

The



Link

THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL BLACK NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE EMPLOYEES



A Message from the President

GREETINGS! THE PAST 4 MONTHS HAVE BEEN VERY PRODUCTIVE FOR US. WE HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN MANY OF THE AGENCY'S PROGRAM ACTIVITIES THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO THE ORGANIZATION. WE HAVE EXPLORED OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE ORGANIZATION TO BE AN ACTIVE PARTNER IN PROGRAM DELIVERY TO SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED AND MINORITY FARMERS. THIS EFFORT, WE HOPE, WILL BE FINALIZED IN THE COMING WEEKS.

ALSO, WE ARE WORKING ON TEAMS THAT ARE ADDRESSING RECOMMENDATIONS AND DEVELOPING ACTIONS THAT ARE PART OF THE SECRETARY'S CIVIL RIGHTS ACTION TEAM REPORT. AS SUCH, IT PROVIDES US ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO INVOLVE THE ORGANIZATION IN ITS EFFORTS TO DELIVER TRAINING THAT WILL ENHANCE THE AWARENESS OF PROGRAMS AND PROGRAM PARTICIPATION BY OUR MEMBERSHIP.

THE ORGANIZATION'S LEADERSHIP SPENT ONE AND ONE-HALF DAYS DEVELOPING OUR ACTION PLAN FOR THE NEXT 2 YEARS. THE PLAN PROVIDES A THEME, A VISION, AND A MISSION. THE THEME, "BRIDGING THE GAP TO THE NEW MILLENNIUM," IS A TIMELY ONE. IT PROVIDES THE OPPORTUNITY FOR US TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE BUILDING OF THE BRIDGE TO THE 21ST CENTURY.

OUR VISION, "IN HARMONY, COMMITTED TO QUALITY LEADERSHIP IN SERVICING A DIVERSE CLIENTELE," WILL ALLOW US TO FOCUS ON DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION AND THOSE WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM OUR ORGANIZATION. THE MISSION, "TO ENHANCE THE AWARENESS AND TO EXPAND THE PARTICIPATION OF EACH MEMBER AND SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED AND MINORITY LANDUSERS IN THE CONSERVATION OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT," IS IN KEEPING WITH WHAT MANY OF THE SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED MINORITY FARMERS TOLD THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE AT THE RECENT LISTENING FORUMS. WE SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO REGAIN THE AGENCY AND DEPARTMENT'S CREDIBILITY WITH SUCH GROUPS.

AGAIN, I WANT TO ENCOURAGE EACH MEMBER TO BE AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN YOUR NATIONAL, REGIONAL, OR LOCAL CHAPTER. THIS FIRST MUST BE DONE BY BEING A CURRENT MEMBER IN GOOD FINANCIAL STANDING. TO ACCOMMODATE YOU, WE ARE PROVIDING A MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION WITH THIS NEWSLETTER.

James E. Tatum
JAMES E. TATUM
PRESIDENT

THE ORGANIZATION OFFICERS...

President
JAMES E. TATUM

Vice President
SARAH R. MARSHALL

Correspondence Secretary
JACQUELINE D. THIBODEAUX

Recording Secretary
JACQUELINE D. ROSCOE

Treasurer
WILLIE R. RAWLS

Parliamentarian
HARVEY MACK

Historian
M. DEWAYNE MAYS

Regional Representatives:

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PERCY MAGEE

National Headquarters
LYNETTE HARRIS

Northeast
WILLIAM TAYLOR

Northern Plains
DEMIRICE G. BOOZER

South Central
ANN ENGLISH

Southeast
REGINALD SPEARS

West
LEONARD JORDAN

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1996 Annual Meeting
Highlights

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES:
Fusing Vision and Values

by DENISE BROOKS, PROCUREMENT ANALYST
WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE 5TH ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL BLACK NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE EMPLOYEES WAS HELD DECEMBER 4-7, 1996, IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA. OVER 400 NRCS PARTICIPANTS ATTENDED THE CONFERENCE.

BEVERLY HARVARD, ATLANTA CHIEF OF POLICE, WELCOMED OUR ORGANIZATION TO ATLANTA. SHE TOLD US TO ATTEND AT LEAST TWO TRAINING SESSIONS A YEAR — YOU ARE NEVER TOO OLD TO LEARN.

CHIEF HARVARD, SET THE TONE FOR THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER DR. EDWIN J. NICHOLS, A CLINICAL/INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGIST, SPECIALIZING IN ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. DR. NICHOLS, EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF VISION AND VALUES IN ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES.

OUR PRESENTERS WERE THE BEST OF THE BEST AND INSPIRED US WITH THEIR TOPICS ON: THE GEOGRAPHY OF HOPE, THE FARM BILL UPDATE, FIELD SERVICE CENTERS, THE 2501 PROGRAM - SMALL FARMER OUTREACH TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, AND STRATEGIES FOR SURVIVAL IN A NON-NURTURING ENVIRONMENT.

THE FOUR-DAY TRAINING SESSION ALSO PROVIDED WORKSHOPS IN DEVELOPING THE LEADER IN YOU,



“STRATEGIES FOR SURVIVAL IN A NON-NURTURING ENVIRONMENT” — PRESENTED BY BARBARA S. TALLEY, PRESIDENT, BUSINESS SUPPORT TRAINING

MALE/FEMALE COMMUNICATIONS STYLES, AND WELLNESS IN THE WORK PLACE.

WE LEARNED THAT:

- PERCEPTION IS GREATER THAN REALITY
- TODAY IS A GIFT THAT IS WHY IT IS CALLED THE PRESENT
- CHANGE IS INEVITABLE, SO IF IT IS GOING TO BE, IT IS UP TO ME
- MAKE A POINT OF ATTENDING AT LEAST TWO TRAINING SESSIONS A YEAR
- SPEND MORE TIME PULLING PEOPLE UP, RATHER THAN PUSHING THEM DOWN

THESE ARE THE THINGS THAT STICK OUT MOST IN MY MIND AS BEING SOMETHING WE WERE ABLE TO TAKE BACK AND USE IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES, BOTH AT WORK AND AT HOME, REGARDLESS OF OUR LOCATION.

“The Organization’s”
1996 Award Recipients

ODOM RECEIVES “THE ORGANIZATION” SCHOLARSHIP AWARD!

THE SCHOLARSHIP CHECK FOR \$1,000.00 WAS PRESENTED TO AARON D. ODOM ON FEBRUARY 11, 1997. THE PRESENTATION WAS MADE BY MR. JAMES C. BROWN, USDA/1890 LIAISON OFFICER, AND DR. ALTON THOMPSON, CHAIRMAN, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION, ECONOMICS, AND RURAL SOCIOLOGY. AARON IS A SENIOR MAJORING IN AGRICULTURE ECONOMICS. HE WILL GRADUATE IN MAY, 1997 AND IS CONSIDERING ATTENDING LAW SCHOOL NEXT YEAR.



OPENING CEREMONY
EARL COSBY
STATE CONSERVATIONIST, GEORGIA

GENDER COMMUNICATIONS STYLES

PRESENTED BY JACQUELYN E. FLOWERS
BY DENISE BROOKS, PROCUREMENT ANALYST,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

MS. FLOWERS INFORMED US THAT WORDS CAN INFLUENCE HOW PEOPLE FEEL ABOUT YOU. SHE SAID PEOPLE HAVE A TENDENCY OF WATCHING WHAT YOU DO—NOT WHAT YOU SAY 93 PERCENT OF THE TIME, AND THE OTHER 7 PERCENT IS SPENT ON YOUR CONVERSATION. SHE REMINDS US THAT WORDS USED CAN MAKE OR BREAK ANY SITUATION. WE MUST REMEMBER, WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO CONTROL WHAT OTHERS SAY; HOWEVER, WE CAN CONTROL WHAT WE SAY WHICH IS SOMETIMES A START TO MAKING A CHANGE.



PICTURED (LEFT TO RIGHT) ARE: JAMES C. BROWN, USDA/1890 LIAISON OFFICER (WHO WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN GETTING AARON TO APPLY FOR THE SCHOLARSHIP), AARON D. ODOM, SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT, AND DR. ALTON THOMPSON, CHAIRMAN, OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION, ECONOMICS, AND RURAL SOCIOLOGY (SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE, NORTH CAROLINA A&T STATE UNIVERSITY).

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 1996
SMALL FARMER OF THE YEAR!**



PICTURED (LEFT TO RIGHT): ESTELLA WILLIAMS, CIVIL RIGHTS SPECIALIST, SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL OFFICE AND BEN BURCKETT, SMALL FARMER OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENT.

*Congratulations for
A Job Well Done!*

**1996 NOPBNRCSE
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**



USDA *What's Happening
in NRCS*

**AMERICA'S PRIVATE LAND,
A GEOGRAPHY OF HOPE**

by HERMAN NORWOOD, DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST,
OTTAWA, KANSAS

THE "AMERICA'S PRIVATE LAND, A GEOGRAPHY OF HOPE" is a new booklet that all NRCS employees should have in their possession. This booklet presents our agency's conservation vision for the 21st century.

As I reviewed this booklet, I found that it contains information that our partners and clients should have available to them.

Following are talking points from the booklet.

CONSERVATION IS A NEW COMMODITY CROP IN AMERICA, AND OUR PRIVATE LAND PRODUCES IT.

SEVENTY PERCENT OF THE LAND IN THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES IS PRIVATELY OWNED AND MOST OF THAT IS IN AGRICULTURE.

PRIVATE LAND IS AMERICA'S "WORKING LAND," PRODUCING HEALTHY SOIL, CLEAN AIR AND WATER, WILDLIFE HABITAT, AND SCENIC LANDSCAPES, JUST AS IT PRODUCES CORN, COTTON, AND CATTLE.

CONSERVATION IS A PRIMARY MISSION OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

WHILE AMERICA'S POPULATION IS LARGELY URBAN, ITS LAND REMAINS AGRICULTURAL: ABOUT TWO PERCENT OF OUR PEOPLE CARE FOR MORE THAN HALF OUR LAND.

MANY FARMERS, RANCHERS, AND OTHER LANDOWNERS ARE GOOD CONSERVATIONISTS, AND THEY'VE ACHIEVED A GREAT DEAL. BUT THEY CAN DO MORE - WITH THE RIGHT KIND OF ASSISTANCE FROM THE REST OF US.

A RENEWED NATIONAL COMMITMENT TO CONSERVATION ON PRIVATE LAND IS THE NEXT GREAT ENVIRONMENTAL GOAL. GOOD STEWARDSHIP OF PRIVATE LAND IS NECESSARY TO OUR ACHIEVING THE RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND POLLUTION REDUCTION GOALS THE WORLD HAS COPIED.

LOCAL ACTION - NEIGHBORS WORKING TOGETHER IN A VOLUNTARY, DEMOCRATIC WAY - IS THE MOST PROMISING FOUNDATION FOR LAND STEWARDSHIP. AFTER ALL, EVERYBODY IS SOMEBODY'S NEIGHBOR.

A PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURE DEPENDS ON A HEALTHY LAND.

CONTACT YOUR STATE PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST TO OBTAIN A COPY OF "AMERICA'S PRIVATE LAND, A GEOGRAPHY OF HOPE".

**NATIONAL INFORMATION
MEASUREMENT SYSTEM (NIMS)
UPDATE**

by ELVIS GRAVES, NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGER
WASHINGTON, D.C.

WITH THE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES THAT HAVE OCCURRED IN FOCS/NIMS DURING THE LAST SIX MONTHS, THE SYSTEM IS BECOMING A MORE USEFUL TOOL AT THE FIELD OFFICE LEVEL AND FOR MANAGEMENT AS WELL. THE TECHNOLOGY OF TODAY ALLOWS US TO BECOME MORE EFFICIENT, WHICH IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT IN THE ERA OF GOVERNMENT DOWNSIZING.

THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF CONSERVATION PLANNING BECOME MORE ESSENTIAL AS WE MOVE FURTHER INTO THE ELECTRONIC ENVIRONMENT OF CASE FILE MANAGEMENT. FOCS REQUIRES THAT THE PLANNING PROCEDURES OUTLINED IN THE NATIONAL PLANNING PROCEDURES HANDBOOK BE FOLLOWED. THE SUCCESS OF NIMS IS CONTINGENT UPON FIELD DOCUMENTATION OF WORK PRODUCTS. WITHOUT THIS DOCUMENTATION THERE IS NO DATA AVAILABLE FOR NIMS TO TRANSMIT. WHEN WE TALK ABOUT THE ABILITY OR INABILITY OF NIMS TO PROVIDE US WITH INFORMATION, THERE IS A DIRECT CORRELATION BETWEEN WHAT WE GET FROM THE SYSTEM AND WHAT IS BEING DOCUMENTED AT THE FIELD OFFICE LEVEL. THERE IS A SIMPLE BUT EFFECTIVE EXAMPLE THAT I LIKE TO USE. WHEN WE GO TO THE ATM WE HAVE EXPECTATIONS THAT WE CAN GET MONEY OUT. HOWEVER, IN ORDER FOR US TO TAKE OUT, THERE MUST HAVE BEEN AN ENTRY INTO OUR ACCOUNT AT SOME POINT. THIS IS THE SAME WITH FOCS/NIMS.

THE FUTURE OF THIS AGENCY REQUIRES ALL OF US TO BECOME KNOWLEDGEABLE, IF NOT PROFICIENT, IN THE USE OF EXISTING TECHNOLOGY. NRCS IS LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE AND THE POSSIBILITIES AVAILABLE WITH GIS TECHNOLOGY. THIS MAY ALLOW INTERFACE WITH OUR CUSTOMERS' HOME COMPUTERS OR COMMUNICATIONS WITH COMPUTERS IN REMOTE LOCATIONS VIA SATELLITE. THE RAPID TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES REQUIRES US TO EMBRACE THE TECHNOLOGY OR BECOME CONSUMED BY ITS TREMENDOUS GROWTH.

THIS QUARTER MARKS THE FIRST TIME NIMS' HISTORY WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SUCCESSFULLY RECEIVE PERFORMANCE DATA FROM STATES WITHOUT ENCOUNTERING MAJOR DATA TRANSMISSION PROBLEMS. THIS MARKS A MILESTONE IN THE ABILITY OF THE SYSTEM TO TRANSMIT AND RECEIVE INFORMATION, AGGREGATE DATA, AND REPORT THE DATA IN AN EASY TO READ AND UNDERSTANDABLE FORMAT.

AS WE CONTINUE TO DEVELOP OUR STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND PERFORMANCE PLANS, NIMS BECOMES A VITAL PART OF THE AGENCY'S ABILITY TO REPORT ITS ACCOMPLISHMENTS. NRCS CAN USE THIS INFORMATION TO ASK FOR AND RECEIVE BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS.

A PRELIMINARY LOOK AT THE DATABASE INDICATES THAT DURING THE FIRST QUARTER OF FY97 MORE THAN 200,000 CLIENTS BENEFITED FROM SOME KIND OF RESOURCE OR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE INVOLVING BUSINESSES CONTAINING GREATER THAN 29 MILLION ACRES. WE DELAYED THE SUBMISSION OF FIRST QUARTER DATA UNTIL MARCH 1; THEREFORE, THE NUMBERS OUTLINED REFLECT THE AGENCY'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM OCTOBER 1996, THROUGH

FEBRUARY 1997. NRCS employees provided assistance on 32,000 conservation systems on 6 million acres. Currently, about one half of the nation's 1.4 billion acre, non-federal land base is recorded in FOCS, and 218 million acres are covered by a planned conservation system.

Additional information can be obtained by calling Elvis Graves at (202)720-3750.

Y2K

YEAR 2000 ISSUE

by Anita Kay Byrd, *Computer Specialist*
Madison, Wisconsin

THE YEAR 2000 (Y2K) problem, also known as Century Date Change relates to how computers and other systems handle the change from Fiscal Year 99 to Fiscal Year 00; December 31, 1999 to January 1, 2000, and the year 2000 as a leap year. This problem could potentially affect all computer systems and systems using embedded micro processors in the world today. Both systems hardware and application software are affected by this anomaly. Additionally, many systems which are not considered computers will be affected, for example, VCRs, elevators, GPS, phones, as well as many other items people take for granted today.

With the arrival of the year 2000, the various systems will not understand that the year "00" stands for 2000. Unless the various systems are fixed or replaced, they will fail at the turn of the century in one of three ways:

- they will reject legitimate entries, or
- they will compute erroneous results, or
- they will simply not run

NRCS has prepared a Year 2000 Management Plan in response to guidance provided by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Government Accounting Office (GAO). The plan calls for the establishment of an NRCS year 2000 program team to develop the overall year 2000 strategy for the agency.

The Year 2000 Program Team was assembled under the direction of Tom Christensen, Acting Chief Information Officer (CIO)/Information Technology Division Director. The initial kick-off of the team's activities took place March 13-14, 1997 in Ft. Collins, Colorado. The CIO has appointed Lyle Rich, Information Technology Division,

as team leader for this team. Members of the team include representatives from NRCS centers and regions. I represent the Midwest Region on the team.

Our team will fully define how the year 2000 problem will impact NRCS, distribute pertinent information, provide updated progress reports, and provide agency support in obtaining a solution to the problem. We will also be involved in inventory and analysis of all systems supporting NRCS core business areas, and prioritizing system conversion and system replacement. We will be responsible for modifications to the agency's year 2000 management plan, as well as development of a year 2000 project plan, and contingency plan.

All employees will need to have an understanding of the problem, and how it will affect them. Additionally, program managers will receive information on estimated costs of conversion, systems affected, and other pertinent information needed for planning decisions as it is developed.

Additional information will be available on the NRCS Year 2000 home page in the near future.

Civil Rights

USDA Adopts Proactive Approach to Civil Rights

by Sylvia T. Rainford
Public Affairs Specialist, Pennsylvania

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE has undertaken a bold initiative to set a new course for the future of civil rights in the department. To carry out this initiative, USDA Secretary Dan Glickman created the Civil Rights Action Team in December 1996 in response to complaints and demonstrations by minority farmers. In January 1997, the team held 12 public hearings in 11 locations nationwide to hear concerns from USDA employees and customers. After the hearings, the team presented 92 recommendations to Secretary Glickman in its final report, entitled "Civil Rights at the United States Department of Agriculture: A Report by the Civil Rights Action Team." USDA released the report on February 28, 1997 during a video conference to all employees.

Glickman named NRCS Associate Chief Pearlle Reed as Acting Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Administration with the

authority and responsibility for all USDA civil rights programs. Glickman also issued the department's new mission statement for civil rights, which includes the statement, "every customer and every employee must be treated fairly and equitably and with dignity and respect."

Reed has set a goal of six months to implement most of the recommendations in the report. He has tapped several NRCS employees to help him in this effort, including Lloyd Wright, who now heads the department's Civil Rights Division; Kathy Gugulis, who heads the Implementation Team; and Lee Bensey, who is now USDA's Director of Human Resources Management.

The civil rights team report is a "must read" for all employees, particularly minorities and women. The report documents institutional and underlying problems with civil rights in the department and offers recommendations to solve them. For instance, a recurring problem is that many managers are not committed to or are not being held accountable for their actions on civil rights. Lack of commitment and accountability appears to be a recurring problem mentioned in this audit of USDA's civil rights performance.

The team offered the following recommendations to solve these and other problems:

- Delegate to the Assistant Secretary for Administration full civil rights authority.
- Ensure the Department has measurable goals for treating customers and employees fairly and equitably.
- Adopt a USDA policy on reprisals.
- Remove USDA employees who do not perform adequately on civil rights or who abuse their authority.

Now the team has moved to the implementation phase under the leadership of Gugulis, the former head of NRCS Strategic Planning Division. The team has created four action teams, with 33 subteams, to tackle the problems and carry out the recommendations.

People On The Move

by Jackie Diggs, *Computer Specialist*,
Washington, D.C.

NINETEEN NINETY-SIX WAS A TIME OF MOVEMENT and change and a time of reorganization throughout the agency. Many NRCS employees took the buyout. Other

employees transferred to agency positions which offered career opportunities and advancement. Congratulations to our members who were successful in meeting their career goals. We wish all them good luck in their new endeavors. Future newsletters will continue to highlight career reassignments and placements of Organization members. Stay tuned to this box for more information.

REASSIGNMENTS

PEARLIE REED, since January 1994, was the Associate Chief of the NRCS. On February 28, 1997, Secretary Dan Glickman named Mr. Reed the Acting Assistant Secretary for Administration. In addition to managing administration and management functions at USDA, he will also have responsibility for civil rights and civil right enforcement. Mr. Reed will also continue as team leader for the Civil Rights Action Team.

LLOYD WRIGHT, former Division Director for Conservation Operations Division, has accepted the position of Director, Office of Civil Rights for USDA.

Both **LAWRENCE CLARK**, former State Conservationist for Ohio and **CAROL JETT**, former State Conservationist for Michigan, have moved to National Headquarters as the Deputy Chief for Programs and Soil Survey and Resource Assessment, respectively.

Two Organization members were promoted to State Conservationist positions this year. **JAMES FORD**, formerly of the South East Region, transferred to the Tennessee State Office. **KALVEN TRICE**, of the Arkansas State Office, accepted his position with the same office.

RETIRED MEMBERS:

National Headquarters: **SHERMAN LEWIS**, former Deputy Chief for Management and Strategic Planning, **RICHARD DUESTERHAUS**, former Deputy Chief for Technology, and **SHIRLEY WILLIAMS**, formerly of the LAN/WAN/Voice Project Team.

STATE CONSERVATIONISTS: **THOMAS WEHRI**, AR, **BILLY MILLIGAN**, KY, **JERRY LEE**, TN

Alabama State Office: **CLIFFORD JONES**, former Resource Conservationist.

Mississippi State Office: **YUL SHELTON**, former Computer Specialist

Oregon State Office: **DANIEL MOORE**, former Resource Conservationist

Tennessee State Office: **JOHN HARRIS**, Rural Development Specialist

Change Management

KEEPING A POSITIVE MENTAL ATTITUDE DURING TIMES OF CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT

*by DOROTHEA MARTINEZ, PERSONNEL ASSISTANT
Columbia, South Carolina*

Today many of us have the task of trying to keep our wits about us as we undergo constant changes that are taking place in government. Government is going through a transitional period because President Clinton has mandated that we do more with less people. That, in turn, has caused downsizing; and reorganizing within government agencies in an effort to get more done by using the resources we have—but making changes in the process. Believe it or not, there are ways to endure these changes with a positive frame of mind. The secret lies in the attitude.

Our attitude is our perception of a situation or how we view it. If we look at a situation negatively we will probably see only the negative in that situation. Negative attitude tends to keep us constantly under pressure because of worry and anxiety. If we look at a situation in a positive light, our outcome will be positive every time. We want to receive positive rewards because we will be happier and healthier from the process. We are empowered to decide whether we will approach a new situation with an open mind and make each new experience a positive one.

Why do we dislike change? We don't like change because it takes us out of our comfort zone and forces us to do things differently. Since we are creatures of habit, it is difficult to deal with change. Change should be viewed positively. It should be looked at as an opportunity. In their book, Stone & Hill states,

"Change is an inexorable natural law. What is important to you is that your success or failure to meet the challenges of change are dependent upon your mental attitude." They go on to say that, "You can direct your thoughts and control your emotions, and thus regulate your attitude. You can choose whether your attitude will be positive or negative. You can decide whether you will affect, use, control, or harmonize with the changes in yourself and your environment. You can ordain your destiny."

In today's society we must understand that doing things the same way presents us some growing. We live in a world that is constantly

changing and we must keep up by being able to change with the times. Many of us are flexible and are able to change with the times; however, there are a few things we must practice to make positive thinking a part of our every day living, such as: I am open-minded; I am willing to learn a little more every day; I am willing to do things differently; and I can do it because I believe I can.

Changes should be viewed as an opportunity to do something that you've never had a chance to do before. We need to tell ourselves that we will be better people as a result of change.

W. Hill, Napoleon and Stone, W. Clement, Success Through a Positive Mental Attitude, You've Got a Problem That's Good!, Pocket Books, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York, Page 81, 1987.

Historian's Corner

*By Lois Jackson, Public Affairs Specialist
Anchorage, Alaska*

Dr. M. Dewayne Mays is the new historian. The position is an important part of The Organization.

At this time, we would like to start an official collection of a photo and document album and/or a historical file of The Organization's accomplishments.

Dr. Mays and I would like to collect photos, articles about members, chapters, and NRCS employees dedicated to The Organization's goals.

Photos will be stored on Compact Disc format with a hard copy printed for the album. Many still snapshots from previous conferences are out there, and we are asking you to send a copy of the picture (which will be returned to you) to include in the photo album. A great start would have the chapters send a group photo with members identified.

We would appreciate if you could:

- Identify persons in photos
- Include place & date of photo
- Reason photo is important to include in album
- Any short stories related to photo
- Slides and negatives are readily accepted as they can be scanned easily onto a CD

Items can be sent to:

Lois Jackson, USDA-NRCS,
949 E. 36th Ave., Ste. 400,
Anchorage, AK 99508



HAVE YOU READ?...

—by DOROTHEA MARTINEZ

IN THE SPIRIT - INSPIRATIONAL WRITINGS OF SUSAN TAYLOR

—by SUSAN TAYLOR

ACTS OF FAITH

by IYANLA VANZANT

STREET SOLDIER - ONE MAN'S STRUGGLE TO SAVE A GENERATION - ONE LIFE AT A TIME

—by JOSEPH MARSHAL, JR., AND LONNIE WHEELER

THE DULANEY SISTERS BOOK OF EVERYDAY WISDOM

—by SARAH DULANEY

BOOK REVIEW

IT'S NOT OVER UNTIL YOU WIN

by LES BROWN:

—by RENNA YOUNG, *Economist*
NATIONAL HEAD QUARTERS, WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE CAPTION ON THE FRONT OF THE BOOK: "HOW TO BECOME THE PERSON YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO BE—NO MATTER WHAT THE OBSTACLE" SUMMARIZES THE ESSENCE OF THIS BOOK. LIKE HIS FIRST BOOK, BROWN APPLIES HIS INSPIRATIONAL AND MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKING STYLE TO WRITE ABOUT VARIOUS REAL LIFE SITUATIONS IN HIS LIFE AND SHARES HIS APPROACH FOR *HANDLING* THEM. AS A RESULT, THE BOOK IS FULL OF LISTS THAT OUTLINE STEPS FOR HOW TO BELIEVE IN YOURSELF, HOW TO TAKE CRITICISM, HOW TO RESOLVE CONFLICT IN YOUR WORK AND PERSONAL LIFE, HOW TO HANDLE CAREER DISAPPOINTMENTS, HOW TO LIVE DYNAMICALLY, AND MORE. AFTER READING THE BOOK, YOU ARE SURE TO FEEL UPLIFTED AND MORE EQUIPPED TO HANDLE YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES —NO MATTER HOW BIG OR SMALL.

HE USES THOUGHT PROVOKING EXERCISES AND EXAMPLES OF HIS OWN LIFE'S EXPERIENCES TO REINFORCE HIS POINTS. THE ANECDOTES ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCES ARE VERY POIGNANT AND GENERATE EMPATHY FOR THE "DOWNTIMES" OF HIS LIFE. HE EVEN JOKES ABOUT HIS TELEVISION TALK SHOW BEING

THE HIGHEST RATED AND SHORTEST LIVED ONE IN THE BUSINESS. YET, AS HE SHARES THE STEPS THAT HE TOOK TO OVERCOME THE STORMY PERIODS IN HIS LIFE, YOU CELEBRATE EACH VICTORY WITH HIM.

THE BOOK IS FULL OF LESSONS THAT MOST OF US CAN APPLY TO SITUATIONS WE FACE ON THE JOB, AT HOME, OR IN GENERAL WHEN INTERACTING WITH OTHER PEOPLE. ONE OF MY FAVORITE LESSONS IS FOUND IN CHAPTER 10. HE PRESENTS A 10-STEP PLAN FOR "DANCING UP LIFE".

STEP 1. CONDUCT A PERSONAL REALITY CHECK. SOMETIMES THE "THINGS" WE DO WILL QUESTION OUR INTEGRITY AND VALUE SYSTEM. THEREFORE, BROWN RECOMMENDS REGULAR PERSONAL REALITY CHECKS TO ENSURE THAT WE ARE TRUE TO OURSELVES.

STEP 2. CONTROL YOUR INNER DIALOGUE. IT IS AMAZING HOW MUCH WE CRITICIZE OUR "OWN SELF". THIS REMINDS ME OF THE SCRIPTURE THAT SAYS: AS A MAN (OR WOMAN) THINKS, SO IS HE (OR SHE). WHEN, NEGATIVE THOUGHTS ABOUT OUR ABILITIES, IMAGE OR LOOKS, KNOWLEDGE, ETC., DOMINATE US, WE CANNOT REALIZE OUR FULL POTENTIAL.

STEP 3. LIVE DYNAMICALLY. ALL THE VARIOUS LESSONS IN THE BOOK FOCUS ON GETTING THE BEST OUT OF LIFE. HE ENCOURAGES OUR HEART TO STRIVE FOR THE BEST.

STEP 4. LIVE WITH A SENSE OF URGENCY. SO OFTEN, WE WAIT RATHER THAN ACT—THINKING "MY CHANGE IS GONNA COME". BROWN SUGGESTS WE LIVE AS THOUGH THERE IS NO TOMORROW REGARDING THE GOALS WE SET FOR OUR LIVES. GO AFTER THE THINGS YOU WANT IN LIFE WITH DUE HASTE. LIFE REALLY IS TOO SHORT TO PUT THINGS OFF.

STEP 5. MAKE IT OKAY TO FAIL. AS WE STRIVE TO LIVE DYNAMICALLY AND LIVE WITH A SENSE OF URGENCY, WE WILL MAKE MISTAKES. HOWEVER, BROWN STRONGLY EMPHASIZES THE POINT THAT, IT IS OKAY TO FAIL WHEN YOU WORK HARD TO ATTAIN YOUR GOAL. ALSO, HE STRESSES THAT YOU SHOULD NOT ACCEPT FAILURE, RATHER KEEP TRYING UNTIL YOU SUCCEED.

STEP 6. MAKE YOUR MOVE BEFORE YOU ARE READY. CONTRARY TO WAITING UNTIL ALL THE CONDITIONS ARE RIGHT, BROWN SUGGESTS WE STEP OUTSIDE OUR COMFORT ZONE BEFORE "EVERYTHING IS JUST RIGHT." WE USE THE EXCUSE THAT I'M NOT READY OUT OF FEAR OF FAILURE. MOST OF TIME WE JUST NEED TO ACT AND IF THE GOAL IS REALISTIC AND YOU COMMIT YOURSELF TO ACHIEVING IT, THEN IT WILL COME TO PASS. JOKINGLY, HE ENCOURAGES US TO "LEAP AND GROW YOUR WINGS ON THE WAY DOWN"...

STEP 7. ELIMINATE TOXIC PEOPLE FROM YOUR LIFE. THIS ONE IS MY FAVORITE. BROWN SUGGEST WE GET RID OF THOSE TOXIC PEOPLE IN OUR LIFE

WHO NEVER HAVE ANYTHING GOOD TO SAY. THESE "NAYSAYERS" DO NOT ADD TO YOUR ABILITY TO ACHIEVE DYNAMIC LIVING. INSTEAD, THEY ARE NEEDY FOLK WHO DRAIN YOUR ENERGY AND SAP YOUR RESOURCES FOR THEIR SATISFACTION. UNFORTUNATELY, SOME MAY BE FAMILY MEMBERS OR "CLOSE" FRIENDS. NEVERTHELESS, IN ORDER TO LIVE YOUR LIFE FULLY, YOU MUST ELIMINATE THE TOXIC PEOPLE THAT OCCUPY SPACE IN WITHIN YOUR CIRCLE OF THE WORLD.

STEP 8. TRUST IN A GREATER POWER. FOR ME AND BROWN, IT IS GOD! HOWEVER, HIS POINT SUGGESTS THAT WE BELIEVE IN "SOMETHING" THAT HELPS US TO APPRECIATE OUR OWN MORTALITY...AND NOT GET TO FULL OF ONE'S SELF.

STEP 9. DEVELOP CAREER VISION. THIS PRINCIPLE SUGGESTS WE DO NOT SETTLE FOR JUST A JOB, BUT, FOR THE CAREER THAT WE WANT. THUS, WE MAY HAVE TO GIVE UP THE JOB WE NOW HAVE IN ORDER TO GET THE CAREER WE KNOW IS "OUT THERE". IT IS NOT EASY...BUT, WHO SAID LIFE WOULD BE EASY?

STEP 10. GET OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE. I SUMMARIZE THIS ONE WITH "JUST DO IT"! LIFE IS TOO SHORT TO WAIT FOR EVERYTHING TO BE JUST RIGHT. IF WE BELIEVE "IT", WHATEVER "IT" MAY BE, THEN WE CAN DO IT. HOWEVER, YOU HAVE TO START. RECENTLY, I HEARD BROWN CREDIT SOMEONE FOR SAYING, "YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE GREAT TO GET STARTED, BUT YOU DO HAVE TO GET STARTED TO BE GREAT."

Something to Ponder

Folk Sayings FROM AROUND THE WORLD

NOT TO KNOW IS BAD, NOT TO WANT TO KNOW IS WORSE

—THE GAMBIA

THOSE KILLED FOR LACK OF WISDOM ARE NUMEROUS; THOSE KILLED BY WISDOM DO NOT AMOUNT TO ANYTHING.

—NIGERIA/BENIN/TOGA

AT THE GATE OF PATIENCE, THERE IS NO CROWDING.

—MOROCCO

DON'T LOOK WHERE YOU FELL, BUT WHERE YOU SLIPPED.

—LIBERIA

A STUMBLE IS NOT A FALL.

—HAITI

Calendar of Events

Communication Committee

May

1st

Satellite broadcast on Riparian Restoration and Management; AIRS FROM 11 A.M. TO 6 P.M. EASTERN TIME.

CONTACT: DOUG BLANKENSHIP
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
202-452-5079, or
Bill Boyer, NRCS,
202-720-0307

4th~10th

DRINKING WATER WEEK

7th~9th

AN AMERICAN WETLANDS MONTH
CELEBRATION - "COMMUNITIES WORKING FOR
WETLANDS,"

Radisson Plaza Hotel
Alexandria, VA.
Call: 800/726-4853 or
FAX: 703-548-6299 or
e-mail: terrene@gnn.com

8th~10th

PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK, NATIONAL
MALL EVENT, WASHINGTON, D.C.

18th~20th

THE WILDLIFE HABITAT COUNCIL (IN COOPERATION
WITH THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY AND SPONSORED BY
NRCS AND OTHER FEDERAL, STATE, AND PRIVATE
ORGANIZATIONS) - 1997 WILDLANDS CONFERENCE,
"EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS."

Swissotel, Atlanta, GA.
Call: 201-588-8994

18th~21st

FIFTH NATIONAL WATERSHED CONFERENCE,
"LIVING IN YOUR WATERSHED." SPONSORED BY
THE NATIONAL WATERSHED COALITION, RENO,
NV.

CONTACT: JIM FISHER
303-988-1810

JUNE

3rd~5th

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM COMMEMORATING THE
50TH ANNIVERSARY OF USDA'S WIND EROSION
RESEARCH AT KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY,
MANHATTAN, KS.

CONTACT: THE WIND EROSION
RESEARCH UNIT (WERU)
PHONE: 913-532-6495
FAX: 913-532-6526

e-mail: sym@weru.ksu.edu
OR THE WORLD WIDE WEB AT:
<http://www.weru.ksu.edu>

15th~18th

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RC&D COUNCILS
CONFERENCE, ST. PAUL, MN.

CONTACT: BECKY LANE,
202-546-8800 OR WRITE TO:
NATIONAL ASSOC. OF RC&D COUNCILS
509 CAPITAL COURT, NE, SUITE
100 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20002

JUNE (CONTINUED)

20th~21st

MIDWEST REGION NOPBNRCSE CONFERENCE:
RAMADA INN, HARVEY, IL
CONTACT: PERCY MACGEE
MW REGION REPRESENTATIVE
(810)766-5192

NORTHERN PLAINS REGION NOPBNRCSE
CONFERENCE:

HOLIDAY INN HOLIDOME, SALINA, KS
CONTACT: DEMITRICE G. BOOZER
NORTHERN PLAINS REG. REP.
(402) 437-4069

OR
LEROY STOKES, PRESIDENT
NORTHERN PLAINS CHAPTER
(402) 437-4093

24th~26th

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
PLANNING CONFERENCE.

OMNI ROYAL ORLEANS
NEW ORLEANS, LA.
CONTACT: LYN KIRSCHNER
765-494-1827 OR

e-mail to: kirschner@ctic.purdue.edu

July

17th~19th

LAND IMPROVEMENT CONTRACTORS OF AMERICA
SUMMER MEETING, PROVIDENCE, RI.

CONTACT: WAYNE F. MARESCH
301-248-9313 OR

e-mail to: WayneF86@aol.com

22nd~25th

THE 52ND SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION
SOCIETY ANNUAL CONF.; INTERACTIONS, MANAGING
ECOSYSTEMS ON A WATERSHED BASIS, TORONTO,
CANADA.

CONTACT: JENNIFER PEMBLE
1-800-843-7645

CONFERENCE INFO. CAN ALSO BE FOUND AT:
<http://www.swcs.orgAnnCon.htm>



**NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF
PROFESSIONAL BLACK
NATURAL RESOURCES
CONSERVATION SERVICE EMPLOYEES
(NOPBNRCSE)**

**1997 ANNUAL CONFERENCE
DECEMBER 10th-13th, 1997
ATLANTA, GEORGIA**

YOUR 1997-1998 COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE
IS COMMITTED TO SERVING YOU BY
PROVIDING YOU INFORMATION THROUGH THE
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER, THE LINK, AND THROUGH
THE ORGANIZATION HOME PAGE. TO FURTHER MEET
YOUR NEEDS, FIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS HAVE
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REPRESENTATIVES. THEY WILL WORK WITH YOU AND
THE ORGANIZATION REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES TO
OBTAIN ARTICLES, SHARE INFORMATION AND IDEAS,
AND RECEIVE COMMENTS.

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**What's Online!
Out**

"The Organization's" Homepage
<http://www.nhq.nrcs.gov/ORGAN/ss.htm>

NRCS Homepage
<http://www.ncq.nrcs.usda.gov>

Civil Rights
http://www.usda.gov/news/civil/cr_index.htm

USDA NRCS Draft GPRA Strategic Plan
http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/STRAT_PLAN/stratind.html

Membership Application

YES! I would like to become a member of the NOPBNRCSE!
ENCLOSE ARE ANNUAL DUES OF \$35 FOR 1997.

() NEW MEMBER—REFERRED BY _____

PLEASE RENEW MY MEMBERSHIP OF THE NOPBNRCSE!
ENCLOSE ARE ANNUAL DUES OF \$35 FOR 1997.

PLEASE MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: "The Organization"

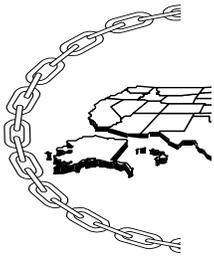
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MEMBERSHIP DUES TO:

Willie Rawls, TREASURER
The Organization
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Clinton, MD 20735~5240
PH: 202.720.1779

<input type="checkbox"/> CHANGE of ADDRESS	DATE: _____
NAME: _____	
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Ofc. PHONE: () _____	
E-Mail _____	
INDICATE COMMITTEE OF INTEREST:	

The Organization
c/o GERI OSBORN
P.O. Box 45297
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20026-5297



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