



United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

# ND NRCS Restructure

ND State Tech Committee

Sept 26, 2019

Richard Webb



## Natural Resources Conservation Service

# ND Reasons Why — Problems/Opportunities

- Staff “chaos” when someone leaves
- Asking too much of a 2-3 FTE office
- Can’t support 53 “do everything” offices
- Little flexibility during hiring freeze or low budgets without forced moves
- Recruiting/retention issues in some towns
- Current system didn’t provide good consistent training to new employees
- Need to balance supervision



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# Goals/Limits – Future Condition

- Reduce to 2 Zones with a ASTC(FO)
- Get 80% of our staff “field-facing”
- Strive for nobody to supervise more than 12 people, and the average should be between 8:1 and 10:1 for the state
- Improve/maintain technical capacity
- Maximum of 230 FTE



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# ND NRCS Values

- No forced moves
- No loss of pay/grade
- No closing of offices





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# Build on Past Successes

- Program Liaisons
- Program Assistants
- Compliance Staff
- FB Specialists
- Ultima/Heartland Clerks
- SCD Contribution Agreements



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# What's the Math?

- 230 FTE, if 80% are field-facing: 184
- $230 - 184 = 46$  left for SO/AO
- 8:1-10:1 Sup ratio: 23-28 supervisors

How do we:

- Get from 138 to 184 field staff?
- Get from 73 to 25 supervisors?
- Get from 3 to 2 ASTC(FO)?
- Get from 80 to 46 SO/AO staff?



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# Cons. Delivery Unit

- Lump a small group of counties into one Conservation Delivery Unit (18 total in the state)
- Each CDU has a Supervisor with ~ 10 employees (10:1)
  - Long term, this will include their needed technical experts
  - Short term, still going to have to work together to share expertise
  - ALWAYS have ability to work together with neighbors
- Each ASTC(FO) supervises 9 CDU Supervisors and 1 administrative assistant; and Tribal Liaisons as appropriate – reduce supervision from 22:1 to 12:1
- Each County retains current office with at least 1 NRCS employee



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# Benefits

- Roughly 25 more field staff (from AO, & room for about 30 more)
- Team dynamic of 6-11 people working on one larger goal rather than 2-4 working on each of 3 separate smaller goals
- Specialized employees working directly with the producers
- QA from the SO rather than both AO and SO - consistency
- Fewer Supervisors – better communication
- Takes supervision/admin off plate of ~ 40 technical employees
- 8.1:1 overall supervisor ratio (almost impossible to get 10:1)
- Better able to react to workload – workload is distributed more evenly; less chaos when someone leaves/vacation/training
- More opportunity to train new staff

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



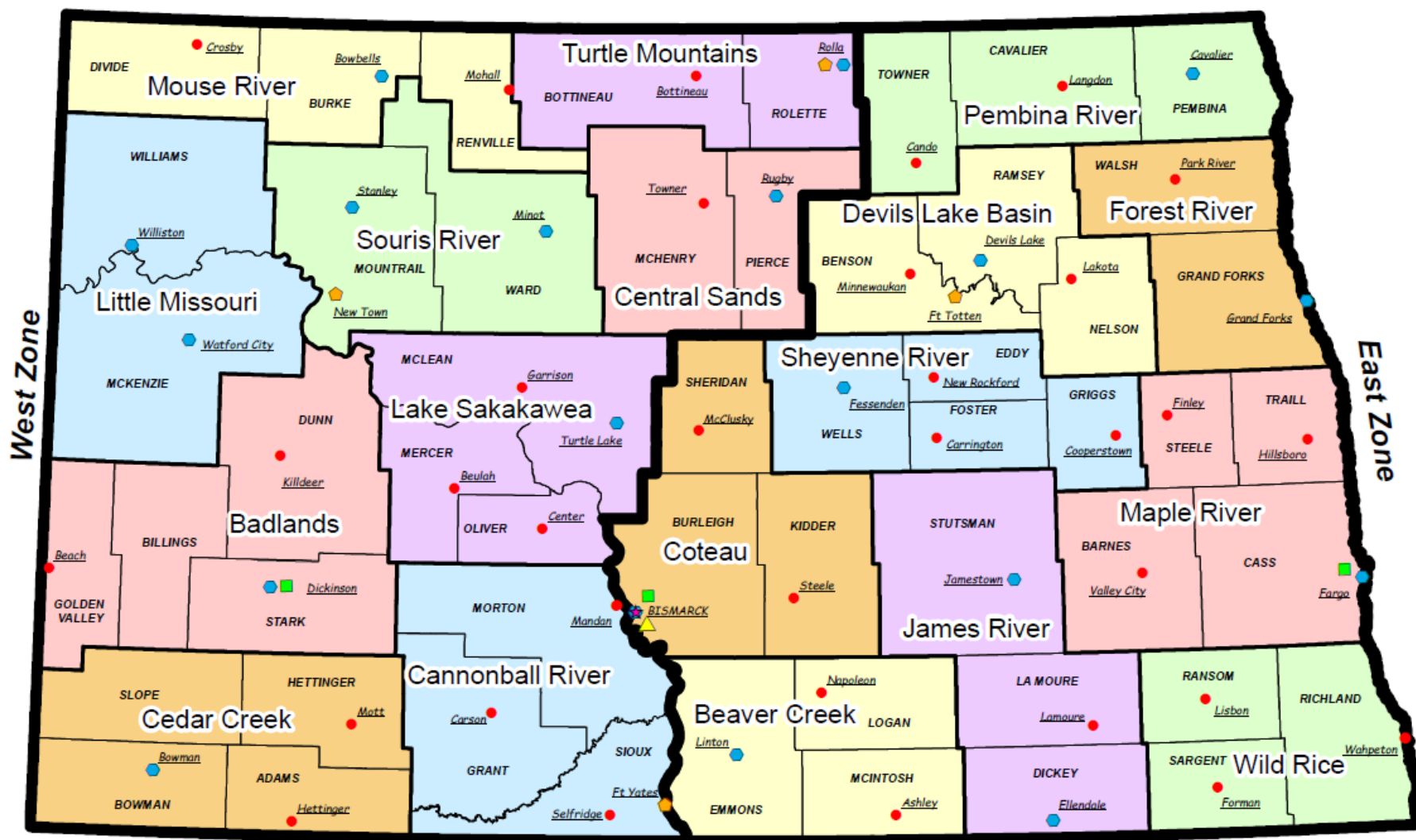


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# Low-hanging Fruit

1. Consolidate supervision/administration
2. Share workload/goals/staff
3. Focused training
4. More field staff

# North Dakota NRCS Service Centers

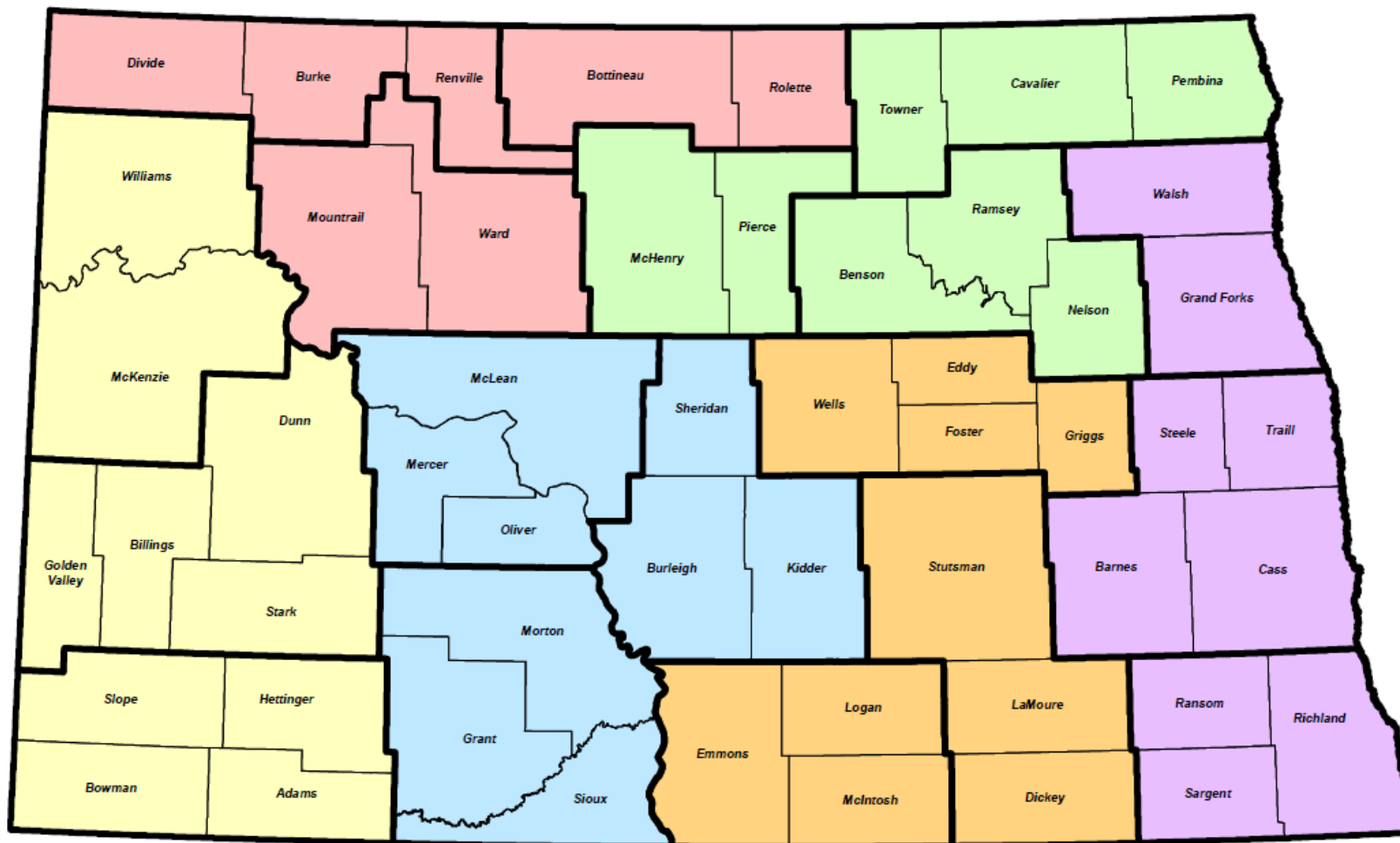


## Legend

- ★ State Office (VTC)
- Field Office w/ VTC
- Field Office
- 🏠 Tribal Office
- 🟩 MLRA Soil Survey Office
- 🟡 PMC
- ▬ Zones
- ▬ Conservation Delivery Centers
- ▬ County Boundary



# Technical Support Map



- Lead & POC Engr - Dan Clausen, Res Con - Jody Forman, Res Soil Scientist - Vacant
- POC Engr - Zach Verlinde, Lead Engr - Dan Clausen, Res Con - Vacant, Res Soil Scientist - Vacant
- POC Engr - Wendy Thomson, Lead Engr - Erica Althoff, Res Con - Vacant, Res Soil Scientist - Vacant
- Lead & POC Engr - Kate Sobolik, Res Con - Shawn Krance, Res Soil Scientist - Lance Duey
- Lead & POC Engr - Erica Althoff, Res Con - Vacant, Res Soil Scientist - Vacant
- POC Engr - Blake Johnson, Lead Engr - Kate Sobolik, Res Con - Vacant, Res Soil Scientist - Vacant





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# West Zone – Wendy Bartholomay

- Mouse River – Lena Bohm
- Turtle Mountains – Amy Sand
- Little Missouri/Souris River – Jared Andrist
- Central Sands – Doug Dragseth
- Badlands – Mike Gerbig
- Lake Sakakawea – Steve Kassian
- Cedar Creek – Amanda Berg
- Cannonball River – Val Hartman





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# East Zone – Stuart Blotter

- Pembina River – Brian Gysbers
- Devils Lake Basin – Dustin Brodina
- Forest River – Chris Nelson
- Coteau – Shawn Koltes
- Sheyenne River – Paul DuBourt
- Maple River – Brent Gustafson
- Beaver Creek – Lindsey Goldade
- James River – Andrew Jewett
- Wild Rice – Mark Welter



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# Staffing Update

- Selections made for 11 DC spots, the remaining 8 will be re-advertised soon
- Advertised 5 CETs across the state
- Advertised 3 Wetland Biologists to fill vacancies
- Advertisement coming soon to hire Soil Cons/Soil Con Techs to get each CDU to at least 6 staff
- Next priorities are Soil Scientists and Resource Cons