

# 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Training Conference of the National Organization of Professional Black Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees

## Preliminary Program and Registration Materials

December 1-5, 2003

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### 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Training Conference

The National Organization of Professional Black Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees (The Organization) is hosting their 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Training Conference at the Millennium Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri, December 1-5, 2003. This year's theme is **“Unlocking the Gateway to Natural Resources Through Awareness, Knowledge, Leadership, and Service”**.

The conference will offer an opportunity for learning and sharing of ideas. Participants will select the concurrent sessions they wish to attend. To assist participants with making their selection, course descriptions are provided for each session. Participants must complete and return the enclosed course registration form. Please prioritize the courses you wish to attend with 1 being the highest.

### COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

#### Time Management (Using XP Outlook)

The participants will receive the latest tips on the efficient and effective use Microsoft Office XP Outlook. The course will cover the use of the XP Outlook Calendar, XP Outlook E-mail, XP Outlook Address Book/Contacts, XP Outlook Task Tool and XP Outlook Notepad. The question of how to use these tools to better manage your time will be answered. The objective of this course is to improve the use of time by learning to manage a schedule using XP Outlook.

#### Introduction to ArcGIS I (For ArcView 8.3, ArvEditor 8.3, and ArcInfo 8.3)

In this course participants will be exposed to ArcMap, ArcCatalog, and ArcToolbox, and explore how these applications work together to provide a complete GIS software solution for conservation planning and wetland, and water quality activities. The course introduces thorough demonstrations fundamental GIS concepts, as well as how to create, edit, and work with georeferenced spatial data applied to NRCS business activities. Attendees will observe how to manipulate tabular data, query a GIS database, and present data clearly and efficiently using maps and charts. Instructors at NCGC will provide demonstrations using USDA spatial data. A few additional topics designed for NRCS/USDA will also be discussed such as using an Internet Map Service (IMS), Spatial Analyst, and 3D applications. The objective of the course is to introduce participants to ArcGIS and provide an introduction of how to become a successful ArcGIS user within NRCS.

#### Civil Rights Program (Title VI and Title VII)

This course will look at the agency's official policy and procedures covering Civil Rights. The training will include identifying the required Civil Rights training for all employees. How can the necessary Civil Rights training be obtained? The question will be answered, am I in compliance with Civil Rights regulations. Upon completing this course, the participants will know how to determine if they are in compliance with Civil Rights regulations.

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### Effective Listening

This session will include discussions of common barriers to effective listening and key skills for effective listening.

### Conservation Nutrient Management Plans (CNPM)

This session will provide training on waste utilization and handling which are important component of nutrient management. The regulations and policies we should be familiar with will be pointed out. The instructor will identify some of the experts in the field of nutrient management and discuss how we can get help to assist our customer. This course is designed to provide **continuing education credits** for person certified as Nutrient Management Specialist and increase skill level in CNMP.

### Conservation Information System (CIS)

The Conservation Information System (CIS) combines data from several major System (CIS) accountability systems and provides information that is useful for agency management. Its purpose is to assist the agency in managing resources efficiently and effectively. The CIS was designed to answer several key questions that agency managers are asked each day about our Agency's performance, budget, and costs. It is a web-based system that gives real-time, on-line access to relevant management information in a format useful to managers at all levels of our agency. The CIS is designed to provide the best estimate of the cost (based on location worked) of programs and activities by location across the country and to relate these costs to performance accomplishments. Information is available by National, Region, State, County Office and Congressional District reports. The system will also help meet the requirements of GPRA and the President's Management

Agenda for Budget Performance Integration. Participants will learn about the relationships between the NRCS accountability databases and how this information can help them to manage for better operational efficiency. Participants will receive a thorough understanding of the CIS, including its development and purpose. Participants will also learn how to access the site, about reports available, and how the data can best be used to analyze agency performance. Limitations of the date will also be covered.

### Leadership Skills Forum

During this session the participants will learn the definition of leadership and some chief qualities of a good leader. The objective of this course is to provide skill enhancement tools that afford individuals opportunities to become a more effective leader.

### Management Tools for the Future

The business tools that the field office uses- PRMS, Toolkit, TCAS – will be undergoing significant changes for Fiscal Year 2004. New tools will be available. Conservation Journal, Program Operations Information Tracking System, and Program Contract System. Because these systems are web based, we will be able to mine information from an information warehouse and use it for numerous applications such as to reporting progress. This will decrease the amount of data entry required from the field and increase the quality of our information. The discussion during this session will center on how these new processes will provide us superior information to articulate what NRCS does with its programs funding. Participants will learn about new field office business tool efficiencies and what they will provide.

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They will show how the Agency has been successful in using the information collected in these systems to articulate how NRCS utilizes the resources that the agency is given to achieve outcomes on the ground.

### Mind Mapping: A Tool Critical Thinking

Many concerns faced by leaders are complex and fuzzy and have multiple causes and solutions. Mind mapping is a creative, real-time, energizing method for illustrating issue complexity. Mind mapping promotes creative problem solving by helping participants to visualize data, to see leadership interrelationships among data elements, and to look at new solutions to old problems. The objective of this course is to provide participants with a method of analyzing complex problems by reframing the issues to find a better and creative solution.

### Outreach/ Limited Resource/ Beginning Farmers

This course will look at how the Farm Bill programs and activities address Outreach/Limited Resources/Beginning Farmers. The following subjects will be covered by detail discussions:

- The use of Minority Technical Service Providers
- Are the Limited Resources/Beginning Farmers concerns covered in our g provision?
- How is the Farm Bill programs and provision being communicated to Limited Resources/Beginning Farmers?
- Are the Farm Bill programs and policies design to address Limited Resources/Beginning Farmers concerns?

Upon completing this course the participants will be able to determine the best way to help Limited Resources/Beginning Farmers use the Farm Bill programs.

### Networking Skills

This session will look at best ways to do networking. How to set up and maintain networks, both internal and external to the agency. Methods to improve our business process through the use of networking will be explored. This course will also cover the very important social graces of networking. Upon completing this course, the participants will be able to identify and use networking tools to improve the business process.

### Protracts

Protracts is a web-based application for managing NRCS conservation programs at all levels of the agency. The course will provide an overview of the software's capabilities and an update on current and future enhancements. The objective of this course is to provide awareness on how the software program is being used to make program contracting more efficient and data tracking easier and accurate.

### RUSLE 2

RUSLE 2 is the new field tool to be used by NRCS in 2003. It is a Windows-based model that will be placed in field offices for used by field personnel for conservation planning. The speaker will discuss the development and demonstrate the use of RUSLE 2 in a windows based computer environment. RUSLE 2 will replace the hard copy lookup tables used with the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE1).

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### Employee Relocation

This course explains in plain language the allowances provided to eligible employees making a permanent change of duty station. It covers travel authorizations, advances and vouchers, house hunting, en-route travel, temporary quarters, shipment of household goods/automobiles, and real estate expenses. Upon completing this course, participants will have an understanding of relocation benefits and allowable expenses that can be claimed when changing permanent duty locations.

### Retirement System (CSRS)

Retirement is something most of us will do one day. But how do we plan for it? This course will discuss planning for retirement, health and life insurance benefits after retirement, creditable service, thrift saving plan and other aspects under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). The objective of this course is to help people think about the need to set goals, objectives, and develop plans for their golden years.

### Rhythm of Life

Improve the quality of your life through a lifelong practice of moderate regular physical activity. The evidence linking physical activity to numerous health improvements is astounding. Regular physical activity greatly reduces the risk of coronary heart disease, developing diabetes, hypertension, and many other diseases. This course provides tips on healthy living even with hectic schedules. The objective of this course is to show how regular physical activity and eating healthy is an achievable means to a healthier life.

### Skills Information Management System (SIMS)

Over the past year a small group of people within NRCS has been working to develop and implement a system that tracks skills and competencies of employees. The Skills Information Management System (SIMS) will provide critical information to assist agency leadership in decision-making as well as help NRCS capitalize on employees' skills and identify additional skills needed to meet the agency's goals and objectives. SIMS benefits to employees include an additional career planning tool, an enhanced training program, ability to update skills, and stay with technology.

### Parliamentary Procedure

Presenters will demonstrate "How to conduct a successful meeting using proper Parliamentary Procedure". The skit will involve actual events as well as role-play events. This demonstration will enhance the skills of leaders and members, whether experienced or inexperienced. The objective of this course is to provide organizational leaders and members with skills in conducting high quality and efficient meetings.

### E-Directive System

This course will look at the agency's official filing system. Training will include how documents are entered into the e-directives systems. The question will be answered, what items are currently in the e-directive system and how do I retrieve them? Upon completing this course, the participant will know how the E-Directive system works and be able to retrieve information from the system.

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### Open Forum With the Deputy Chief for Science and Technology and the Deputy Chief for Soil Survey and Resource Assessment

The Deputy Chiefs will provide an update on current activities in their areas and answer questions from participants. The objective for this course is for participants to have a good understanding of current initiatives and the future direction of the Agency.

### Effective Presentations

This course will outline the steps speakers must take to develop and deliver public presentations. They will also discuss various presentation, media, methods, and styles of delivery. The objective of this course is to demonstrate presentation techniques, which will enable the participant to present or exchange information in an effective professional manner.

### E-Government

This course will look at the various tools that make up electronic government. How is NRCS currently using e-Government? Also, new ways to expand e-Government will be explored. The objective of this course is to expand participant knowledge on how e-Government can be used to better serve our internal and external customers.

### Open Forum with the Deputy Chief for Management and the Deputy Chief for Strategic Planning and Accountability

The Deputy Chiefs will provide an update on current activities in their areas and answer questions for participants. The objective for this course is for participants to have a good understanding of current initiatives and the future direction of the Agency.

### Retirement System (FERS)

Retirement is something most of us will do one day. But how do we plan for it? This course will discuss planning for retirement, health, and life insurance benefits after retirement, creditable service, and thrift saving plan, social security, and other aspects under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). The objective of this course is to help people think about the need to set goals, objectives, and develop plans for their golden years.

### Ethics Pertaining to the Farm Bill

This session will look at the things we should know when government employees are participating in Farm Bill programs. The session is designed to answer the question, what and where are the regulation pertaining to Ethics for government employees? As an employee how do I manage Ethics while implementing the Farm Bill? The objective of this course is designed to familiarize the participant with the various components of Ethics do's and don'ts of the Farm Bill.

### Executive Briefing Methods

Many opportunities occur to brief management on various programs, reports, and activities. This session will look at the best ways to package your information and deliver it to management. The course will cover the do's and don'ts of executive briefings. Upon completing this course the participant will know how to conduct an effective briefing for management.

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### Financial Planning

This session will provide basic information on financial planning, protecting your heir property, wills, trusts, and insight on the power of investing. The objective of this course is to provide information that will help participants make decisions now to prepare for the future.

### Open Forum with the Deputy Chief for Programs

The Deputy Chief will provide an update on current activities in the Program area and answer questions from participants. Upon completing this course participants will have a good understanding of current initiatives and the future direction of the Agency.

### Federal Grants, Contribution, and Cooperative Agreements

Present basic information to employees who use grants, contribution or cooperative agreements to support the mission of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and to help them determine the appropriate legal instrument to use. Its use is designed for anyone who has a role in processing agreements or grants with other Federal agencies, State, and local governments and private sector organizations. Emphasis will be placed on requirements for program implementation. The objective of this course is to enhance employee's knowledge of NRCS contracting procedures, regulations, and requirements with emphasis on program implementation.

### Flexible Spending Account

Flexible Spending Account (FSA) is another benefit available to Federal employees to ensure availability of funds to pay out-of-pocket medical expenses or dependent care of a child or

parent and the tax benefits. The course will provide enough information for employees to decide if the program will meet their needs, how to enroll, and how to estimate allotments.

### Unconscious Discrimination

Unconscious discrimination is something we all do, but are unaware of because it happens as a result of two things: how we are socialized and the way our brains take in and process information. Because it occurs without our conscious realization, it can have real impacts on the work environment – how we hire and retain; how successful we are in our outreach efforts. At the end of this course, you will be more aware of your own hidden biases and see how unconscious discrimination can have an impact in the work environment.

### GPS/Mobile Data Collection/Digital Camera Training

This course will provide an introduction of how Geospatial technology can benefit the NRCS user. The students will be exposed to the 3 different levels of GPS implementation and the applications and capabilities of each. The first level is the use of the GPS receiver for “in the field” conservation and resource inventory functions. The second level will explore using the GPS data to create GIS point, line, and polygon features. The third level of implementation will look at using mobile computers for GIS on-site and real-time mapping applications. Instructors from NCGC will demonstrate the application of the digital camera and simulate use of the GPS for GIS feature creation with and without the use of a mobile device for real-time mapping. The course objective is to provide an introduction to GPS applications and equipment available to NRCS

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through the USDA GPS purchase contract currently being deployed.

### Homeland Security

A Department – wide National Interagency Incident Management System (NIMS) is being implemented. This course highlights some of the pertinent features of this system, which includes command and control, coordination, and publications management. USDA has developed additional security procedures for use when the threat of terrorist attacks increases. These too will be discussed. Upon completing this course participants will understand the different threat levels and be prepared to respond to national emergencies.

### Integrated Acquisition System (IAS)

Integrated Acquisition System (IAS) is a modern, web-based e-Procurement solution designed to streamline and automate contract management and acquisition processes throughout USDA, and ultimately enhance support of USDA mission-critical activities. This course will teach how this system will be used within NRCS to lower purchasing costs, reduce lead time to complete acquisitions, improve customer service, support integrated planning and budgeting and increase opportunities for female, minority, and small and disadvantaged businesses. The objective of this course is to make employees aware of IAS and benefits of using this electronic procurement tool.

### Sexual Harassment

This course will provide a definition and overview of sexual harassment along with the following:

- Sexual Harassment Facts
- Sexual Harassment Liability

- Elements of a Claim of Sex Harassment
- Types of Sexual Harassment
- Tools for Preventing Sexual Harassment

Upon completing this course participants will learn how to recognize and prevent sexual harassment and understand its negative impacts on productivity in the workplace.

### Writing KSAs

Discusses and explains selected items in the NRCS Human Resources Merit Promotion Plan in addition to providing “tips” on how to respond to KSAs for federal employment. The objective of this course is to provide tips to assist the participant in responding to KSA’s.

### Technical Paper Session

New science, techniques, and improvement are being made each day in the scientific community. These sessions are a series of topics that will provide information on the latest technology, products, and services in the area of crops and livestock production, wildlife, air quality, and the interaction of agriculture and the environment. The various technical papers will provide ideas and research that is available that can be used to solve new and old problems related to the technical and social issues related to conservation implementation.

### Effective Conservation Assessment

The National Resources Inventory (NRI) Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) is designed to measure environmental benefits effects on conservation programs. This study is a partnership effort between NASS, FSA, ARS, and NRCS. The attendee will learn about the study content and design. The objective of this course is to help attendees understand how the NRI-CEAP will

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be used to support conservation programs.

### E-FOTG

The Electronic Field Office Technical Guide was one of the first tools developed in SmartTech initiative. This course will highlight how the E-FOTG can be optimized in service centers and in the public and private sectors. The speaker will inform attendees how NRCS is progressing in its goal of having the completed FOTG available electronically and how it will be used at the National level to update technical guidance and future developments.

### All in the Family

The instructor will provide information on the importance of becoming knowledgeable of the political and economic implications of land ownership. Participants will become knowledgeable of the type of family land-holding and business organization that perpetuate land ownership. This will be done by examining and understanding four principal tactics used to prevent involuntary land loss.

### A Diverse View – Customer Service in Your Office

The course will explore some of the dos and don'ts of good customer service. It will also provide you with some fresh ideas on how to improve your customer service.

### **Registration**

The registration area will be open:

December 1, 2003 – 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.  
December 2, 2003 – 6:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

December 3, 2003 – 6:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

### Registration Information

Complete and return the registration form along with the appropriate registration fee.

Additional registration forms can be printed from The Organization home page at:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/organ>

The training conference registration fee covers program materials, 3 continental breakfasts, all morning and afternoon breaks, three luncheons, one banquet ticket, and other materials for each participant. Early registration fees are \$290.00 for members and \$340.00 for nonmembers if received and post marked by **November 1, 2003**. Registration fees will increase to \$335.00 for members and \$385.00 for nonmembers for registration received after November 1, 2003. Family members and guests can purchase individual luncheon(s) and banquet tickets as listed on the registration form. Tickets may be purchased on site. Tickets will be included with your registration materials.

Organization members who are life members qualify for a 20% discount on registration and merchandise sold by The Organization, special luncheon and banquet seating, and a special meeting registration line. Life members are entitled to attend all activities.

Student rates are available to individuals who are full time students and have proper identification.

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Payment for the annual training conference registration will be accepted in US funds through money orders, checks, or credit cards. **PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH THROUGH THE MAIL**

### Cancellation Policy

Cancellation of training conference registration must be received in writing by November 1, 2003, to receive a full refund. Cancellation in writing received after November 1, 2003 is subject to a processing fee of \$45.00. No refund will be made for the training conference after November 8, 2003. Due to commitments made to the service providers this policy must be followed.

### Special Needs

Please indicate on the registration form any physical, dietary, or other special needs. The planning committee and Missouri Chapter volunteers will be present at the registration area and are available to assist all conference participants.

### Accommodations

The Millennium Hotel is holding accommodations including suites, standard kings, queens, and double rooms. The price of the room is \$76.00 per night plus tax. For reservations, individual may the reservation department toll free number at 1-866-866-6455 or 314-241-9500 between 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday (be sure to request The National Organization Of Professional Black NRCS Employees room block). Cut-off date for room reservation is November 1, 2003. The address of the hotel is 200 South Fourth Street, St. Louis, Missouri. The hotel does not accept debit cards.

### Transportation

There are several options for local transportation. A taxis cab ride is \$25.00 one-way. To ride the Metro Link from the Airport to downtown is \$3.00 ([www.metrostlouis.org](http://www.metrostlouis.org) or call 314-231-2345). The Transexpress is \$13.00 one-way and \$21.00 round trip to the hotel ( [www.transexpress-stl.com](http://www.transexpress-stl.com) or call 314 -428-7799). In addition, rental cars are available at the airport.

### Parking

Parking is available at a garage directly connected to the hotel by an enclosed walkway. Registered hotel guests have unlimited in-out privileges. The current parking fee is \$10.00 per day, subject to change.

### Activities At A Glance

#### Monday, December 1, 2003

Exhibits and Poster Setup	8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
College/HR Fair	1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Registration	1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Silent Auction	4:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Executive Board Meeting	5:00 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.
Membership Drive	5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Organization's Store	5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Committee Meetings	6:00 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.
Regional Meetings	7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Moderator's Meeting	8:45 p.m. to 9:15 p.m.

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### Tuesday, December 2, 2003

Continental Breakfast	6:00 a.m. to 7:15 a.m.
Registration	6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
College/HR Fair	8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Picture Taking Session	5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Silent Auction	5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
2004 Membership Drive	5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Executive Board Meeting	5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
Organization's Store	5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Networking Session	6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

### Wednesday, December 3, 2003

Continental Breakfast	6:00 a.m. to 7:15 a.m.
Registration	7:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Membership Drive	5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Silent Auction	5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Chapter/Region Pictures	5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Organization's Store	5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Executive Board Meeting	5:15 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.
Annual Business Meeting	6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

### Thursday, December 4, 2003

Continental Breakfast	6:00 p.m. to 7:15 a.m.
Exhibits/Posters Breakdown	2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Banquet	6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Mixer	9:00 p.m.

### Friday, December 5, 2003

Training Conference Evaluation 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**\*\*Remember to include both the course and conference registration forms when sending in your information.**