

Francis, Ronald - Salt Lake City, UT



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LOOKING AHEAD

Sylvia Gillen, State Conservationist

What lies ahead for NRCS Utah in 2005? After several months as a Utah citizen and member of the state NRCS team, I want to take this opportunity to send you an "e-Blast" with my observations on our future as a leading natural resources conservation agency in the state. At my vantage point I see some key goals expressed in the vision of the President and NRCS Chief Bruce Knight. We recently sent each employee a small desktop placard that lists the agency's national priorities. I hope they will become your priorities, as they have become mine.



Thank you

First, I want to thank you for your hard work, persistence and great attitude in delivering quality service to our customers. I have heard many positive comments from our partners on your enthusiasm and willingness to cooperate. I am aware that many of you do things that go above and beyond normal expectations and I thank you for going the extra mile.

Leadership's Vision

At our recent national leadership meeting, Chief Knight said President Bush's conservation vision was to build a "citizenry of conservation stewards." He noted that the President's favorite part of the Farm Bill is the Conservation Title. It's anticipated NRCS will play a major role in the upcoming White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation.

Future for NRCS

As NRCS celebrates its 70th anniversary this year, the Chief said he will be preparing for the next farm bill, but our job is to concentrate on implementation of the 2002 Farm Bill, streamline conservation planning and implementation, and improve efficiency in programs. Some specifics he mentioned were:

1. Focus on private working lands by helping people who are making a living on the farm continue to do so.
2. Maintain the credibility of the agency in the face of what is expected to be flat budgets in the near future.
3. Improve NRCS programs through innovation and coordination, provide incentives for results-oriented activity and not just for practices applied, and improve selection criteria for funded projects.
4. Continue to build upon our "World Class Delivery System" and emphasize sound ethics, trust and working partnerships.

Utah Outlook

With outstanding employees, trusted partners, and supportive congressional staff, we have every opportunity to make Utah a shining example of effective, coordinated natural resource management. The Utah Partners for Conservation and Development, which I was recently asked to chair, will continue to focus our joint resources on solving critical issues, such as the sage-steppe restoration initiative. We also have great opportunities to work with Governor Jon Huntsman, Ag Commissioner Leonard Blackham, and DNR Director Mike Styler on initiatives to strengthen the rural economy.

As we begin the year, it is my hope that a comprehensive evaluation of Utah's natural resources will help build greater local capacity by providing current resource data on which local decisions can be made. This will provide invaluable feedback to our State Technical Committee, which we hope will represent a broader spectrum of our partners statewide. Recently, we conducted this meeting over a closed circuit television network to allow greater participation statewide. An informed, involved partnership will bring positive, measurable results to our combined

efforts.

Another matter I feel strongly about is a sincere effort on our part to expand our outreach and services to non-traditional customers. It's easy to do the same old things, so this effort will take work to actually practice what we preach. Identify your alternative and limited resource producers and then use communication vehicles that reach them. We want to maximize the number of people we say "yes" to.

Our NRCS staff is our most important resource. I am committed to providing resources for the technical development of staff and hope you will take advantage of the professional development offered. Investing in the training, recognition and supervision of staff will return big dividends to the conservation partnership.

And, finally, I want each of you to know how important it is to take care of yourself and you family. Happy, productive employees find a good balance between their personal and professional lives. I want each of you to be happy and to know that your NRCS service is appreciated. I look forward to eventually meeting each one of you.

Periodic news reports from NRCS Utah

To see blasts from the past go to [e-Blast archives](#)

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