FARMLAND PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

National State Soils Scientist’s Meeting

October 28th - November 1st

Cheryl Simmons

Doug Lawrence - Staff Leader
Denise Coleman – FPP
Ginger Murphy – Community Planning
Avery Patillo – Community Assistance
Cheryl Simmons - FPPA/LESA
Nakia Scott – Administrative Assistant
FARMLAND PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

AUTHORITIES:

Conservation Technical Assistance to Developed and Developing Areas

- Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act of 1935

Farmland Protection

- Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996
  - Farmland Protection Program
  - National Natural Resources Conservation Foundation

Community Planning

- The Soil Information Assistance for Community Planning and Resource Development Act of 1966
From 1992 and 1997, the annual rate of conversion increased 60 percent, from an average of 1.4 million acres during the period from 1982 to 1992, to more than 2.2 million acres per year.

Over the next ten years at current rates, an area the size of Indiana, will be converted to urban and built-up uses.
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Status and Trends

Land Developed, 1982 - 1997

New Acres
- 50,000 or more: 3.1% of total
- 0.1-9,999: 1.0% of total
- 10,000 to 29,999: 3.3% of total
- 15,000 to 24,999: 3.5% of total
- 16,000 to 25,000: 3.5% of total
- 25,000 to 34,999: 3.5% of total
- Less than 15,000: 5.0% of total
- 76.0% of Urban lands
- 76.0% of Metropolitan areas

Watersheds are defined as U.S. Geological Survey Hydrologic Units (6-digit).

Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands

Map ID: M4008
Data Source: 1997 National Resources Inventory Revised December 2001
USDA NRCS
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- While agricultural land continues to be converted to residential, commercial, and other land uses, and once-thriving city centers have experienced losses in business, industry, and populace, individual landowners and communities alike are faced with the challenge of balancing economic viability with ecologic, social, and cultural values.

- These changes create a range of natural resource-related problems, including increased water runoff, excessive soil erosion, sedimentation, and degradation of water quality and wildlife habitat. NRCS and conservation districts can provide individuals and communities with a range of services and tools that can mitigate the effects of changes in land use.

- These services and tools include conservation easements to protect farmland and technical assistance to individuals and communities for comprehensive planning, resource assessment, site assessment, soil erosion, and sediment control, as well as other conservation practices.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Financial Assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>17 States - $14.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>10 States - $1.9 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>19 States - $17.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>NH earmark - $0.2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>28 States - $16.8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>36 States - $50 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Farmland Protection Program
Status and Trends

Blue States are new in 2002

Farmland Protection Program Funds
1996 through 2001 (dollars)

- $1,807,600 to $5,847,100 (12)
- $625,800 to $1,807,600 (8)
- $103,200 to $625,800 (7)
- $26,000 to $103,200 (1)
- $0 to $26,000 (12)
## FARMLAND PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

Farmland Protection Program  
Side-by-Side Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>1996 Legislation</th>
<th>2002 Legislation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eligible Entities</td>
<td>State and Local Governments</td>
<td>Expanded the definition of eligible entities to include Tribes and non-governmental organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible Land</td>
<td>Land Containing Prime, Unique or Other Productive Soil</td>
<td>Expanded the definition of eligible land to include farm and ranches containing historical or archaeological resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching Funds</td>
<td>Entity must contribute 50% of the appraised fair market value of the easement (cash match)</td>
<td>Entity may include a charitable landowner donation of up to 25% of the fair market value of the easement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation Plan</td>
<td>Requires a plan on highly erodible land (non-Title XII)</td>
<td>Requires a conservation plan on highly erodible land, land is also subject to FSA provisions (Title XII)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NRCS provides assistance to communities engaged in planning using the agency’s area-wide planning process.

NRCS integrates:
• Natural resource data and analysis
• Socioeconomic data and analysis
• Tools for community attitude assessment
NRCS, working in partnership with local conservation districts, can provide assistance to communities for developing a planning process for comprehensive or smart growth and for conducting natural resource and socioeconomic assessments. NRCS follows a nine-step, area-wide planning process that includes an inventory of available data and an analysis of the data to yield useful information. Data typically used include:

- Topographic,
- Soils,
- Hydrologic,
- Watershed boundary,
- Floodplain boundary,
- Land cover,
- Land use,
- Parcel boundary, and
- Census.
Important Farmland Maps

Working with the National Cartographic and Geospatial Center in Fort Worth, Texas, local jurisdictions are obtaining maps identifying Prime and Unique soils and soils of state or local importance. (7CFR Part 657)

**Indiana**
Elkhart Co.
elkhart_in.ps
elkhart_in.pdf

**Iowa**
Polk Co.
polk_ia.ps
polk_ia.pdf

**Ohio**
Lake Co.
lake_oh.ps
lake_oh.pdf

**Texas**
Cameron Co.
cameron_tx.ps
cameron_tx.pdf
Farmland Protection Program

The Farmland Protection Program provides funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farmland in agricultural uses. Working through existing programs, USDA joins with State, tribal, or local governments to acquire conservation easements or other interests from landowners. USDA provides up to 50 percent of the fair market easement value. To qualify, farmland must: be part of a pending offer from a State, tribe, or local farmland protection program; be privately owned; have a conservation plan; be large enough to sustain agricultural production; be accessible to markets for what the land produces; have adequate infrastructure and agricultural support services; and have surrounding parcels of land that can support long-term agricultural production. Depending on funding availability, proposals must be submitted by the government entities to the appropriate NRCS State Office during the application window.

For more information see the Farmland Protection Program Fact Sheet or Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).
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Co-Sponsor of a loose-knit network
*C2N Community Collaboration Network*
Hosted by the Watershed Science Institute


Purpose:
The purpose for establishing a community collaboration network is to:

- Facilitate dialogue for NRCS people who are working in communities;
- Facilitate sharing of ideas, strategies, ideas, tools, information resources, techniques between staff working in communities;
- Strengthen NRCS ability to assist communities in their capacity to make informed natural resources decisions;
- Enhance and expand existing informal networks;
- Develop a list of NRCS staff who have experience in community work and for field staff who have an interest in community collaboration;
- Develop a field and state interest and needs-based system for networking and mentoring; and
- Build capacity for collaboration within the agency.
A Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system can help state and local officials make sound decisions about land use. Combined with Forest measures and Rangeland parameters, LESA can provide a technical framework to numerically rank land parcels based on local resource evaluation and site considerations to support protection efforts.
Computer Assisted Land Evaluation System (CALES):

Used by Soil Scientists to assist with the Land Evaluation component for the FPPA and local rankings for farmland protection efforts.

http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/fpcp/cales/
Federal Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA)

The act directs federal agencies to identify and correct adverse effects of federal programs on the preservation of farmland:

• To minimize the extent to which Federal programs contribute to the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses.

• To assure that Federal programs are administered in a manner that will be consistent with state, local and private programs and policies to protect farmland.

(7CFR Part 658)

AD-1006 Website is the first step in automating the FPPA
Farmland Conversion Impact Rating:

With NRCS assistance, Federal agencies rate the potential impacts of farmland conversion.

http://fppa.nrcs.usda.gov/lesa/
New WebCAAF Password Process
Register and Identify Project by State or #

To open a form, enter the NRCS Identifier, then Click Go.

NRCS Identifier:  

Or, enter the state and then select a project from the list. State: MD  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Identifier</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Howard</td>
<td>Heavenly Hills Retirement Community</td>
<td>MD-2002-0001</td>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard</td>
<td>Water Pipe Line</td>
<td>MD-2002-0002</td>
<td>Site</td>
<td>I,II,III,IV,V,VI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service **Farm Land Conversion Impact Rating** site is a secured web site. Name, address, and other information is needed to process the Farm Land Conversion Impact Rating form AD-1006 or NRCS-OFA-106. Use your USDA Site Log On and Password to access these forms later.
Opportunities for Input/Training

Grassland LESA – Identifying Grasslands of State-wide importance

LESA Training – March 10-12, 2003

http://www.farmland.org
Shall we not proceed immediately to help the present generation of farmers and to conserve the heritage for posterity.....A little is being done here and there to check the loss—an infinitesimal part of what should be done.

*Hugh Hammond Bennett, 1928*