

Questions and Answers

National Natural Resources Conservation Foundation

March 2003

Q. What is the National Natural Resources Conservation Foundation (NNRCF)?

A. The NNRCF is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation established by Congress in 1996 to work closely with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill) authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to enable the Foundation to use, license, or transfer symbols, slogans, and logos of the Foundation.

Q. What is the purpose of the NNRCF?

A. The purpose of the NNRCF is to promote innovative solutions to natural resource problems, conduct research, undertake educational activities, and support and encourage conservation of natural resources.

Q. What are the benefits of a NNRCF?

A. The NNRCF provides the means to research and promote innovations for the conservation of natural resources on private land to prevent excessive soil erosion; enhance soil and water quality; and protect wetlands, wildlife habitat, and strategically important farmland subject to urban conversion and fragmentation. The Foundation builds partnerships among agencies and agricultural, public, and private constituencies interested in promoting voluntary conservation on private lands. With private funding, the Foundation can make grants to State and local agencies and nonprofit organizations

and engage innovators of natural resource conservation concepts and technologies to find conservation solutions to natural resource challenges.

Q. What is the relationship between the NRCS and the Foundation?

A. The Foundation works with the NRCS to support and contribute to the goals of the agency, but the Foundation is a complete and separate entity from the agency, governed by a Board of Trustees and led by an Executive Director.

Q. Can the Foundation lobby?

A. Public Law 104-127, dated April 4, 1996, as amended, prohibits lobbying: No funds of the Foundation may be used in any manner for the purpose of influencing legislation or government action or policy.

Q. What is the organizational structure of the Foundation?

A. The Foundation is made up of a nine member Board of Trustees, an Executive Director, and a staff hired by the Foundation to carry out its duties.

Q. Who appoints the Board of Trustees and the Executive Director?

A. Initially, the Board of Trustees and the Executive Director are appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture to terms determined by the Secretary. Once appointed, the Board of Trustees will

develop a constitution outlining procedures for the nomination and selection of subsequent Board members. The Executive Director will serve at the pleasure of the Board.

Q. Are the Board members paid employees?

- A. Board members are not compensated for their service to the Foundation; travel expenses are allowed for performance of services for the Board when the Board member is away from home or regular place of business.

Q. Where does the Foundation receive its funding?

- A. The Foundation can accept funds from individuals, corporations, businesses, and nonprofit organizations and agencies.

Q. Are donations to the Foundation tax deductible?

- A. As a nonprofit, tax exempt organization under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, gifts to the NNRCF are tax deductible.

Q. What will the funds of the NNRCF be used for?

- A. Funds will be used to promote innovative solutions to the problems associated with natural resources on private lands, particularly with respect to agriculture and soil and water conservation; to promote voluntary partnerships between government and private interests in the conservation of natural resources; to conduct research and undertake educational activities; to conduct and support demonstration projects and make grants to State and local agencies and

nonprofit organizations; and to provide other leadership and support to address conservation challenges, such as the prevention of excessive soil erosion, the enhancement of soil and water quality, and the protection of wetlands, wildlife habitat, and strategically important farmland subject to urban conversion and fragmentation.

Q. How will the grants be made?

- A. Since the Foundation is not yet established, except by law, the mechanism for grant funding will need to be created under the leadership and direction of the Board of Trustees and Executive Director. Announcements for any grant program administered by the Foundation will be published, as required by law.

Q. Can the Foundation engage in international projects?

- A. The authorizing legislation states that the NNRCF may conduct business throughout the United States and the territories and possessions of the United States.

For More Information

If you need more information about the NNRCF, please contact Doug Lawrence at 202-720-8851 or doug.lawrence@usda.gov. Information also is available on the World Wide Web at:
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/>



Visit USDA on the Web at:
<http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>

Note: This is not intended to be a definitive interpretation of farm legislation. Rather, it is preliminary and may change as USDA develops implementing policies and procedures. Please check back for updates.