

Chief's Statement on Cooperative Conservation -- Helping People Help the Land

At the Natural Resources Conservation Service, cooperative conservation is all about helping people help the land. We know that those who depend upon the land to make their living have a vested interest in sound, sustainable stewardship. We're here to encourage and enable their efforts to conserve natural resources on private working lands.

Since 1935, NRCS has been a partner in conservation. For seven decades, our job has been to serve as a catalyst and coordinator for locally led, community-based approaches that benefit the environment.

This week, NRCS is participating in the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation in St. Louis—a gathering of public and private organizations and individuals similar to the first conservation convocation convened by President Teddy Roosevelt nearly 100 years ago. The focus is finding collaborative, innovative solutions to prevent soil erosion, increase water quality and quantity and establish and maintain wildlife habitat.

Conservation is vital to all who share the landscape—farmers, ranchers, Tribes and communities. Building partnerships and working together to conserve natural resources is in everyone's best interest. We know that economic prosperity and environmental protection go hand-in-hand.

As President Roosevelt put it, "The farmer is a good farmer who, having enabled the land to support himself and to provide for the education of his children, leaves it to them a little better than he found it himself." Cooperative conservation is the best strategy to encourage and assist landowners in conserving the land, for the benefit of all of us today as well as the next generation.