§ 600.9

Major land resource area soil survey offices.

The United States is divided into 17 major land resource areas (MLRA) for the purpose of soil survey production. Major land resource area soil survey offices (MO) provide the technical leadership, coordination, and quality assurance for all soil survey project activities within the respective MLRA. Each MO serves two or more States (except for the MO in Alaska), and is under the jurisdiction of the State conservationist where the office is located. Each MO is directed and supervised by
PART 601—FUNCTIONS

Sec. 601.1 Functions assigned.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is the Federal agency that works with private landowners to conserve their natural resources. NRCS employees help land users and communities approach conservation planning and implementation with an understanding of how natural resources relate to each other and to people—and how human activities affect those resources. The agency emphasizes voluntary, science-based assistance, partnerships, and cooperative problem solving at the community level. The mission of NRCS is to work on the Nation’s non-Federal lands to conserve, improve, and sustain natural resources. The following functions support the mission.

(a) NRCS facilitates and provides conservation technical assistance at the local level that helps people assess their natural resource conditions and needs, set goals, identify programs and other resources to address those needs, develop proposals and recommendations, implement solutions, and measure their success. The agency’s role is to assist with:

(1) Resource inventories,
(2) Resource assessments,
(3) Planning assistance, and/or
(4) Technical assistance.

(b) NRCS provides technical assistance through local conservation districts to land users, communities, watershed groups, Federal and State agencies, other partners, and customers.

(c) NRCS provides assistance on a voluntary basis.

(d) The agency’s work focuses on soil, water, air, plant, and animal conservation including erosion reduction, water quality improvement, wetland restoration and protection, fish and wildlife habitat improvement, range management, stream restoration, water management, and other natural resource issues.

(e) Through the conservation operations program, NRCS maintains a cadre of conservationists and interdisciplinary technical experts who provide landowners with advice and recommendations. Science based procedures and techniques are based on new knowledge and research provided by the Agricultural Research Service and others. NRCS developed and maintains a system of directives—including manuals, handbooks, and technical references—to institutionalize new methods, procedures, and standards used to deliver technical assistance at the field level.

(f) NRCS has general responsibility for administration of the following programs:

(1) Conservation operations, authorized by the Soil Conservation Act of 1935 and the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977. Activities include:

(i) Conservation technical assistance to land users, communities, units of State and local government, and other Federal agencies in planning and implementing natural resource solutions to reduce erosion, improve soil and water quantity and quality, improve and conserve wetlands, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, improve air quality, improve pasture and range conditions, reduce upstream flooding, and improve woodlands. Assistance is also provided to implement the highly erodible land (HEL) and wetland conservation (Swampbuster) provisions and—on a reimbursable basis—the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in the 1985 Food Security Act, as amended by the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 and Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996. NRCS technical field staff make HEL and wetland determinations and assist land users to develop and implement conservation plans needed...