USDA Council on Sustainable Development

Americans are searching for—and finding—ways to prosper and be good stewards of the lands where we live.

As a nation we are making new efforts to pursue growth and still ensure opportunities for generations to come.

The Council on Sustainable Development overarches the divisions within USDA to act as the forum for policy and program development, implementation, and evaluation on issues relating to sustainable development. The Council provides the framework and mechanism needed for integrating research, management, technical assistance, education, and grant programs.

www.usda.gov/oce/sustainable/

Members:

- Agricultural Marketing Service
- Agricultural Research Service
- Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
- Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service
- Economic Research Service
- Farm Service Agency
- Food and Nutrition Service
- Foreign Agricultural Service
- Forest Service
- National Agriculture Library
- National Rural Development Partnership
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Office of Community Development

Connecting Countryside to Community

Sustainability links people and places across rural and urban America - from farms and forests to consumers and communities. Sustainable approaches to agriculture, forest management, and community development provide a safer, affordable food supply; more healthy and nutritious diets; and better management practices for growing, harvesting, and processing food and fiber. Working together, United States Department of Agriculture agencies seek to create opportunities and preserve choices for present and future generations.

Did you know?

The United States covers 2.27 billion acres of land, and that USDA assists landowners with most of it!

Of the 458 million acres devoted to cropland, 60% is planted as corn, soybeans or wheat!

20% is Croplands
22% is Deserts, Swamps, Public, and other lands
26% is Grasslands and Rangelands
32% is Forests

USDA Council on Sustainable Development

The *USDA Council on Sustainable Development* is a forum for integrating environmental, social, and economic issues related to farms, forests, and communities. The Council connects research, management, technical assistance, education, and financial assistance.

Sustainability is the foundation of modern approaches to agriculture, forest management, and community development. Our basic requirements come from the environment. USDA is helping protect, conserve, and enhance natural resources needed to grow food, keep air and water clean, and foster economic benefits for the nation.

Council Members:

Agricultural Marketing Service; Agricultural Research Service; Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service; Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service; Economic Research Service; Farm Service Agency; Food and Nutrition Service; Foreign Agricultural Service; Forest Service; National Agricultural Library; Natural Resources Conservation Service; Office of the Chief Economist; Risk Management Agency; and Rural Development.

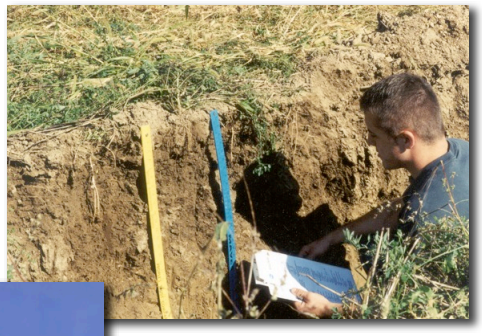
The Council is extremely pleased to sponsor this exhibit. Please visit us at: www.usda.gov

Advancing Science for Sustainability

Our nation's future depends on generating and applying science-based knowledge to sustain food, fiber, and fuel production; developing practices and technologies that farmers, ranchers, and other landowners can adopt to produce food and fiber using the environment's natural systems; and training a future workforce that understands the interaction between profitable, environmental, and social dimensions of sustainability. Some of the benefits of science for sustainability include:

Soil:

As the foundation of life, scientists are studying the properties and functions of soil to maintain and sustain our nation's capacity to provide clean water, clean air and productive lands for food, fiber and energy.



Safe and Healthy Food:

Agricultural and food scientists help our farmers, ranchers, and food industry supply consumers here and around the world with the healthy, safe and nutritious foods they desire.

Bio-fuels:

Switchgrass can yield almost twice as much ethanol as corn! Breeding and genetics research is underway to improve switchgrass yield and its ability to recycle carbon.

Bio-based Products:

Lesquerella, a yellow-flowered member of the mustard family, has enormous potential for oils, gums and meals. Native to the American Southwest, its superior quality oil might soon be found in coatings, plastics, paints, lipstick, shampoo and even frozen foods!

Inventory and Monitoring:

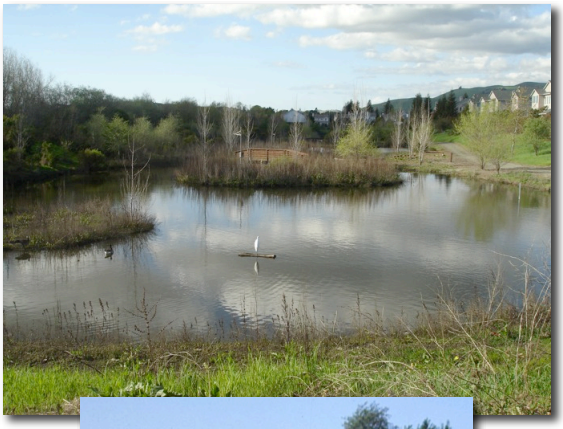
Scientists collect field data for measuring forest sustainability and to track environmental health.

Caring for Our Environment

USDA is working to protect, maintain, and restore the health, diversity, and productivity of working lands - farms, ranches, and forests. These diverse landscapes within which we live, work, and play - provide a variety of ecosystem services vital to humans.

Urban Watersheds:

Washington, DC, is located within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. USDA is working with farmers, forest landowners, and communities to reduce nutrients and sediment entering the Bay through forest buffers along streams and rivers, bay-friendly gardening, and sound conservation practices.



Prairies:

Prairies are ecologically beneficial treeless plant communities consisting of native flowers, grasses and sedges. Prairies are being restored to conserve soil, wildlife habitat, scenic vistas, sequester greenhouse gasses, and store carbon.

Bottomland Forests:

USDA is working to protect bottomland forests. Located along rivers and streams, these unique forests provide biological diversity and protect humans and wildlife from floods and other natural disasters.

Rangelands:

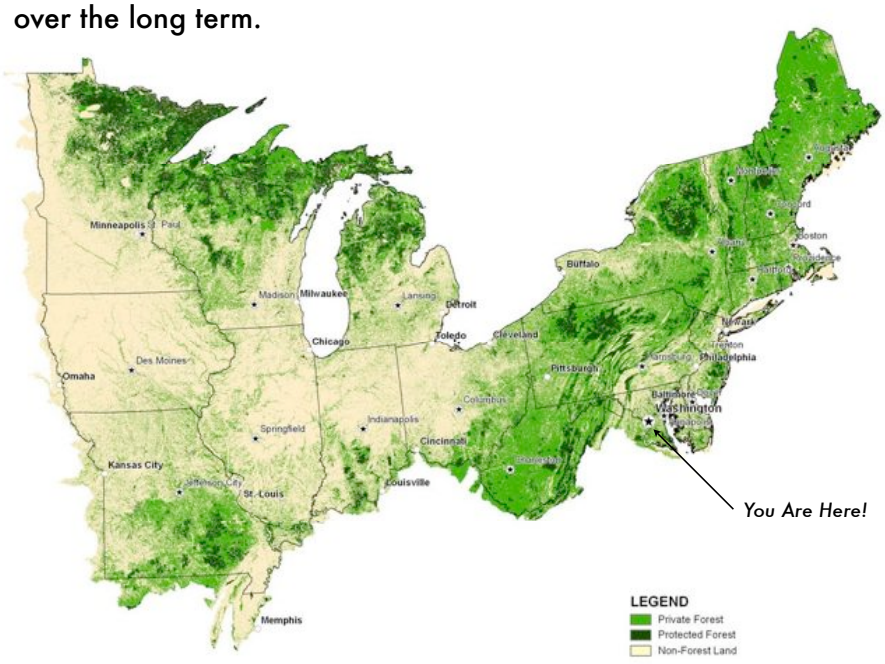
U.S. rangelands provide opportunities for mixing the benefits of conservation and ranching. A major threat to biodiversity is converting land into non-agricultural use or into smaller parcels.

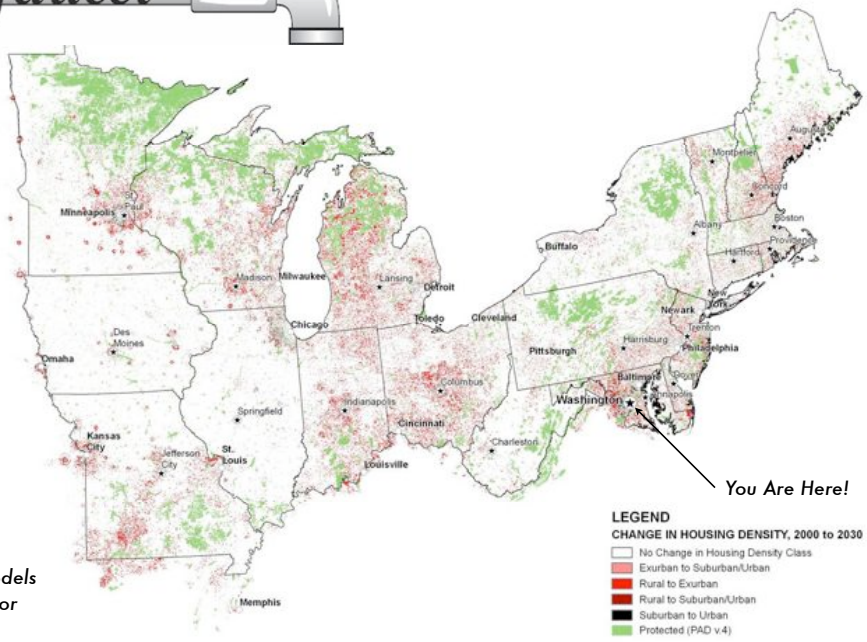
Linking Forests to the Faucet

The water many of us drink and use is a direct and immediate connection to forests and watersheds. Do you realize that the water coming from your faucet is connected to trees and forested areas?

More than 52 million people in the northeastern part of the USA depend on forest lands as the source of their drinking water. Trees and forests absorb, filter, store, and release water - thereby bringing clean water to your faucet.

Decisions we individually and collectively make every day about where and how we live, work, and play affects the availability and condition of our water. Retaining and managing forests is one of the best ways to protect our drinking water resources and to reduce the costs of water treatment over the long term.





Geographic Information System - based models are used to identify and rank forest areas for protection, restoration or management.

Countryside to Community

Sustainable Farms, Forests & Communities

sponsored by:

USDA Council on Sustainable Development

Robert Friedman