

#### **505.14 Engineering Services Not Provided by NRCS**

- A. Frequently, engineering services that NRCS does not provide are needed for carrying out NRCS programs. Cooperating individuals, groups, and organizations must arrange for such services from non-NRCS sources.
- B. Among the services NRCS engineers do not provide are the following:
  - (1) Boundary or location surveys for legal purposes, unless the State Conservationist has determined that providing such service in a State meets the requirements of the State Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors Board.
  - (2) Representation of drainage or irrigation districts or similar enterprises in legal proceedings required by State laws, unless non-NRCS sources are not available and the State Conservationist presents justification acceptable to the Chief.
  - (3) Obtaining water rights or filing applications with regulating agencies for pollution abatement facilities, except as provided in [GM-130, Part 400](#).

## Subpart A - Vision and Mission Statements and Guiding Principles

### 400.0 Purpose

This part provides both statements and rationale behind the vision, mission, and guiding principles of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Together these statements provide clear Agency direction. They help employees align their thinking, planning and actions with the Agency direction.

### 400.1 Statement of Vision

#### “Productive Lands – Healthy Environment”

(1) This is a vision of the landscape that Americans want – a landscape in which a productive agricultural sector and a high quality environment are both achieved. The NRCS vision statement describes the balance of sustaining economic viability of working lands with ensuring a healthy environment that results from the Agency’s work.

(2) Productive use of privately owned cropland, rangeland, pastureland, and forestland is essential to the Nation’s security and the health and well-being of its citizens. Those lands form the foundation of a substantial and vibrant agricultural economy that provides food, fiber, forest products, and energy for the Nation. Those lands can also produce environmental benefits that people need – clean and abundant water, clean air, and healthy ecosystems. Two-thirds of the Nation is in agricultural and forest use and the management of these lands affects the quality of the environment for everyone.

(3) America’s farmers, ranchers, woodlot owners, and others involved in America’s working lands strive to produce the multiple benefits that the Nation wants from privately owned land. They do not work in isolation. The Nation’s growing population and dynamic landscape of changing land uses, means that conservation is everyone’s responsibility.

### 400.2 Statement of Mission

#### “Helping People Help the Land”

(1) This statement recognizes that NRCS’ mission is to develop and deliver high quality products and services that enable people to be good stewards of the Nation’s soil, water, and related natural related resources on non-Federal lands. The NRCS Mission Statement defines NRCS’ purpose and direction and is aligned with the Vision Statement.

(2) “Helping people” connotes that NRCS is customer focused and develops and delivers products and services that meet customer needs, are technically sound, and provide solutions to identified natural resource problems.

(3) “Help the Land” connotes that NRCS technical and financial assistance begins with an understanding of the land—the landscape as a whole. This technical and financial assistance is delivered through five business lines:

- (i) Conservation Planning and Technical Consultation
- (ii) Conservation Implementation
- (iii) Natural Resource Inventory and Assessment
- (iv) Natural Resource Technology Transfer
- (v) Financial Assistance

(4) NRCS technical and financial assistance helps customers care for the land. The result is a landscape where working farms and ranches are in balance with a healthy environment.

### 400.3 Statement of Guiding Principles

Three fundamental principles guide how NRCS conducts business:

(1) Service – Giving customers the best products and service NRCS employees can provide; customer needs are as important to conservation as our understanding of natural resources.

(2) Partnerships – Building effective relationships with other agencies and organizations that share NRCS objectives.

(3) Technical Excellence – Delivering up-to-date and easily accessible science-based information and technology.

## Part 400 – Mission Statement

### Subpart B – Delegations of Authority

#### 400.10 Purpose

A. This subpart specifies delegated authorities are consistent with 5 U.S.C. Sections 301 and 303, 7 CFR Section 2.61, and Department of Agriculture departmental regulations, delegations of authority for the NRCS mission and programs are made by the Chief of NRCS. [Click here for a detailed copy of NRCS History.](#)

B. These delegated authorities are based on applicable legislation, statutes, or Executive orders, including those codified in the U.S. Code and the Code of Federal Regulations, as well as departmental policies and guidance.

C. Delegations of authorities are created for—

- (1) Implementation of clear, manageable, and efficient execution of agency policies and procedures.
- (2) Facilitation of management controls.
- (3) Program quality control.
- (4) Accountability.

#### 400.11 References

- A. [5 U.S.C. Sections 301 and 302](#)
- B. [7 CFR Section 2.61](#)

#### 400.12 Abbreviations or Acronyms

The following guidance is provided for specified columns of the delegations:

- (1) A-R-M.—Identifies an item as an—
  - (i) (A).—Authority granted from statute or law
  - (ii) (R).—Regulations based on interpretation of statute or law
  - (iii) (M).—Management discretionary action
- (2) AC for Operations.—Associate Chief for Operations
- (3) AC for Conservation.—Associate Chief for Conservation
- (4) RC.—The delegations to the Regional Conservationists who serve as leadership representative of the Chief for designated geographic areas
- (5) DEP CHF.—The delegations to one or more Deputy Chiefs as indicated
- (6) STC.—The delegations to State Conservationists, including the Directors, Caribbean and Pacific Island Areas
- (7) DD.—The delegations to one or more division directors
- (8) CTR DIR.—The delegations to one or more national center directors, as indicated
- (9) AO.—The delegations to administrative officers, including State administrative officers (SAO), and the administrative officers for the Caribbean and Pacific Island Areas, as well as the Management Deputy Area National Headquarters (NHQ) administrative officer
- (10) DCSV.—The delegations to one or more district conservationists, as indicated
- (11) ASTCFO.—The delegations to one or more Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations or equivalents, such as area conservationists
- (12) SPCLTY OFCR.—The delegations to one or more specialty officer (i.e., specific positions requiring certain professional certifications or licenses or qualifications of experience, skills, abilities, and knowledge before the authority can be exercised)

#### 400.13 Responsibilities

A. The absence of delegated authorities from the NRCS Title 130, General Manual, Part 400, Subpart B, Section 400.10, does not preclude the exercise of those delegated authorities by the Chief, any official listed in this subpart, or any official associated with rulemaking, from exercising authority so delegated or from redelegating such authority to a different official provided the delegation or redelegation has appropriate legal or regulatory basis.

B. The Chief (OOC) will—

- (1) Delegate and redelegate to other agency officials the authority to perform technical assistance, technology acquisition or development, technology transfer, research, conservation planning, conservation easement stewardship, oversight, administrative, and financial assistance activities within NRCS in writing.
- (2) Approve the application of new principles of major importance or a departure from established, documented principles within NRCS.

(3) Provide guidance and oversight to the Associate Chiefs who serve as management representatives of the Chief and provide national level responsibilities related to operations and conservations.

C. The Associate Chief for Conservation will—

Oversee conservation activities for NRCS, including Soil Science and Resource Assessment, Programs, Science and Technology, and Strategic Natural Resources Initiatives.

D. The Associate Chief for Operations will—

Oversee the operations for NRCS, including Management, Information Technology, Financial Management, Strategic Planning and Accountability, and Enterprise Business Initiatives.

E. Regional Conservationists (RC) will—

- (1) Receive approval from the Chief to apply new principles of major importance or to depart from established, documented principles in conducting assigned activities.
- (2) Delegate and redelegate their authority in writing to the appropriate staff.
- (3) Establish internal management controls for delegations and redelegations within assigned areas of responsibility in writing.
- (4) Ensure that periodic reviews are conducted of the activities assigned to their direction and supervision.

F. Deputy Chiefs for [Strategic Planning and Accountability](#), [Programs](#), [Science and Technology](#), [Soil Science and Resource Assessment](#), [Management](#), [Financial Management](#), and [Information Technology](#) will—

- (1) Receive approval from the Chief to apply new principles of major importance or to depart from established, documented principles in conducting assigned activities.
- (2) Delegate and redelegate their authority in writing to the appropriate staff.
- (3) Establish internal management controls for delegations and redelegations within assigned areas of responsibility in writing.
- (4) Ensure that periodic reviews are conducted of the activities assigned to their direction and supervision.

G. Division directors will—

- (1) Receive approval from the Chief to apply new principles of major importance or to depart from established, documented principles in conducting assigned activities.
- (2) Ensure that periodic reviews are conducted of the activities assigned to their direction and supervision.
- (3) Establish internal management controls for delegations and redelegations within assigned areas of responsibility in writing.
- (4) Delegate and redelegate his or her authority to appropriate staff.

H. State Conservationists and Directors, Caribbean and Pacific Island Areas, will—

- (1) Receive approval from geographically assigned Regional Conservationists for the application of new principles of major importance or a departure from established, documented principles in the conduct of activities assigned to their direction and supervision.
- (2) Ensure that periodic reviews are conducted of the activities assigned to their direction and supervision.
- (3) Establish internal management controls for delegations and redelegations within assigned areas of responsibility in writing.
- (4) Delegate and redelegate their authority to appropriate staff.

I. National center directors will—

- (1) Receive approval from assigned supervisors to apply new principles of major importance or to depart from established, documented principles in conducting assigned activities.
- (2) Ensure that periodic reviews are conducted of the activities assigned to their direction and supervision.
- (3) Establish internal management controls for delegations and redelegations within assigned areas of responsibility.
- (4) Delegate and redelegate their authority to appropriate staff.

J. Click below for a copy of the following matrix and abbreviations and acronyms:

- (1) [Office of the Chief and OOC abbreviations and acronyms](#)
- (2) [Strategic Planning and Accountability](#) and [SPA abbreviations and acronyms](#)
- (3) [Programs and Programs abbreviations and acronyms](#)
- (4) [Science and Technology](#) and [S&T abbreviations and acronyms](#)
- (5) [Soil Science and Resource Assessment](#) and [SSRA abbreviations and acronyms](#)
- (6) [Management and Management abbreviations and acronyms](#)
- (7) [Information Technology](#) and [IT abbreviations and acronyms](#)
- (8) [Financial Management and FM abbreviations and acronyms](#)

