CONSIDER THE LAND

Mr. Kincaple - Ohio Federation

Supervisors; Friends, I'm glad to be with you to "Consider the Land." and I'm glad to share ~~this afternoon~~ the platform with Dave Unger representing your national association, because I too want to take a few minutes to "Consider the Soil & Water Conservation Districts." - of Ohio - and the Nation.

Look closely at any segment of our population, and "conservationists" of every hue and background will appear before your eyes. But you can't really tell them by what they ~~do or~~ look like, how they dress - or their label.

They may be wearing army surplus bargains or tailor-made suits. They can be seen in picket lines, or at country club functions.

They are, by trade, businessmen and politicians, housewives ~~and social~~ dowagers, hippies ~~and teenybop~~pers, television stars and hucksters, professors and preachers, and, oh yes -- farmers and ranchers.

Material for Norman A. Berg, Associate Administrator, Soil Conservation Service, for presentation at the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, January 18, 1972.

They form clubs, organizations, associations, societies, federations, alliances, leagues, affiliations, and, yes . . . even civil Conservation districts.

Most are sincere in their belief. Some have made lasting contributions. Others are well meaning but poorly informed. Still others seem to do little more than criticize and shout, bicker and complain, point with alarm, and forecast doom - and try to stop progress.

How do we tell who the real conservationists are? As a sage old politician once said, "Let's look at the record."

LIGHTS OUT -- BEGIN SLIDE RUN

1. We have to go back almost 40 years to when the vast grasslands of the dry Plains rebelled after being plowed by homesteaders and overgrazed by livestock.

2. For the first time in the memory of man dust storms blew 2,000 miles eastward and 200 miles out to sea.

3. Left behind was havoc, abandoned farms . . .

4. Desolate land.

5. Elsewhere, rains cut deep gullies into the rolling land.

6. The once-clear waters of streams and lakes became choked and filled with silt.

7. Roads and highways were damaged and entire communities were uprooted by floods.

8. The land was troubled. No one felt it more than the farmers and ranchers whose once fertile land was becoming less and less productive with each succeeding rain and windstorm -- and whose hope lessened with each failure.

9. Out of this came a conservation movement unparalleled in the history of the world.

10. In 1935 Congress created the Soil Conservation Service -- an agency using science and research as the basis for its work of protecting the soil from the ravages of wind and rain.

11. Eager to put this new knowledge to work, the people -- farmers and ranchers -- began organizing soil conservation districts under their own state law in 1937.

12. These farmers and ranchers, with the help of SCS ~~technicians~~ Prof & others, began working out conservation programs for their land to hold down the soil, conserve water, protect crops and livestock, and promote the agricultural economy.

13. So the frontier of the land was ~~being~~ replaced with the frontier of the mind.

14. New agricultural practices and conservation terminology came into every day use . . . like terraces . . .

15. Grassed waterways . . .

16. Cons. Ponds . . .

17. Woodland management . . .

18 Pasture improvement . . .

19. Cons. And stripcropping.

20. Today in practically every community, the mark of conservation is ~~evident~~ visible, -- reducing erosion, gullying, and sedimentation . . . soil & water & resource highly

21. Adding beauty to the land . . .

22. And creating a home for wildlife. Indeed, most of our birds and animals make their homes on privately owned land . . . on our farms and ranches. Fish &

23. Farmers in all parts of the country know that good soil and water conservation also encourages wildlife.

24. For example, the erosion-control practice of growing strips of corn alternately with grasses or legumes can provide double the wildlife over what would be present had only one crop been planted.

25. District cooperators have constructed more than ~~1.7~~ 2 million ponds on their property that provide water for livestock and homes for wildlife.

26. Thousands have planted borders and special areas specifically to provide food and cover for birds and animals.

27. Can you name a What group of "conservationists" has done more that long in developing a quality environment for this nation's wildlife?

28. Today, local conservation districts cover ~~more than 96 percent of~~ the United States, ~~mainland.~~ About 2 million district cooperators voluntarily work with these districts to solve conservation problems.

29. In addition, some district supervisors have encouraged other groups, such as county planners, private land developers, engineers, and zoning officials, to seek help through the districts in dealing with land and water problems.

30. The districts know that many of the environmental problems plaguing suburban America can be controlled by practices that have been tested and proved by district cooperators over the past three and a half decades.

31. In the suburbs, soil erosion is a serious environmental hazard. County and city planners, with SCS and district help, are doing something about this problem -- but the need is acute.

as I pointed out yesterday w/ SCS

32. Soil erosion on a square mile of land can skyrocket from as little as 50 tons a year on farmland to more than 25,000 tons a year on land being converted to suburban uses.

33. The runoff water rips away the unprotected soil, damaging the construction site itself . . .

34. And causing sediment pollution that reduces the storage capacity for municipal water supplies . . .

35. And diminishes or destroys the usefulness of lakes for recreation and scenic enjoyment.

36. Much of this damage can be reduced by conservation practices such as reseeding disturbed areas until construction actually gets underway . . .

37. Building temporary sediment or debris basins to catch dislodged soil material before it leaves the property . . .

38. Establishing grassed waterways to conduct water runoff safely from the site without erosion . . .

39. And even on individual home sites, leaving trees for beautification and to minimize erosion hazards.

40. Many conservation districts have long increasingly been looking beyond the individual farms and ranches in their efforts to improve environmental quality.

41. For example, more than 10 years ago when peaceful Loudoun County, Virginia, was selected as the site for Dulles International Airport, the local conservation district board was quick to foresee the damaging impact of denuding 1,000 acres of land for construction.

42. The district appealed to the Federal Aviation Administration and convinced it to become a cooperator.

43. Throughout construction, the FAA followed the conservation recommendations of the district.

44. And the airport was built with a minimum of erosion and sediment damage. Later, the sediment basin became an attractive lake at the entrance to the airport terminal.

45. Districts elsewhere are similarly involved in action to keep flood-prone land as open space . . .

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46. In the development of community recreation areas . . .

47. In selecting safe locations for sanitary landfills . . .

48. And in minimizing pollution hazards -- and Ohio districts have important new responsibilities in the pollution abatement field since passage of Senate Bill 305.

49. Conservation districts have long appreciated the value of the soil survey, and many are encouraging non-farm landusers to make better use of it.

50. Also, in using the survey, prospective home buyers and builders can determine whether a particular piece of land is suitable for septic tank installation . . .

51. And if the soil can support a given structure safely.

52. Check the roof and balcony lines of these garden apartments. The structural damage is readily apparent. The buildings shouldn't have been built on such unstable soils without special foundation work. A soil survey would have saved this developer a lot of headaches.

53. Today the soil survey is being used by a growing number of people -- individuals to multi-county planning groups -- in making intelligent land-use decisions.

54. In many areas the soil maps provide the basis for zoning and subdivision regulations.

55. As a result, construction is done on better sites, designs are prepared more economically, cost estimates are more accurate, and maintenance costs are lower.

56. Most important, distressing misuses of land can be avoided or at least minimized.

57. Conservation districts, as county-wide organizations, are in a position to deal with the many environmental problems that are community wide and need action on a larger scale than the individual can undertake. This is especially the case where flooding is persistent.

58. Half the annual flood damage in the United States occurs in the geographically-small upstream watersheds.

59. Here, hundreds of millions of dollars are lost each year in ruined crops, livestock deaths, and soil losses.

60. And the damage isn't restricted to farmland. City homes are damaged . . .

61. Bridges washed out . . .

62. Transportation disrupted . . .

63. And businesses lost.

64. Soil and water conservation district leaders knew that such damages could only be stopped by a concerted effort on the part of everyone in the watershed. So when Public Law 566 was passed, they actively promoted it.

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65. Today, virtually all of the ~~2,900~~ 3,000 small watershed project applications presented have been initiated and sponsored by conservation districts.

66. And districts have been in the forefront of promoting the multipurpose concept in watershed development. So in addition to flood prevention, most projects today are being developed for municipal, water supply . . .
& industrial

67. Recreation . . .

68. And fish and wildlife.

69. The same community concern that has guided districts in small watershed project development is also guiding them in Resource Conservation and Development Project work.

70. To date, 154 multi-county areas have submitted detailed RC&D applications and 98 projects have been authorized for planning and operations. Every one of these has been sponsored by soil and water conservation districts.

71. In addition to basic soil and water conservation practices, far-reaching RC&D project measures include such things as adequate water systems . . .
other itemed

72. Vocational training and retraining for community residents . . .

73. Establishment of new industrial facilities to make better use of the areas manpower and natural resources . . .

74. And development of recreational enterprises and historic places of interest to draw visitors and build community pride.

75. In this brief -- and by no means complete -- look at the record, we have seen evidence of the profound evolution that is taking place in the work of conservation districts . . .

in every corner of the la

76. From the initial efforts directed toward the prevention of soil erosion on the individual farm . . .

77. To comprehensive community resource planning that benefits large numbers of people in a district; in the whole Nation; and benefits the Americans of the future, whose quality of life will depend on the quality of the resource base they inherit.

78. And no single group of people has contributed more to the utilitarian beauty and the vital well-being of the American land than you, the soil and water conservation district supervisors and cooperators.

Will the real 1, p/s stand up, you

79. You have been "real" conservationists, you are now and you will be -- you must be -- as together we face the challenges still ahead of us.

80. The world we live in is a blend of natural resources and people. Let's use our talents together to make that blend a harmonious one.

JRN LIGHTS UP

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Now I'd like to spend just a few minutes talking about sharing our talents for the job ahead. Both districts and the SCS have been at work for several years analyzing how well prepared we are for future challenges . . . whether we have the right programs with the right priorities . . . how we can accomplish more with the tools we have -- and what new tools we might need to do our job better.

The districts have come up with a District Outlook report which Dave Unger has discussed, and the Soil Conservation Service recently published its Framework Plan. In my opinion these two documents and the thinking that went into them dovetail perfectly. If each district supervisor takes the Outlook recommendations to heart and gets familiar with goals and priorities of the SCS as stated in our plan -- and if each SCS employee helps implement the framework plan and becomes knowledgeable about the District Outlook, I think districts and the SCS can be ~~a real~~ an even more effective force in building a better life for all Americans.

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Our Framework Plan lists 67 major goals, all directed toward the attainment of three basic SCS mission objectives: the achievement of quality in the natural resource base, in the environment, and in the standard of living. The plan focuses on the tasks that need to be done to improve and maintain all the resource management systems that make up our environment so that we can have and maintain a quality environment. It points up the effects and benefits that result from resource system improvements. And it discusses the kinds of technical action -- in conservation needs, in watershed development, in Resource Conservation and Development -- that SCS will need to concentrate on in the years ahead to help insure a highly quality environment.

The plan calls for:

-- Broadening our activities in monitoring and inventorying soil and water resources;

-- Adjusting our technology to changing conditions and to important concerns such as pollution control;

-- Improving our planning assistance to contribute more fully to the planning efforts of one cooperator, a group, or the Nation; and

-- Working closely with conservation districts to make soil and water conservation principles and techniques a part of planning and regulatory standards used by state and local governments and private groups and organizations.

We will work closely with Ohio districts in implementing the provisions of Senate Bill 305 to move ahead in abating agriculture-related pollution of many forms and sediment pollution in urbanizing areas. And we are working with you and state agencies in formulating land-use policy and guidelines in Ohio.

We are hard at work in SCS implementing our Framework Plan. Some priority items are developing and implementing an effective surveying and monitoring system; discussing the plan with all SCS employees and district officials to achieve understanding of our goals;

reviewing how well our resources are oriented toward meeting the plan's objectives; developing effective institutional arrangements; and involving ourselves more aggressively in land-use planning activities at all levels of government.

I know that Ohio's soil and water conservation districts are busy at implementing the recommendations of your District Outlook Committee. We all need to get with it. Because America is changing and we must change ~~with her~~. Rapid change is in every corner of the Nation. Physical change. Change in people's attitudes, values, and priorities. Accelerating change.

But I think we are equal to the task. For all the reasons that I outlined in the slide narrative I think districts are the real conservationists and you have a future of greater involvement and greater accomplishment ahead of you.

Congratulations to all of you and I wish you Godspeed in the work ahead!