

Land, Water, and People 2000



Natural Resources Conservation Service
Serving Pennsylvania Through Conservation

 **United States Department of Agriculture**
Natural Resources Conservation Service



A Message From our State Conservationist

Conservation on private land is important to all Pennsylvanians in providing clean water, healthy soil, food and clothing, wildlife habitat, recreational areas, and healthy green space for everyone to enjoy.

We are proud to help Pennsylvania citizens work toward that goal. While most of our work is with farmers who are the primary stewards of much of Pennsylvania's lands, I urge everyone to support and implement conservation measures which will preserve Pennsylvania's quality of life for future generations.

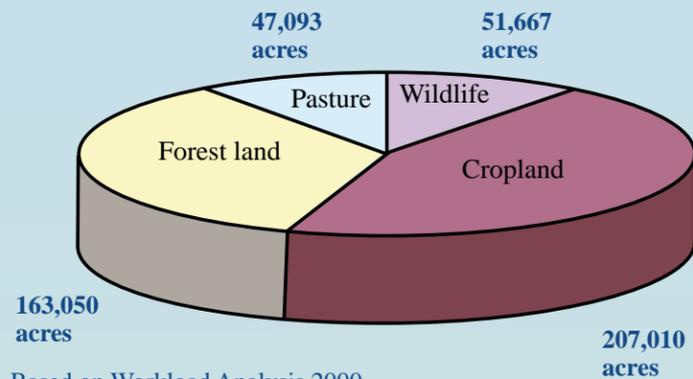
Janet Z. Clutz

The **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** is the agency of the United States Department of Agriculture charged with carrying out the Department's conservation mission on private lands. NRCS professionals provide guidance and technical assistance to address natural resource conservation issues. They work to improve and protect the natural resources in partnership with farmers and landowners, conservation districts, Federal, State and local agencies, Resource Conservation and Development Councils (RC&D) and communities.

NRCS employees work in all of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. Most work out of 50 USDA Service Centers, providing technical assistance to help farmers and locally developed and led conservation groups solve community resource concerns. NRCS provides soil survey and natural resource inventory information, conservation planning and practice specifications, program funding request assistance, and a comprehensive knowledge of resource conservation. Local partnerships are formed to increase our ability to solve problems. NRCS conservation assistance helps Pennsylvania sustain and improve its economic and environmental quality of life.

NRCS Provides Conservation Benefits

Land Improved Through NRCS Efforts



Based on Workload Analysis 2000 using the four basic agricultural land uses.

Grazing Land Conservation Initiative (Somerset County)

Protecting Pennsylvania's pastureland has meant developing grazing plans and water sources for livestock. Rotational grazing allows pasture to rest for extended periods, restoring the nutritional benefits of plants and reducing the need for additional feeding.

Because grazing rotations and streambank protection fencing can reduce the availability of water for animals, Pennsylvania's eight Resource Conservation and Development Councils (RC&D) obtained a grant to help install solar-powered water pump systems throughout the state. The solar pumps have improved the potential for grazing management by offering alternative water sources away from streams.

For one Somerset County dairy farmer with 90 Jersey cows, providing water to each of the 50 paddocks in a 100-acre grazing rotation area improved milk production by 4 pounds per cow per day.



Agricultural Conservation Tulpehocken Watershed (Lebanon and Berks Counties)

Funded through the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program (PL-566), over \$1.04 million was obligated in 1999 to improve water quality in the Tulpehocken Watershed--the largest single-year commitment for a land treatment watershed plan through the PL-566 program in Pennsylvania.

Working primarily at streamside sites, NRCS conservation professionals and partners plan,

design, and supervise the installation of manure storage and milkyhouse waste facilities, nutrient management plans, and buffers as well as fencing to keep cattle out of streams. At one location, over 7,500 feet of fencing were installed as well as a manure storage facility and stripcropping on the fields.

Technical assistance is provided to install Best Management Practices and the landowner is compensated for a percentage of the practice (cost-share). Recreation at Blue Marsh Lake, drinking water for residents of western Berks County, and flood prevention activities are all feeling the positive effects of this project.



Watershed Planning Evitts Creek Watershed (Bedford County)

NRCS is helping over 60 watershed associations or groups throughout the state. These groups request assistance in identifying the resource needs, determining alternatives and finding the best technology to solve problems. Sometimes they just need to know where to go for help. NRCS is there.

The Evitts Creek Watershed started in 1993 with community members from Maryland and Pennsylvania working together to restore a recreational and drinking water site. Using funding from the USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program and NRCS planning and design assistance, landowners have constructed wetlands, installed grass filter strips, fenced livestock out of streams and installed manure storage facilities to reduce nutrients and sediment and improve the water supply in two lakes for the 50,000 Maryland residents downstream. Previously upset with sportsmen and farmers, the Evitts Creek Water Company is now preparing to donate land for an Environmental Center which will benefit each county in the two states.



Water Quality Red/White Clay Creek Watershed (Chester County)

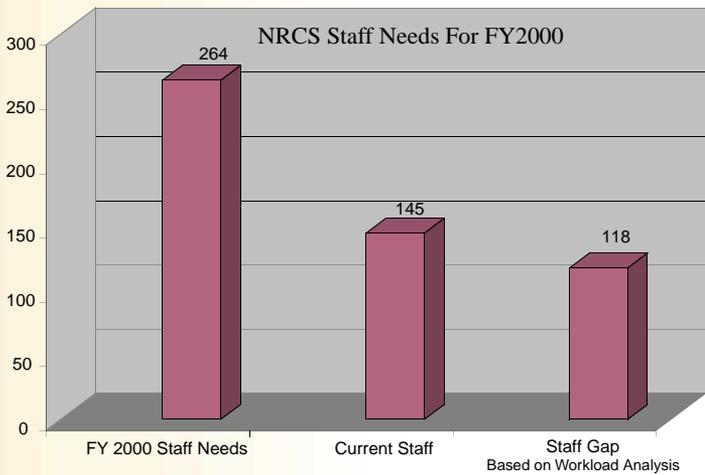
Mushroom growers in the Red/White Clay Creek Watershed are working hard to improve water quality in their area. Wastewater collection and rainfall gutter systems to protect clean water were the start for some operations. NRCS provided assistance to design concrete and earthen composting pads, which direct excess water to specific holding areas for filtering and future use as well as protect ground water. While used for both new and used material, these stabilized areas are mainly constructed for processing the used mushroom growth medium for sale as a by-product for additional income. NRCS and growers are working together to improve composting operations and capture wastewater before it reaches local streams.

NRCS is also working with the growers to educate their Spanish-speaking workers, stressing that their work is important in protecting Pennsylvania's water.



Today's Conservation Benefits...

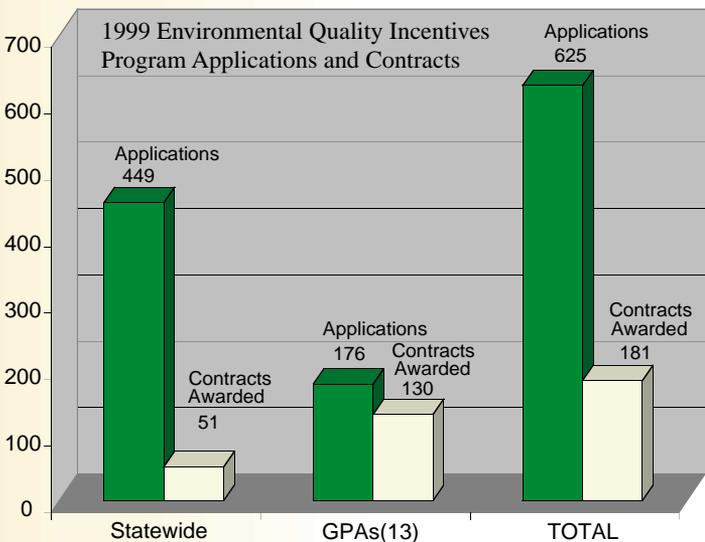
- Assistance with erosion and nutrient runoff control and stormwater management reduces sediment and nutrient waste in streams and reduces water treatment costs. Over 216,000 feet of fence were installed in 1999 to keep cattle out of streams and improve water quality.
- Conservation plans maintain the quality of the land being preserved through farmland preservation. Almost \$2.5 million in NRCS dollars have helped preserve over 142,000 acres of farmland in Pennsylvania, providing open space and improving the quality of life for citizens and communities. Applications for another 187,500 acres area waiting funding, which was not included in FY1999 or 2000 authorizations.
- Over 3,200 miles of Pennsylvania's streams have been severely impacted by polluted drainage from abandoned coal mines. With funding from the NRCS Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program, and in partnership with local watershed organizations, conservation districts, State and other Federal agencies as well as corporate businesses and organizations, work is underway to improve our waterways. The Glenwhite Run Watershed includes the Kittanning Point Reservoir near the Horseshoe Curve. Work there impacts drinking water for the residents of Altoona. Over 3 miles of trout fishery waters will be restored, and water treatment costs for Altoona's residents should be reduced.



Tomorrow's Conservation Needs...

- Government, business and industry are all trying to work smarter and more economically by reducing staff. NRCS, formerly the Soil Conservation Service, has been recognized and valued for their one-on-one assistance to farmers and land managers for over 65 years. As development continues, urban and suburban residents as well as farmers and community planners need help knowing what they can do to conserve natural resources. While staffing levels have decreased, demands for NRCS assistance have increased.

While recognized and valued for one-on-one assistance for over 65 years, staffing levels continue to decrease. NRCS needs are developed from local data collected through the Workload Analysis process.



- With more public recognition of environmental impacts, smaller farms, and increased urban conservation demands, NRCS is faced with more requests for assistance. The Clean Water Action Plan and state regulations for nutrient management are just two examples of additional demands for NRCS conservation technical assistance.
- Field offices each have waiting lists of 25 to 100 or more people requesting assistance in developing conservation plans for their land. This process averages from 39 to 50 hours to complete according to the Workload Analysis. The Workload Analysis was established to use data collected at the field office level to determine workload and staffing needs. For the second year in a row, the Analysis shows a definite need for additional staff. (See graph at left.)
- Today's economy has not provided the full-time farmer with the means to "live off the land." The weather and market conditions have combined to put Pennsylvania farmers under the severest conditions they have had to bear in some time. Conservation programs, such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, can help farmers prepare for negative conditions and protect the land for the future. Out of 449 applications for statewide participation in EQIP in 1999, only 51 were awarded due to lack of funds. (See graph at left.)

Funding for 1999 was \$2,417,000; for 1998 was \$3,301,200; and for 1997 was \$4,542,698

Everyone is Responsible for Pennsylvania's Natural Resources!

From this...



To this...



NRCS is ready to help.

You Can:

- Use Backyard Conservation practices to add beauty, reduce erosion, and provide wildlife habitat in your yard.
- Learn about your watershed. Join or start a watershed association to address water quality concerns in your community.
- Request NRCS professional assistance to develop and apply a conservation plan on your land.
- Adopt a stream or watershed and develop local groups to monitor and improve water quality.
- Become an Earth Team volunteer through your local NRCS office and help with conservation education, provide administrative support, or work on the land.

To contact your local NRCS office, find the phone number in the telephone book under United States Government, Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service; contact our state office at 717-237-2200; or check the website at <http://www.pa.nrcs.usda.gov>.

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