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Conservation District Stakeholder Session: Arizona NRCS Reorganization

Webinar - July 2020

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Welcome

Keisha Tatem
State Conservationist



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Computer Engagement

Microsoft Teams


Search or type a command


VR

Arizona – Natural Resources Conservation Service






Need help?

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Live event Q&A


?

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Featured

My questions

Most recent



No featured questions yet

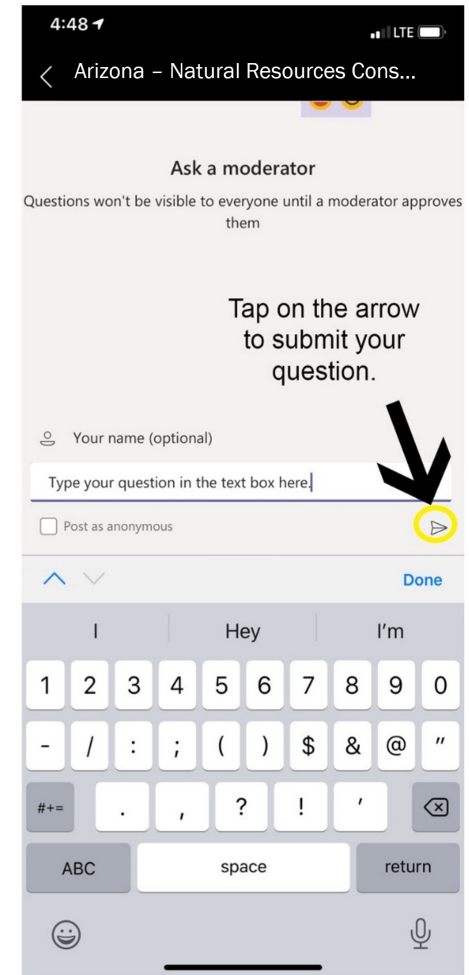
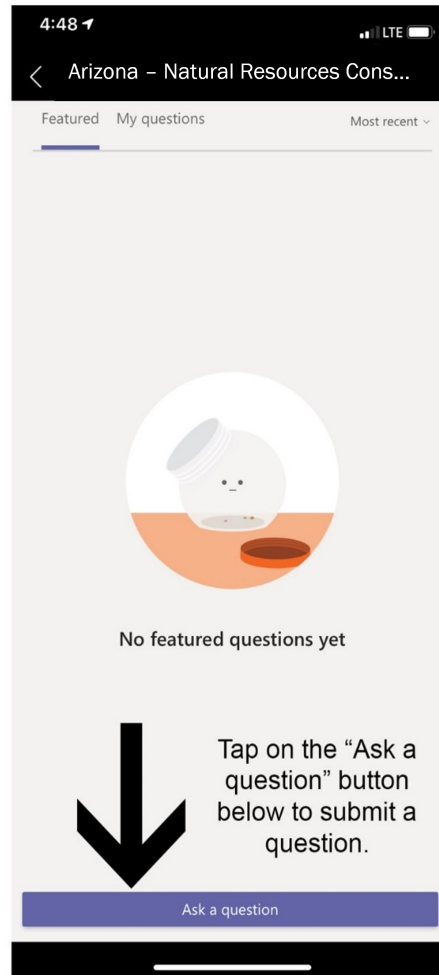
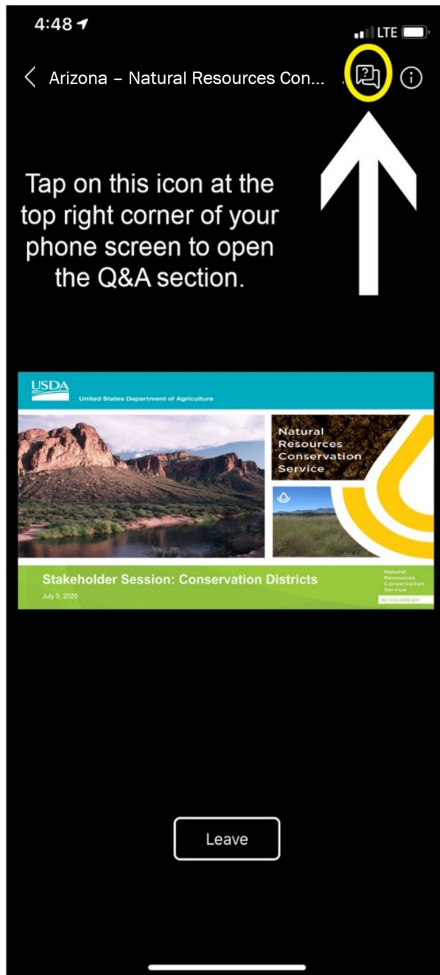
Ask a question



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Mobile Engagement





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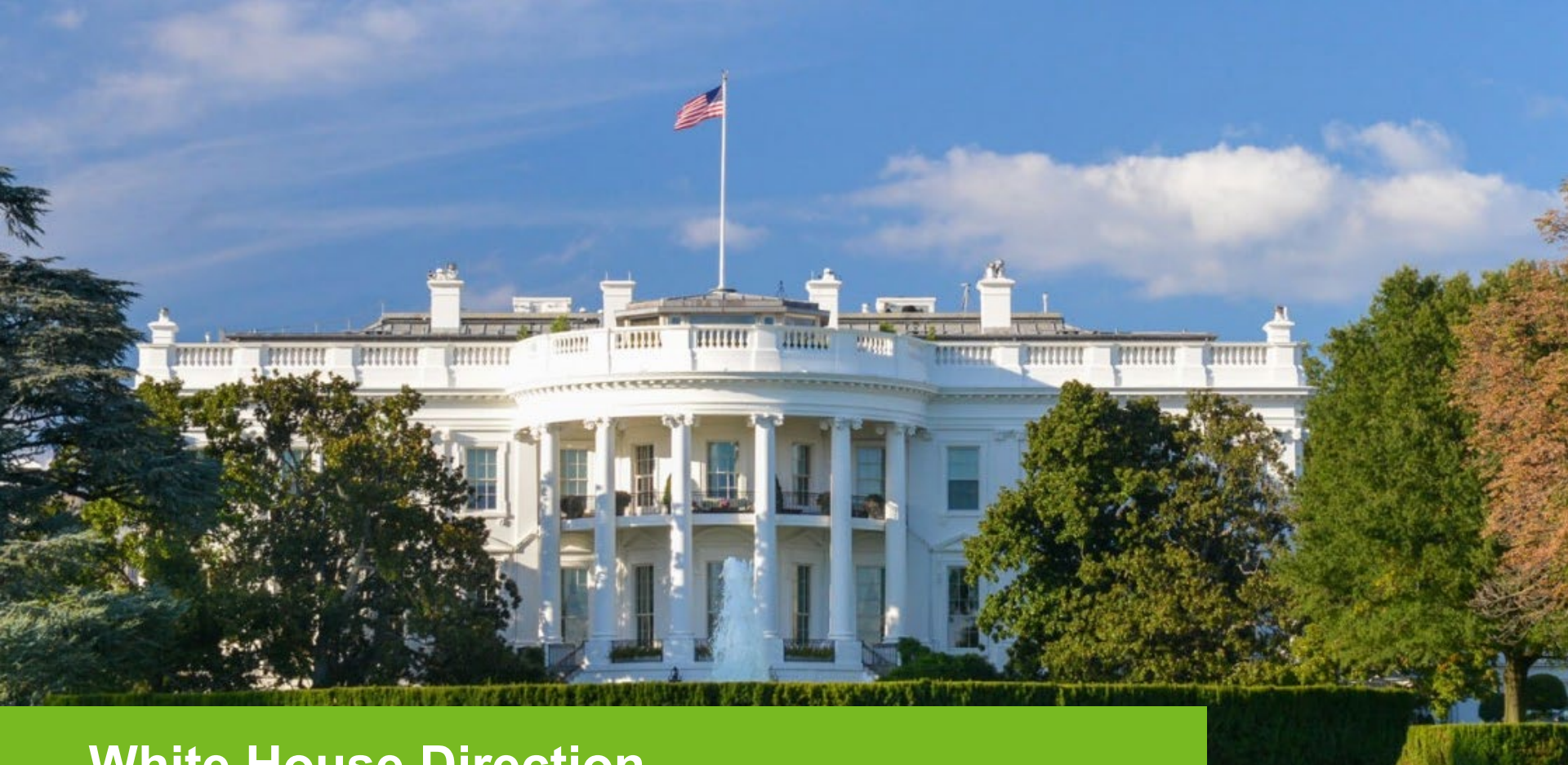
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Why even think about reorganizing?

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White House Direction

- President Trump signed [Executive Order 13781](#) on March 13, 2017 (Comprehensive Plan for Reorganizing the Executive Branch)
- Office of Management and Budget issued [M-17-22](#) (Comprehensive Plan for Reforming the Federal Government and Reducing the Federal Civilian Workforce) on April 12, 2017.
 - Eliminate, merge, restructure activities
 - Improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness
 - Workforce management: Improve performance, increase accountability, and reduce costs

Agencies should develop an analytical framework that looks at the alignment of agency activities with the mission and role of the agency and the performance of individual functions.



Consideration Factors



Factor	If	Actions
Duplicative	Some or all of the mission functions or administrative capabilities of an agency, component, or program are needlessly redundant with those of another agency, component, or program	Eliminate or merge
Non-Essential	The service, activity or function is not core to the agency's mission or obsolete	Eliminate
Federalism (appropriate Federal role)	Some or all of the services, activities or functions could be better performed by another entity, such as State/local/Tribal government or the private sector	Eliminate or restructure
Cost-Benefit	The costs of continuing to operate an agency, a component, or a program are not justified by the unique public benefits it provides	Eliminate, merge, restructure, improve efficiency & effectiveness

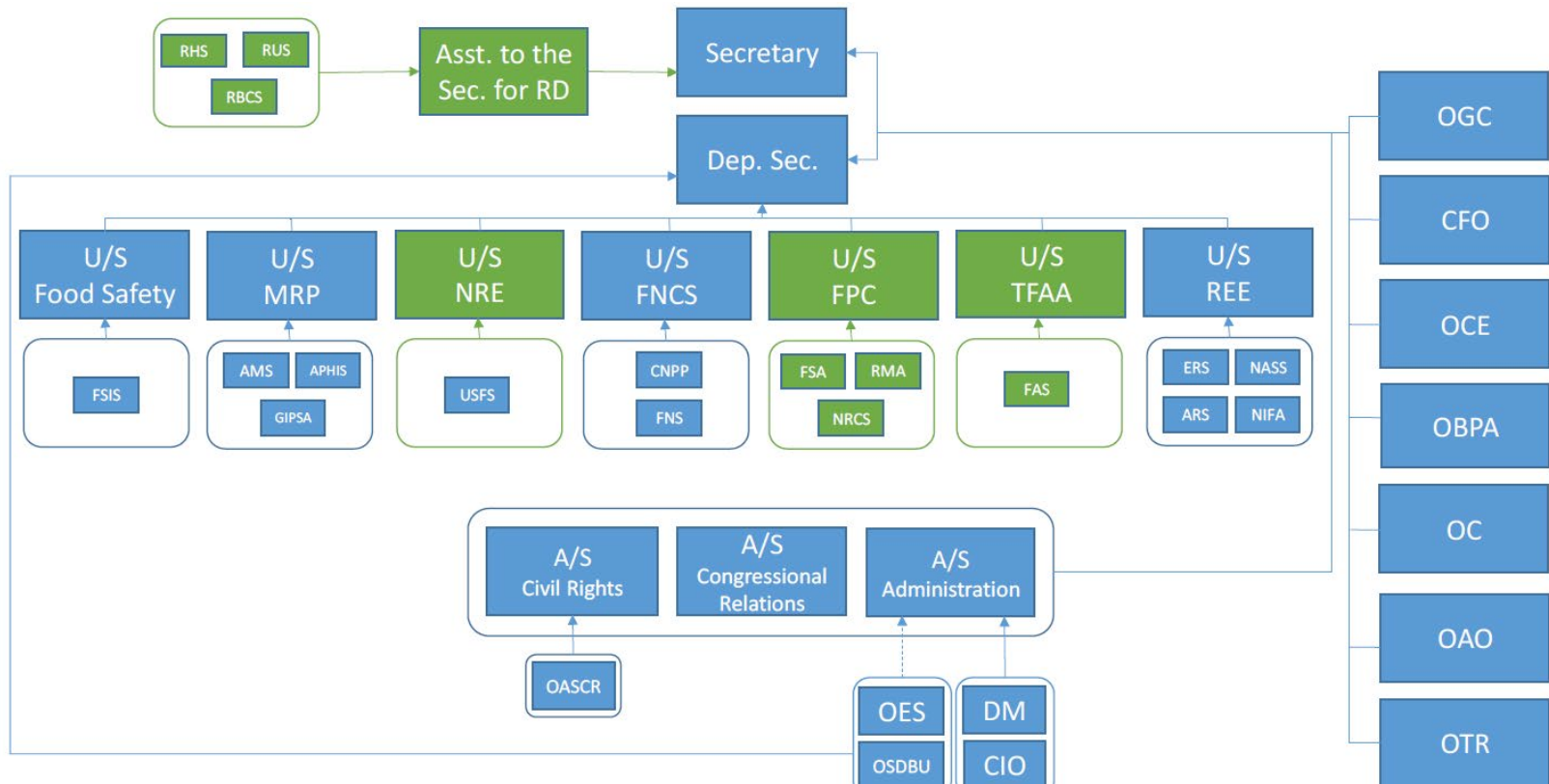


Consideration Factors



Factor	If	Actions
Cost-Benefit	The long-term savings from shutting down or merging agencies, components, or programs - including the costs of addressing the equities of affected agency staff - are greater than the expected costs	Eliminate or merge, improve efficiency and effectiveness
Efficiency and Effectiveness	The agency, component, or program -based on the available body of evidence and historical performance data -is ineffective or inefficient (e.g. struggles to make decisions and execute)	Eliminate, restructure, improve efficiency and effectiveness, improve workforce performance/ accountability, or enhance evidence-building
Customer Service	The agency, component, or program can be redesigned to better meet the needs of the public and partners in service delivery in a more accessible and effective manner	Restructure, improve efficiency and effectiveness





USDA Reorganization

Realigning USDA's Mission Areas

- Created Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs
- Created Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development
- **Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation**
- Merged the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion into the Food and Nutrition Service

USDA Strategic Goal #1

Ensure USDA Programs are Delivered Efficiently, Effectively, and with Integrity and a Focus on Customer Service

Objectives

- Modernize information technology infrastructure, facilities and support services to improve the customer experience.
- Maintain a high performing workforce through employee engagement and empowerment.
- Remove obstacles in USDA programs by reducing regulatory burdens and streamlining processes.
- Improve stewardship of resources and utilize data-driven analyses to maximize the return on investment.



USDA Strategic Goal #5

Strengthen the Stewardship of Private Lands through Technology and Research

Objectives

- Enhance conservation planning with science-based tools and information.
- Promote productive working lands.
- Enhance productive agricultural landscapes.





Expectations & Parameters for Agencies



Data Driven Decision Making

Workload analysis



Optimal Office Locations

Move close to the work and the customers



Streamline Processes

Utilize technology



Supervisor Ratio

Close to 1:8 as possible



Employee Performance

Increase engagement and accountability



Staffing Cap

Number set by Secretary



Customer Service

Access for all farmers and ranchers



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Agency Response



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NRCS Plan



NRCS of the Future

- 13 National Projects to Improve Operations
- NHQ Reorganization
- **State Reorganizations**

Operational Tools

- Workload Analysis/Cycle Time Study
- Operational Dashboards

Technology Tools

- Conservation Assessment and Ranking Tool (CART)
- Conservation Desktop
- Conservation Client Gateway → FARMERS.GOV



Executive Operational Dashboards

- For years, NRCS has been data rich, but information poor. Dashboards create a usable interface to synthesize data to aid in decision making.
- Optimally Productive Office Focus
 - Productivity
 - Location Analysis
 - Status of Funds
 - Operations Scorecard





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Arizona Challenges and Considerations



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Arizona Challenges & Considerations

1. Geography

- a. County Size
- b. Landscape
- c. Travel Time

2. Land Ownership

3. Pay Grades/Career Ladder

4. Supervisor Ratio (1:3)

5. Staffing Cap (99+4)



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“What if we don’t change at all ...
and something magical just happens?”



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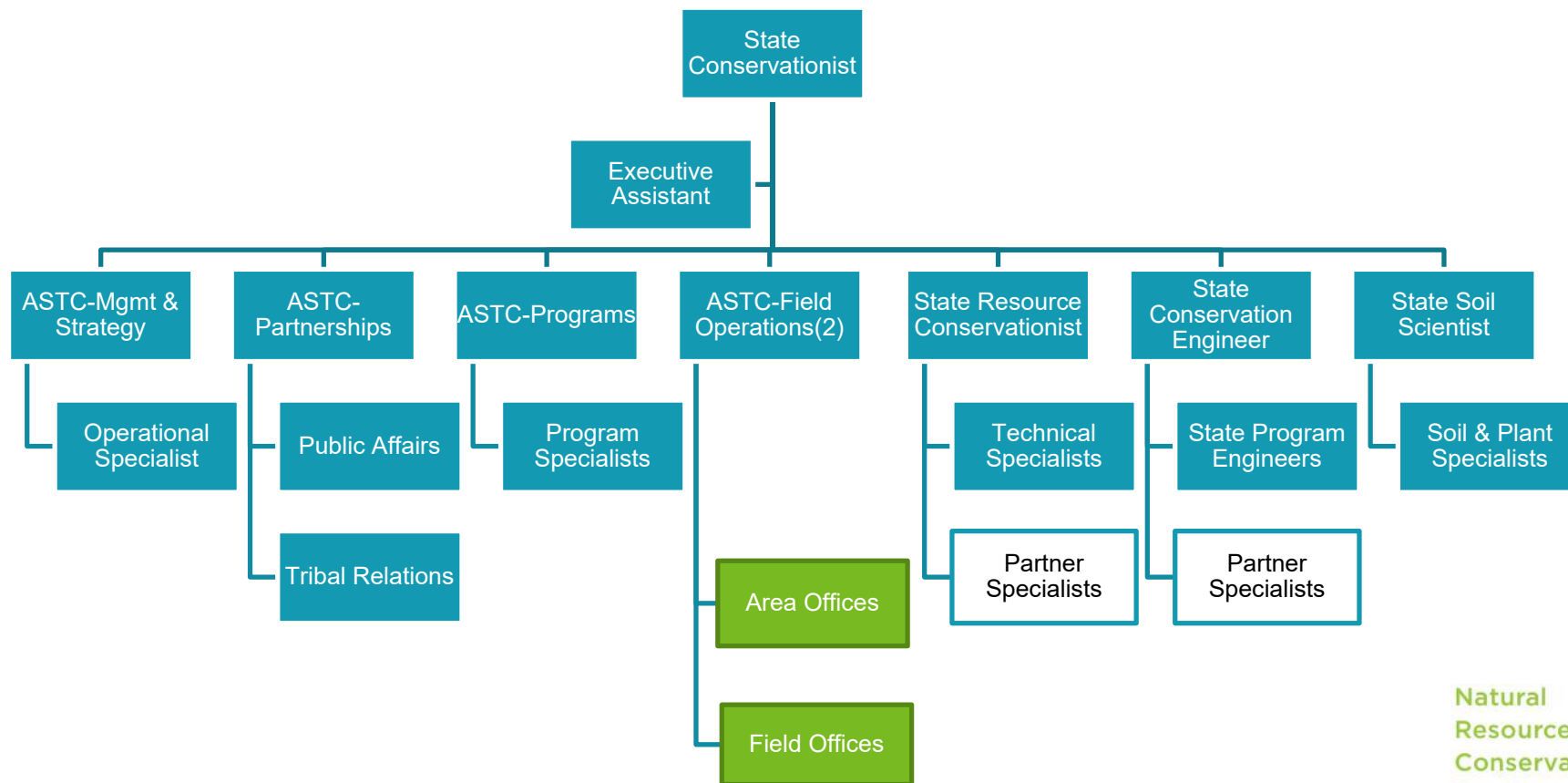
Arizona Plan



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Current Organizational Structure

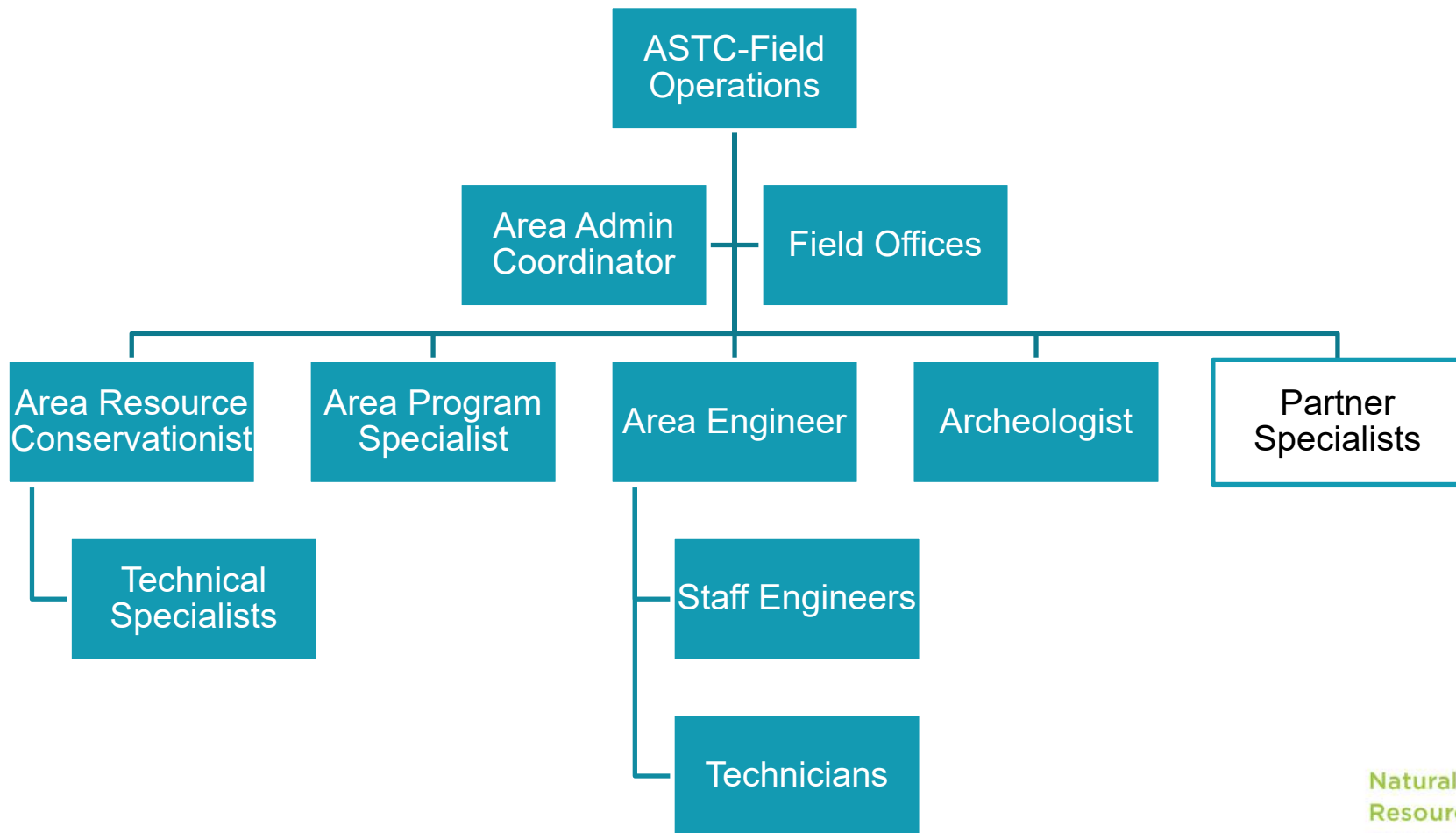


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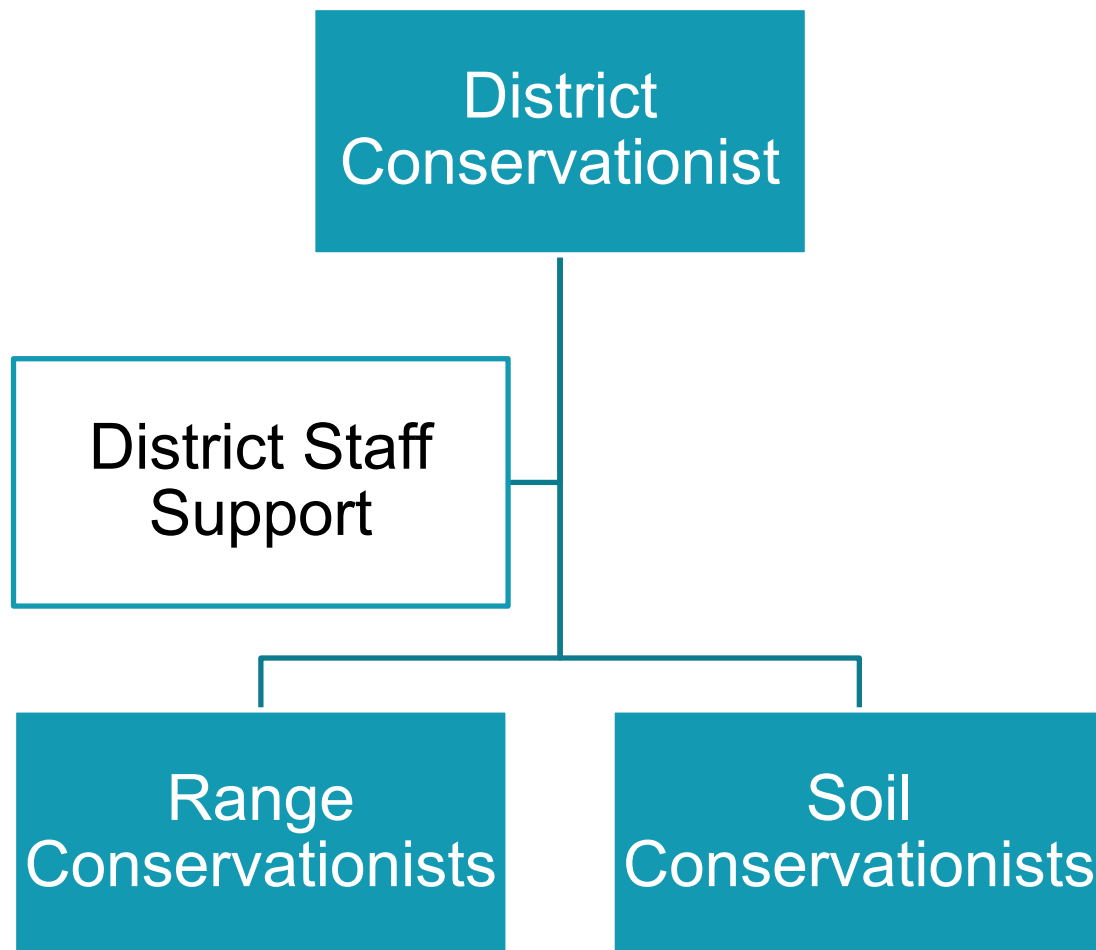
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Current Area Office Structure



Current Field Office Structure





Redefining Our Business Model



**All Programs
Locally Led**



**Landscape Level
Conservation**



**State of the Art
Technology**



**Engaged and
Empowered Employees**



Arizona Guiding Principles

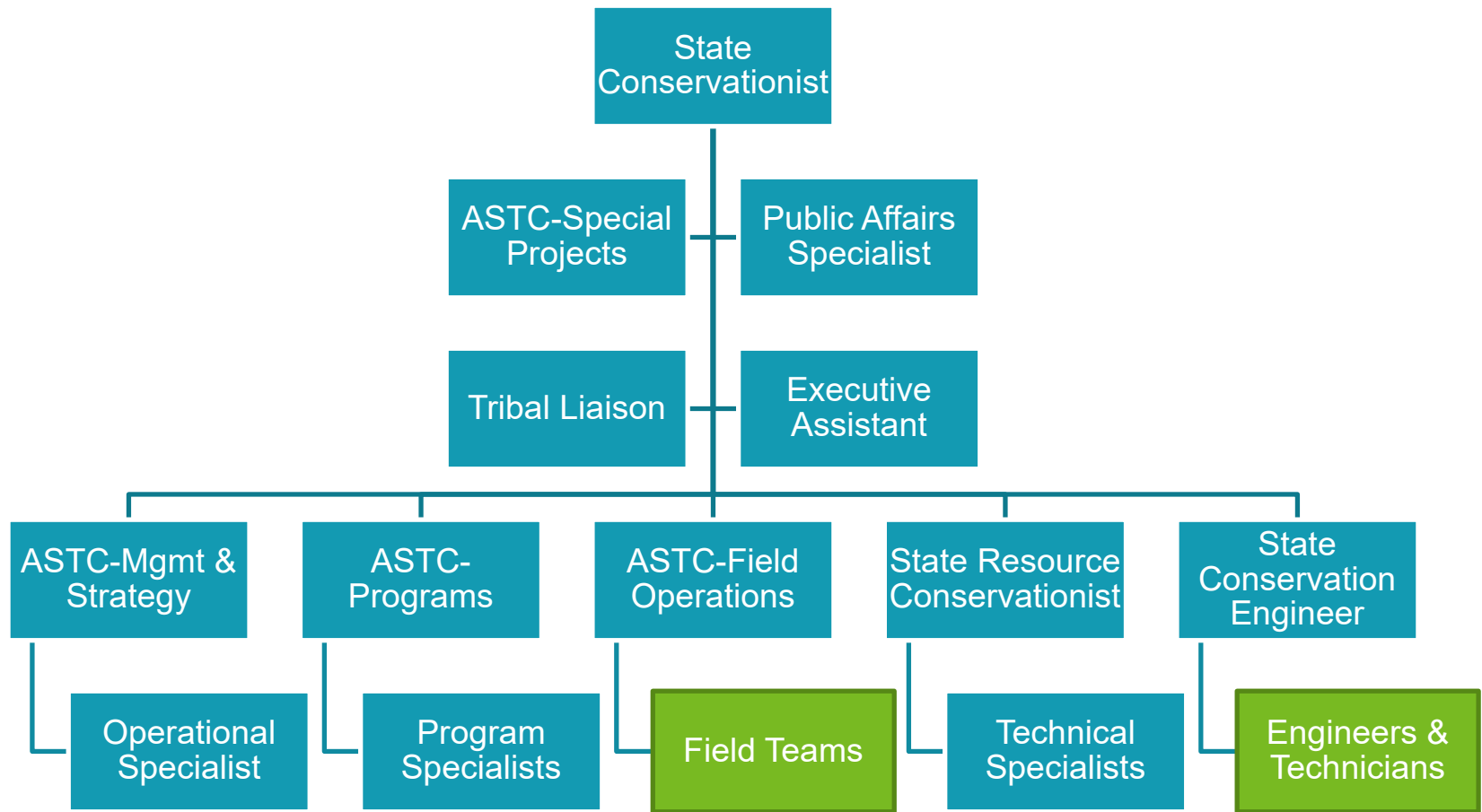
- Reduce the access points the customer has to encounter to receive all services from NRCS. All customers should work with field staff to address locally led resource concerns.
- Flattened our structure by changing from a 3-layer structure to a 2-layer structure to improve supervisor ratio.
- Staffing caps may change, but the 2-layer structure will be designed at a proportion of 70% field staff and 30% operational support.
- Offices will be located to optimize travel time to farms and ranches. We should be located where the work is.
- Maintain conservation district boundaries within a team.
- Phased approach will be needed to finalize details of structure with feedback opportunities throughout.

Proposed Office Locations

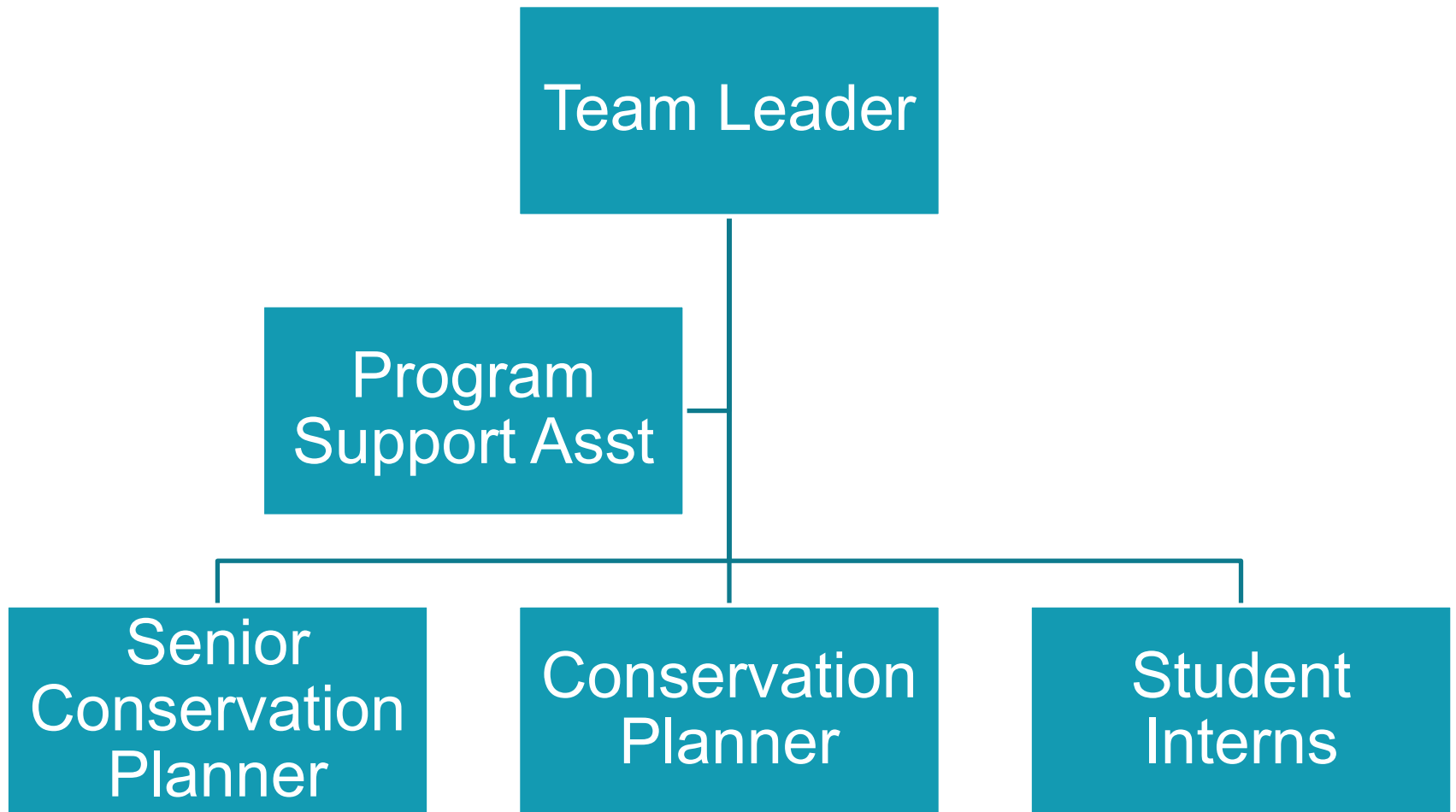
- **Team 1**
 - Fredonia
 - Flagstaff
- **Team 2**
 - Chinle
 - Saint Michaels
- **Team 3**
 - Kingman
 - Prescott Valley
 - Roosevelt
- **Team 4**
 - Holbrook
 - Springerville
 - Whiteriver
- **Team 5**
 - Avondale
 - Yuma
- **Team 6**
 - Casa Grande
- **Team 7**
 - Douglas
 - Sells
 - Tucson
- **Team 8**
 - Safford
 - San Carlos
 - Willcox

Proposed Field Team Boundaries

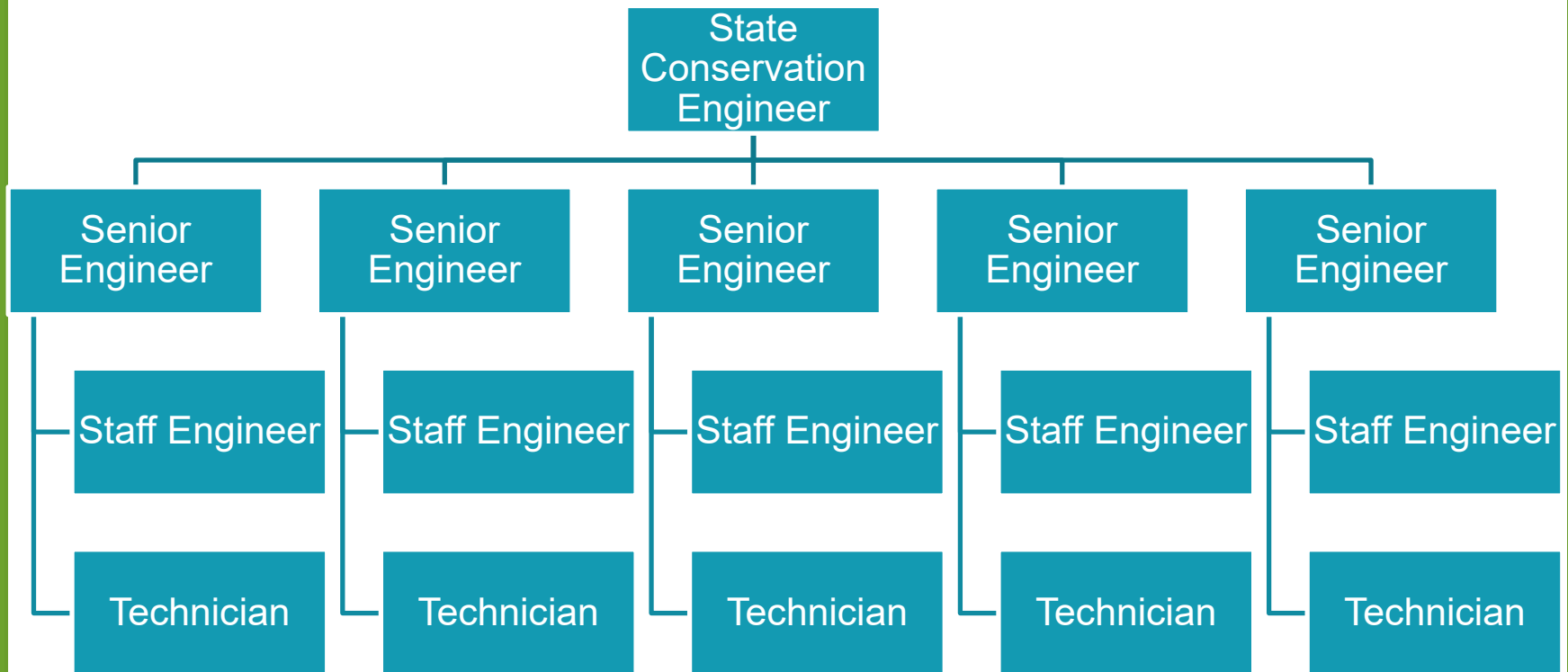




Proposed Overall State Structure

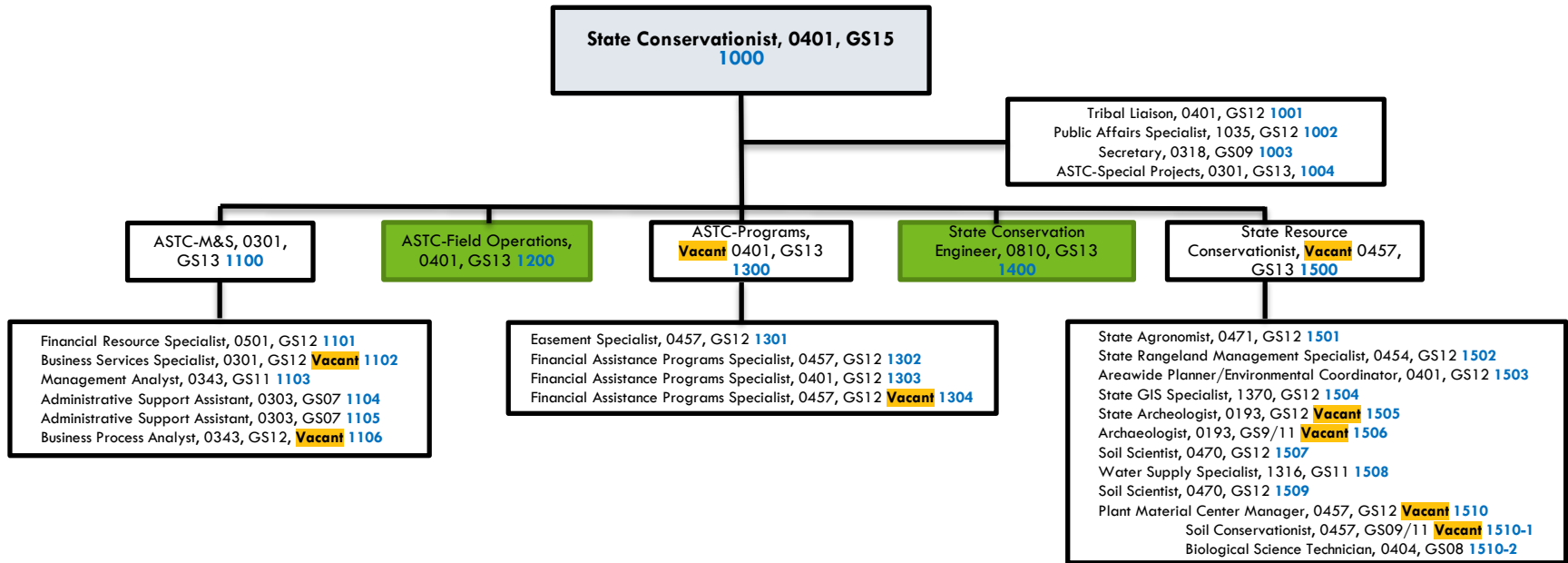


Proposed Field Team Structure



Proposed Engineering Team Structure

Arizona NRCS – PROPOSED Employee Cap: 103 FTEs: 77 Vacancies: 32



State Office	Current	Vacancies	Total
	23	9	32

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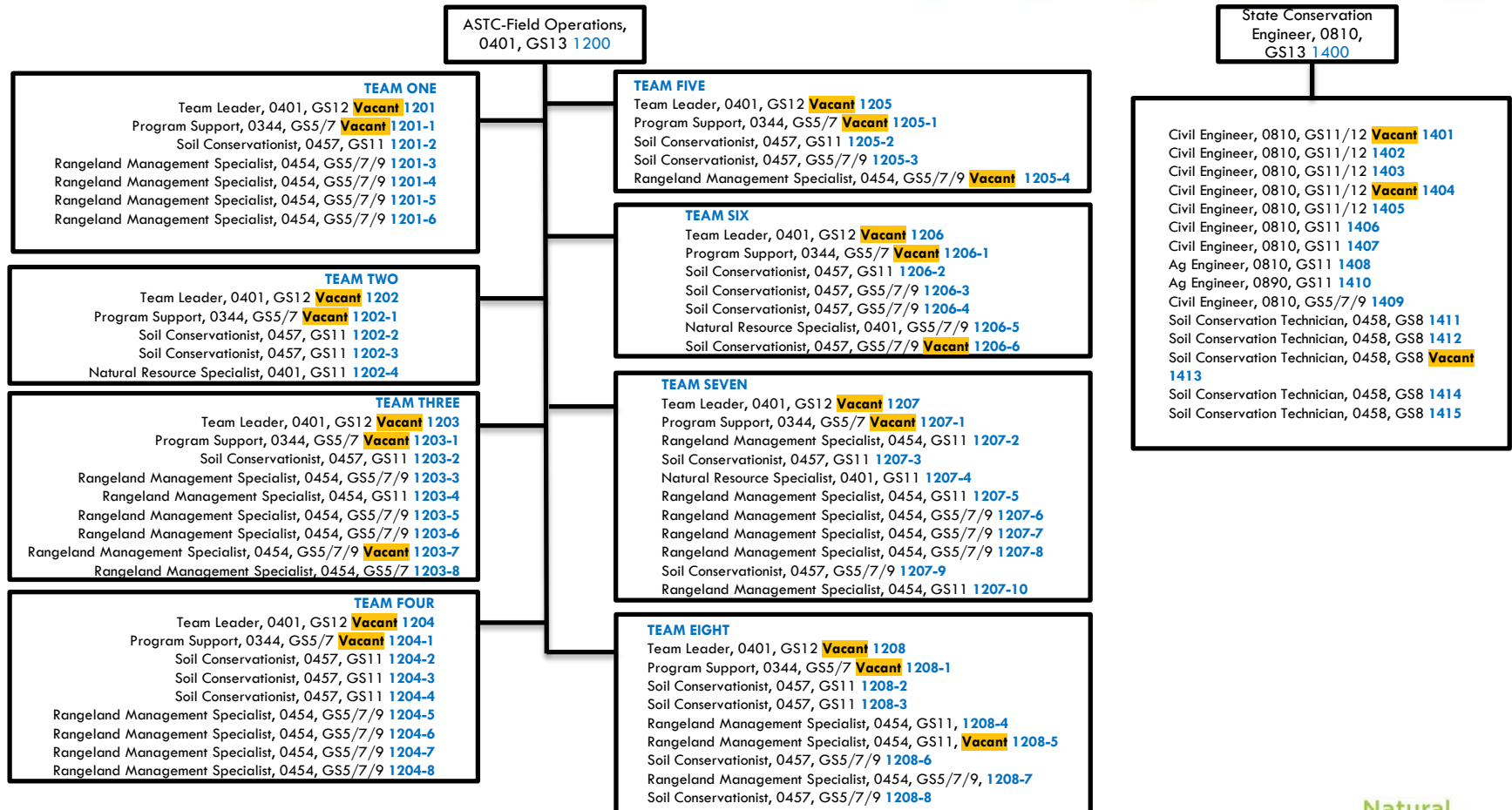
DRAFT Pre-Decisional

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Arizona NRCS – PROPOSED

Employee Cap: 103 FTEs: 77 Vacancies: 32



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	Current	Vacancies	Total
Field Teams	39	23	62
Engineering Team	12	3	15

DRAFT Pre-Decisional

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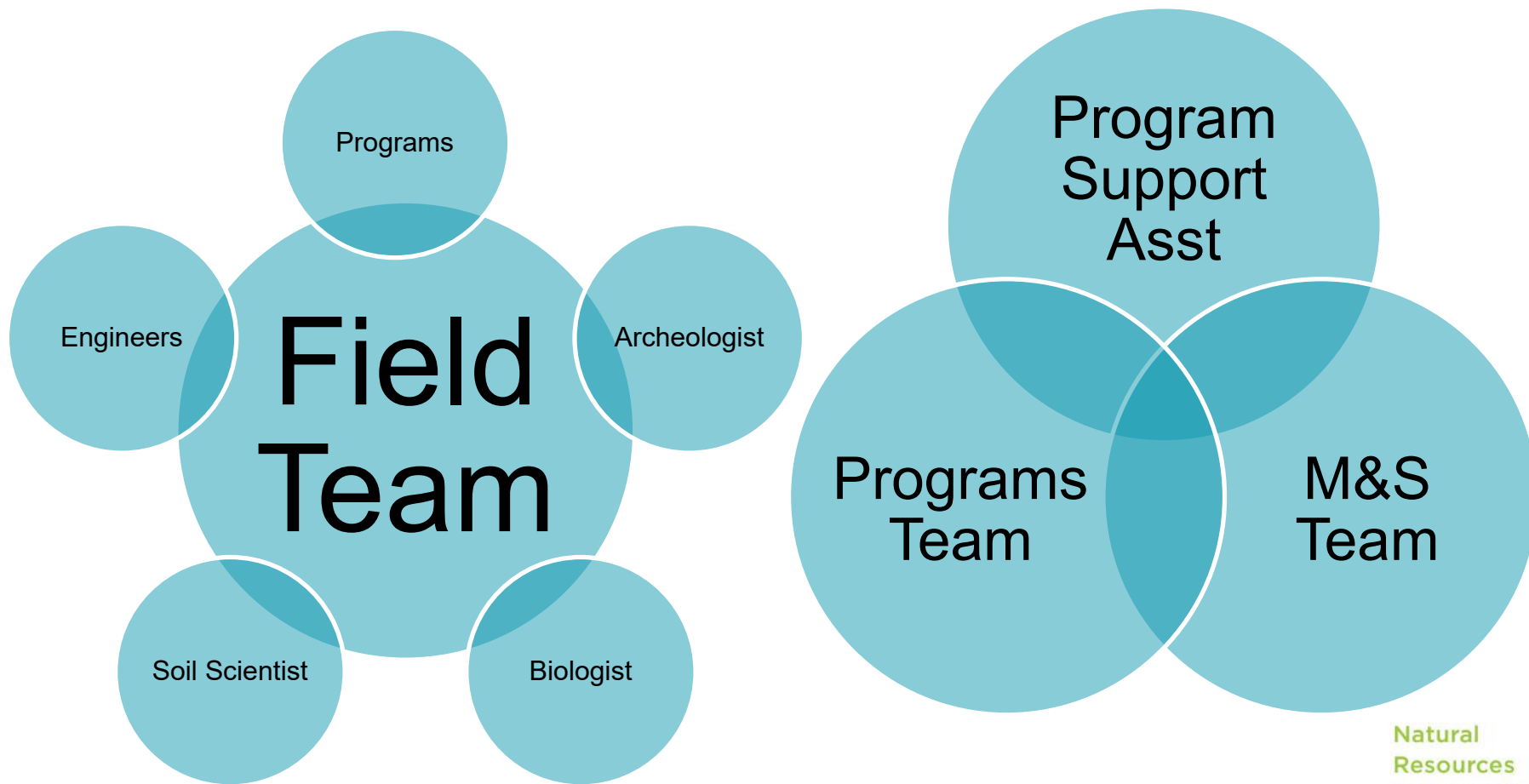
Paradigm Shift



Small Changes → Change What You Do
Big Changes → Change How You Think



Integrated Team Concept





Team Leader GS-12

- Provides leadership on **setting priorities**, managing workload, and quality assurance.
- Work with the team and congruent teams to develop recommendations regarding **operating procedures, staffing, budget, equipment** and other requirements to effectively accomplish the agency mission in the field team.
- Serves as **supervisor** of record for Field Team employees.
- Works with NRCS employees, representatives of other agencies, conservation districts, and other **partners** as appropriate in the development and implementation of an effective **conservation strategic plan**.
- Serves as contract officer for Farm Bill Program Activities within work area/team boundaries.

Program Support Assistants

GS-5/7 Program Support Assistants

- Assist with setting up conservation plan folders and files
- Certify program payments
- Provide administrative support to the Field Team and coordinates with Management & Strategy as needed

Partner Program Support Assistants

- Similar duties as outlined in agreement with partner



Conservation Planners

GS-11 Senior Planner

- Master Certified Planner
- Analyzes conservation problems and facilitates the formulation of technically balanced programs and plans of action to remedy them.
- Provides technical training and guidance to Field Team staff, Conservation District and other Partnership employees involved in conservation planning and implementation activities.
- Conducts spot checks of neighboring Field Teams.

GS-9 Planner

- Certified Planner
- Analyzes conservation problems and facilitates the formulation of technically balanced programs and plans of action to remedy them.

GS-5/7 Junior Planner

- Apprentice Certified Planner
- Assists with analyzing conservation problems and facilitates the formulation of technically balanced programs and plans of action to remedy them.





Field Engineers

GS-12 Senior Engineer

- Oversight of team projects, manage workload and scheduling
- Works with Field Team Leader to set priorities
- Design projects within job approval authority
- Peer review/spot checks
- Tool development/support

GS-7/9/11 Engineer

- Design projects within job approval authority
- Peer review/spot checks
- Tool development/support

GS-5/6/7 Technician

- Collect design data
- Monitor construction
- Practice check outs

Additional Strategies



- 1. Share Staff with Other States**
- 2. Partner Agreements**
- 3. Contract Services**



Problems Solved, Right?

The reorganization will not solve all our operational issues. Running any organization requires regular evaluation and continuous process improvement.

- Locally Led Landscape Planning
- Program Application Management
- Technology Research, Development, Procurement
- Recruitment Strategy
- Employee Development





We Welcome Your Feedback



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 Thank you!

Please let us know
if you have any
questions.



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