What Can You Do?

Rationale

Most people who purchase a small-acreage property have an idea of the eventual look and use they want for their property. Unfortunately, this vision is sometimes nebulous, incomplete, or unrealistic. Participants will be encouraged to focus on the human, financial and community issues that may constrain their ability to achieve the goals they have set for their properties. Additionally, there may be further constraints on their properties in the form of federal, state, county, city and/or local regulations. These regulations can seriously limit or curtail the short-term and long-term goals participants have for their properties. It is important for participants to understand the limits and constraints on their properties in order to develop realistic and obtainable goals.

Objectives

Participants will:

1. Gain an understanding of human and financial resources.
2. Gain an understanding of community issues.
3. Inventory the human and financial resources and community issues that affect their properties.
4. Gain an understanding of the federal, state, county, city and/or local regulations that may affect use of their properties.
5. Revise their goal assessment worksheets and physical inventory maps.
6. Inventory potential limitations on their properties and create a working list of possible solutions, mitigations or compromises to minimize the effects of the federal, state, county, city and/or local regulations.
7. Maintain a list of contacts or referrals for various land-use issues.

What Can You Do? – Lesson Plan

Time	Section	Goal	Activity	Instructor
30 min	Physical resource inventory review	Review homework and finalize first drafts of maps.	Introduce agenda for this lesson: • Questions and concerns from last lesson • Photographic documentation • Nonphysical resources • Community issues inventory • Identifying constraints Inform participants that their active participation will be required during this lesson.	It might be helpful to designate a contact person for any further mapping assistance needed by participants. Handouts PowerPoint slides 1-6
15 min	Photographic documentation	Encourage participants to document changes to their properties through the use of photography.	Justification for photodocumentation Reasons for keeping a photo record Some photo hints Photodocumentation Information Sheet	Add local examples of photodocumentation as available. Photodocumentation Information Sheet PowerPoint slides 7-9
30 min	Human and financial resource inventory	Focus and/or prod participants to reflect on nonphysical resources.	Financial and Human Resources Assessment Activity Sheet Outline whose labor will be available. For family members, do they have outside jobs? When are they available? Do they share your goals and aspirations for the property? For hired labor, how much time will you need to buy at what cost? Do you need a written bid and/or contract? Think about your available financial resources. What can you realistically afford to spend? Are you planning a business that is expected to turn a profit? This will influence how you manage your property and may cause you to modify your goals.	Instructor can use flip chart or blackboard to group responses. Instructor may need to facilitate the discussion, using leading questions when appropriate. Participants are encouraged to add to and/or modify their Goals Assessment Activity Sheet and Inventorying Property Facilities and Assets Activity Sheet from the last lesson. Point out to participants that it is not unusual to modify goals as the class proceeds and participants refine their ideas. PowerPoint slides 10-17
15 min	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK
30 min	Community issues inventory	Direct participants to reflect on their community relationships. What are the impacts they have on their neighbors, and what impact do their neighbors' activities have on them?	Participants consider the following: Are there easements or other legal concerns that might affect your property? Mark these on your maps. Other considerations: odors and impacts from animal manure; dust from tillage or bare ground; noise from animals or machinery; weeds that could spread to/from your property; etc. Do you have or will you need slow-moving equipment that would travel on public roads? Is land being developed close by? What land uses will occur adjacent to you in the future? How can you plan for this?	Instructor can use flip chart or blackboard to group responses. Instructor may need to facilitate the discussion, using leading questions when appropriate. Participants are encouraged to add to and/or modify their Goals Assessment Activity Sheet and Inventorying Property Facilities and Assets Activity Sheet from the last lesson. PowerPoint slides 18-25

What Can You Do? – Lesson Plan (continued)

Time	Section	Goal	Activity	Instructor
45 min	Identifying constraints	Identify constraints that may interfere with participants' goals for their properties.	Identifying Limitations Activity Sheet There are federal, state, county, city and/or local regulations (CC&Rs and/or zoning) that can limit the ways in which you manage your property. Awareness of these regulations can help you avoid large financial and time drains that you may not have otherwise anticipated. Types of constraints: • Water rights • Regulations: federal, state, county, city • Zoning • CC&Rs • Easements • Buffer zones What are the limitations that affect your property goals? Review zoning and CC&Rs for your property. Review or familiarize yourself with federal, state, county, city and/or local regulations that could affect your property. Some items to consider: • Wetlands • Streams/creeks (permanent and intermittent, working in/access to) • Riparian/wetland buffer areas • Right-to-farm ordinances • Animal zoning regulations • Easements or buffers • Nuisance laws • Trespass (dense development next to farming) • Weed laws • Health regulations (wells, septic, hired labor, food processing) How you deal with these issues is likely to affect property management.	Instructor should be comfortable with basic water rights related to the participants' properties. Some information is available on the participants' preregistration form. Instructor should present basic rules and regulations surrounding major issues in the local area. Be prepared to deal with sensitive issues, and allow sufficient time for participants to share "horror stories." Refer to PowerPoint documents for discussion of these topics. Prepare a referral list of contacts for various land-use issues. Encourage participants to update their resource maps as they proceed through the rest of the course. This will help build a record of the decision-making process. Assign homework: finish the Financial and Human Resources Assessment Activity Sheet, the Revised Goals Assessment Activity Sheet, , the Inventorying Property Facilities and Assets Activity Sheet, the Physical Inventory Map, and the Identifying Limitations Activity Sheet. Reiterate that these items will be used during the subsequent modules in the series. PowerPoint slides 26-39
15 min	Question and answer period	Review	Answer questions.	See PowerPoint for optional suggested activities. PowerPoint slides 40-41

What Can You Do?

Materials/supplies to be requested from participants before class

1. Existing maps of their properties
2. Copies of CC&Rs for their property, any zoning information, etc. that they already have for their properties
3. Calculator, paper, writing utensils, rulers, etc.

Materials/supplies needed for class

1. Flip chart and markers (or dry-erase board, chalkboard or overhead projector)
2. Overhead or PowerPoint computer projection system
3. Pointer
4. Refreshments

Local resources needed for class

1. Federal, state, county, city and/or local regulations and CC&Rs that may affect participants' properties, including any local issues of concern
2. Local water rights information
3. Local examples of easement issues
4. Local examples or photos of development issues, such as farming adjacent to dense urban housing

Background information for instructors

Instructor will need to have a basic understanding of any federal, state, county, city and/or local regulations (CC&Rs) that may affect participants' properties, including any local hot issues of concern.

Instructor will need to have a basic understanding of water rights, easements, etc.

Handouts needed for participants

1. Photodocumentation Information Sheet
2. Revised Goals Assessment Activity Sheet
3. Revised Physical Inventory Map
4. Identifying Constraints Activity Sheet

Handouts needed for participants (in addition to lesson handouts)

1. List of local and state agencies that create or enforce regulations and offer technical assistance

What Can You Do?

Web sites for further information

ATTRA, National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service, http://www.attra.org/

Colorado State University Cooperative Extension Service Small Acreage Management, http://www.larimer.org/extension/sam/sam.htm

Colorado State University Drought and Fire Resources, http://www.ext.colostate.edu/menudrought.html

Gallatin County, Montana Code of the West, http://www.gallatin.mt.gov/Public_Documents/gallatincomt_webdocs/codewest

Glossary of Real Estate Terms, http://www.csus.edu/obe/West/Glossary/

Idaho OnePlan Farm Planning, http://www.oneplan.org/

Landowning Colorado Style, http://csfs.colostate.edu/library/pdfs/homeandland/landowning_guide.pdf

Larimer County, Colorado Code of the West, http://www.co.larimer.co.us/planning/planning/code_of_the_west/index.htm

Lincoln County, WY. 2005. The Code of the West, http://www.lcwy.org/documents/LincolnCountyCodeoftheWest.pdf

Oregon State University Extension Service Oregon Small Farms, http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/

Siskiyou County, CA. 2005. The Code of the West...the Realities of Rural Living, http://www.co.siskiyou.ca.us/docs/Code%20of%20the%20West%2012-05.pdf

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education, http://www.sare.org/

Texas A & M University Conservation Ethics for Small Acreage Landowners, http://wfsc.tamu.edu/people/publication/B5035.pdf

University of Nebraska Lincoln Cooperative Extension Acreage and Small Farm Insights, http://acreage.unl.edu/

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension Small Ranch Manual, http://www.unce.unr.edu/publications/files/ag/other/eb9502.pdf

Washington State University Cooperative Extension Small Farms, http://www.smallfarms.wsu.edu/

Homework assignment

1. Revise the Goals Assessment Activity Sheet, updated with information gleaned from this lesson.
2. Update the Inventorying Property Facilities and Assets Activity Sheet with information from this lesson.
3. Update the Physical Inventory Map for existing property to include information gleaned from this lesson.
4. Revise Physical Inventory Map to include proposed changes, updated with information gleaned from this lesson.
5. Complete the Identifying Limitations Activity Sheet.

Photodocumentation Information Sheet

The camera is one of the most powerful tools you have for tracking the condition of your property. Photos allow you to easily track the initial conditions on your property, or monitor improvements or changes that occur on your property.

Reasons for keeping photo records:

Personal satisfaction: Implementing changes to your property can sometimes seem to be a never-ending battle. Taking photos helps you document your progress and keep your outlook positive.

Track changes: You will be able to track the progress of management changes you make. It can also be part of a plan to make and evaluate changes to your current plan.

Show value-added features: Photo records can be used to show improvements to your property, such as weed management. This can translate into higher property values later.

Document property additions for insurance purposes: This is self-explanatory.

Permit application: In applying for permits, photos help the process along. You are able to show current and past conditions to permitting agencies.

Photo records are inexpensive: This is a low-cost way to document your property and the improvements you've made.

Some photo hints:

Make sure your photos have dates and descriptions: Many cameras have a date feature on them. You may also want to write a description on the back, i.e. "pasture with spotted knapweed infestation 1999 – before spraying." The next photo might be "pasture with weed infestation after spraying 2000." This involves a little time on your part, but it will be worth it in the long run.

Store the photos in a photo album or some other easily accessible system: A shoe box of photos can be an enormous source of frustration. If you use a digital camera, store the photos in a series of dated directories, or use photo album software. Many photo developers offer a set of prints and a CD of your photos. If you select this option, organize your printed photos into an album for easy viewing.

Photo reference points: If you are going to take comparison photos, it is a good idea to take each photo from the same permanent vantage point, such as a fencepost, a gate, the corner of a building, etc.. Photos taken from different reference points may not allow easy comparison. Establishing photo stations or reference points ensures consistent record-keeping. Note the date and the established photo point on the photo.

Time: The time of year and day the photo is taken can be important. Make sure you take photos at appropriate times to use for record-keeping or comparison.

Start soon: Remember, the oldest picture you take is the one you take today.

Financial and Human Resources Assessment Activity Sheet

Financial resources

How much can you realistically afford to spend on your property right now? _____

_____

During the next year?_____

_____

During the next five years? _____

_____

Can your goals or improvements be completed in phases? _____

_____

Can you set annual goals to accomplish your long-term goals over the next few years?

_____

Do you have adequate funds for ongoing yearly maintenance? _____

Do you have money set aside for management emergencies (a failed septic system, for example)?

_____

What will property taxes and added insurance cost for any new structures?

_____

Human resources

How many hours per week **can** you put toward the labor required to achieve your property goals?

_____

How many hours per week do you **want** to put toward the labor required to achieve your property goals?

_____

Do your family members share your goals and aspirations for the property? _____

How many hours per week **can** they put toward the labor required to achieve your property goals?

_____

How many hours per week do they **want** to put toward the labor required for your property goals?

_____

Revised Goals Assessment Activity Sheet, page 1 of 2

How have your goals changed?

Now that you've learned some of the basic limitations that may affect your ability to reach your goals, how have they changed? Use the table below to rewrite your goals, resource list, and timeline or priority based on what you've learned to date. As you continue through this class series, it is normal for your goals to continue to change.

Your Goals for Your Property	Resources Needed to Achieve Goals	Priority/ Time line	Date Finished
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

Revised Goals Assessment Activity Sheet, page 2 of 2

Your Goals for Your Property	Resources Needed to Achieve Goals	Priority/ Time line	Date Finished
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			

Module 1, Lesson 2

Revised Physical Inventory Map – Proposed Changes Activity Sheet

Sketch your goals or proposed changes for your property. This may be done as a series of maps showing the progressive stages of property development. Again, keep in mind the location of your neighbors' buildings and facilities in relation to your property.

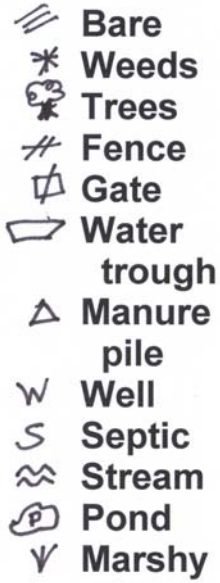
Legal description:_____

Total acres: _____Types and numbers of animals:_____

Number of pastures:_____Months animals are grazed:_____Soil types:_____

Grasses present: _____

Weeds present:_____



Adapted from: Presentation materials written by Wendy Williams, USDA NRCS, Bozeman, MT

Identifying Limitations Activity Sheet, page 1 of 4

Identify as many constraints as you can on your property. Identify the way each constraint limits the usability of your acreage. Identify any mitigation available to eliminate or limit the constraint. Remember this is an ongoing process. Your goals may change, or new ideas, mitigations, and techniques will also come to light as you complete the remaining Living on the Land modules.

1. Limitation:_____

_____

_____

_____

How does this change or limit your goals?

_____

_____

_____

What can you do to adapt your goals?

_____

_____

_____

2. Limitation:_____

_____

_____

_____

How does this change or limit your goals?

_____

_____

_____

What can you do to adapt your goals?

_____

_____

_____

Identifying Limitations Activity Sheet, page 2 of 4

3. Limitation: _____

_____

_____

_____

How does this change or limit your goals?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What can you do to adapt your goals?

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Limitation: _____

_____

_____

_____

How does this change or limit your goals?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What can you do to adapt your goals?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Identifying Limitations Activity Sheet, page 3 of 4

5. Limitation:_____

_____

_____

_____

How does this change or limit your goals?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What can you do to adapt your goals?

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Limitation:_____

_____

_____

_____

How does this change or limit your goals?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What can you do to adapt your goals?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Identifying Limitations Activity Sheet, page 4 of 4

7. Limitation: _____

_____

_____

_____

How does this change or limit your goals?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What can you do to adapt your goals?

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. Limitation: _____

_____

_____

_____

How does this change or limit your goals?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What can you do to adapt your goals?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What Can You Do? Glossary

Buffer zone, buffer strip: Neutral area that acts as a protective barrier separating two conflicting forces. An area that acts to minimize the impact of pollutants on the environment or public welfare. For example, a buffer zone is established between a composting facility and neighboring residents to minimize odor problems. A buffer strip is a grassed or planted zone that acts as a protective barrier between an area which experiences livestock grazing or other activities and a water body. Buffer strips can be streamside features to protect streams and streambanks or features built on slopes to slow water runoff velocities.

Covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs): A series of regulations set up by neighborhoods or housing developments that govern various construction features, such as setbacks, fence heights and types, house paint colors, etc.

Easement: A right to use the land of another for a specific purpose, such as for a right-of-way, access to water or utilities; an incorporeal interest in land.

Footprint: The amount and dimension of property a building actually sits on. The “footprint” the building makes on the property.

Photo reference point: Well-defined landmark from which photos are taken to document changes over time. The best photo reference points are permanent structures or features.

Regulation: A rule, law or order that regulates or limits an action.

Right-to-farm ordinance: This type of ordinance allows agricultural producers that were in business in their location prior to development to maintain approved farming and ranching practices without fear of lawsuits relating to the normal conduct of operations.

Setback: The amount of space local zoning regulations require between a lot line and a building line.

Zoning: Governmental regulations that determine how land may be used, the minimum size of lots, the height of structures, the setbacks required from the road and from property lines, and other features. The intent of zoning is to provide for orderly development and coordinated land uses.

What Can You Do? Evaluation

(Circle your answer.)	Not at all	----------→			Very much so
Was this lesson:					
Current, up-to-date?	1	2	3	4	5
Understandable?	1	2	3	4	5
Presented in an interesting way?	1	2	3	4	5
Did the program answer any questions you had?	1	2	3	4	5
Did it help you learn how to do new things or how to do something better than you knew before?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you intend to use any of the information from this lesson?	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, was this program worth your time to attend?	1	2	3	4	5

What was the most informative part of this session?

Which part was too technical and why?

Which part was too easy and why?

On which part(s) do we need to spend more or less time?

On which topic(s) would you like more information?

What one practice from this lesson will you implement within a year?

What Can You Do? Post-class Mini-test

1. Photodocumentation of your efforts on your property will:
    a. Provide a low-cost way to track changes
    b. Document property additions for insurance purposes and to aid permit processes
    c. Provide personal satisfaction
    d. All of the above
2. To make photodocumentation successful, you should:
    a. Make sure your photos have dates and descriptions
    b. Organize and store the photos in an easily accessible manner
    c. Establish photo reference points and a schedule for taking the photos
    d. All of the above
3. T or F Upgrading or adding new buildings or facilities to your property will not change your tax bill.
4. T or F A basic principle of good neighboring consists of planning your land uses around the land uses already in place on adjacent properties.
5. T or F Once set, small-acreage management goals should not be changed.
6. T or F Limitations are outside influences that can sometimes affect how you manage your land.
7. List three neighboring issues to consider during the goal-setting process for your property:
    a.
    b.
    c.
8. List three legal limitations that can affect your goals for your property:
    a.
    b.
    c.

What Can You Do? Post-class Mini-test Answer Key

1. d. All of the above

2. d. All of the above

3. F

4. T

5. F

6. T

7. List three neighboring issues to consider during the goal-setting process for your property:

    a. Weeds
    b. Odors
    c. Windbreaks
    d. Dust
    e. Noise
    f. Fire risk
    g. Slow-moving equipment
    h. Viewshed
    i. Pets

8. List three legal limitations that can affect your goals for your property:

    a. Water rights
    b. Regulations – federal, state, county, city
    c. Zoning
    d. Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&Rs)
    e. Easements
    f. Setbacks