USDA

United States Department of Agriculture

Becoming an NRCS Technical Service Provider

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USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

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Natural Resources Conservation Service

nrcs.usda.gov/

Outline

- **Need for Technical Service Providers (TSPs)**
- **What is a Technical Service Provider?**
  - Definition
  - Rules, regulations, policy
- **TSP Registration Process**
- **TSP Certification Process**
- **Roles and Responsibilities**
  - Producer
  - TSP
  - NRCS

Need for Technical Service Providers

- **NRCS staff can't know everything AND assist everyone**

- **"Increase availability and range of technical expertise available to eligible participants to plan and implement conservation measures."**

Natural Resources

- Soil
- Water
- Air
- Plants
- Animals
- Humans
- Energy

What is a TSP?

- TSPs offer services to agricultural producers such as farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners on behalf of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). TSPs help these producers plan, design, and implement conservation practices or **develop conservation activity plans** to improve agricultural operations.
- TSPs include individuals, private businesses, American Indian tribes, nonprofit organizations, and public agencies.
- TSPs expand the number and availability of conservation technical experts capable of offering customized, one-on-one conservation advice to agricultural producers.

TSP Policy

- **Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (aka, the 2008 Farm Bill) authorized TSPs as we know them today**
- **Main TSP policy references:**
  - Farm Bill
  - Code of Federal Regulations (7 CFR 652)
  - General Manual Title 180, Part 411
  - Manual Title 440, Part 504
- **"All technical services provided by TSPs must meet USDA standards and specifications…"**

How to become a TSP

1. Registration

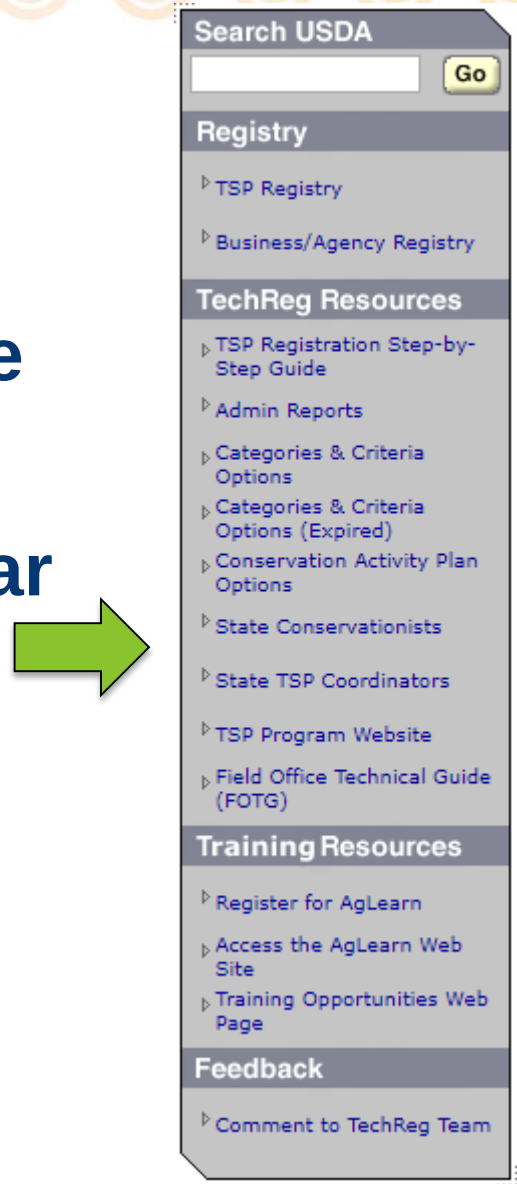
A. Create your USDA Level 2 eAuthentication account
B. Create your profile on TechReg, the NRCS online TSP registry
C. Create your account on AgLearn, USDA's training hub
D. Sign Certification Agreement in TechReg

2. Certification

A. Complete required training
B. Meet all required criteria for writing CAP 106 Forest Management Plans
C. Submit two example CAP 106 Forest Management Plans
D. Have qualifications verified by NRCS
E. Certification Agreement signed by NRCS

Some helpful tips

- **Be patient**
- **Bookmark the “Become a TSP” page**
- **Get familiar with the left-hand sidebar on TechReg**
- **Call or email state TSP coordinators**



How to become a TSP

techreg.usda.gov

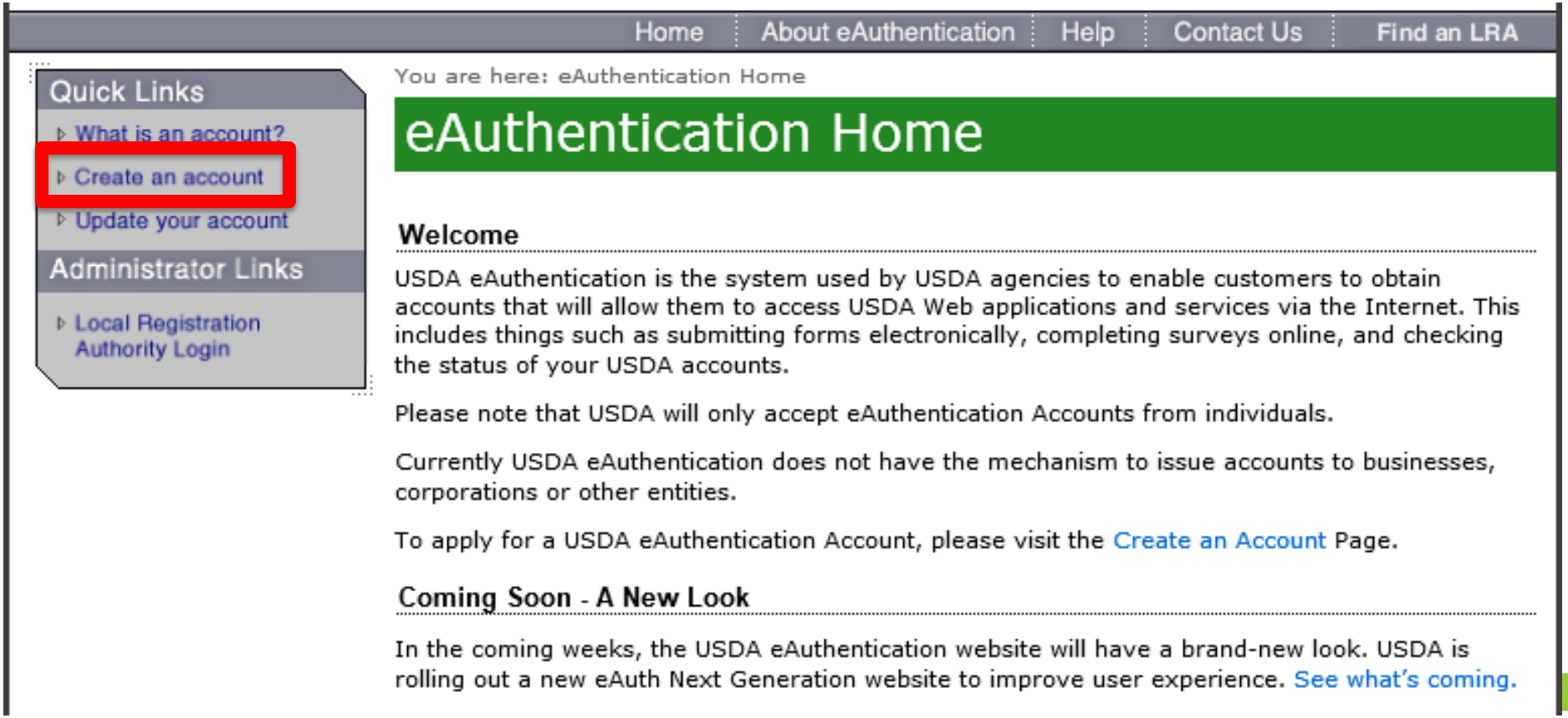
Become A TSP

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/

TSP Registration

- **Create your USDA Level 2 eAuthentication account**
  - www.eauth.usda.gov



USDA
United States Department of Agriculture

Create an Account - Getting Started

USDA Federal Employees, Contractors, & Affiliates

If you are a USDA Federal Employee, Contractor, or Affiliate of the USDA, you must register for a USDA Internal Account.

Register for an Internal Account

USDA Customers - What Level of Access Do You Need?

Request Level 1 Access to:

- Visit a USDA web page that indicates a Level 1 account is necessary
- Obtain general information about the USDA or its agencies
- Participate in public surveys for a USDA agency

Register for a Level 1 Account

Request Level 2 Access to:

- Submit official business transactions via the Internet
- Enter into a contract with the USDA
- Submit forms or applications for the USDA via the Internet

Register for a Level 2 Account

Changing from Level 1 Access to Level 2 Access

If you already have a Level 1 account and require Level 2 access:

1. Log into your profile
2. Fill in and submit the required information
3. Verify your Identity remotely by following the instructions on the "Level 2 Account Upgrade Request Confirmation" email, or visit a Local Registration Authority (LRA)

Log into Your Profile

Natural Resources Conservation Service

nrcs.usda.gov/

USDA Level 2 eAuth Account

- **Four-step process**
  1. Account registration
     - Enter name as it appears on your government issued photo ID
  2. Account verification
  3. Confirmation email
     - Click “ACTIVATE MY ACCOUNT” link within 7 days of receiving email
  4. Verify identity
     - Option 1 (Recommended): Verify online using the USDA Online Identity Verification Application
     - Option 2: Verify in person at Local Registration Authority (LRA), generally your local USDA service center

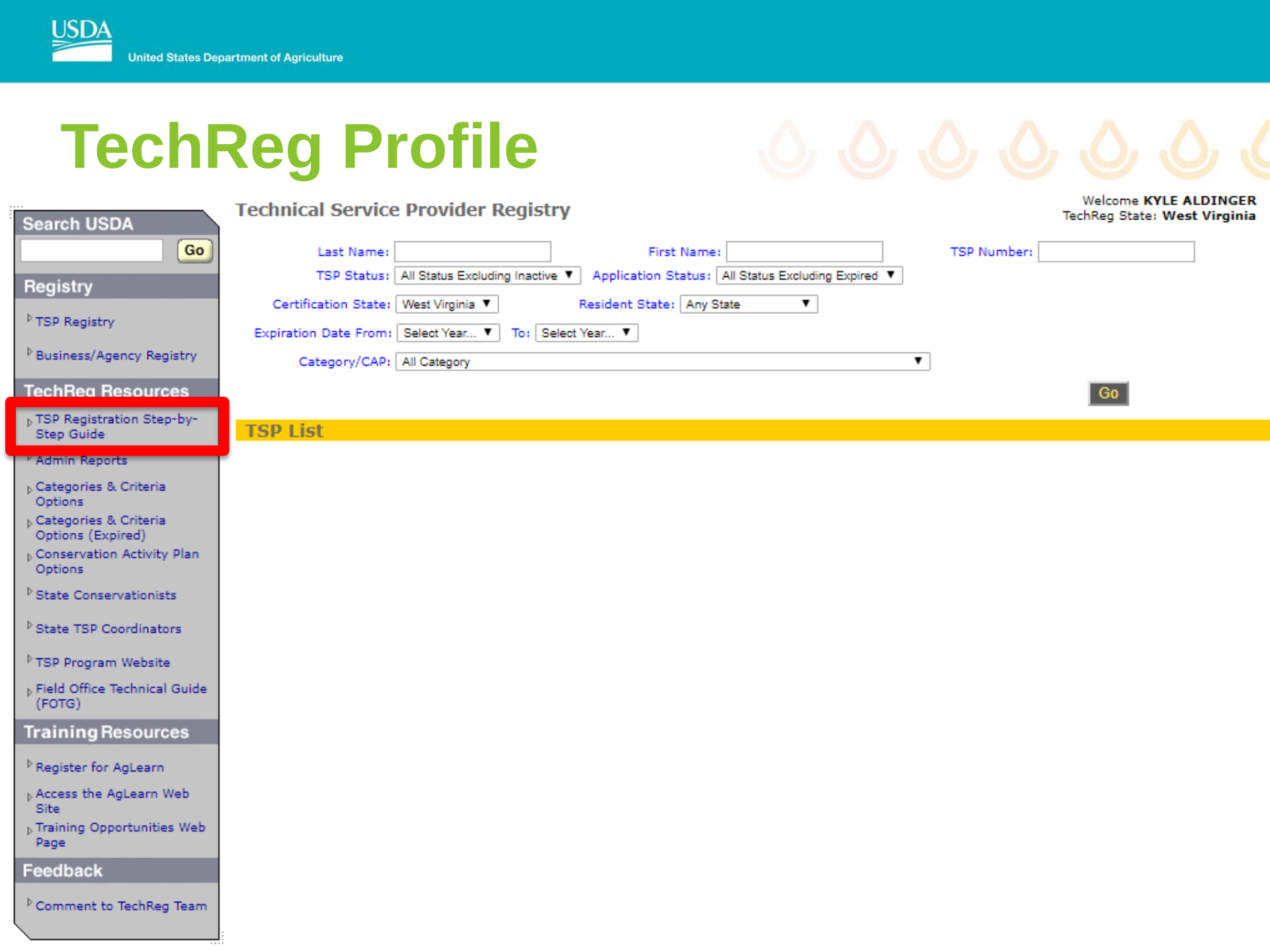
- **Passwords must change every 6 months**

TSP Registration

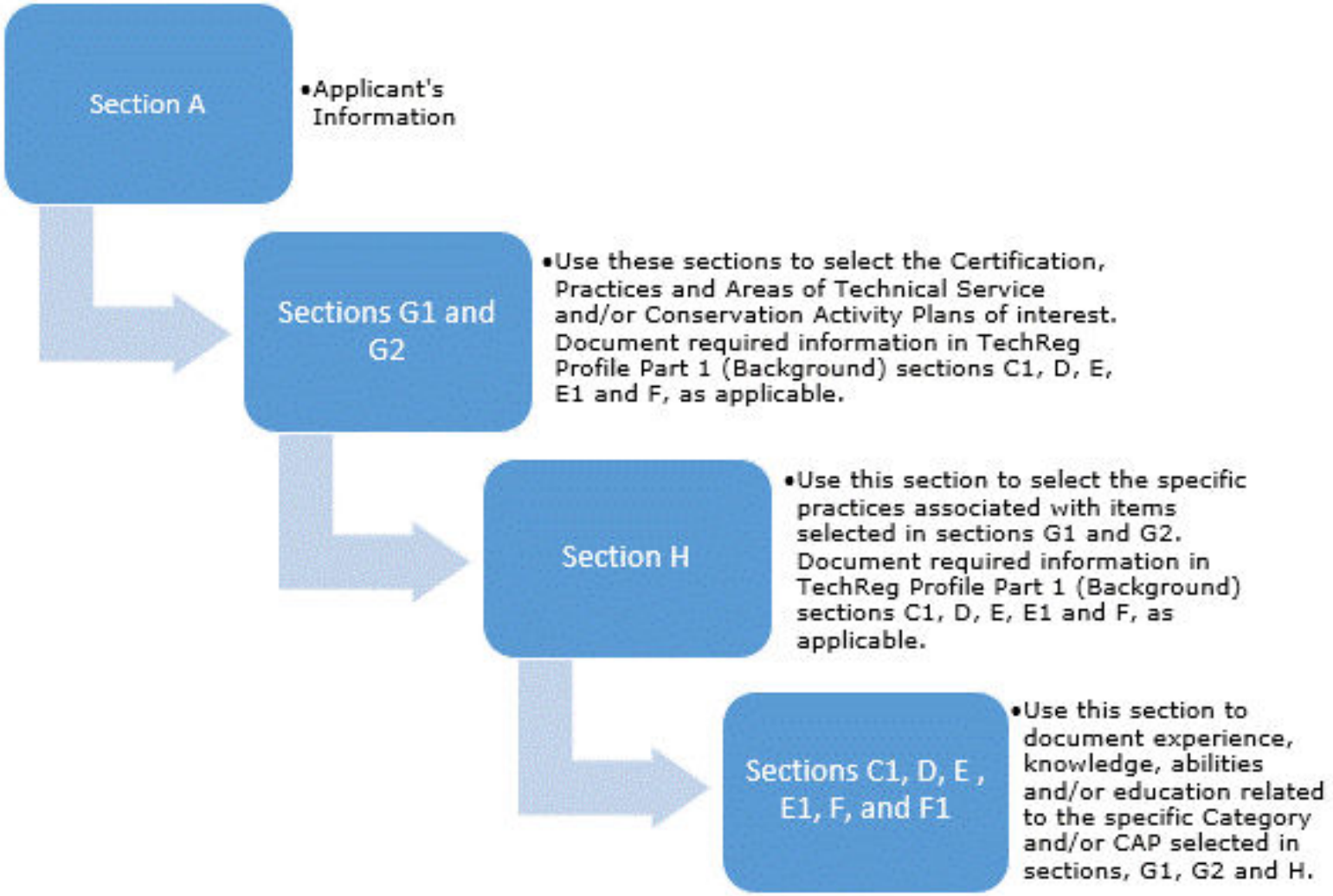
- **Create your profile on TechReg, the NRCS online TSP registry**

techreg.usda.gov

TechReg Profile

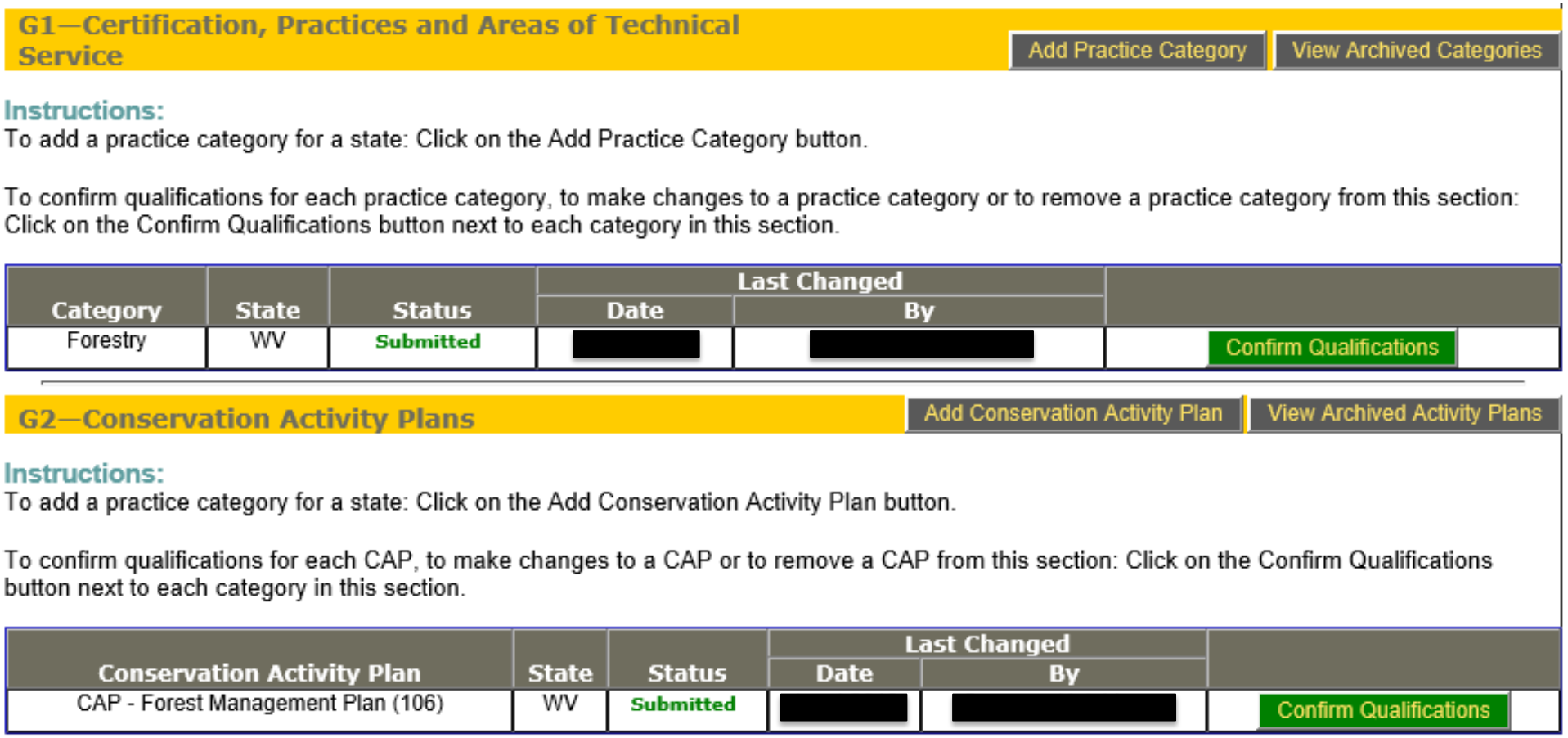


This is your résumé!



Services provided

- **You can fill out either G1 or G2 or both. G2 is most likely the option that you want.**



G1—Certification, Practices and Areas of Technical Service

Add Practice Category | View Archived Categories

Instructions:
To add a practice category for a state: Click on the Add Practice Category button.

To confirm qualifications for each practice category, to make changes to a practice category or to remove a practice category from this section: Click on the Confirm Qualifications button next to each category in this section.

Category	State	Status	Last Changed		
			Date	By	
Forestry	WV	Submitted	[redacted]	[redacted]	Confirm Qualifications

G2—Conservation Activity Plans

Add Conservation Activity Plan | View Archived Activity Plans

Instructions:
To add a practice category for a state: Click on the Add Conservation Activity Plan button.

To confirm qualifications for each CAP, to make changes to a CAP or to remove a CAP from this section: Click on the Confirm Qualifications button next to each category in this section.

Conservation Activity Plan	State	Status	Last Changed		
			Date	By	
CAP - Forest Management Plan (106)	WV	Submitted	[redacted]	[redacted]	Confirm Qualifications

TSP Registration

- **Create your AgLearn account**
- **USDA's department-wide system for managing training records and activity.**

AgLearn

AgLearn Account

- **Information Security Awareness (ISA) Training required annually**
- **Must take this training outside of AgLearn the first time in order to gain access to AgLearn**
  - http://deliver.courseavenue.com/Login/usda
- **Send ISA certificate of completion to NRCS TSP Coordinator and NRCS State Training Officer**

TSP Registration

- **Sign Certification Agreement in TechReg**
  - Last step in setting up your profile in TechReg
    - Forwards your application to NRCS for review
  - Requires that all sections are fully completed
    - “Submitted” vs. “Incomplete”

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TSP Certification

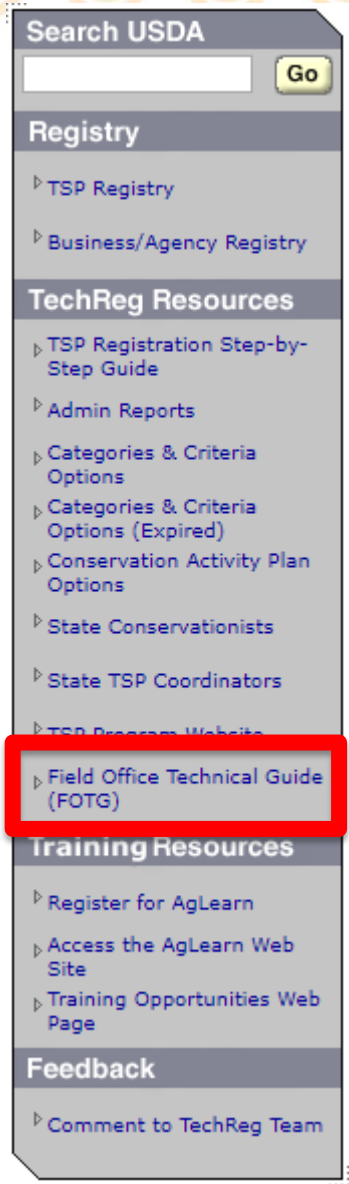
- **Complete required training**
  - Information Security Awareness Training
    - Annual
    - First time: http://deliver.courseavenue.com/Login/usda
    - Subsequent: AgLearn
  - TSP Orientation and Conservation Planning
    - One time
    - AgLearn (Course ID: NRCS-NEDC-000191)
  - Introduction to the Field Office Technical Guide
    - One time
    - AgLearn (Course ID: NRCS-NEDC-000149)
  - State Specific TSP Training Module for West Virginia
    - One time
    - TechReg -> “Training Opportunities Web Page” -> “State-specific Training Modules” -> “West Virginia”

TSP Certification

- **Meet all required criteria for writing CAP 106 Forest Management Plans**
  - Two Options
    - Knowledge, Education, and Experience
      - Degree in forestry
      - 5 years of experience
      - 2 references from customers
      - 2 example forest management plans that meet CAP 106 requirements
      - WV registered professional forester
    - Certification
      - Professional certification through SAF or ACF
      - 2 references from customers
      - 2 example forest management plans that meet CAP 106 requirements
      - WV registered professional forester

Example CAP 106 Forest Management Plans

- **Must meet minimum criteria posted on Field Office Technical Guide, Section III**
- **FOTG or current Fiscal Year CAP web page**
  - Guide for Foresters using the “National Common Forest Management Plan Template” (USFS, NRCS, ATFS, NASF, NACD)
  - Guide for Landowners using the “National Common Forest Management Plan Template”
  - National Common Forest Management Plan Template
  - **CAP 106 Forest Management Plan Criteria**
  - Cruise Intensity Guide



FIELD OFFICE TECHNICAL GUIDE

Welcome to NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG)

Select a state for documents.

State: West Virginia SUBMIT

Document Tree | Document Search | Recently Changed

Keyboard navigation instructions

- Section I
- Section II
- Section III
  - Conservation Activity Plans (CAP) Technical Criteria / Templates
    - 102 Comprensive Nutrient Management Plan
    - 104 Nutrient Management Plan
    - **106 Forest Management Plan**
    - 108 Feed Management Plan
    - 110 Grazing Management Plan
    - 114 Integrated Pest Management Plan
    - 118 Irrigation Water Management Plan
    - 128 Agricultural Energy Management Plan
    - 130 Drainage Water Management Plan

106 Forest Management Plan

Documents (5)

Document Title	Type	Pub Date
106 A Guide for Foresters& other Natural Resource Professionals on Using: Managing Your Woodlands: A Template-Sept 2014		2018-1-19
106 Forest Management Plan Criteria - September 2017		2018-1-19
106 Managing Your Woodlands: Atemplate for your plans for the future - September 2014		2018-1-19
106-Understanding Your Plan-A Guide for Landowners using Managing Your Woodlands: A Template-Sept 2014		2018-1-19
Cruise Intensity Guide		2013-1-18

Programs

- Farm Bill
- Landscape Initiatives
- Financial Assistance
  - Agricultural Management Assistance
  - Conservation Innovation Grants
  - Conservation Stewardship Program
  - Environmental Quality Incentives Program
  - Regional Conservation Partnership Program
- Technical Assistance
- Easements
- Landscape Planning
- Alphabetical Listing & Archive

FY 2019 EQIP Conservation Activity Plan (CAP)

TSP Certification

- **Have qualifications verified by NRCS**
  - Verified by state and national reviewers
  - May request documentation for experience, training, etc.
  - Will review two example CAP 106 Forest Management Plans and approve or return an annotated checklist with suggested revisions

- **NRCS signs Certification Agreement**

Producer Responsibilities

- **Authorize, in writing, NRCS to disclose any information in their NRCS case file**
- **Comply with terms & conditions of their stand-alone EQIP Conservation Activity Plan contract**
- **Select, hire, contract with, and pay the TSP**
  - This is independent from the producer's contract with NRCS!
  - Assignment of Payment?
- **Meet compliance and regulatory responsibilities**
- **Coordinate with NRCS once technical services have been completed**

TSP Responsibilities

- **Be registered and certified by NRCS and listed in TechReg**
- **Ensure assistance provided to producers meets NRCS standards and specification**
- **Comply with applicable Federal, state, tribal, and local laws and requirements**
- **Establish agreement with producer governing payment from producer for services provided by TSP**
  - This is independent from the producer's contract with NRCS!

NRCS Responsibilities

- **Provide program leadership and serve as agency point of contact regarding technical service providers**
- **Process requests from participants and TSPs**
  - Assignment of Payment
  - Release of Information
- **EQIP Conservation Activity Plan contract administration**
- **Conservation Activity Plan spot checks**
- **Can't provide references for TSP applicants**
- **Can't recommend specific TSPs to producers**

NRCS

** Assignment of Payment**

EQIP

Private agreement

TSP

Producer

Natural Resources Conservation Service

nrcs.usda.gov/

Helpful General Contacts

- **eAuthentication Help**

  800-457-3642, select option 1, then select option 4 for a representative

  eAuthHelpDesk@usda.gov
- **TechReg Help**

  970-372-4200

  usdafpacbc@midatl.service-now.com
- **AgLearn Help**

  866-633-9394

  AgLearnHelp@genphysics.com

Helpful WV Contacts

- **WV NRCS TSP Coordinators**

  Kyle Aldinger, 304-284-7595, kyle.aldinger@usda.gov

  Kathy Allen, 304-284-7561, kathy.allen@usda.gov

  Jason Bladow, 304-284-7581, jason.bladow@usda.gov

  Damarys Mortenson, 304-284-7579, damarys.mortenson@usda.gov

- **WV AgLearn State Training Officers**

  Ben Collier, 304-284-7550, ben.collier@usda.gov

  Carla Davis, 304-284-7578, carla.davis@usda.gov

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