



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

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H I S T O R Y

# Conservation Milestones

## Natural Resources Conservation on America's Private Land

<i>February 15, 1894</i>	Division of Agricultural Soils established in the Department of Agriculture
<i>March 1, 1899</i>	Soil survey program began with Congressional authorization for mapping of tobacco lands
<i>February 16, 1929</i>	Soil conservation experiment stations authorized
<i>September 19, 1933</i>	Soil Erosion Service created in the Department of the Interior
<i>April 27, 1935</i>	Soil Conservation Service created in the Department of Agriculture
<i>June 22, 1936</i>	Flood Control Act of 1936 authorized USDA to develop measures to retard water flow and reduce soil erosion in selected watersheds
<i>February 27, 1937</i>	President Franklin D. Roosevelt encouraged states to enact a conservation district law to enable the Department of Agriculture to provide assistance to local conservation districts
<i>March 3, 1937</i>	Arkansas became the first state to enact the Standard State Soil Conservation Districts Law
<i>August 4, 1937</i>	First conservation district organized: Brown Creek Soil Conservation District, North Carolina
<i>December 12, 1944</i>	Flood Control Act of 1944 authorized 11 flood prevention projects and authorized the Emergency Watershed Protection Program to help protect lives and property following natural disasters
<i>July 25, 1946</i>	National Association of Conservation Districts founded by district officials from 17 states, Chicago, Illinois
<i>August 4, 1954</i>	Small Watershed Program enacted to help communities protect, improve, and develop watersheds
<i>August 7, 1956</i>	Great Plains Conservation Program created to help protect the drought-prone Great Plains against wind erosion
<i>July 2, 1957</i>	First American Indian conservation district established: Parker Valley Soil Conservation District, Arizona
<i>September 27, 1962</i>	Resource Conservation and Development Program enacted to advance resource development and environmental protection in multi-county areas
<i>February 7, 1967</i>	National Association of State Conservation Agencies officially organized
<i>January 1, 1970</i>	National Environmental Policy Act enacted to require assessment of impacts of federal actions on the environment
<i>December 1975</i>	Modern soil classification system developed and adopted
<i>November 18, 1977</i>	Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act enacted to further the conservation, protection, and enhancement of the nation's natural resources for sustained use
<i>June 22, 1982</i>	First completely urban conservation district established: District of Columbia Conservation District, Washington, D.C.
<i>December 23, 1985</i>	1985 Farm Bill — first farm bill to contain a conservation title — linked conservation to eligibility for USDA program benefits
<i>October 20, 1994</i>	Natural Resources Conservation Service created
<i>April 4, 1996</i>	1996 Farm Bill made significant changes and additions to the conservation title

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