

TEAMWORK FOR TOMORROW .

I consider this opportunity to meet with you again a pleasure and a privilege. Your theme "Conservation - Rural and Urban Teamwork" is very timely!

Teamwork -- cooperation -- is at the very heart of conservation. Cooperation between man and nature is basic to good land and water use. Cooperation between man and man, as individuals and as members of different groups is a necessity for good conservation. And in today's America, cooperation between local, state, and federal groups and agencies, public and private, is also vital.

Cooperation means working together with our environment, our fellow citizens, and the next generation -- and the key words are "working" and "together."

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Material for Norman A. Berg, Associate Administrator, Soil Conservation Service, at annual meeting of Utah Association of Soil Conservation District Supervisors, Salt Lake City, Utah, December 10, 1969.

In this working together, we face three basic issues  
in the matter of creative conservation work.

First, the rapidly increasing demands on our resources;

Second, the changing demands on our resources; and

Third, the increased complexity of our resource problems,  
with special emphasis on how this will affect conservation districts  
in the decade of the Seventies.

These were important issues when I talked about them  
here two years ago, and they are even more important today.

We do have many things to be grateful for. Just look  
at our great Nation:

- Better schools, colleges, and universities.
- Expanding industry and commerce.
- Abundance in agriculture.
- Astounding medical advances.
- First and second trip to the moon.
- The highest wages in the world.

-- Conveniences by the dozens--in the home, the office,  
the factory, and on the farm and ranch.

-- Recreation opportunities of every description.

-- The arts--on canvas, record, film, stage, and  
printed page.

-- Over 3,000 conservation districts and 18,000 members  
of local governing boards.

-- Government concern for resources that helps with  
research, education, loans, cost-sharing, and  
technical help for over 2,000,000 cooperators.

We have many people who know that there's more to life  
than a bigger and bigger Gross National Product.

We are concentrating more and more on putting first  
things first.

We realize that greater technology demands greater  
responsibility.

At the same time the newspaper headlines offer daily evidence of the challenges of change. Are we as responsible as we should be as caretakers of our land and waters?

We all know that the "people" pressure on our land and water resources is still growing. Each year, the U.S. population increases by about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  million people, an increase more than twice the total population of Utah. Within 3 decades there will be about 100 million more Americans living on today's land and water base. Our need for urban land will double. Our water needs for manufacturing will quadruple.

These "people" pressures on our land and water even today cause serious problems.

For example: Every year sediment displaces about a million acre-feet of storage space--space that costs about \$100 per acre foot to build. This reduces the Nation's water supply capacity by enough to serve a city of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  million people.

Ohio's Cuyahoga River, near Cleveland, caught fire last year from an oil slick and several bridges were burned -- the river is a dumping ground for waste.

In Los Angeles, the County Medical Association estimates that air pollution forces 10,000 people a year to leave the area. During heavy smog conditions, Los Angeles county students are asked not to exercise strenuously or to breathe deeply.

When rivers become fire hazards and we can't take a deep breath in safety we will replace apathy with a readiness to act.

Rural towns and the countryside are also challenged by a changing society. We in agriculture need to face this problem-- to replace isolation with involvement in the needs of people.

In addition to heavier demands on our resources, we can see changing demands, even as we ourselves change.

In my own experience, my father pioneered on a Minnesota farm, originally forest, that probably should never have been cultivated. That land, in my lifetime, has gone from original forest cover into row crops and from there into its present use--primarily for outdoor recreation. These changes occurred in part because, as the growing productivity of American farmers dictated less land use for one purpose, the growing popularity of outdoor recreation dictated another land use.

These land-use changes are paralleled by "people" changes. Again in my own experience, I grew up in a rural Midwest and worked as a career conservationist in a number of Western rural areas. Today my family and I live in a very urban metropolitan Washington, D.C. We've worked and lived there for several years now, but when I retire we may again seek a rural or semi-rural area in which to live. This transient way of life is common to many Americans today.

In the lifetime of many of us we have personally seen agriculture go from about 6 million small, horse-powered units to less than 3 million largely machine-powered farms. We've witnessed -- in fact caused -- major shifts in land use. Even the vocabulary is different -- remote sensing, eutrophication, no-till, laser, chlorinated hydrocarbons, pelletizing.

These changes in land, people, and agriculture are signs that any demarcation between town and country is fading fast. A doctor or lawyer in your area whom you've never met can affect you, a rancher. If he sits on a town planning board he can vote on issues that determine whether or not your area gets a new sewage plant, makes a cooperative soil survey, or plans a watershed project. You the rancher, a stranger to this doctor or lawyer, can affect him through your decisions on how to treat the land and water you control. In today's more crowded world, one man's junkyard can become another man's backyard.

Can we any longer have a small group of dedicated conservationists worry about the Nation's future, while American society as a whole tacitly agrees to shift the results of their land and water use onto the shoulders of the next generation? In some ways that's what our collective ancestors did and now many Americans are finding that we are the "next generation" that conservationists talked about 30 years ago. We are the generation for whom the air is more polluted, the water still silting up, the underground reservoirs lowering. Suddenly, good resource use is not only something vital to our grandchildren, but vital to us. Suddenly, that vague tommorrow, when all of the chickens come home to roost -- to use an old phrase -- is today. And the real tomorrow -- that we had better start planning for right now -- is only the rest of this century.

Now at this point I want to again make one important point very clear. The original mission of conservation districts and the SCS has not been abandoned -- and never will be. Soil erosion and sediment problems are still with us.



You can still go into the countryside today and see barn-swallowing gullies, while the amount of sediment moving into the streams, rivers, and lakes of our country each year is in the magnitude of 4 billion tons -- not all of it, by any means, from agricultural land.

So districts and the SCS still need to help clean-up and patch-up old and current land-use mistakes. But, let's look beyond the clean-up and crisis stage to the planning and prevention period. We can use the kinds of up-to-date knowledge we have on soils, watersheds, and water resources to help shape the kinds of communities we want and need for a good life. And as we do, keep in mind the facts of modern-day America; the facts about our increasing population, our increasing urbanization -- which creates new conservation problems -- and our growing demands on natural resources. Let's not only recognize that land and water use are tied together, but also note that the needs of different resource users -- farmers, builders, John Q. Citizen -- are also tied together, and must be planned for together.

Urban people are becoming very interested in what's happening to the land and water around them because, unlike the drought and soil blowing of the 1930's, today's problems hit them directly. For example, water pollution along a part of the Rockaway River in heavily populated New Jersey became so bad that the smell was unbearable and area residents complained about intestinal upsets. The State stepped in -- took nine of its own towns and townships to court, where they obtained an injunction, still in effect, that forbids these nine communities to issue any more building permits until they have adequate sewage treatment plants.

As long as this ban remains, local people in these nine communities can't build on their own lots, and can't very well sell, since the new purchasers couldn't build either. Contractors and merchants are unhappy because there are no new households, no factory expansion, no new jobs coming in. Whole communities are being stopped in their tracks until local resource planning catches up with local resource use.

So, effective soil and water conservation in the 1970's must recognize:

1. The wide variety of concerns that conservation now embraces, and
2. The wide variety of people that are interested and affected by conservation activities.

Urban people may -- in fact often will -- look at conservation and land and water use from a different viewpoint. I would only remind you, here, that life is not a television program. There are few clear-cut good guys versus bad guys confrontations. What we will be seeing more and more -- it's been building up for years -- is a confrontation of intelligent and aware citizens with different voices and viewpoints who must get together, talk together, and put together a rational, workable plan that considers all of the community's legitimate needs.

Because, of course, we do need land for farms and ranches, for outdoor recreation and wildlife. We also need land for homes and airports and roads. We need water for farming and industry and home consumption and many other uses. These many requirements are the reason, above all, that we need good land and water resource planning.

Perhaps as part of this planning, we need a national dialogue on land-use criteria. Certainly, we need a more widespread understanding, based on good technical data, of the limits and potentials of our soil, water, and even air for various uses. And we also need local, state, and national leaders who understand that planning and development should build on a solid base of good land and water use.

Do I need to point the "fickle finger of fate" as to who fits the picture as the local leaders of land use and conservation? It is not your job alone. Many people are concerned. But if you don't speak up for good land and water use, who will? If you don't urge good land and water use, who should? -

Districts have a prestigious background upon which to build. You have the help of the Soil Conservation Service and other agencies in providing you with good technical information on which to base decisions. You have not only your own land and water use experience, but your reputation as a local official of character and competence.

The overwhelming majority of land use changes throughout the Nation are made at the individual and local level. The local rancher makes the final decision on his land use, including, if desired, the decision to sell. Local officials make zoning and planning laws and pass on applications for local land development. Federal and state conservation agencies can counsel and assist, but the responsibility and initiative must come from the people who live there, where the land and water are. Their collective response is the reality of conservation.

What specifically can soil conservation districts do?

They are a major source for technical help on land and water resources -- such information as soil surveys, watershed data and so on. This provides some basic tools for planning, but it is not, by itself, planning.

Many district leaders go beyond resource information alone to join the active planning process as committee members on their area planning districts and in other ways. Working with other citizens, they help to plan, and then support, good policy decisions on land and water use. They make certain the community understands the need for adequate sources of clean water, and the need for erosion and flood control measures. In the planning process, they look ahead at changes in their area -- for example, if a new highway is planned for a certain area, how this will affect future growth and thus future land and water needs in the area.

And, when plans have been finalized, district leaders help to implement them and to gain further community support.

I hope that in this planning process, you and other local leaders actively solicit the views of the entire community -- not only farmers and businessmen but also women and young people. Many women's groups -- the League of Women Voters for example -- are very effective in working for those projects they choose to back. As for young people -- we know how effective they can be in making changes. And they are interested in their environment. After all, this will be their world for a longer time than it will be mine -- perhaps yours.

In town and country planning, some may wonder if the farm interests will be slighted in a partnership with urban people. Will farmers be adequately represented?

I believe you will be if you join the planning --  
 but you may not be if you don't. Town and country should grow  
 together and no planning worthy of the name should slight the  
 needs of either.

The task of planning and developing of the Nation's  
 rural areas is receiving the close attention of Secretary of  
 Agriculture Clifford Hardin, who is a member of the President's  
 Council on Rural Affairs as well as the Urban Affairs Council.  
 Last month, in Chicago, Secretary Hardin said, "The Nation must  
 progress rapidly with rural development both for the welfare of  
 rural America and also to save our big cities from even worse  
 population and environmental problems than now exist. It is  
 not enough simply to think of improving conditions for the  
 people in rural America and thereby stemming the migration to the  
 cities. We must do much more. We must make it a matter of  
 urgent national policy to create in and around the smaller  
 cities and towns sufficiently good employment opportunities and  
 living environments that large numbers of families will choose to  
 rear their children there."



There has been some stemming of the migration to big cities. But there are still too many small towns like Cottonwood, Kansas, having almost twice as many residents aged 65 or over as it does aged 25 to 40. Today's successful farmer may find himself living in an unsuccessful community.

As someone said, "Big farming is exciting but you get kind of lonely when there are so few people to talk to in town on Saturday night."

To stay alive and healthy, rural communities today must have the institutions and services that will make young families want to live there. This includes good jobs, good schools, medical facilities, and shopping and cultural activities that are convenient.

Districts have already helped hundreds of small communities and their surrounding areas grow healthier. Utah's American Fork-Dry Creek watershed has reduced flood damages, provided irrigation and recreation water, and given a sharp boost to the area's economy.

Elsewhere, for another example, the watershed project near Culpeper, Virginia, has provided that town with a dependable water supply that helped bring in over a thousand new jobs, doubled the town's size and resulted in the county's first public water-based recreation park.

Resource conservation and development projects -- there are 56 now planned or in operation including your own Box Elder RC&D -- are also helping shape better rural communities, and not only in the obvious ways. Crawford, Indiana, part of an early RC&D project, is one of the poorest counties in that state. For a generation, Crawford had no doctor. Today they do. Crawford County residents got together and purchased \$80,000 in stocks to help build a clinic, then recruited for a first-class doctor and dentist. Crawford people say the community spirit generated by their direct RC&D resource conservation work made them realize they could make other changes as well by working together.

Local people working together with state and Federal agencies can shape and plan the environment on their terms.

Changes are inevitable. The only question is, on whose terms and under what criteria?

The Soil Conservation Service is also well aware that we are embarking on a new decade where change will accelerate, where problems will multiply and pressures will mount. Therefore we held, this fall, a State Conservationists' meeting that was different from any we have held before.

Instead of trying to solve present problems -- however pressing -- we focused our full attention what the Service should be doing during the next decade.

We are now making a critical scrutiny of all of our present operations. The more of a sacred cow the operation, the more we feel it probably needs a critical review.

We are also looking at the many new areas in which SCS is being called upon for technical assistance. Requests to help planning and zoning commissions; requests for information on sediment reduction and water quality improvement, and so on. We need to define these areas very clearly and to understand what contributions we can make as an agency, and where to place our limited resources.

We haven't formulated the specifics for our work in the 1970's, but I think you will be interested in some of the general recommendations made by our state conservationists.

A major point was that we strengthen our inventory capabilities to provide better data, faster, on a wider variety of resource conditions and problems. It was recommended that SCS --

-- Speed up work on the national cooperative soil survey and reduce the time lag between mapping and publication;

-- Continue to modernize snow survey equipment and procedures for knowing quickly what is happening in the mountains;

-- Broaden the perspective of our river basin surveys to deal more fully with water quality, pollution abatement, municipal and industrial water supply, and other needs;

. -- And undertake other comprehensive surveys of erosion, sedimentation, pollution sources, flood damages, water impoundment sites, scenic areas, and other resource concerns.

In the area of conservation planning, we need to streamline our assistance; be more flexible; and relate planning on individual land units to planning for neighborhoods, communities and multi-county areas.

We discussed the total watershed project and RC&D project needs, including how to provide for more flexibility in planning and for greater coordination with special interest groups such as wildlife agencies.

It was the consensus of the group that state, local, and private interests may have to continue to provide a larger proportion of the technical assistance for installing conservation work on individual land holdings. We in SCS will need to continuously evaluate how to provide the best overall direction and technical assistance.

Sprinkled throughout all of our discussions was the thought that we ought to look at and strengthen our relationships with conservation districts and their associations, and with other organizations in the conservation field.

To summarize, SCS in the 1970's will probably move toward better and more comprehensive planning, and closer involvement in controlling pollution from all sources.

Also at the national level, the whole business of conservation and environmental improvement is being studied by a number of departments. This includes specific policies all the way up to the institutional arrangements for carrying out those policies.

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A number of bills have been introduced in the U.S. Congress that would change some of the present arrangements -- that would shift whole agencies around, or shape new agencies and departments.

We may not agree with some of the new arrangements being suggested for conservation work, but we are firmly convinced that the process of questioning current methods is a very healthy one. We cannot assume that any of us are making the highest and most effective contribution at the "old stand." Let's look at ourselves and our work and when we see where an improvement can be made we ought to make it.

We believe that conservation districts can play a strong role in the accelerated local resource conservation work that lies ahead. We hope districts and the SCS can each help the other to do its part of the job. If we don't always see eye-to-eye, then let's talk it over and iron out the problems and get on with the challenge. If you have suggestions on how SCS can better help Utah, tell us.

Meanwhile, there remain the old and newer jobs of conservation. There are eroded lands to be made green again, and watersheds to be protected. There are soils to be stabilized and land use changes to be made. There is planning to do so that we, the people today and the greater number tomorrow, can live a decent life on our part of the spaceship earth.

Today's frontier is our own community. Today's challenge is to improve life where we are, using our special skills and knowledge, and the help of state and federal groups and agencies.

On behalf of the Soil Conservation Service, we pledge our continued support for your activities on behalf of your land, your water, and most of all, your people.

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