



United States
Department of
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Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

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Natural Resources Conservation Service Accomplishments Report FY 2000



What We Do

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is the primary Federal agency that works with private landowners to help them protect their natural resources. The agency emphasizes voluntary, science-based conservation technical assistance; partnerships; incentive-based programs; and cooperative problem solving at the community level. The strength of NRCS is its workforce—some 12,000 individuals—working side by side with many partners to help set conservation goals, work with people on the land, and provide services. These partners include conservation districts, state conservation agencies, resource conservation and development councils, and tribes. Local conservation districts—about 3,000 in all—are an important part of the conservation delivery system and natural resource accomplishments that benefit all Americans.

Strategic Goals

In fiscal year 2000, the agency continued its commitment to help individuals, communities, units of government, and tribes make decisions

about managing their lands and resources for productivity and long-term use. NRCS helped rural and urban communities curb erosion, conserve and protect water, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, and solve other natural resource problems. Conservation accomplishments were achieved under four strategic goals:

- **Enhance natural resource productivity** to enable a strong agricultural and natural resource sector.
- **Reduce unintended adverse effects of natural resource development and use** to ensure a high quality environment.
- **Reduce risks from drought and flooding** to protect individual and community health and safety.
- **Deliver high quality services to the public** to enable natural resource stewardship.

NRCS identified objectives and performance measurements for each goal. The work of the agency is accomplished through conservation planning, technical and financial assistance, resource assessment, and technology development and transfer.



Conservation systems are designed to meet the needs of the land and landowners.

What We Achieved

Highlights of the accomplishments for fiscal year 2000 illustrate that conservation is the work of many—no one person or group can do it alone. The Nation's conservation efforts on private land ensure a healthy and productive land—sustaining food and fiber production, protecting watersheds and natural systems, enhancing the environment, and improving urban and rural landscapes.

Goal 1: Enhance natural resource productivity.

NRCS identified four objectives to address resource concerns that challenge continued productivity of privately owned agricultural lands:

- Maintain, restore, and enhance cropland productivity.
- Maintain, restore, and enhance irrigated land.
- Maintain, restore, and enhance grazing land productivity.
- Maintain, restore, and enhance forest land productivity.

We said we would:

- Help landowners plan and apply resource management systems on 6 million acres of cropland. Accomplishment—10.2 million acres
- Help landowners apply resource management systems on 5.8 million acres of grazing land. Accomplishment—10.7 million acres
- Protect 4 million acres of cropland from excessive wind and water erosion. Accomplishment—4.1 million acres

- Help landowners apply irrigation water management systems that result in an estimated 7.2 million acre-inches of water savings. Accomplishment—9 million acre-inches
- Help farmers and ranchers use prescribed grazing on 10 million acres. Accomplishment—19.6 million acres
- Help landowners apply forest stand improvement (weeding and thinning) on 270,000 acres. Accomplishment—390,000 acres
- Help landowners establish trees and shrubs on 308,000 acres. Accomplishment—640,000 acres

Goal 2: Reduce unintended adverse effects of natural resource development and use.

NRCS identified five objectives to address the most pressing concerns affecting environmental quality of the rural and urban landscapes:

- Protect farmland from conversion to nonagricultural uses.
- Promote sound urban and rural community development.
- Protect water and air resources from agricultural nonpoint sources of impairment.
- Enhance animal feeding operations to protect the environment.
- Maintain, restore, or enhance wetland ecosystems and fish and wildlife habitat.

We said we would:

- Help landowners put conservation buffers on 804,000 acres to protect water quality and provide wildlife habitat. Accomplishment—1 million acres
- Create, restore, or enhance wetlands on 200,000 acres. Accomplishment—290,000 acres
- Help landowners apply wildlife habitat management plans—for wetlands or upland areas—on 3.8 million acres. Accomplishment—12.3 million acres
- Plan or apply 9,300 waste management systems, including waste storage structures, treatment lagoons, composting facilities, and roof runoff management. Accomplishment—11,000 systems
- Help agricultural producers apply nutrient management systems on 2.9 million acres. Accomplishment—4.3 million acres
- Help producers apply pest management systems on 3.2 million acres. Accomplishment—4.3 million acres



Much of the Nation's most valuable and productive farmland is located near urban and suburban areas.

Conservation buffers reduce soil erosion, improve air and water quality, reduce flooding, and enhance fish and wildlife habitat.

Goal 3: Reduce risks from drought and flooding.

NRCS identified two objectives to help landowners and land managers apply conservation systems to address the impacts of water shortages and flooding.

- Protect upstream watersheds from flood risk.
- Protect watersheds from the effects of chronic water shortages and risks from drought.

We said we would:

- Provide a total of \$914 million worth of onsite and offsite benefits from local watershed protection projects. Accomplishment—\$1.24 billion
- Issue 6,470 water supply forecasts for Federal, state, and local water resource planning purposes. Accomplishment—7,580 forecasts



Goal 4: Deliver high quality services to the public.

NRCS identified three objectives to address the delivery of conservation services that lead to good natural resource stewardship.

- Deliver services fairly and equitably.
- Strengthen the conservation delivery system.
- Ensure timely, science-based information and technologies.

We said we would:

- Map or update 23.4 million acres of soils. Accomplishment—24.4 million acres
- Provide 884 soil surveys in digital format. Accomplishment—941 surveys (cumulative total)

- Generate 3,000 downloads from the web or compact disk requests for digital soils data. Accomplishment—10,510 requests
- Release 16 new conservation plants for commercial or private use. Accomplishment—24 plants
- Generate 16 million hits on the PLANTS database website. Accomplishment—17.5 million hits

In addition, we provided assistance to 3 million individuals, including 340,000 minority customers.

More Information

Additional information on the agency's programs and services can be found in the NRCS Strategic Plan for 2000-2005. It is a comprehensive roadmap that describes goals, objectives, guiding principles, baselines, and performance targets. The Strategic Plan is available on the web at: www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/SPA.



Wetlands improve water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, reduce soil erosion, reduce flooding, and improve water supply.

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