District Operations Brief

DO Brief #4 - 2010

Washington State Conservation Commission

NRCS / District Technical Service Provider Task Orders

Background:

NRCS has committed funding toward technical service activities with Conservation Districts for work on Farm Bill Program implementation utilizing one agreement with the WSCC.

In an effort to leverage this federal funding opportunity for conservation work in your district and our state, this year's WSCC budget includes specific funding for the 25% state match to the federal TSP dollars. So only a locally developed TSP task order is needed to obtain the funding. Your district will not need to use other existing grants for TSP agreements, unless your district chooses to use alternative match funding from local or state sources.

To obtain the Technical Service Provider (TSP) funds, the District Manager needs to work with the NRCS District Conservationist to complete a task order identifying the tasks that will be performed and the costs identified with the tasks.

The anticipated advantages to this umbrella TSP process through the WSCC is to provide Districts with funding for work identified in the District's long range and annual plans of work that also meet the needs of NRCS to increase Farm bill implementation while using a process with a standardized, familiar granting, vouchering, and audit system to Districts.

Opportunities:

- The TSP task orders provide a great opportunity for Districts to utilize existing staff or possibly to add on staff to help with implementation tasks needed to get conservation on the ground within the District.
- It is expected that task orders will be developed by communications between districts and the local NRCS, both with the intent of getting as much conservation on the ground as possible. Costs for TSP tasks/deliverables are negotiable, but they need to be very specific and measurable, and need to be completed by the end of the federal or state fiscal year (end of September or June)

Opportunities (continued):

- The use of TSP task orders is expected to continue as a means for NRCS to continue implementing the farm bill with their existing limited staff
- Task Order activities can only be activities that NRCS would normally be expected to do. This can include practice implementation, outreach, administrative, engineering work, and other types of non-engineering work.
- Large scale or complex engineering projects are less desirable TSP tasks for a Conservation District because of the large amount of time needed for very few deliverables.
- TSP funds are ready and waiting for enterprising Conservation Districts to use to help producers get CONSERVATION ON THEIR LAND.

Procedures for an NRCS / District TSP Task Order:

1. Identify Opportunities:

- District Conservationist (DC) determines workload by program
- DC identifies work that exceeds staff capacity; or might be more economically or efficiently performed by a Conservation District (CD)
- DC proposes task opportunities to CD

2. Capable CD Staff Available:

- If CD has capable/qualified staff available, then,
- DC coordinates with appropriate technical discipline to verify CD staff has technical qualification to perform the activities.
- DC and CD may consider contract labor as a method to deliver technical assistance.
- DC and CD develop Task Order
  - Single program task orders are recommended because of budget considerations
  - Specific Tasks (attach eFOTG Statements of Work; non-eFOTG tasks adequately described in narrative statements of work)
  - DC identifies reportable PRS accomplishments anticipated
  - Specific commencement and completion dates are identified

- CD develops estimate of time and cost; reviewed and refined with DC
- CD may identify grant or other funds to be used as match, or may request WSCC appropriated funds for 25% match.
- If a contractor is utilized by the conservation district, the NRCS must concur with the selection of the contractor based on technical expertise.

- DC develops surveillance plan to monitor task force accomplishment and assure quality control.

3. Task Order Request Process:

- Task Order is signed at Field Level
  - Show Names of Signatory individuals under Title.
  - Authorized CD employee approves
  - CD "Cluster" Engineer signs, if applicable
  - DC signs for NRCS
  - NRCS employee with appropriate technical approval authority signs
  - Task Order routed to Area Conservationist (AC) for approval

- Task Order is forwarded to AC
  - AC assigns NRCS reference number (Format: E (East), C (Central), or W (West) area designator followed by sequential number assigned by AC)
  - AC approves
  - Original is sent to WSCC, concurrently
  - Copy is faxed to State Administrative Officer (SAO) and to DC

4. Task Order Approval Process:

- WSCC coordinates with NRCS ACs and program lead regarding task order approvals
- WSCC coordinates with CD if grant funds are being used for match, or
- WSCC confirms appropriated funds are available.
- WSCC attaches reference number used for tracking and inquiries
- WSCC approves Task Order and routes (hard copy, or scan, or fax) to: CD, AC, DC, SAO

5. CD Starts Work

6. Tracking Accomplishments and Requesting Payment

- Task Order is completed by CD
- CD tracks actual costs
- CD completes and signs Accomplishment Form
  - Narrative statement should be included if the CD is submitting partial completion
  - Narrative statement is required if the quantity accomplished is less than agreed to when the task order is submitted as final.

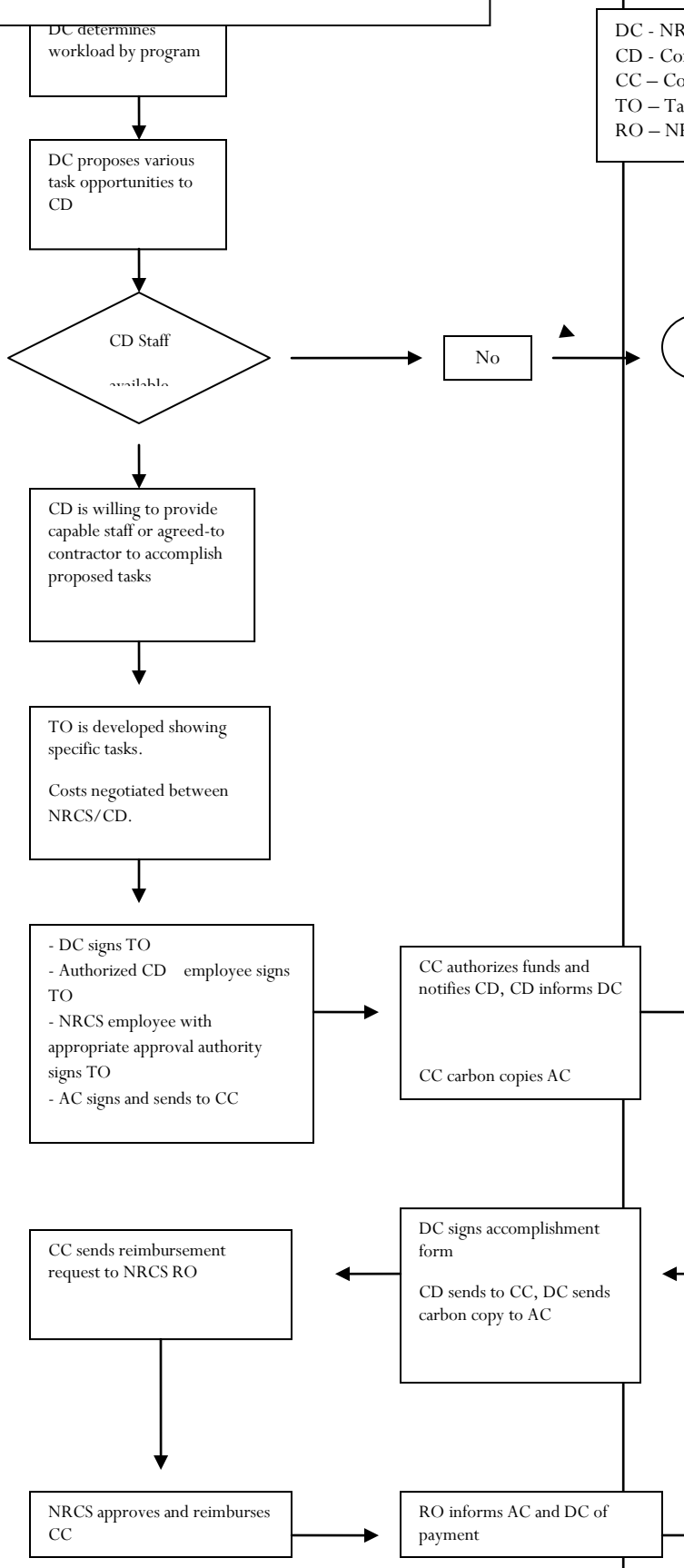
- DC receipts the Accomplishment Form
  - Original returned to CD
  - Copy sent to AC and SAO

- CD submits actual costs to WSCC on an invoice voucher and submits the voucher and Accomplishment Form
  - Partial payments are authorized; see comments above

7. WSCC Payment to CD and Reimbursement to WSCC by NRCS

- WSCC reimburses CD for approved costs
- WSCC submits reimbursement request (SF-270) to SAO
  - Copy of Task Order and associated Accomplishment Form provided as documentation
- NRCS reimburses WSCC
  - SAO provides a listing of task orders paid to AC and DC

Questions:

Contact your NRCS District Conservationist

Flow Chart for NRCS/Commission Task Order Process