

SUBCHAPTER A—GENERAL

PART 600—ORGANIZATION

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§ 600.1 General.

(a) The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) was authorized by the Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (Pub. L. 103-354, 7 U.S.C. 6901 note) and established by Secretary's Memorandum 1010-1 (2.b.6), *Reorganization of the Department of Agriculture*, to provide national leadership in the conservation, development, and productive use of the Nation's natural resources. Such leadership encompasses the conservation of soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources with consideration of the many human (economic and sociological) interactions. NRCS is the Federal agency that works with landowners on private lands to help them conserve their natural resources. NRCS employees are highly skilled in many scientific and technical specialties, including soil science, soil conservation, agronomy, biology, agroecology, range conservation, forestry, engineering, geology, hydrology, wetlands science, cultural resources, and economics. NRCS was formerly the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) which was established by the Soil Conservation Act of 1935 (Pub. L. 74-46, 49 Stat. 163 (16 U.S.C. 590 (a-f))). NRCS has responsibility for three major areas:

- (1) Soil and water conservation;
- (2) Natural resource surveys including soil surveys, resources inventory, snow surveys, and water supply forecasting; and

(3) Community resource protection and management including watershed projects, river basin studies and investigations, resource conservation and development areas, land evaluation and site assessment, and emergency watershed protection. In addition, NRCS has leadership for the Wetlands Reserve Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, Farmland Protection Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, Forestry Incentives Program, and Conservation Farm Option. NRCS provides technical support for the Conservation Reserve Program.

(b) The NRCS organization consists of a National Headquarters located in Washington, D.C.; six regional offices; 50 state offices and two equivalent offices in the Caribbean Area and the U.S. Trust Territories of the Pacific Basin Area; approximately 2,500 field offices and 300 specialized offices; 26 plant materials centers; 17 major land resource area soil survey offices; nine national centers; and seven national institutes. A Chief who reports to the USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment heads NRCS.

§ 600.2 National headquarters.

(a) *Chief.* The Chief, with assistance of the Associate Chief, is responsible for administering a coordinated national program of natural resource conservation; planning, directing, and coordinating all program, technical, and administrative activities of NRCS; developing policies and procedures; correlating NRCS conservation programs with other agencies; accepting departmental leadership for programs for other activities assigned by the Secretary of Agriculture; and serving as Equal Employment Opportunity Officer for NRCS.

(b) *Deputy chiefs.* Five deputy chiefs assist the Chief as follows:

(1) *Deputy Chief for Management.* The Deputy Chief for Management is responsible for policies, guidelines, and standards for management services,