

(a) Program assistance is provided to conservation districts and other organizations concerned with the conservation of soil, water, plant, and wildlife resources. This assistance includes providing resource inventory data and identifying conservation problems and needs in order for districts to develop long-range soil and water conservation programs. Individuals, groups, and organizations requesting NRCS assistance through conservation districts include:

(1) Farmers, ranchers, and other land users concerned with the conservation of land and water resources.

(2) County and other local government units such as park authorities, departments of public works, planning, zoning (rural, urban, and flood plain), school, and institution boards, highway departments, and tax assessors.

(3) Citizen groups, youth groups, recreation groups, and garden clubs.

(4) State and local units of government (highway, health, recreation, water resources, and regional planning) involved in establishing public policy regarding the use of resources.

(5) Federal departments and agencies such as Defense, Housing and Urban Development, Public Roads, Health and Human Services; and Interior.

(6) Professional consultants who provide services such as engineering, planning, environmental assessment, tax assessment, and forest management.

(b) Planning assistance includes evaluation of soil, water, vegetation, and other resource data needed for making land use, environmental and conservation treatment decisions. NRCS helps land users make conservation plans for farms, ranches, and other land units. This help includes onsite planning assistance in making conservation plans. The plans are based on a soil survey and interpretations for the intended land uses and conservation treatment. Plans may also include other inventories of soil, water, plant, and related resources needed in the planning process. Information about the responses of each kind of soil and the conservation practices and resource management needed for different land uses is provided. The land user's decisions recorded in the plan are based on his conservation objectives. Conservation

plans provide for the orderly installation of conservation practices. Conservation plans reflect changing conditions.

(c) Application assistance is provided to help land users apply and maintain planned conservation work. NRCS assistance for applying the conservation practices in the plan may include:

(1) Designing, constructing, and maintaining conservation practices;

(2) Selecting management alternatives and cultural practices needed to establish and maintain vegetation; and

(3) Other conservation practices needed to protect land and water resources.

(d) The Natural Resources Conservation Service assists in carrying out certain phases of USDA soil and water conservation cost-share programs. NRCS assists individual program participants with conservation plans needed for long-term cost-share agreements. NRCS is assigned responsibility by the Secretary of Agriculture for technical phases of applying conservation practices on the land. This assignment includes:

(1) Determining what practices are needed and feasible to install, (2) selecting sites and planning and designing practices, (3) providing assistance for installing practices, and (4) certifying that the work done is in accordance with NRCS standards and specifications.

[42 FR 38169, July 27, 1977, as amended at 47 FR 56473, Dec. 17, 1982]

§610.5 Interdisciplinary assistance.

Technical assistance is based on the principle that soil, water, plant, and related resources are interdependent and must be managed accordingly. Soil conservationists integrate the various technical fields in providing for the conservation of land and water resources. Staff scientists and specialists develop conservation standards, prepare necessary specifications, provide training, and review work performance. NRCS uses consultants for conservation problems that require special expertise.