

A Framework for the Future

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Thank you for inviting me to join in your meeting.

You've had some interesting sessions. *My life's ambition has a new goal. To do something that in it* I hope you will return home *with*

with some fresh ideas and with renewed *enthusiasm* energy to get conservation *measures*

on the land in the *ARK, La, OKla & Texas* South Central States and to make the effort

most meaningful in the lives of people *represent* you *back home*

This morning *1ce* I would like to discuss *briefly* with you an effort

that the Soil Conservation Service is making to do more, to do it better, and to make it benefit more people.

~~Nearly~~ *three* years ago Administrator Kenneth Grant asked the SCS state conservationists and others to draft a Framework Plan for the Service to guide the agency's actions in the ~~next 10~~ *1970's* years and beyond.

Material for speech by Norman A. Berg, Associate Administrator, Soil Conservation Service, at a South Central Area meeting of the National Association of Conservation Districts, Houston, Texas, July 1, 1972.

I have been deeply involved in the development of that Framework

Plan, ~~as Ken has~~; I also ^{have} had the privilege earlier of helping

NACD's Special Committee on District Outlook ^{first hands John Wilkins leadership of now} formulate the report ^{chad by Sam St.}

on "The Future of Districts." So I ^{do} speak from first-hand knowledge

when I say that these two documents -- the SCS Framework Plan and

the "Future of Districts" report -- dovetail perfectly. Both

documents deserve your careful study and your careful application

of their recommendations to the program needs and community

objectives in your States.

First, I would like to describe, with the help of ⁴⁹ slides,

the setting in which SCS and conservation districts have found a

need to critically examine the way they are geared up to do their

intended work. I'll show some elements of the Framework Plan.

Then I will discuss ^{a few} ~~some of the~~ ways we are moving ahead to

implement the plan.

LIGHTS OUT BEGIN SLIDE RUN

1. The setting in which the Soil Conservation Service and conservation districts must work...

2. Is one of change...accelerating change...
3. Is one in which yesterday's farmland
4. Is getting new neighbors today
5. And more neighbors tomorrow
6. Until the city is right next door and still growing.
7. Our setting is one in which many farm and ranch families
8. Have moved to the city where wide open spaces means room ^{only} to park
a station wagon.
9. Look what's happened to our farm ^{& ranch} population since 1910.
10. While urban population keeps pace with the total growth...up and up.
11. We have a ^{action} setting in which ^{some} people have changed their values and
priorities as well as their addresses. ^{many} They want to bring quality
of life more in balance with quantity of material goods.
12. Younger Americans are especially aware and eager to become involved
in improving the quality of life, but the search for quality goes
on in all age groups.

13. They are concerned about pollution that is becoming a monument of its own; they want a cleaner and healthier environment.
14. They are becoming aware that sediment is a severe ^{water} pollutant...
15. And that sediment and many other problems arise from the haphazard and often careless growth of suburbs all over this Nation.
16. They want a quality environment...whether it's a vista one might see a few times in his life...
17. Or right in town...
18. Or right at home.
19. They want a high-quality food supply
20. And that means ^{first} there must ^{always} be a high-quality agriculture in America.
21. They want space and facilities for recreation...
22. They want space and habitat for wildlife
23. And ^{some} ~~they~~ want the red carpet treatment for fish.
24. It is in this setting that SCS has developed a Framework Plan to make its actions responsive to the needs that we foresee.
25. As our plan states in the very beginning, SCS has three mutually supporting mission objectives.

26. These are defined more closely in the framework chart.
27. We seek these benefits from our action toward those objectives.

And the gap between present conditions and the quality standards

represents the soil and water conservation job ^{still} ahead - *awaiting action.*

28. It is the effects of physical changes and improvements that contribute toward reaching those quality standards.

29. The pivotal point in our SCS action ^{is & always} will be resource management _{needed.} systems, or the combination of measures used for any given land

use. For each of seventeen resource management systems the

Framework Plan lists a goal and major future needs or supporting objectives.

30. Changes in use are basic to quality resource management -- changes to prevent or correct misuse of resources, and to meet future needs.

These elements of the plan are the outputs or the ends we seek in

carrying out the Framework Plan. They're discussed in chapter 5

of the Plan.

31. On the input side are the accomplishments that SCS can make to help bring about changes and improvements in resource management systems. This is an important concept -- the idea of an agency's work as inputs to some larger plan rather than as outputs from some isolated activity. None of us can do it alone. The actions and the effects of all agencies need to be considered together.
32. Next on the input side are the program activities of SCS. The framework plan helped us decide what present activities and relationships continue to be meaningful in the 1970's, and helped us chart some new courses for SCS. The plan lists 19 separate activities with a goal for each and a set of actions SCS will take to reach the goal.
33. For example; Resource technology must be further developed to meet today's conservation needs. We'll work to make our own technology second to none, and strengthen our liaison with research and educational institutions and with ^{private} industry.

34. We ^{are continue} going to work to develop a comprehensive system for surveying and monitoring to provide facts for planning and for keeping the public informed about their resources and the changes taking place in extent and condition of those resources. In addition to the standard field work for soil surveys, snow surveys, and other studies...
35. We will make use of newer methods such as remote sensing to gather more basic resource data and interpretations.
36. We'll step up our resource conservation planning assistance to help people make use of the facts we've gathered. SCS recognizes its responsibility for bridging a wide gap between national concerns and those of groups and individuals in the use of natural resources.
37. We'll work to improve our helpfulness in getting conservation measures planned, installed, and maintained properly, whether it's on the farm...
38. Or in the suburbs or anywhere else.
39. SCS will work to inform all citizens about resource conditions and conservation needs, so they can participate more knowledgeably in resource decisions. Information work will be the responsibility of every SCS employee, aided by information specialists and educators.

40. SCS will work to make itself function as a highly motivated, innovative, and effective organization through the best in management support. Every SCS employee has the responsibility to manage his time, skill, and materials in a way that gets the best conservation job done at lowest cost. We want ^{competent} professionalism to continue to be our image.

41. Other nations have the same challenge as America to fit natural resources to the long-term needs and objectives of the people. SCS will continue its efforts to help improve foreign conservation programs to make more countries self sufficient in food production while protecting the ^{resource} base.

42. The last piece of the chart shows the different sources of ^{Present} funds for SCS program activities. We must manage these funds in a way that most effectively leads toward our three basic mission

objectives - ^{and probably seek new sources. Federal & non federal}

43. The SCS Framework Plan, then, gives us a way to think through the entire process from either the objectives end or the program end and make decisions on how best to move to the next step.

44. Finally, chapter 7 of the Plan focuses on the relationships between SCS and ^{primary} conservation districts and ^{a few} others to achieve the objectives of the plan. It recognizes that conservation districts are the primary local organization through which ^{now & will} SCS work. And although each of us will be working with an increasing number of other groups, how well ^{effectively} districts and SCS work together in future years will strongly influence the effectiveness of resource conservation action in the years ahead. ^{will work to} ~~So let's~~ keep that relationship finely tuned. ^{and I know you will too!}
45. As the SCS and conservation districts pursue our ^{respective} long-range policies and plans that blend so well together...
46. Let's keep all our ducks in a row and do the best mutual job we can.
47. The result will be a better resource base...
48. And a higher quality environment for all Americans...
49. Which means ^{stronger} (happier) Americans for a lot of years to come.

NOW IF I MAY HAVE THE LIGHTS PLEASE.

72.10

That's our long-range planning effort. It has many elements because the conservation work we've been up to all these years is ~~pretty~~ complex. That's why we tried to give it a framework or perspective so that every part of our efforts will get the proper attention. We have dramatic new things to do, ^{solid} old standby things to do, and in between; and our program will have to touch all ^{imp't resource} the bases.

I do want to give you a little more detail about two areas of the Plan because they foresee such a significant change in emphasis for the SCS. But I'm in no way de-emphasizing other parts of the plan.

7 The first of these is the expansion of our knowledge of resources through more complete and accurate surveying and monitoring. We need much better data on the extent, condition, and rate of change of soil, water, and related resources.

We are convinced that SCS and district leaders and cooperators have training and experience second to none in appraising the state of our soil and water resources. We also have the ability to look at the supply and condition of soil and water to determine the impact on those resources when a new force or change is interjected into the environment.

Our framework plan sets forth a number of specific goals in surveying and monitoring.

First, it calls for a soil survey of the Nation that is complete and current.

Second, it calls for systematic studies to produce basic resource data and interpretations for units of government, planners, and other people concerned with resource management.

Third, it calls for an expansion of our present Conservation Needs Inventory into a comprehensive system for monitoring the condition of soil, water, and related resources.

Fourth, it proposes a sediment monitoring system that includes information on sediment sources, deposition, characteristics, and effects.

~~X~~ Fifth, it calls for even more timely and accurate
snow-survey data.

I cannot over-emphasize the importance of getting and disseminating reliable data about America's natural resources. Over the past few years, a public debate has raged over the condition of our environment and what to do about it. A number of the conflicts have not yet been resolved to the satisfaction of the general public simply because no one has the information on which to base an informed judgment.

America's resource decisions are going to have to be based on solid information, instead of unfounded fears, guesswork, or wishful thinking. And I believe that Districts and the SCS should have a more significant role in obtaining that information.

The second area ~~I want to discuss~~ relates to planning assistance. Conservation districts and SCS are already up to their ears in planning work. Last year, nearly 23,000 units of state and local government asked for and received district and SCS assistance.

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We provided nearly 11,000 resource inventories and evaluations to government units. We counseled on land use and treatment of proposed sites for more than 2,000 schools, hospitals, sanitary landfills, and other public facilities.

The SCS framework plan anticipates a far greater demand for this sort of planning assistance in the Seventies and it sets forth several principles to guide our employees.

➤ One principle calls for maximum citizen involvement.

We have known for a long time that a successful conservation plan can be developed only when the farmer or rancher participates fully and makes the necessary decisions. Experience also confirms that plans for communities, townships, or counties -- if they are going to be supported -- must have local people participating from the very beginning. It is not our job as SCS employees to make decisions for local people, but rather to help local planners themselves to recognize the alternatives that confront their communities when they make resource decisions.

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We also must pay ^{more} attention to the principle of interaction. This means simply that everything we do about resources interacts in some way with something else; it sets off a whole series of effects.

In one city, for example, there has been a deliberate emphasis on building high rise apartments to beat the high cost of providing utility services to detached single-family homes. But one unforeseen result of the confinement of apartment living has been a mass exodus to the country on weekends. This Friday-night migration, in turn, has led to problems of waste disposal and pollution at nearby lakes and campgrounds and to increased congestion on the highways, with accompanying increases in the weekend accident rate.

We will work along with conservation districts to help minimize such unforeseen effects of planning decisions.

So much for the document that we call our Framework Plan.

It took ~~a long~~ time to prepare -- and ~~all~~ that time would be
~~utterly~~ wasted if we didn't proceed to implement it quickly.

SCS is paying fully as much attention to this phase as it did to
plan formulation. Or more.

Some of the priority items for this fiscal year are:

- 1) discussing the plan with all SCS employees and district
officials to achieve understanding of our goals; 2) reviewing how
well our resources are oriented toward meeting the plan's
objectives; 3) developing effective institutional arrangements;
- 4) involving ourselves more aggressively in land-use planning
activities at all levels of government; and 5) developing and
implementing an effective surveying and monitoring system.

*Its
improvement*

In a number of States, SCS employees have met in 3- or
4-day sessions to discuss the plan in detail. I've attended
several, and they have been encouragingly fruitful in terms of
relating the plan to the needs and opportunities in a particular
State.

As Ken Grant and I have said at these sessions, we can't make an agency plan that fits the situation in every work unit or area. They still have a responsibility to assess the total needs within their sphere of work and the resources they have to work with--and design the best conservation program they can that, as I said before, touches all the bases.

We have emphasized that our Plan will work if every SCS employee reads and understands it and helps implement it in every district in the Nation...only if he explains it to other agencies and organizations, and ^{especially} to district leaders and ^{their} cooperators.

In addition to ~~these~~ SCS sessions, and meetings like this one with our district allies, SCS has scheduled full discussion of the Plan and its implementation at our next State Conservationists meeting in September. We have ^{already} discussed it at the last three such meetings. This time ^{Revised} we have named four task force committees to assess key problems SCS will face in gearing up to implement the plan.

The committees will analyze the present situation and present their thoughts for strengthening SCS operations in four key areas:

- A. Improving Interrelationships Among SCS Programs
- B. Surveying and Monitoring
- C. Interdisciplinary Resource Planning
- D. Management of SCS Programs and Resources

This will be followed by group discussions by the State Conservationists to evaluate each report in detail and develop recommendations.

We expect this ^{fall} meeting to be a major step forward in putting the Framework Plan into effect.

Among the next steps are:

1. Developing a monitoring capability and quality standards.

High priority will be given to developing and testing a national system for natural resource monitoring and to methods for determining the quality standard for each resource management system.

2. Developing SCS program plans in each State using the national plan as base--these will be oriented to five years or less, and will be more specific as to priority needs, program levels, and program actions. District conservationists will be using the framework plan to help districts update and keep current their own long-range program plans.

3. Developing annual plans of operations

within this long-range framework.
Out of ~~all~~ this activity I expect a sizeable increase

help
in the effectiveness of our assistance to local communities.

Blended with the forward-looking action of conservation districts --

the national organization, area and state bodies, and individual

me
districts -- I think SCS can help America act to achieve a quality

simply
environment rather than react to environmental crises as our Nation

has done far too often.

challenge
The work we are about is vital to the welfare of the

people of America. Let's resolve to keep on improving that work

wherever and whenever we can.