Seeking Common Ground for Conservation

A Farm Bill Policy Project
by the Soil and Water Conservation Society

The Soil and Water Conservation Society is undertaking a two-year project to help key stakeholders and policymakers shape the conservation provisions of the 2002 farm bill. SWCS will achieve that goal by (1) working with agricultural and conservation leaders at state and local levels to identify ways to improve U.S. agricultural conservation policy and programs, (2) helping translate those ideas into proposals for incremental and large-scale change in the conservation provisions of the farm bill, and (3) communicating the meaning and importance of the proposals to policymakers and opinion-leaders.

Approach

SWCS has conducted five regional workshops of eighty-two invited state and local leaders with first-hand experience of the strengths and weaknesses of current conservation policy and programs. Participants representing the agriculture, water quality, and fish and wildlife communities developed concrete recommendations for reform of U.S. agricultural conservation policy and programs based on their direct experience with these programs and conservation problems in their states and localities. The names and affiliations of workshop participants are listed below.

Workshop participants were asked to develop two agendas for the reform of agricultural conservation policy and programs: (1) an incremental agenda, consisting of refinements in existing programs that would allow current authorities and programs to work better for agriculture and the environment, and (2) an agenda for large-scale change in our nation’s approach to land stewardship that would dramatically accelerate progress toward improving the economic health and environmental performance of farms and ranches.

A Policy Advisory Committee has been established to help translate the ideas developed by workshop participants into proposals for reform of the conservation provisions of the farm bill. This committee includes individuals with personal experience in the farm bill policy process. The names and affiliations of Policy Advisory Committee members are listed below.

SWCS will publish a report in 2001 that communicates the findings and recommendations of workshop participants and the policy advisory group. Communication efforts will focus on two main groups: (1) policymakers who will directly determine the outcome of the farm bill debate and (2) opinion-leaders within nongovernmental organizations, interest groups, and academia who can influence the outcome of the policy process through their advocacy activities. We will communicate the meaning and importance of the proposals to policymakers and opinion-leaders directly through briefings, invited testimony, and other opportunities and indirectly through print and broadcast media. SWCS will also provide technical support to state and local agriculturalists and conservationists working to use the farm bill process to enhance the environmental sustainability of U.S. agriculture.

Outcome

Through this project, SWCS hopes to define common ground on which people and organizations can come together to enhance the environmental sustainability of U.S. agriculture. That common ground will be constructed of specific recommendations for incremental and large-scale changes in the conservation provisions of the farm bill that will be based on the ideas presented by the state and local leaders who participated in the workshops.
This project will, we hope, lead to serious consideration of and action on recommendations to enhance conservation policy and programs during the 2002 farm bill recommendations that will work for both agriculture and the environment.

**Workshop Participants**

**Great Plains Workshop, June 26-27, 2000, Denver, Colorado**
- Bill Baxter, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
- Kathy Buchner, Wyoming Trout Unlimited
- J.B. Cooper, farmer, Texas
- Tim Davis, Colorado Division of Wildlife
- Rodney DeBuhr, Upper Big Blue Natural Resources District, Nebraska
- Laurie Fisher, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- Lisa French, farmer and Kansas Rural Center
- Cid Goodloe, rancher, New Mexico
- Catherine Johnson, National Wildlife Federation, Colorado
- Duane Murphey, South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources
- Pat O’Toole, rancher, Wyoming
- Roger Pederson, Duck Unlimited, North Dakota
- Don Snethen, Kansas Department of Health and Environment
- Steve Treadway, farmer, Colorado
- Gene Williams, farmer/rancher, South Dakota
- Brad Wind, Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District

**West Workshop, July 17-18, 2000, Sacramento, California**
- John Anderson, farmer, California
- Jack Barnett, Colorado River Salinity Project, Utah
- Dale Buck, Oregon
- Larry Cochran, farmer, Washington
- Mark Craven, farmer, Washington
- Alan Garcia, farmer, California
- Bill Green, Washington State Department of Ecology
- Jack Hodges, California State Water Resources Control Board
- Bill Jeffers, rancher, Arizona
- John Kennedy, Arizona Game and Fish Department
- John McCaull, National Audubon Society, California
- Charles Rominger, farmer, California
- Teresa Showa, Navajo Nation Department of Natural Resources, Arizona
- Emily Tibbott, The Nature Conservancy, California
- Olen Zirkle, Ducks Unlimited, California

**Midwest Workshop, July 24-25, 2000, Indianapolis, Indiana**
- Roy Bardole, farmer, Iowa
- Dale Brown, Indiana
- Kim Cates, farmer, Wisconsin
- Chris Davis, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
- Jeff Gaska, Pheasants Forever, Wisconsin
- Howard Halderman, farm manager, Indiana
- Dave Hanselmann, Ohio Department of Natural Resources
- Ron Harnack, Minnesota Bureau of Water and Soil Resources
- Brett Hulsey, Sierra Club, Wisconsin
- Jill Jonas, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Loni Kemp, The Minnesota Project
- Glen Keppy, farmer, Iowa
- Bill McGuire, Missouri Department of Conservation
John Madras, Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Davis Minton, farmer, Missouri
Garry Niemeyer, farmer, Illinois
Dave Nuhring, farmer, Indiana
Mark Sargent, Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Southeast Workshop, August 21-22, 2000, Nashville, Tennessee
Archer Christian, farmer, Florida
Paul Coreil, Louisiana
Marc Curtis, Mississippi Soybean Association
Art Darling, Sunshine State Milk Producers, Florida
Mark Gudlin, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
Peggy Jackson, Kentucky Division of Water
Sally Knowles, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
David Long, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
Don McKenzie, Wildlife Management Institute, Arkansas
Mike Butler, Tennessee Conservation League
Larkin Martin, farmer, Alabama
Michael Osborne, farmer, Tennessee
Bob Wade, farmer, Kentucky
David Rose, farmer, North Carolina
Don Vaught, farmer, Arkansas
Garland Wiggins, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation
Chris Wolkonowski, Quail Unlimited, Tennessee

Northeast Workshop, September 11-12, 2000, Albany, New York
Clint Barber, Saratoga County Water Quality Coordinating Committee, New York
Deirdre Cabral, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
Martha Clark, Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts
Adele Hayes, farmer, New York
Rick Creamer, Lancaster County Conservation District, Pennsylvania
Tim Hobbs, Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine
Scott Klinger, Pennsylvania Game Commission
Fran Koch, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
Michael Martin, F.X. Bowne, Inc., New York
John Sinton, Connecticut River Watershed Council
Spencer Waller, Ducks Unlimited, Maryland
Rick Zimmerman, New York Department of Agriculture and Markets
G. Douglas Young, farmer, New York
Kathryn Zuelzer Ruhf, New England Small Farm Institute, Massachusetts

Policy Advisory Committee

John Barrett, farmer, Texas
Sandra Batie, Department of Agricultural Economics, Michigan State University
Sam Cordes, Department for Agricultural Economics and Center for Rural Revitalization, University of Nebraska
Jon Craig, Water Quality Division, Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality
Otto Doering, Department of Agricultural Economics, Purdue University
Ray Evans, Wildlife Division, Missouri Department of Conservation
Steve Moyer, Trout Unlimited, Virginia
Bill Northey, farmer, Iowa
J. Read Smith, National Association of Conservation Districts, Washington
Rollin Sparrowe, Wildlife Management Institute, Washington, D.C.
John Tarburton, Delaware Department of Agriculture
Ann Tutwiler, Central Soya Co., Washington, D.C.
Pat Westhoff, Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute, Missouri
Roger Wood, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
Jeff Zinn, Congressional Research Service, Washington, D.C.

Major funding for this project has been provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, The Farm Foundation, and the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service.