

NRCS At A Glance



the "people" agency



photos: NRCS Oklahoma

NRCS Mission

To provide leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, improve, and sustain our natural resources and environment

NRCS Vision

A Productive Nation in Harmony with a Quality Environment

People in Partnership for a Healthy Land

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works hand-in-hand with the American people to conserve natural resources on private lands. We help land users approach conservation planning and implementation with an understanding of how natural resources relate to each other and to all of us, and how our activities affect those resources.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service, formerly the Soil Conservation Service, was created as a national response to the Dust Bowl catastrophe of the 1930's. Hugh Hammond Bennett, the agency's first chief, convinced Congress that soil erosion was a national menace; that a permanent agency was needed within the U. S. Department of Agriculture to call landowners' attention to their land stewardship opportunities and responsibilities; and that a partnership of federal agencies, with local communities, was needed to help farmers and ranchers conserve their land.

Today the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's lead conservation agency, still speaks to the health and well-being of soil, water, air, plants, and animals. Indeed, no other federal agency speaks for the health and fate of America's private land.

Agency Services and Products

The Natural Resources Conservation Service employees and volunteers provide services and products to managers and owners of private lands that assist them in making land use decisions:

Technical Assistance for Conservation Planning

The Natural Resources Conservation Service specialists provide technical assistance to help customers decide what conservation practices and systems will best address natural resource concerns and meet their economic goals. This planning assistance ranges from a site specific plan to one that covers a larger geographic area.

Technical Assistance for Application of Conservation

The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides technical and cost-share assistance to help customers apply planned conservation practices and systems. This assistance includes the designs, specifications, construction and management assistance, as well as financial assistance for practice and system installation.

Resources Information and Technology

This includes the natural resource inventories and assessments that the Natural Resources Conservation Service conducts to indicate status, condition, and trends of natural resources on private lands. It also includes science-based, technical tools—technical



guides and performance specifications and standards—that assure quality and consistency of conservation planning and application across the nation.

Local people—individually and collectively—decide how to use the Natural Resources Conservation Service capabilities in the natural resource conservation planning and application process. Natural Resources Conservation Service's role is to support and facilitate these individual and local decisions based on good resource information—whether that's a grazing management plan or layout for a terrace system.

Customers Are Not The Only Ones Who Benefit

Ultimately, every person who drinks water and eats food benefits from the work the Natural Resources Conservation Service does. The benefits translate beyond a landscape into benefits to rural communities. Studies have shown that every dollar the Natural Resources Conservation Service invests in technical and financial assistance to improve natural resources, triggers a \$4.89 stimulus for rural economies and the people of Oklahoma.

Individuals and groups who own or manage Oklahoma's private lands are the people who most directly use our programs and services

- Farmers, ranchers and others who manage privately owned lands
- Water management groups
- Rural and urban community leaders and members
- Local and state government elected and appointed officials
- Other individuals, groups, and associations with an interest or focus on natural resource issues

A Staff Of Technically Sound, Field-Based Employees

The strength of the Natural Resources Conservation Service is in its workforce—the men and women who work side-by-side with the owners and managers of America's privately owned land.

These are the Natural Resources Conservation Service employees who have the technical expertise and field experience to help land users solve their natural resource challenges and maintain and improve their ability to thrive economically. Natural Resources Conservation Service employees are highly skilled in many scientific and technical specialties, including soil science, soil conservation, agronomy, biology, agroecology, range conservation, forestry, engineering, geology, hydrology, cultural resources, and economics.

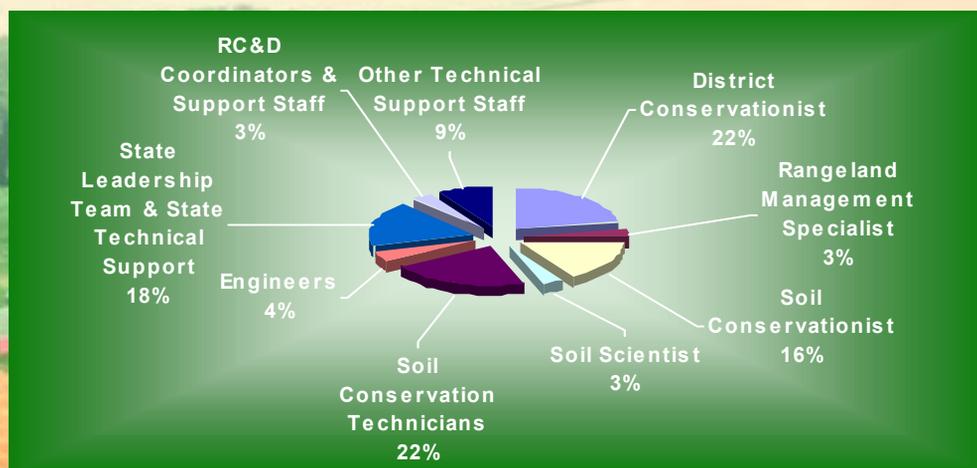
Partners

The Natural Resources Conservation Service collaborates with many partners to set conservation goals, to provide the maximum technical assistance to people who work the land, and to leverage the federal contributions to natural resource conservation on private lands. These partners include:

- Conservation districts
- County governments
- State and other federal agencies
- Natural Resources Conservation Service Earth Team volunteers
- Agricultural and environmental groups
- Professional societies

The state's 88 conservation districts—take a special place in the partnership and the natural resource conservation delivery system. Units of local government and conservation districts operate on the premise that local people know the most about local natural resource needs. Conservation districts link the Natural Resources Conservation Service to local communities and to local priorities for natural resource conservation.

The State Technical Committee in Oklahoma is a diverse group that fulfills a key partnership and advisory function. These individuals provide information, analyses and recommendations on implementing U.S. Department of Agriculture conservation programs. Membership on the committee is open to representatives of private organizations and businesses, state and federal agencies, and individuals who are knowledgeable or have expertise in natural resource conservation.



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