

RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT—THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

I welcome this opportunity to join you. I am deeply concerned about your problems. I want to be closely associated with your progress in the Harrison County Soil and Water Conservation District; with the plans for the future of the 87 soil and water conservation districts in Indiana and the 3,000 in our land. That is why I am here tonight.

Words are the legitimate weapons of civilized man facing the issues of his time. Your meeting tonight, as I see it, provides for a timely discussion of vital issues.

This is the time to speak for the unity of the countryside in all its values and uses. It is the time to advocate the protection and development of our resources as a whole, in accordance with their capabilities and the goals of the community. It is a time to speak for action that will meet the oncoming demands of a growing Nation. It is a time to forestall premature and disorderly commitments of resource use.

We find ourselves in an age demanding instant satisfaction of ill-considered demands—often hypocritically made in the name of progress and society. Therefore, I believe it is a time to come forward, to be heard. It is a time to assist conservation district governing boards to assume fully their responsibilities of leadership in soil, in water, and in related conservation work.

In a steel mill a great bar of steel was suspended vertically by a delicate chain. Nearby a bottle cork was suspended by a silk thread. Could the small cork held only by a fragile thread set the steel bar

Address by Norman A. Berg, Deputy Administrator for Field Services, Soil Conservation Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., Annual Meeting of the Harrison County Soil and Water Conservation District on February 21, 1967, Corydon, Indiana.

into motion? The cork was swung gently against the steel bar. The bar remained motionless. But this was repeated again and again. In ten minutes the bar gave some evidence of feeling uncomfortable, and a "nervous chill" ran over it. Then ten minutes later the chill was followed by a tremor of vibration. At the end of an hour the great bar was swinging like a pendulum in concert with the tiny cork.

How many "potential" leaders desert their goal because they stopped just before a "nervous chill" ran over their bar of steel?

There is an old Greek proverb that says, "Before you score, you must have a goal." Our goal is that the Nation's future lies in rural America. The vast countryside can offer relief from the teeming cities and their congested suburbs--provide ample land and water to serve the expanding needs of commerce and industry, and broad acres on which to build garden communities for tomorrow's generations.

If we act with wisdom--in time!

We have become, in my lifetime, a nation of city-dwellers. Each day and each year, more and more Americans concentrate in the towns, cities, and suburbs. To them life naturally centers where they work, make their homes--raise their families. And from these centers of population emerge a pattern of mutual interests, problems, and understanding. A kinship is growing up among these people of Albuquerque and Atlanta, of Baltimore and Boston, of Cincinnati and Chicago, and of Lexington and Louisville.

This kinship derives from such typically metropolitan concerns as

What then happens to the countryside? Increasingly, it becomes an obstacle in time and space--merely landscape separating cities. It is to many--far too many--a "land in between" to be crossed as quickly as possible via super highways, fast trains or faster planes. Among this new and urban oriented generation, there is danger that the land in between will be regarded increasingly as just "undeveloped" space. The hinterland--available for exploitation.

The American countryside--that expanse of nature separating our cities and towns and rural hamlets--represents the land we have left to grow in, play in, and build on the American dream.

That is all we have; and when divided and divided again for the multiple needs of a Nation growing rapidly in population, in urban development, in highway mileage, in an array of man-oriented uses alien to nature, this natural landscape that once seemed so limitless shrinks before us at every turn--and we are made aware of the challenging crisis in the countryside.

May I take a moment to commend each of you for the excellent progress in the soil and water conservation work that you share after 20 years of progress in Harrison County.

Refer to booklet-outline

At present there are 977 district cooperators with 126,472 acres which is over one-third of the county. Of these, 590 with 69,925 acres have basic conservation plans. Land adequately treated is about 91,696

This District, I understand, includes all of Harrison County (306,560 acres). Topography is rolling to steep with mostly limestone soil and some sandstone soil. About 85% of the population is rural and the economy is based on agriculture. Major agricultural products are tobacco, poultry, dairy, beef, hogs and corn.

Land use according to the Conservation Needs Inventory is 127,400 acres of cropland, 30,519 acres of pastureland, 120,000 acres of forest land, and 21000 acres of other with 7,641 acres of urban, built up, and water areas.

Some of the needed and major soil and water conservation problems are (1) land use changes on about 35,000 acres of class VI and VII land now being cropped, (2) about 56,385 acres of cropland have an erosion problem, (3) about 37,812 acres of grassland needs establishment or improvement, (4) tree planting is needed on about 10,620 acres, (5) protection from livestock is needed on about 21,863 acres of woodland, and (6) about 71,154 acres of woodland needs improvement work. In addition, there is a serious water management problem with serious flooding at times and a lack of adequate water for various uses at other times.

I am told that this District has always had a very active Board of Supervisors. Past and present members have been leaders dedicated and willing to give of their time and expense to promote an aggressive District Program. Assistant supervisors have been used effectively.

You have always supported the National, State and Area Associations of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. In fact, one former chairman of your board, C. Jerome Davis, has served as vice-president of the State Association and was also a member of the State Soil Conservation Committee. Presently Master of the Indiana State Grange and Deputy to the Master of the National Grange he still maintains a deep and sincere interest in soil and water conservation. I became acquainted with Mr. Davis because of his excellent work as a member of the Secretary of Agriculture's Soil and Water Conservation Advisory Committee.

This District ^{Rayon Snow} is also one of the sponsors of the Lincoln Hills Resource Conservation and Development Project which includes 1,005,440 acres in Harrison, Crawford, Perry and Spencer counties. Secretary of Agriculture Freeman visited the area in May 1963 and announced that it was the first RC&D project in the nation. This was building on a Rural Area Development concept that took hold early in the 1950's in this area.

As a result of this RC&D project in Harrison County, a complete soil survey is now in progress with about two-thirds of the County mapped, conservation planning and application are being accelerated, a severely eroded area is being planted to trees, engineering and geological investigations have been made for a proposed 400 acre lake, and ^{several} ~~some~~ other projects are in the mill.

An application for Indian Creek Watershed was sponsored by the

many multipurpose structures are being planned. This watershed has been approved for planning and the local people are in the process of forming a Conservancy District.

I want to briefly review progress in Resource Conservation and Development projects as only one example of advancement in conservation. I could discuss many other facets. But it shows what can be done.

It shows that our concept of conservation has been growing and taking new form.

The six new RC&D projects being the total to 26 approved for planning or operations since we started the program in 1963. It speaks well of the soil and water conservation leadership that so many have been started in so short a time.

The RC&D projects offer one of our best opportunities to step up soil and water conservation programs in meeting today's urgent need. These projects represent a new approach to assisting rural areas in the full development and multiple use of land and water resources to create new jobs, new recreation areas, and to increase rural income opportunities.

RC&D is broadening our programs of assistance to soil and water conservation districts.

➤ It is accelerating the small watershed program and emphasizing multi-purpose development watershed projects.

➤ It is assisting in recreational developments on private lands.

- It is helping eliminate the causes of rural poverty.
- It is strengthening the family farm pattern of agriculture.
- It is establishing a reservoir of experience which the developing Nations of the world--largely rural and agrarian--can adapt.
- It is helping make rural America a place where millions more of our citizens can live and work and play.

Nationwide Progress and Concepts Developed

Experience in the pilot work we have seen since 1963 is encouraging.

Stated in its simplest terms the resource conservation and development concept is that of local people initiating and carrying forward a program of action for resource conservation, development, and utilization in an area to provide additional economic opportunities to its people.

The Project Approach

The keys to success in resource conservation and development projects are (1) local leadership, and (2) teamwork between public agencies assisting the project sponsors.

Local leadership organizes and directs the technical and financial resources of all participants to carry out the project plan. All segments of the community--rural, suburban, and urban--can coordinate their activities toward a unified approach in meeting local problems and improving resource use. Often, the very act of taking stock of resources and planning together for their use stimulates people to carry out measures on their own.

The "project" approach has advantages over the usual program basis of most USDA activities in which services are available nationwide to eligible participants.

The project approach limits the area, gives sharp focus to use of funds and authorities, and concentrates the effort. Local leadership is most effective because its influence and interest are centered in the project area.

Coordinated effort by local interests and all Federal, State, and local agencies results in a truly comprehensive project plan for each area.

Common Objectives

All projects have in common--land, water, and other resource potentials that will significantly improve the area economy. Yet each project is different in resources, in problems, and in approaches in solving problems of the local communities and local people.

Area resource planning and conservation work is a timely development. The histories of both the SCS and the SCD's have been a continuing response to new challenges as our times and problems change. As new problems appeared, districts have moved to help solve these problems. At first districts worked mostly with individual farmers and ranchers. Next came work with groups. Later, programs expanded to include whole communities or regions--in watershed or resource conservation and development projects and in planning and ever growing programs.

Yes, indeed, times change, our problems change and our boundaries of concern are widened. Not necessarily because we want it this way,

the Peace Corps and give what they have, which is time and energy. Millionaires set up foundations and give money. Your field of special competence is your knowledge of the land. I suggest that using this knowledge of the land, for the people, can be a very valuable contribution to your country.

The basic concept of conservation is the wise use and protection of the land both today and tomorrow. So let's take a brief look at our national tomorrow and see what changes will occur.

One of the basic facts of tomorrow's America is many more people. By 1975 there will be an estimated 223 to 230 million people. By the year 2000 we shall have between 338,000,000 and 350,000,000. During the second half of the 20th century, it appears highly probable that we shall add 200,000,000 persons to the population of the United States.

To put it in another way: between 1960 and 1970 we shall add a population equal to the present population in the 25 largest cities: New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Detroit, Philadelphia, Baltimore, St. Louis, and so on.

In relation to this population, there is another very important fact that we must recognize. For all practical purposes 100 percent of the population increase in the United States will eventually come to live in urban places. Something like 80 or 90 percent of the population will live in the present metropolitan areas if present trends are

Recently Secretary of Agriculture Freeman told his Public Advisory Committee on Soil and Water Conservation,

"Cities are suffering from the burden of too many bodies for the space they have, while rural areas suffer from the loss of too many of their bright young people to the urban centers.

"There should be more jobs where the space is.

"Our rural America should become a place where parity of opportunity exists--opportunity equal to that in the cities. Only then will it be a place in which more people want to live and work.

"That is your challenge: Help make it such a place.

"Future developments in soil and water conservation should support a national effort to create in rural America more new enterprises, more industrialization--and the growth in commerce and business that will accompany new industry in rural areas."

Rural America is also changing. Only 6 out of 20 Americans live in rural areas, and only 25 percent of rural residents themselves are farmers. So there are a lot of people owning land in rural America who aren't too familiar with conservation practices.

In the future, we will have more people, more demands on the land, and less agricultural land. Urbanization may not have reached all of Indiana in ^{tornado} hurricane force, but its effects will be very much present.

We have enough land, for our immediate future, if we use it wisely. But we can't continue to remove millions of acres from agricultural production forever and not pay for it sometime in higher food costs and lower quality.

We need new suburbs and industrial developments. We also need to retain much of our prime farmland. We can do both--if we plan urban growth and other land changes in consideration of our national needs and the land's capabilities. But we have to plan--now--while there is some time left.

I don't think most urban Americans realize how much their standard of living depends on efficient farming. Our farmers and ranchers have produced the world's greatest agricultural success story--unequaled anywhere else on earth. But our farmers can't keep pulling production miracles, like rabbits, out of a silk hat forever, especially when the silk hat--our agricultural land and water base--keeps getting smaller.

Right today, the competing demands of resource users are running into each other. In some areas of the country, there isn't enough water to satisfy industry, recreation, irrigation, and home use. Who gets priority--and on what basis? What if an industrial company, a housing developer, a city recreation department and highway officials all want the same land? Again, who gets priority? We had better decide before the bulldozer gets there because once that soil is ripped up and urbanization takes over, the

This raises the question--who should make the plans for land and water use and conservation? I suggest that soil conservation districts should have a major role.

I know this is a subject with more questions than answers. But before we consider some of these questions, I'd like to quote the National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts on the future of districts.

A recent NACD statement suggests that districts have four major challenges facing them.

First, districts--and I quote. . . "must equip themselves to meet the demands for orderly resource development in an age of increasing requirements for land, water, and space."

Second, . . . "They must secure and provide the needed technical, financial, and other services necessary to move ahead with the job."

Third, . . . "They must confront the fact the resource programs of the future need to be developed in terms that our vast urban population can understand and support."

And fourth, . . . "They must invent new operating machinery that will not only meet the basic needs of farmers and other landowners but also satisfy community development needs and provide a framework for greater participation in resource matters."

I support these objectives. I know there are some questions, and

have the needs of our land. Should Districts serve only farmers or should they serve both land resource owners and users? I support the NACD concept that districts should include more segments of the local community.

Some districts may feel they are not equipped to lead an expanded land conservation job. But consider this. Who is better equipped? Who knows more about the land in your area? Who already has the organizational machinery, the skill, and the long experience in land use problems? In short, you are the experts.

You may forget how limited your kind of knowledge is among urban people because you deal with land all the time. In many areas, urban, county and city officials are asking for district help in land conservation.

I suggest that conservation district supervisors might well consider their programs not farm programs alone, but land and water programs. Of course, you already do that. You realize that farm conservation work is as important as ever, but a whole new series of conservation problems have sprung up through more intensified land use. You learned earlier that farming here was different from farming in the humid East or the mountainous Far West, and you adapted to this particular land. Well, the same knowledge of the differences in land, and the necessity of using the land for its best purposes is beginning to come clear to many urban land users today; and they are looking for guidance.

You know a flood doesn't stop at the edge of town. The same river

wife. You, and the banker and lawyer will all pay higher food prices and higher taxes for road repair work when the wrong land is used for the wrong purpose, or when floods wash over roads and farms.

The Lincoln Hills RC&D Project was built on the foundation of four Soil Conservation Districts, yet it transcends these districts in its outlook and function as well as in its geography. The broader base of citizen interest reflected in the planning body members and the structure of the working committees has assured that the emphasis of this activity is "development" as well as "conservation" and that interests far beyond those of agriculture are given high priority.

The presence of the RC&D project has yet made little, if any, traceable impact on the staffing and functioning of the separate county SCS units as such. Within the SCS structure, cooperation with the multi-county project seems to meet everyone's expectations, despite the fact that it is regarded as pretty much of a novelty. The important point is that there is no inherent or incidental conflict between the Districts and the RC&D program.

What Are The Ingredients That Have Produced Success Here?

1. There was a real need in this area for planning and development assistance. This need was so great that perhaps it wouldn't have mattered much whether it began as resource-oriented development (which RC&D is not entirely) or whether the focus began with some other

not supply. Possibly, if another program had organized this area first, the citizenry would have developed a sharper awareness of other needs and possibilities. Was there a planning and development vacuum at the county and area levels?

2. The time was ripe. Development possibilities were just beginning to become visible, success was possible.
3. SCS had enough financial resources available to show some early project successes, and these resources are well adapted to many of the needs of the area. There has been relatively little of the damaging frustration of waiting for endless agency approvals.
4. The combination of a carefully selected, broadly-based development planning group plus a skilled, full-time staff aide is a potent weapon and is widely appreciated.
5. The initial project measures were a combination of sure successes and long-range possibilities.
6. Even though the project could benefit from more active support from several other Federal agencies, it appears to have the united support of the USDA and several State agencies and this has proven sufficient thus far.
7. Local and county groups were stimulated to new actions because of the existence of the area program and this momentum has been vital.

What Has RC&D Produced That Would Not Have Occurred Anyway?

One of the difficulties in dealing with this question is the nature

A certain amount of restatement of long-term area goals is inevitable and not always without justification. Certainly, such restatement produces the problem of "multiple-credits"--several activities charging the success of specific measures to their own accounts. On the other hand, the nature of area planning and development work acknowledges from the outset that many forces must be harnessed to accomplish complex area goals, thereby assuring that where there is success, there will be many claims to parenthood.

Then, too, RC&D offers acceleration as its principal action weapon, indicating that timing is the critical variable. The important question is not only what happens, but how soon? On that point, we are offered important insights from the standpoint of the local consumers of RC&D and they appear satisfied with the rate of acceleration. We need to continue to ask "What has been the principal benefit to the area from the RC&D program?" How can its benefits be expanded?

Some Implications Drawn From the Project History

Finally, this RC&D project produces some important insights into community development processes:

1. Economics of scale in development work can be achieved through multi-county area planning and development, and, if properly handled, there do not appear to be serious political penalties in this approach to inter-governmental collaboration. This last

2. Although this system can be improved considerably, the existence of this citizen planning and action council has a tendency to produce more Federal assistance and to make better use of it. The broader vision of the multi-county group reduces the waste that can occur when small counties each try to sponsor their own small projects. Furthermore, the concerted public muscle represented by these citizen groups tends to produce support from Federal and State agencies faster than would otherwise be the case.
3. Inter-agency and inter-jurisdictional rivalries can be reduced if each of these interests is assured of an appropriate role in the development process.
4. New development needs have made necessary an extension of the scope of concern and the geographic span of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts. While their traditional function remains, the area-wide projects which they are helping to create represent a positive response to a new level of community expectations.

Summary

This work exemplifies that a rural and limited soil conservation concept will no longer suffice in a society that has become increasingly urban, a society in which the interests of the users of resources have become equal to those of the owners of resources.

Regardless of whether an area ever has an RC&D project, the needs

project the probable demands that will be made on these resources and to guide the development and use of these same resources along wise and orderly by-lines.

There is need to develop a countryside purpose--to identify the principles and goals of the countryside and to make them known.

There is need for leadership in conservation districts, in farm organizations and chambers of commerce--among conservationists, tradesmen, bankers, and newsmen--to identify the array of new issues now facing the countryside and the soil, and devise constructive programs for dealing with them.

The key to the new approach in a nutshell seems to be that of involving more people in resource work, of extending district services to additional people, of placing more emphasis on broad-based resource planning, and at the same time continuing the original purpose of the district as an effective local action organization to get as much total conservation on the land as fast as possible!

We have a big job ahead. Our land boundaries from sea to sea remain the same. Our land uses change. It is our enlarged job to help see that these changing land adjustments are right for the land and for our people. Because of your experience and past record, you will inevitably be leaders in this field. I hope you accept that leadership for what it is: a recognition of your past accomplishments, an acknowledg-

On behalf of your State Conservationist and the Administrator of the Soil Conservation Service, I pledge our continued help to the limit of funds and abilities. I congratulate everyone of you on your past achievements; I commend you for your present activities, and I wish you godspeed in your work for the future.