	<p>each alternative in Part V of the form.</p> <p>b. "Total Corridor Assessment" is the total score of questions 1 through 10 in Part VI of the form.</p> <p>c. "Total points" is the sum of the scores in Part V and VI.</p> <p>d. Question 1: refers to the alternative selected and should match the letter designation of one of the column headings shown in Part III.</p> <p>e. Question 2: is the sum of rows A and B in Part IV for the selected alternative.</p> <p>f. Question 3: is the date that the preferred alternative was selected.</p> <p>g. Question 4: will always be "NO" because the form must be submitted to NRCS.</p> <p>h. Question 5: may be left blank if only one alternative was considered. If more than one alternative was considered the box should contain a simple concise statement such as: "This alternative met the purpose and need of the project and had the least environmental impact." The statement should be consistent with the findings in the environmental document.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Local Agency projects: send a copy of the completed form to the appropriate WSDOT Local Programs Environmental Engineer.
PEO	10. Sends the completed form to FHWA.
FHWA	11. Signs the form and sends a copy of the signed form to NRCS and the original to the PEO.
PEO	12. Incorporates discussion of the Farmland Conversion evaluation into the environmental document (Include a copy of the form in the appendix) and files the form in the Project File.