NRCS: The Role of Conservation Planning in Climate Mitigation and Social Equity

Luis Cruz-Arroyo, USDA-NRCS Caribbean Area Director
luis.cruz-arroyo@usda.gov (787) 405-7368
Who We Are

An Agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture with offices in every state & territory.
Mission: *We deliver conservation solutions so agricultural producers can protect natural resources and feed a growing world.*

Vision: *A world of clean and abundant water, healthy soils, resilient landscapes and thriving agricultural communities through voluntary conservation.*
NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers to voluntarily put conservation on the ground to help the environment and benefit farmers.
Soil, Water, Air, Plants, Animal & Energy
Objectives:

• Healthy and productive soils
• Reduce soil erosion
• Improve water quality
• Healthy and balanced plant and animal communities.
• Clean air
• Sustainable farm operations
9-Step Planning Process

1. Identify Problems and Opportunities
2. Determine Objectives
3. Inventory Resources
4. Analyze Resource Data
5. Formulate Alternatives
6. Evaluate Alternatives
7. Make Decisions
8. Implement the Plan
9. Evaluate the Plan
NRCS Products

• Conservation Plan for your Farm
Recommended Practices

- Reduced Tillage (329)
- Contour Farming (330)
- Cover Crops (340)
- Nutrient Management (590)
- Pest Management (595)
- Vegetative Barriers (601)
- Filter Strips (393)
- Hedgerow Planting (422)
- Obstruction Removal (500)
- Water and Sediment Control Basin (638)
- Pond (378)
- Irrigation Water Management
- Heavy Use Area (561)
- Riparian Forest Buffer (391)
USDA Priorities

Today, containing the pandemic, ensuring racial justice and equity, responding to a mounting hunger and nutrition insecurity crisis, rebuilding the rural economy, strengthening and building markets for farmers and producers, and addressing the impacts of climate change are our top priorities. Amid these challenges, we are tasked with delivering fundamental services— safe and nutritious food, clean water and last-mile broadband, energy security, sound infrastructure, business services, and tackling the climate crisis. In rural America—which holds a special claim to USDA’s mission—we must build back better, stronger, and more resilient and equitably than ever before.

Statement by Thomas J. Vilsack Secretary of Agriculture Before the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives April 14, 2021
USDA to Invest $50 Million in New Cooperative Agreements for Racial Justice and Equity

Supporting Historically Underserved Farmers & Ranchers

Projects to expand the delivery of conservation assistance to beginning, limited resource, socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers to implement natural resources conservation practices that:

- Improve soil health;
- Improve water quality;
- Provide habitat for local wildlife species of concern;
- Improve environmental and economic performance agricultural land
- Build and strengthen local food projects.

Racial Justice and Equity in Conservation
Priority Areas

1. Increase **Soil Health**

2. Look for opportunities to look for **Climate Smart Practices**

3. Identify and address resource concerns at Landscape level.
Soil Health Principles

• Minimize Soil Disturbance

• Maximize Soil Cover

• Maximize Biodiversity

• Maximize Presence of Living Roots
Benefits of Soil Health

- Increase Organic Matter in Soil
- Increase Microbiological Activity
- Increase Nutrient Recycling
- Increase Water Retention in Soils
- Improves Water Quality
- Minimizes Energy Consumption
- Reduce Soil Erosion
Adapting to Climate Change

- Maximize water capture
- Maximize irrigation efficiency
- Interconnect systems like a tool to manage risk.

Santa Isabel, PR
Watershed level projects

- Drains one of the largest watersheds in Puerto Rico covering 164,480 acres.

- Ranked 5 on the list of impaired watersheds in the Puerto Rico Unified Watershed Assessment.

- Some of these pollutants are related to ag sources such as fertilizers, pesticides and manure from crop and pasture lands.

- Initiative will address Concentrated erosion, Degraded plant condition, Field sediment, nutrient and pathogen loss, and Aquatic and Terrestrial habitat loss.
Other Programs

Joint Chief Initiative

Partnership with DNER, USFWS, Distrito de Conservacion, PLN, Envirosurvey, Protectores de Cuentas and Cafiesencia.

6 completed and certified Stewardship Management Plans from the 24 planned to be completed at the end of this initiative.

2,000 acres to be impacted from the first 20 farms from FY 2018 and 2019.

6,500 native trees planted.
Some of our Results

- **18,405** impacted acres
- **6,516** impacted acres in Soil Health
- **13,079** acres impacting water quality
- **8,000** planted trees
- **767** acres of habitat improvement
Get Involve

• Local Working Groups

• Soil and Water Conservation Districts

• Partnership Opportunities
NRCS Field Offices

Puerto Rico

Caribbean Area Offices
- State Office
- Arecibo Field Office
- Caguas Field Office
- Corozal Field Office
- Juana Díaz Field Office
- Mayaguez Field Office
- San Sebastian Field Office
- St Croix Field Office
- Utuado Field Office

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Natural Resources Conservation Service

nrcre.usda.gov/
Bee-Friendly Pollinators for National Pollinator Week June 22-28!

Did you know 75% of the world's flowering plants & more than 30% of the world's food crops depend on pollinators to reproduce? Find out how YOU can help our pollinators! ¡Descubre cómo TÚ puedes ayudar a nuestros polinizadores!

¡Feliz Semana Nacional de los Polinizadores!

Popular Topics

- Financial Assistance
- Technical Resources
- Caribbean Area Soils
- Caribbean Area Plants
- Caribbean Area Publications

In the News

- OP ED: Caribbean Area Farmers Use Conservation Practices to Protect Pollinator Habitat, Boost Crop Production

Highlights

Caribbean Landscape Initiatives
Climate & Drought in the Caribbean Area
Hurricane Recovery
Soil Health
Caribbean Area Social Media

- Twitter: www.twitter.com/nrcs_caribbean
- YouTube: www.youtube.com/nrcs_caribbean
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/nrcs.caribbean
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