

# Get Involved With the Earth

## Exciting Environmental Careers

### What is the Natural Resources Conservation Service?

The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), formerly known as the Soil Conservation Service, can trace its roots to the Dust Bowl days of the 1930s, when dust storms covered the Midwest, sending clouds of dust as far east as Washington, D.C.

Employees of the Natural Resources Conservation Service work in cooperation with locally sponsored soil and water conservation districts on programs aimed at:

- Reducing erosion
- Improving water quality
- Preventing floods and reducing flood damages
- Promoting proper land use
- Conserving soil, water, air, plants and animals.

NRCS employees serve landusers through field offices serving all counties. A state office staff provides leadership, coordination, and technical assistance to the county offices in delivering NRCS assistance through its various programs.

### What careers are available with NRCS?

There are several careers available with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. They are unique, but have at least one thing in common - they require a commitment to protecting the country's soil and water for future generations. Opportunities for conservation careers exist on a nationwide basis. Read on for information about some of the careers available with the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

#### Soil Conservationists

NRCS soil conservationists spend most of their time working with farmers and other land users. Soil Conservationists suggest ways to conserve soil and water. They offer conservation planning and technical assistance to farmers, land developers, town government or any organization looking for suggestions for efficient use of natural resources. You qualify for a soil conservationist position if you have a college degree in soil conservation or a related natural resources field, such as agronomy, forestry, wildlife, water quality, and others. At least three credits of soils and a minimum of 12 credit hours in a combination of soils, crops, and plants are required.

#### Soil Conservation Technicians

NRCS soil conservation technicians usually work in local field offices. The technician's most important job is assisting farmers and others design and install specialized conservation practices. Technicians work closely with contractors to make sure that practices are built according to NRCS design and specifications. Technicians often make follow-up visits to make sure that practices are working according to plan.

#### Soil Scientists

NRCS soil scientists map and classify soils. They identify soils in the field and delineate the location on aerial photographs. They prepare detailed information about them and help users understand their soil resources. Time is spent in the field and in the office gathering and interpreting the information. They use computers to help analyze the data and they prepare soil maps for use in Geographic Information Systems (GIS). For a soil scientist position, it is necessary to have a college degree in soil science or a closely related field of biological, physical, or earth science. Fifteen semester hours of soils are required.

#### Conservation Engineers

Engineering is an important part of the conservation program. NRCS

# Make a World of Difference.

**Our environment needs people like you who...**

enjoy working with people. Help people improve their natural resources and be recognized as a community leader.

are concerned about our environment. Be a part of the solution to environmental problems.

Working for the Natural Resources Conservation Service is interesting, challenging, and rewarding. You will know that you can make a difference by helping to conserve, sustain, and enhance our nation's resources.

employs many engineers skilled in erosion control, water management, water quality, structure design, construction, hydraulics, soil mechanics, and related subjects. Although job assignments are varied, this work can be very specialized and technical. NRCS engineers may design concrete and earthen dams and streambank and channel erosion-control systems. An NRCS engineer must have a bachelor's degree in engineering. The engineer can then specialize in agricultural, environmental, civil, and other areas of engineering.

## Civil Engineering Technicians

NRCS engineering technicians assist engineers in planning, design, and construction work of conservation practices but also work on their own. The jobs of a technician are as varied as those of an engineer. A two-year college degree in civil engineering, survey crew experience, or construction experience may qualify you for a civil engineering technician position.

### How can I join the NRCS team?

Some NRCS employees begin their careers as student trainees or in a co-op program through their college. If you are attending college or graduate school you may qualify for one of these programs. You earn while you learn and you learn by doing. Contact your campus placement office for more information.

There are also opportunities to gain practical job experience by becoming an Earth Team volunteer. Volunteers provide assistance to full-time employees of NRCS and perform many of the same duties as NRCS professionals.

To learn how to apply for jobs, become a student trainee, or be an Earth Team volunteer with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, contact or write: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Special Examining Unit, P.O. Box 37636, Washington, D.C. 20013.

---

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA Office of Communications at (202) 720-2791.

To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., 20250, or call (202) 720-7327 (voice) or (202) 720-1127 (TDD). USDA is an equal employment opportunity employer.