

TODAY'S "CHANGING" RESOURCE PICTURE

The topic suggests that the status--or work--or something about resource conservation is changing. I agree it is but we also need to ask:

- 1. Changing from what?
- 2. Why is it changing?
- 3. Is the change for the better?
- 4. Or is it bad?
- 5. What difference does it make:

to you?

to conservation districts?

to my organization?

to the Nation?

I can't fully answer these questions --not in the time allotted-- perhaps not at all. But I can set some guidelines for your analysis--from experience and trends that may help you to arrive at your own answers.

We in this Nation find that scientific knowledge is doubling every decade;

That the pace of change seems also to double every decade;

Therefore we need to avoid being hidebound in our concepts or processes.

We have collectively met the challenges of change in the past, but our skills and ingenuity will be tested as never before in the future.

What are the facts?

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Material used for Norman A. Berg, Deputy Administrator for Field Services, Soil Conservation Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., before the NACD Business Advisory Committee, Chicago, Illinois, October 8, 1968

First:

Many of America's soil and water problems have needed attention for a long time. We still haven't caught up with all the problems we faced over 30 years ago.

These basic soil conservation problems have even increased in complexity. Why?

- Growing population
- Expanding economy
- Continued land use decisions that are wrong for several reasons.
- Ignorance of sound conservation practices.
- A continued shortage of money.

Second:

The dramatic U. S. expansion of urban-suburban developments, homes, shopping and service centers, roads, airports, <sup>and</sup> factories have added to the task and mission faced for 3 decades.

These new developing areas have:

- created additional sediment source areas to pollute streams and reservoirs.
- taken its toll of prime agricultural land.
- dedicated some land to unwise costly long term use.

The exodus of population from rural to urban living have also radically changed old town and country relationships. It is not news to you that more people now live in urban slums than on the Nation's farms, nor that the rise of a generally more affluent society has dramatized through contrast (and TV) the urban slums and the rural backwater. We all know

the attention of the Nation is now increasingly focused on new demands for legislation and money. This all greatly influences the resource picture.

Third:

Surface space has now become an issue. We hear about "Open Space." Space to live and work--play and even breathe--space to develop and grow. Wise use of space for all purposes is of increasing concern.

It is not that we do not have enough space, or water, or all the resources we now need and will need as far as we can predict. It is rather are we making the best use and the wisest allocation of our resources, land and water.

Fourth:

There is now increased attention to:

--solving resource conservation problems wherever they exist.

The farms, and ranches are almost (never have been) land areas apart from the total conservation picture. Every piece of land in the U. S.--rural and urban alike--needs the concern of conservationists.

Community wide multi-county planning and implementation is on the upswing.

Let me tell you of our experience in 5 years of RC&D. You have a map in front of you;

Resource Conservation and Development

Our experience in watershed projects, river basin planning, and now RC&D has proven to SCS, conservation districts, other agencies and local leaders, that there are many resource problems and needs that can only be effectively solved on a multi-county, multi-district basis. It is, of course, our intention to continue to channel our resources through conservation districts. We both have a continuing function to help individual land owners and operators to solve their problems.

But this type of work has over the years vividly revealed the need for broader, cooperative, coordinated effort on resource problems. Resource conservation needs span fence and county lines. So do the economic and social needs of the people.

A typical RC&D plan shows:

The RC&D plan is a multi-county, multi-district plan that is developed by a committee of representatives from the participating agencies and local leaders. The plan is developed in a series of steps: 1. Identification of resource problems and needs. 2. Development of a plan of action. 3. Implementation of the plan. 4. Evaluation of the plan. The plan is developed in a series of steps: 1. Identification of resource problems and needs. 2. Development of a plan of action. 3. Implementation of the plan. 4. Evaluation of the plan. The plan is developed in a series of steps: 1. Identification of resource problems and needs. 2. Development of a plan of action. 3. Implementation of the plan. 4. Evaluation of the plan.

If we compare 1960 with the year 2000, the experts tell us, the U. S. population will increase by 100 million people, and the world population will double. Food needs also will double. Water needs for municipal use will nearly double, and for manufacturing, quadruple. And so on.

There will be twice as much land used for homes, schools, factories, and other urban purposes. Four million more acres will be used for transportation.

There is plenty of land available for this growth--but the question is what land for what purpose.

The voice of the resource conservationist must be heard in arriving at this decision. As a basic need, land owners and developers must conform to reasonable and effective standards of site selection and site development. To guide this development, it is imperative that soil surveys be completed as rapidly as possible in critical areas of rapidly changing land use. More State and local government help is essential to get this done. We all have a vital mission to perform in this broad conservation field.

Our Administrator believes we are coming to a time when there must be a national program and national standards of performance in land development. We do not mean that this should be or can be a Federal program with Federal standards. These issues are for the States and local governments to work out. Only when the general public and State and local leaders recognize the essential need for protecting their natural resources and developing them wisely--for their own long-term benefit--can the necessary programs and standards come into being. Some States

and communities are making progress in meeting these needs, but the problems they are encountering attest to the magnitude of the challenge.

RC&D projects, multiple purpose watershed projects, and other multi-community and multi-interest resource developments are proper showcase areas for achieving rural-urban balance. We should make the best use of them to show the way.

If we professionals in resource conservation do not meet new needs of our people, the job is going to be handled by some other device, organizational set-up, or even by government edict. The public needs must be met--and this fact will continue to bear more heavily on the Nation the longer they go unmet.

We must continually redefine our roles and our goals as resource conservationists.

Finally, facing a national conservation crisis born of exploding population and mounting pressures on the land, the United States' central conservation goal between now and the year 2000 must be to help American people make full use of their soil and water resources.

"Full use" in this context is the direct opposite, not only of exploitive land use such as we experienced in earlier periods of U. S. history but also of costly and disastrous land use mistakes being made today as land is plowed, stripped, or buried under concrete without consideration for its basic capability or the long-time needs of the community or Nation.

To achieve "full use" will require that the conservation programs be directed and shaped toward:

1. Developing and following a sound policy that:
  - a. Uses scientific information as a basis for intelligent selectivity in land use, and
  - b. Results in putting land to the use for which it is best suited, be that intensive farming, housing, recreation or reservation as wilderness.
2. Perfecting soil and water management techniques that will enable us to meet all foreseeable food needs without damaging good land and without having to farm soils unsuited for cultivation.
3. Developing and protecting watersheds and water use systems so that quality as well as quantity of water supply for all purposes is maintained.
4. Developing multiple use to the practicable maximum, since the mounting needs for food, water, recreation, open space, highways, airports, municipal and industrial expansion, etc. cannot be met without making many parcels of land serve more than one purpose.
5. Making rural living more attractive and profitable.
6. Protecting and managing soil and water resources so they contribute to a better and more beautiful total environment for all people.
7. Preserving effective local leadership, through such institutions as soil and water conservation districts, which insure that conservation programs are kept fully responsive to local needs.

# RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT STATUS

