

DISTRICTS ARE ALIVE AND WELL AND LIVING IN THE NORTHEAST

I appreciate the opportunity to join in your meeting.

Your program has touched on several of the crossroads that districts face. At some of those crossroads the traffic is getting lighter and the green light is on your side. Now's the time to GO.

Particularly in sediment control, in resource planning, and in working with environmental groups, districts in your part of the country have provided valuable ideas and experience for districts in other parts of the country to follow.

Through your early work in urban sediment control--particularly in Maryland--we are now in a position to discuss model state laws on this subject. NACD has a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency to hold more than 40 sediment control institutes

Material for speech by Norman A. Berg, Associate Administrator, Soil Conservation Service, at the Northeast Area meeting of the National Association of Conservation Districts, Newport, Rhode Island, August 8, 1972.

throughout the country. It has taken a decade and more--but we are on the move in sediment control.

Resource conservation and development projects in the
northeast have opened up new horizons--for civic leaders in rural communities and for district governing bodies. The Penn-Soil RC&D in Pennsylvania and the White River RC&D in Vermont were among the first 10 in the Nation. They helped prove the RC&D idea practical, popular, and successful to the point where SCS and districts now are working in 98 authorized projects covering nearly 400 million acres. Another 69 communities have applied for RC&D project help in 69 additional areas covering more than 300 million acres. All the projects, active and applied for, comprise about a third of the counties in the United States.

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In your region, there are now 13 RC&D projects in operation, 3 others in the planning stage, and another 10 applications. They are working on a broad range of community needs and they are getting good results.

Watershed projects have come a long way since historic Honey Hollow in Pennsylvania and Buffalo Creek in New York. This summer, Hurricane Agnes dumped from 7 to 15 inches of rain on five states in a short time. Some 75 watershed projects in Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New York received perhaps their strongest test. Every dam or other structure performed beautifully. In total, they prevented many millions of dollars in damages and may have saved human lives as well.

Local SCS offices and individual districts are receiving

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heavy demands for help in restoring land damaged by Agnes' floodwaters throughout the five states. We just can't emphasize enough the importance of everyday land treatment work in avoiding loss of valuable land and in helping structural measures do their job.

Watershed projects in the Northeast are accomplishing more than flood prevention. Recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, municipal and industrial water supply, and other tools are being used to bring fresh gains in the environment and in community growth.

Be proud of what you've done so far. You are here because you want to do more in the days ahead. You want to keep ahead of change while working to solve the problems we already know about.

On the Eastern Seaboard you've got to run pretty fast to keep up with change. There are more people in more suburbs every day. As of the 1970 census, you had 55 million people in the Northeast. That's 27 percent of all the people in the United States. Yet, the Northeast states comprise less than 6 percent of the land area of the Nation. And you are going to get more people. It has been said that in the next 10,000 days we will build in and around America's metropolitan areas the equivalent of everything we've built since Plymouth Rock.

Where the building will be done is a matter in which you in conservation districts must involve yourselves heavily if you are to meet your aims of a high-quality environment. The time is short. Thoughtless, unplanned, uncontrolled land use

practices already have cost the Northeast dearly--both economically and aesthetically.

You still have open space-- $5\frac{1}{2}$ million acres set aside for recreation and wildlife. You still have good, productive farmland--24 million acres of crop and pasture land, 83 million acres of forest land. You still have many communities that can and should grow a little bigger and provide more services for their residents. If land-use shifts are carefully planned, you and your communities have everything to gain. You have a great deal to lose if they are not.

Land-use planning is a complex field that stretches all the way from an individual's decisions to a body of national policies about the use of land and other resources. Decisions

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need to be based on the physical characteristics of land. This is where the soil survey comes in. Your states have been among the first to show local communities and area-wide planning bodies the value of soils information in guiding town and country planning. In SCS, we've been working to make that information available faster. In fiscal 1970, we sent 40 soil surveys to the printer. The following year it was 60, and 80 this past year. We plan to keep going up to 90 in 1973, and 100 in 1974. We need your help in getting this information to the people who can use it and in helping them understand and apply it. In many places, you can't afford to wait for the published survey. Land users and decision makers need to know about the usefulness and availability of soil facts before the ink on the field sheets gets dry.

Land use decisions must also be based on the needs and desires of the local community. Particularly in RC&D projects and in watershed projects you have shown your ability to help communities identify what they have and where they want to go. You need to work with planning commissions, with all kinds of governing bodies, and with citizen groups to get even closer to what is the best total interest of each community.

Land use decisions also must be guided by state, region-wide and national objectives if we are to avoid or correct conflicting and competing land use patterns. The subject of national land use policy is under full discussion at the Congress and in several Federal departments. Several bills have been introduced that basically would provide grants-in-aid to develop state land

use plans and programs, with some Federal guidelines and review.

Some bills concentrate on "areas of critical environmental concern"

and "key facilities." Other bills would set general policies

for the use of public lands. USDA would not be involved in admin-

istering any of these bills except as a member of a proposed

National Land Use Advisory Board.

The final shape and timing of this legislation are any-

one's guess. There will be more legislation and more Federal

administrative decisions that will involve USDA heavily. We must

move toward an approach to land use planning in which control is

vested at those levels of government where effective land use plan-

ning and regulation can occur. And we must coordinate better among

levels of government.

Shaping the America of tomorrow is a job that must involve all of us. You have a big job ahead of you in the Northeast.

You need more hands. SCS needs more hands. The day is long past when we could do it all with a handful of district supervisors

and a district conservationist. You and SCS need more points of view. The day is long past or never was when the contribution of

the agriculture-oriented adult white male was sufficient. Are

we doing as well as we can in making use of the talents of young

people, women, blacks, and other minority-group members, and

people in urban occupations?

There's a reason to involve more kinds of people that

goes beyond the obvious fact that they all have valuable ideas

and insight and energy to offer. And that is that all segments

of American society need to understand what you're up to if they

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are going to support it. In the face of rapid increases in the number of people and in the number of those who are interested in the environment, there has been a gradual lessening of support for agricultural programs. The way to increase that support is through understanding. And the best way to increase understanding is through involvement. You need help. Give people a meaningful way to help you. You'll find some tremendous allies.

People can't help you and you can't help them if they don't know who and where you are--district identity.

- Can people find you in the telephone book?
- If they can, will someone answer the phone?
- Can people get to the person they want without making several calls?
- Are you close enough to the news media? The Northeast has a tremendous concentration of radio and television networks, newspapers and magazines, other publishers, advertisers.

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- Encourage public attendance at your meetings.
- Take positions on key conservation issues and tell the public about them.
- Display district information prominently in the district office and look for other places to show it off.
- Take a close look at your newsletter and its mailing list.
- A shabby district boundary sign is worse than none at all.
- Organize tours.
- Publish better annual reports more places.

National legislation:

- Appropriation bill through Senate. Conferees to meet.
- Conference report on rural development bill through House.
Has gone to Senate.
- Reorganization--Dept. of Community Development, Dept. of Natural Resources.

Conservation education:

District leaders and state associations have assumed major responsibilities in conservation education in many states. An Illinois district last year received a sizeable grant from the Office of Environmental Education for developing community environmental education projects.

Districts are--

- serving on education advisory councils
- helping with conservation projects in local schools
- helping develop and publish conservation education materials
- organizing youth boards to aid with district activities

The NACD Education Committee now is working to promote outdoor classrooms and provide materials to schools. It is also helping Thelma McClellan and the Ladies Auxiliary with distribution of the series of curriculum guides and with encouraging workshops for in-service teachers.

<u>State</u>	<u>Districts</u> (6/30/75) <u>No.</u>	<u>Cooperators</u> (6/30/75) <u>No.</u>
Total	243	211,324
West Virginia	14	45,999
Vermont	14	12,234
Rhode Island	3	1,217
Pennsylvania	62	46,772
New York	26	45,037
New Jersey	12	7,327
New Hampshire	10	7,227
Massachusetts	12	9,222
Maryland	24	18,330
Maine	16	12,106
Delaware	3	3,264
Connecticut	8	4,822

Major Uses of Land, Northeast Region, 1969

	<u>Acres</u>
Cropland <u>1/</u>	20,372,000
Grassland and pasture <u>2/</u>	4,025,000
Forest land <u>3/</u>	83,367,000
Special uses:	
Urban and builtup <u>4/</u>	(9,707,000)
Recreation and wildlife <u>5/</u>	(5,545,000)
Other special uses <u>6/</u>	(1,152,000)
TOTAL	16,404,000
Other land	3,366,000
 TOTAL LAND AREA	 127,534,000

1. Includes 4,555,000 acres of cropland used only for pasture.
2. Grassland exclusive of cropland used only for pasture.
3. Excludes reserved forestland in parks and other special uses (New York forest preserves is largest component).
4. Urban areas, rural highways, roads and railroad rights-of-way, and rural airports.
5. Federal and state areas designated primarily for parks, related recreation, and wildlife purposes.
6. National defense, state institutions, farmsteads, farm roads, etc.

Excerpts from "Secretary Butz Is As Welcome As a Refreshing Rain"
by Rep. William A. Steiger in Congressional Record 7/31/72 (E7187)

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"It isn't so much the high cost of living as it is the cost of high living," he tells his audiences.

Butz reminds housewives who complain about high food prices that they never had it so good. Food costs are the lowest in history-- down to 15.6 cents of each dollar of take-home pay, compared with 23 cents two decades ago. In the same 20 years the farmer's share of the consumer's food dollar has shrunk to 38 cents from 49 cents.

"One reason why housewives think food is expensive is that they buy it several times a week and are aware of every little change in prices," says Butz. "On the other hand, they buy, say, furniture or a refrigerator once every 10 years, and they are not as aware of what has happened to prices of those items. The housewife may spend more on her week's trip to the store, and when she gets home she complains about food prices as she takes the pantyhose, detergent, mouthwash, and floor wax out of her shopping bag."

"I won't be satisfied until the income of the farm people is at least on a par with city people....I get letters from farmers saying 'Glory Hallelujah'...I also get letters from housewives saying, in effect, 'You silly S.O.B., what are you trying to do to us, anyway?'"

GOP national committee: "Butz's performance is as welcome as a refreshing rain after planting."

Kansas farm editor: "I can't find anyone who is against him."

Iowa farmer: "Farmers are pretty satisfied right now with Mr. Butz."

Sen. Herman Talmadge: "The other secretaries were always lurking in the shadows, but he's looking after the interests of American agriculture."

Illinois hog raiser: "Butz is Beautiful."

Chicago Tribute reporter: "A gutsy, give-em-hell fighter for agriculture...saying and doing things which have delighted farmers, irked consumer advocates and labor leaders, confounded political critics, and focused national attention on agriculture."

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This is an excellent time to summarize the responsibilities and opportunities discussed in your meetings since Sunday.

In any work it is primarily through the dedicated exercise of responsibilities that opportunities happen.

When Congress debated the money bill for USDA-SCS this summer they said--with the increased emphasis placed on environmental and conservation matters today, many people fail to realize that we have been on the front line for more than 35 years. They pointed out that many people want to get back to some balance of nature. We have been trying to do something all these years about living with nature, and this is different from being under the laws of nature. Making discoveries and using them puts man ahead of other living things--and ahead in the competition between him and other living things. Anyone knowledgeable of ecology will find that the developing countries of the world come nearer to a condition where nature has its way--and that appears to be a chief reason for lack of development. It is certain--I believe--that those who wish to return to the balance of nature don't really mean to go that far.

The problem that one has with returning to some balance is to determine just where the line should be drawn. If we go too far--our Secretary of Agriculture points out--someone else would have to face the policy question of which 50 million citizens of the U. S. would starve. He doesn't want this decision.

Though we all agree that we have a problem facing us with regard to the waste of our resources and pollution we must find solutions and put them to work. One thing is certain: You can take pollution from the air and put it in the water, or you can take it out of the water and put it on the land, but once formed, it must be disposed of somehow. There is an old saying, "There ought to be a law," But a law is not self-enforcing. What people really mean is that there ought to be a correction. Laws require the cooperation of the vast majority of decent citizens to be effective. The law is also blind to any considerations not included in its framework. If a law causes more problems than it solves, it will not be enforced over a long period of time.

Congress in recent years--said our Appropriations Committee--has been passing environmental laws that are difficult if not impossible not to support, but which may be impossible to carry out. These laws are a reflection of the feelings of the Nation--and the Congress--and for the most part an earnest desire to improve and restore the environment. But many of the provisions of these laws go well beyond the test of the prudent man.

** News article on book of Pollution Control*

By 2000--28 years ahead we will grow above today's 208 million Americans by another 80-90 million--and we have been, and still are abusing our environment. How we will clean it up--learn to handle it without unduly restricting the means for providing our high standard of living may well determine the future of our nation.

Today the agencies--and Congress are faced with dealing with many of the environmental groups.

--We see projects opposed by some because they will change the **type** of fish or animal they may wish to catch and kill.

--Because their lights come on every night, they oppose new electric generation facilities--and our needs double each decade.

--Because they haven't been hungry they oppose fertilizers--and pesticides fundamental to agriculture.

--Because they have jobs, they oppose developing areas of this country not so fortunate.

--Because their homes are not flooded, they are opposed to watershed projects.

Millions of people have been sold against "changing the environment" even though it be for the good of mankind.

Let's talk about responsibilities. It is the responsibility of SCS to consider the protection and development of all resources.

Nature tried to have it her way in late June--as you so well know. Dams and other structures in 75 watershed projects in five eastern States were tested by hurricane Agnes, and all performed according to plan, according to a post-flood check by SCS.

The watershed projects completed or under construction include 14 in Maryland, 21 in Pennsylvania, four in Delaware and six in the five southern counties of New York State.

The dams in these projects prevented millions of dollars in damages, and may have saved human lives as well. None of the small watershed dams involved failed, or even came close to failure, and all of them functioned as they were designed to do.

~~Lake~~ Lake Needwood, in Montgomery County, Maryland is a 74-acre lake, part of the Upper Rock Creek small watershed project, protecting thousands of homes downstream in a heavily urbanized area.

At no time during the hundred-year frequency storm did floodwaters reach the level of Lake Needwood's emergency spillway, designed to safely handle overflows. The lake level itself never came closer than 14 feet of the top of the dam.

Lewis Williams, SCS district conservationist estimated that the depth of flood waters in many areas below Lake Needwood was reduced one-third to one-half because of the watershed project. Rock Creek Terrace, an apartment complex for people of low-to-moderate income about four miles downstream from the lake had two to four inches of water in less

Nationally, more than 800 watershed projects are completed or under construction. SCS strongly supports the concept of multiple use of water resources. But flood control is the backbone of small watershed projects, and 'be prepared' is still the best flood control advice. Whether another major flood leads to inconvenience or real disaster for the people of a particular area can often be decided before the first raindrop hits the ground.

This is what we mean as a responsibility to consider man and his needs. Man himself is an integral part of the environment, and his personal requirements should not be under emphasized--something which may be happening too often.

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