



# **National Association of Conservation Districts**

## **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services**

### **NATIONAL**

#### **Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D)**

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/rcd](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/rcd)

The purpose of the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) program is to accelerate the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources, improve the general level of economic activity, and to enhance the environment and standard of living in designated RC&D areas. It improves the capability of State, tribal and local units of government and local nonprofit organizations in rural areas to plan, develop and carry out programs for resource conservation and development.

#### **Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program**

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/frpp](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/frpp)

The Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP) provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and rangeland in agricultural uses. Working through existing programs, USDA partners with State, tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations to acquire conservation easements or other interests in land from landowners. USDA provides up to 50 percent of the fair market easement value of the conservation easement.

#### **Conservation and Area-wide Planning**

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/planning](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/planning)

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides conservation planning and technical assistance to clients (individuals, groups, and units of government). These clients develop and implement conservation plans to protect, conserve, and enhance natural resources (soil, water, air, plants, and animals) within their related social and economic interests.

#### **Urban Soil Survey**

<http://soils.usda.gov/use/urban>

NRCS provides nationwide leadership in soil science to meet the needs of urban customers. We define urban as populated areas of various sizes. Urban soils are found in watersheds that provide drinking water, food, waste utilization, and natural resources to communities. Urban soils also are located within cities in park areas, recreation areas, community gardens, green belts, lawns, septic absorption fields, sediment basins and other uses. Urban soil survey is a broad area that can be divided into 6 topics. Each of the following will be discussed in detail to illustrate the state-of-the-art in urban programs.

#### **Land Evaluation and Site Assessment and Computer Assisted Land Evaluation System**

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/lesa](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/lesa) and <http://nasis.usda.gov/cales>

The Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system helps state and local officials make sound decisions about land use. Combined with Forest measures and Rangeland parameters, LESA can provide a technical framework to numerically rank land parcels based on local resource evaluation and site considerations.

## **Community Assistance**

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/commplanning](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/commplanning)

NRCS is working to enhance NRCS's ability to deliver technical assistance to communities experiencing development pressure by employing strategic approaches to land use planning and natural resource conservation. Strategic Conservation Planning focuses on the development of a system to support the functions of the natural environment. The support system consists of an interconnected network of natural, working and built-up lands that support the natural ecological processes that contribute to the health and quality of life for America's communities and people.

## **Illinois Urban Manual**

[www.il.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/engineer/urban/index.html](http://www.il.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/engineer/urban/index.html)

This manual is intended for use as a technical reference by developers, planners, engineers, government officials and others involved in land use planning, building site development, and natural resource conservation in rural and urban communities and developing areas.

## **STATE**

Contact your NRCS State office to learn more about specific assistance provided in your State.

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/organization/regions.html#state](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/organization/regions.html#state)

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

### **American Farmland Trust**

[www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org)

The mission of American Farmland Trust is to stop the loss of productive farmland and to promote farming practices that lead to a healthy environment.

### **National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils**

[www.rcdnet.org](http://www.rcdnet.org)

The National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils (NARC&DC) was established in 1988 to represent America's 375 local Resource Conservation and Development Councils. The local councils deliver coordinated resource conservation and rural development assistance throughout rural America. By working together on local RC&D Councils; communities, all levels of Government, and grassroots organizations work together to develop and implement solutions to widespread problems and to develop opportunities that will help sustain rural communities, local economies, and natural resources.

### **Soil and Water Conservation Society**

[www.swcs.org](http://www.swcs.org)

SWCS is a nonprofit scientific and educational organization that serves as an advocate for conservation professionals and for science-based conservation practice, programs, and policy.

## **GETTING YOUR DISTRICTS INVOLVED**

- ✓ Visit with your NRCS State Conservationist about your districts' technical resource and training needs.
- ✓ Encourage district employees to participate in NRCS technical training where available; develop list of training needs that are not being met.