



# Local Work Groups

Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov](https://nrcs.usda.gov)

# Locally Led Conservation

- Locally led conservation is a series of phases that involve community stakeholders in natural resource planning, implementation of solutions, and evaluation of results.
- Begins with the community working through the local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD).
- The principle of locally led conservation is that community stakeholders are best suited to deal with local resource problems.



Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov](https://nrcs.usda.gov)

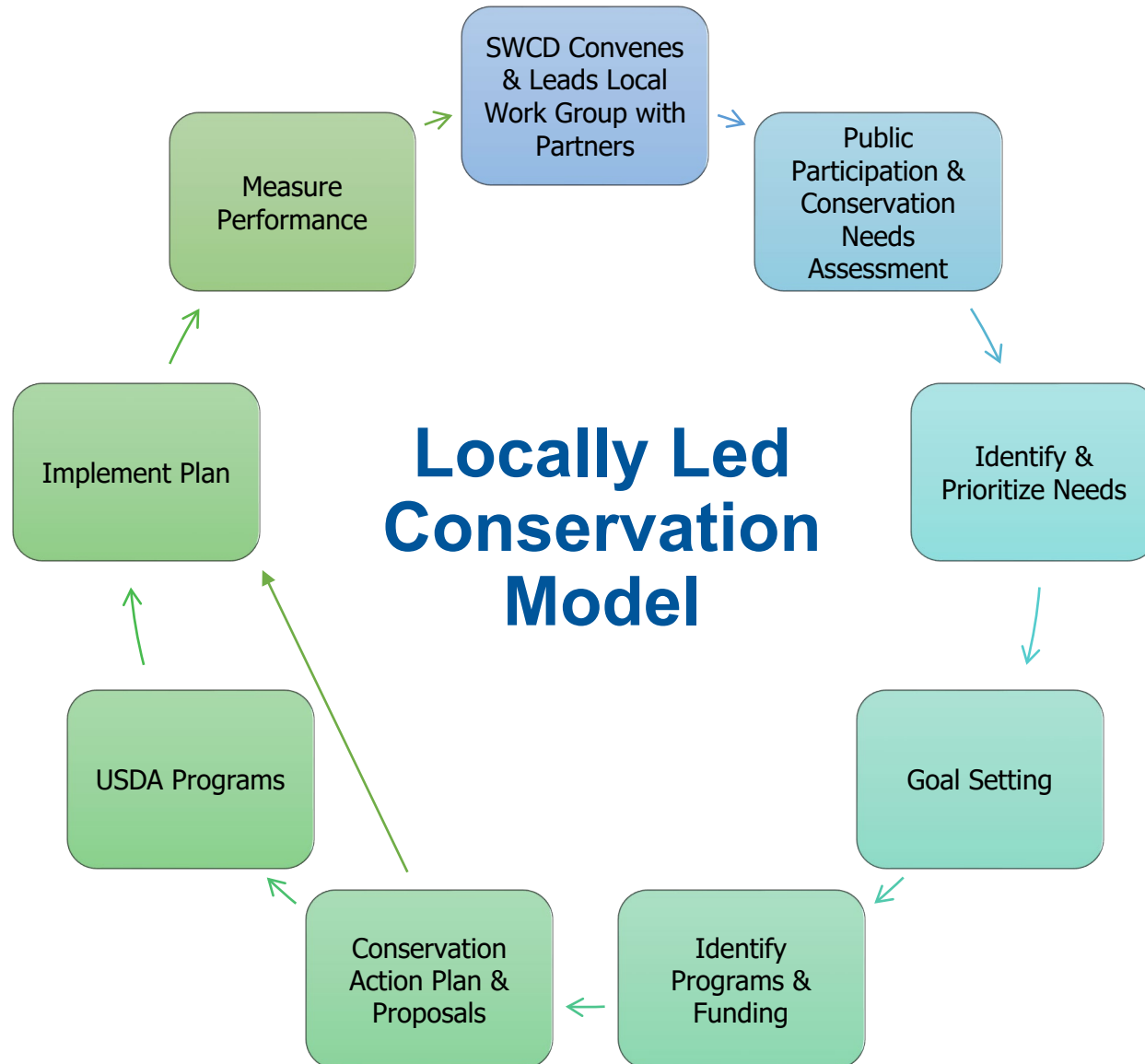
# Locally Led Conservation Focus

- The **focus** of locally led conservation is to **identify the natural resource concerns**, along with related economic and social concerns.
- The process should be **driven by natural resource conservation needs** rather than programs.
- Locally led conservation begins with the local work group.



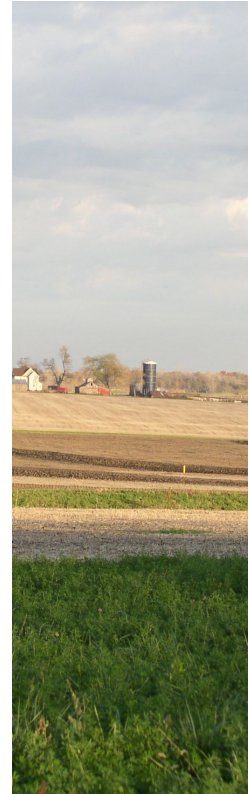
Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov](https://nrcs.usda.gov)



# What is a Local Work Group (LWG)?

- Guidance in Programs Manual Title 440 - Part 500 and 501.
- LWGs provide recommendations to USDA-NRCS on the local and state natural resource priorities and criteria for conservation activities and programs.
- LWG are the connection between SWCD, NRCS, State and local partners and producers to work through an assessment of current natural resource concerns.
- Illinois has a renewed emphasis in holding LWG meetings and utilizing the feedback from the LWGs.

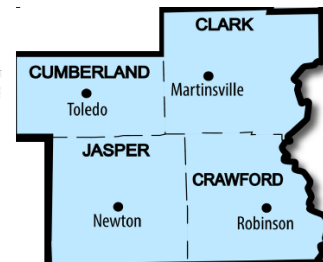
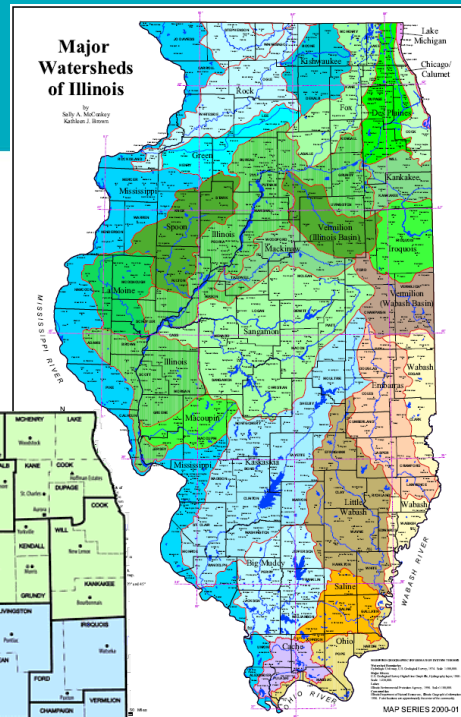
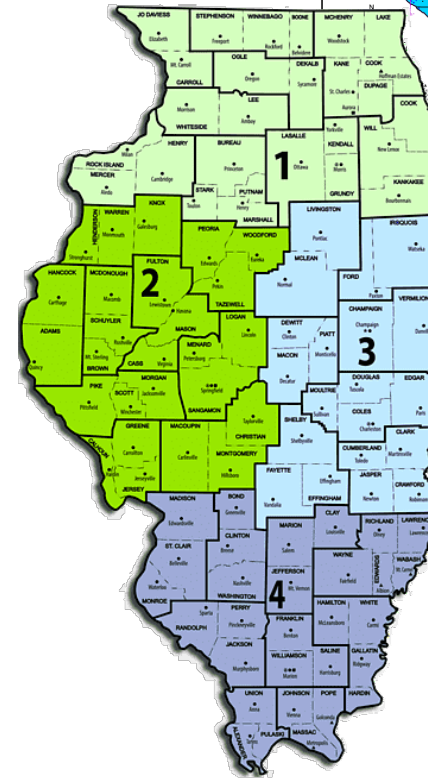


Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov](https://nrcs.usda.gov)

# The term “Local” can be defined several ways:

- County (typically how LWGs in IL have met)
- Watershed
- Multicounty region (example District Group)
- Other geographic area suited to address the resource conservation needs identified.



# LWG Membership

- LWG membership includes key people from natural resource agencies, environmental organizations, conservation groups, and agricultural producers.
- Attendees may include:
  - NRCS District Conservationist (DC) and staff
  - SWCD board and staff
  - FSA County Committee and staff
  - Other local, state, or federal agencies
  - Cooperative Extension
  - State or local appointed officials
  - Local, state, or federal government representatives
  - Local agricultural organizations/business
  - Impacted stakeholders/local producers
- Meetings are open to the public.



# LWG Responsibilities

- Develop a conservation needs assessment. Identify the following:
  - Priority resource concerns
  - Program funding needs
  - Recommended practices
- Assist NRCS with public outreach and information/educational efforts.
- Provide recommendations to NRCS through the DC, as appropriate.



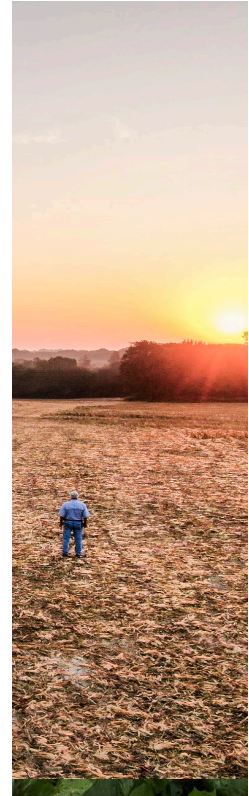
Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov](https://nrcs.usda.gov)



# LWG Standard Operating Procedures – SWCD and NRCS Responsibilities

- Meet at least once a year.
- Provide public notification of open public meetings at least 14 calendar days prior to the meeting with time, place, and agenda.
- Hold meetings as open discussion, voting on issues is not appropriate.
- Record meeting minutes and distribute to the members after the meeting.
- Provide DCs feedback as appropriate, for Illinois NRCS use.
  - Note that future guidance for the DCs to elevate conservation needs and priority resource concerns, is forthcoming.



Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov](https://nrcs.usda.gov)

# Using the LWG Information

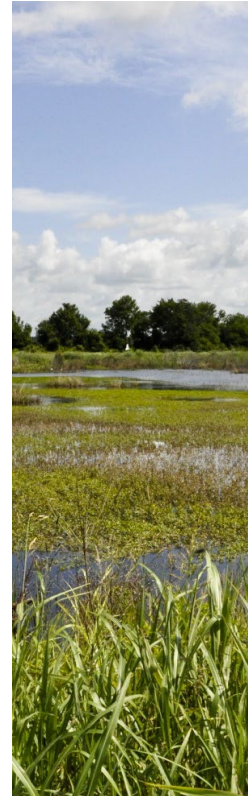
- Conservation planners work with producers to assess their resource concerns.
- Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART) streamlines our ability to assess and document resource concerns.
- Ranking pools are developed assigning weighted percentages to resource concerns. The priority resource concerns identified in the state are taken into consideration in this process. LWGs can continue to provide input.
- In addition, resource concern questions are asked in ranking in financial assistance programs. Questions can be developed to address local/state needs identified by the LWGs.



Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

# Using the LWG Information

- LWGs may identify specific areas of conservation needs within the LWG.
  - For example, a watershed within the LWG area may have specific resource concern needs.
  - The SWCD may decide a watershed plan should be developed to address the conservation needs.
- As a result of the watershed plan development, the watershed may be eligible to be submitted for funding. Examples of possibilities include:
  - Funding through initiatives, such as a National Water Quality Incentive (NWQI) or Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watershed Initiative (MRBI).
  - Interested partners may submit proposals through Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).

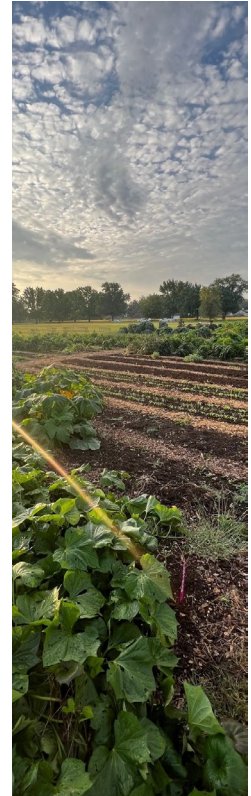


Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov](https://nrcs.usda.gov)

# Questions and Answers

Work with your local District Conservationist to hold the LWG meeting in your county.



Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov](https://nrcs.usda.gov)

## Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call

(866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

**USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.**