

## The Second Newsletter



# Association of Soil Conservation Service Retired Employees

4657 Ch. Ch. Dr. 208, Chevy Chase, Md. 20015

March, 1974

Vol. 1, No. 2

**GROWING PAINS.** Business is boomin'. Since our first newsletter in January we've added 221 new members, bringing our total to 452. Most of the new members joined in response to President Roy Hockensmith's letter sent to a list of retirees obtained from SCS state offices. To beat the 10-cent postage rate with that letter, Roy, Secretary Joe Rogers, Member Paul Lemmon and the editor addressed envelopes and stuffed them and stamped them like crazy. We were tickled with the response. Many, along with their dues, sent notes expressing their interest in ARSCSE and its possibilities for service. Membership is from 47 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. States having 20 or more members include Virginia, Texas, Oregon, and Maryland. Others pushing toward this mark including Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Washington, and Wisconsin. President Hockensmith has asked our regional representatives to select a leader in each state to represent the Association. And Roy suggests that attention be paid to affiliate members as well as retirees eligible for full membership. A surfeit of things to report and a lack of space within our six-page format, even by severely condensing copy and eliminating extra lines for headings, forced expansion to eight pages this issue. It was either that or omit what we thought was useful information or "personals." In this issue we are also trying out a cheaper reproduction process that involves typing on special stencils instead of on paper for camera copy used to make negatives. In other words, we are cutting out one step -- the negative -- at a savings of about \$3 a page. We'll also try a cheaper grade of paper. We hope the results are satisfactory. If your newsletter is hand-addressed, as nearly half of them are this issue, it's because your membership didn't arrive in time for an addressograph stencil to be made. You'll have one by the next newsletter. Secretary Rogers is making up a supplemental membership list that can be added to your list of January 15 when it is sent out in a few weeks.

**RETIREE BENEFIT BILLS.** Two bills of interest to retirees are pending. The Senate has a House-passed bill that would establish minimum civil service benefits equal to the minimum for social security and give a flat \$20 a monthly increase to

<u>President</u>	<u>Vice-President</u>	<u>Sec'y-Tres.</u>	<u>Editor-Manager</u>
Roy D. Hockensmith	A. A. Klingebiel	Jos. B. Rogers	Hal Jenkins
<u>Regional</u>	<u>Northeast</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>Midwest</u>
<u>Representatives</u>	S. L. Tinsley	H. B. Martin	Wm. Russell
<u>Consultant</u>			Paul McGrew
D. A. Williams			

all persons who retired from the federal service before October 1969. The other, a bill to eliminate the annuity deduction a retiree must take in order to provide survivor benefits, has cleared the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee. Under its provisions, all present and future retirees would get their full annuity as well as the right to designate a portion of it for a survivor. The Administration is reportedly opposed to the retroactive annuity recomputation and new benefit (estimated to cost \$200 to \$300 million) and insiders say the President is certain to veto the legislation if it gets through Congress.

LOOKING FOR AN ASSIGNMENT? Requests for the names of retirees interested in short-term or long-term assignments are received on a continuing basis by SCS from international and foreign agencies and organizations and private consulting firms. The requests also include U.S. Government assignments, which are limited to three months. Other assignments range from a few weeks to two years. If you are interested write to Dale Webber, foreign program specialist, SCS, Washington, D.C. 20250, phone (301) 447-4403. Give him your address, phone number, and your preferences as to locations and length of assignment. Dale will give your name to requesters who will get in touch with you direct.

ENVIRONMENTAL APPROACH MODERATING. Most observers of the Washington scene agree that environmental concerns are becoming more moderate due to growing awareness that there must be a balance between environmental needs and production and energy needs. The pros and the cons are moving away from their extremes toward the center, just about where SCS has been all along. Some of the controversies and legal complications that have caused many problems may abate somewhat. Despite these problems, the watershed program, as an example, is still moving along. Fiscal year 1973 saw the highest dollar amount in construction ever -- and 1974 is expected to be just as high. Amusing evidence of the exaggerated claims of extreme environmentalists came to light the other day with publication of photographs of the main channel of Chicod Creek, Pitt County, N.C., a watershed project that has had more than its share of legal and other problems. The photographs of this "marvelous fishing paradise" show a dry channel clogged with debris and sediment, with only a few stagnant pools of water visible here and there. All out production efforts involving bringing "new" land into production call for accelerated technical assistance in conservation planning and application and accelerated soil surveys. (see item under "SCS Press Releases") USDA has just issued a publication focussing on this problem. Title, "Land Use Planning Assistance Available Through the Department of Agriculture." Write to SCS for a free copy.

NEW ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR. Effective April 7, NE Field Representative and TSC Director Ronello M. (Mel) Davis will fill a new assistant administrator post in the Washington office in which he will have responsibility for program planning and evaluation and legislative liaison.

NEW AWARDS PROGRAM. Conservation districts and teachers in districts may take part in a new environmental conservation education awards program sponsored by Allis Chalmers and NACD. Two national awards of \$1,500 each are offered, one to the conservation district that has developed the best conservation education program in cooperation with elementary and/or high schools in its area, and the other to the teacher-of-the year in environmental conservation education. Nominations must be made by May 1. This program, it would seem offers an opportunity

for service. Ask your district about it. Perhaps you can promote district and/or teacher entrants. Two NACD publications would be useful in this connection. Single copies may be obtained free from NACD Service Department, League City, Texas 77573. Ask for "A District Program for Youth," and the "Environmental Action Guide."

THE BUDGET. The President's budget for 1975 (beginning July 1) proposes a program level for SCS of \$383 million compared to \$404.4 million for 1974 excluding \$22.5 that was withheld. No funds are budgeted for SCS under the Great Plains Conservation Program, which SCS has administered in full since its beginning. The GPCP cost sharing for this program would be merged into the USDA long-term contracting program, called Rural Environmental Program, and be administered by the ASCS. (Old-timers will recall that ASCS was offered the cost-sharing job in this program when it began but refused unless it could have the entire program.) SCS, under the President's budget, would receive \$11.2 million to provide technical assistance under REP, which would include activities in addition to the GPCP. The SCS hearing on this budget before the House Subcommittee on Agricultural (and other) Appropriations was rated excellent in all respects, and unique in one. For the first time in the memory of veteran observers, the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, Rep. George Mahon of Texas, came to Subcommittee Chairman Jamie Whitten's hearing for SCS and took part in the discussion. Rep. Mahon expressed concern over the "melding" of the GPCP into a general Departmental activity. He said the program was a very successful one and he wanted it to continue, to retain its identity, and be a strong USDA program. He left the impression that he would not favor too many alterations or program changes. The Subcommittee, led by Rep. Whitten, expressed confidence in SCS work. Detailed questions by various members indicated their concern over personnel ceilings. (The budget reduces SCS personnel ceilings by 160, thus eliminating most of the increase of 200 announced for 1974 midway in the fiscal year.) One member said SCS is a good influence on us not to go for short-term gains and to make unwise decisions in the present all out production effort. All in all, a most satisfactory hearing for SCS.

WE REGRET TO REPORT. Veterans in the SCS cause who died recently include Member William Beacham, in Mississippi; Member Phoebe Harrison, former information specialist in the WO, in Maryland; Virgil S. Beck, former information specialist in the Amarillo and Albuquerque regional offices and field information units at Denver and Berkeley, in New Mexico; Wilmer (Bill) Steiner, former head plant materials specialist, in Maryland; and Ross A. Williams, former regional forester at Rapid City and Lincoln, later dean of the School of Forestry, University of Montana, in Colorado.

UPCOMING EVENTS. The first National Conference on Flood Plain Management will be held in Washington, D.C. at the Statler Hilton July 23-25. Sponsoring organizations are NACD, National Wildlife Management Institute, Sport Fishing Institute, American Forestry Association, Soil Conservation Society of America, Council of State Governments, American Society of Planning Officials, and Keep America Beautiful. SCS will be among the agencies represented by consultants. National Watershed Congress will hold its 21st annual meeting June 16-19 at the Hilton in Pittsburgh. Thirty-four organizations participate in the Congress. Earth Week 1974 will be observed April 21-28, a real opportunity to get in a few good words and deeds locally. The theme is "Education for Environmental Quality." Sponsor is the Alliance for Environmental Education, a coalition of 26 national and regional organizations. Helpful to those interested in this subject and in

creation of a Department of Energy and Minerals, making USDA the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and opposes transfer of the Forest Service and parts of the watershed program to a new department of Energy and Natural Resources. Technical Manpower for Conservation Districts. NACD opposes any reductions in personnel or funds and calls on state and county governments to furnish additional assistance for technical and clerical help. Outlook Report Adopted. The Council adopted a new report by the NACD Special Committee on District Outlook that urges priority on the following items for the next decade: (1) prevention and control of non-point source pollution; (2) comprehensive resource management on a watershed basis; (3) reclamation of surface-mined areas; (4) improvement of private non-industrial forest lands; (5) advancement of environmental conservation education in schools; (6) preservation and enhancement of prime and unique agricultural, range, horticultural and forest lands; (7) land use planning.

ON THE LEGISLATIVE FRONT. The proposed Department of Energy and Natural Resources received a resounding slap on February 22 when all 13 members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry wrote to Senator Sam J. Ervin, chairman of the Senate Committee on Government Operations, protesting inclusion of the Forest Service and certain water resource functions of SCS in the new department. The six-page letter opposed dismemberment of the Department of Agriculture, which, it said, "has responsibility for approximately 90 percent of our renewable natural resources." Strip Mining Battle. The Senate-passed strip mine regulation bill, adopted with only eight dissents last October, is running into real trouble in the House. Legislation has been obstructed time and again and further efforts to water it down are expected. Proponents of the bill say strip mining must be expanded and accelerated to meet the energy crisis despite statistical information that deep mined coal is lower in sulfur, more extensive in total quantity (only about 45 billion tons of our coal reserves of three trillion tons, says the Bureau of Mines, can be recovered by strip mining). Land Use Bill Scuttled. The land use bill that was supported by most conservation forces, including NACD, was scuttled in a surprise move by the House Rules Committee. The legislation passed the Senate last year by a 64-21 vote and was approved by the House Interior Committee 26-11. The Rules Committee shelved it by a 9-4 vote. The bill would provide \$800 million over the next eight years for states to draw up comprehensive plans for regulating the use of land. Efforts to revive the measure will not be taken up until more evidence of public support is forthcoming, congressional leaders backing the measure said. A better understanding of the legislation is needed. Actually, both sides overstated their case. One scare tactic was that the bill would put the federal government into the business of controlling land in the states. Remember this same bunk being used when conservation district enabling legislation was being debated? Environmental Lobbying. The House Ways and Means Committee is considering legislation that would permit tax-exempt, charitable organizations to influence legislation, an activity that is now prohibited. Insiders say such legislation has a good chance to become law this year.

WHAT THEY'RE DOING NOW. Two of our longest-retired members, W.A. (Bill) Rockie ('52) Oregon, and Joy Hopkins ('56) Virginia appear to be as active as most non-retirees. Rockie, who held many key posts in the west, lectures part time at Portland State University, is active in SCSA and other organizations, and finds time for fishing. Joy, former assistant chief of operations and NE field representative, has an extensive collection of hardy azaleas that has led him into flower photography. He uses several sets of slides on azaleas, bulbs, and home propagation



in talks to garden clubs. He now does watercolors when he can't play golf. Joy was a member of the organizing committee for ARSCSE. Eurselle "S" Cordell ('70), Albuquerque, former AC in California, is president of a NARFE chapter of 898 members, vice president of the New Mexico NARFE, active in SCSA and Kiwanis, and is adviser to an RC&D project and the Commission for the Aging. Howard V. Cheney ('69) Grainfield, Kansas is farming 700 acres of terraced, stubblemulched cropland and 100 acres of grass. Leo Doval ('63), former engineer at Elida, N.M. has been a supervisor of the Border Natural Resources District since 1964 and secretary-treasurer for the past 10 years. John F. Kane ('73) former soil scientist at Front Royal, Va. has his own soil consulting business at Winchester, Va. Madge Mullin ('72), Burlington, Vt. works as secretary for the regional office of the United Community Service. She was secretary to two Vermont STCs, Lemuel J. Peet and Dave Grimwood, for 25 years. She sent a clipping showing a picture of Lem as secretary of the Burlington chapter of SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives) whose members counsel small businessmen. Another SCORE worker is J. Dale Schott ('70) Bluemont, Va., former soil conservationist. (Dale has a suggestion in "Members Speak Their Piece.") Richard M. Long ('71) Waynesboro, Pa. operates a small cattle farm and does soil consulting work. Charles J. Koch, Reston, Va., former Virginia state soil scientist, is secretary of the Fairfax County SCD. He keeps in touch with urban development and deals daily with sediment pollution and sediment problems in an urbanizing community. Paul C. McGrew ('62) former Washington STC, for several years has written a newsletter to retired STCs and others who provide stamp money. He also conducts a dinner and program for his gang at each SCSA annual meeting. Henry I. Weeks ('73) former DC at Hernando, Miss. owns and manages a 154-acre pine tree farm. He enjoys fishing in some of the 1,600 farm ponds he helped plan in his 28 years in DeSoto County. Willis J. (Pete) Sorrells ('73) former DC for the Deer Creek SCD, Oklahoma, is active in civic affairs in Weatherford. The local paper gave him a six-column spread on his retirement for "nearly 38 years of selling conservation to farmers from Ardmore to Weatherford." Among other civic jobs, Pete serves on the Renewable Natural Resources Committee of the local Chamber of Commerce. Frank C. Edminster ('66), Trumansburg, N.Y. consults on resource conservation, writes books, grows prize-winning flowers and squash (one 170-pounder made AP Wirephoto pictures) Frank was NE regional biologist, STC for New Jersey and Virginia, and WO Resource Development Division specialist. Thomas P. Helseth ('72) former STC, Oregon and California, developed a tree farm at Sagle, Idaho, and then took a two-year contract as chief conservation officer for the government of Lesotho, South Africa, where he is developing a program of soil and water conservation.

MEMBERS SPEAK THEIR PIECE. (Note: This section offers members space to say what they think, and to espouse any point of view so long as it's decent. The editor pledges no comment even though he may be outraged by the point of view expressed. But other members may object or support as they see fit. We reserve the right to streamline contributions and we invite your participation.) Lennon G. Bell ('64) Coeur d' Alene, Idaho, former ASTC for watersheds in Connecticut: "Let's get back into the conservation of soils and assistance to land owners and operators rather than the political, social, and popular programs and questions of the day. This goes for SCDs as well as SCS. We have the greatest program and most competent personnel in the whole dam government so why should we relax our aim and goals?" M.J. Horrell ('64) Emporia, Kansas, former engineering aid, Lyon County WU: "Suggest we all join and give our backing to the NARFE which has already greatly benefited retired federal people." (Note: This suggestion came from other

members, including Alfred Epperson ('65) Hutchinson, Kansas who is vice president of his local chapter; Paul Underwood ('64) Aberdeen, S. Dak.; Howard W. Andrus, Springfield, Ohio; and Eurselle Cordell ('70), Albuquerque, N. M. whose interest is mentioned under "What They're Doing Now." Melville H. Cohee ('65) formerly WO, Milwaukee regional office and EWP unit and now a research resources specialist for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources: "What I miss is the technical advancements regarding, for example, basic changes in watershed planning developments; range, soils, etc. interpretation methods of basic data and the like. I have serious doubts that another newsletter would capture this type of reporting to retirees. And, without keeping up on true fundamentals of approaches about resources conservation of SCS, retirees soon become in the "has-been" category in the eyes of those they might seek support from in times of need. . . . A superficially informed retiree from any agency or company can become a liability rather than an asset if not informed in depth. Thus the need for more than the usual reporting type of newsletter. . . . And we must keep in mind that some SCS retirees truly retire. Furthermore, many of the best informed retirees are a bit reluctant to do something that might be construed as interfering by the people who replaced them when they retired. It follows that the current leaders should make it clear to retirees that their help is wanted". W.E. Schnurr, Nebraska: "I'm in favor of a newsletter at least twice a year. As far as SCS activities and welfare are concerned, in my opinion this should be minimal if at all with the possible exception of a critical situation where help with congressional people would be beneficial. Keep personal items short, ten words or less. You know how long-winded some people can be." O. O. Moore ('72), Alexandria, La.: "Don't make the newsletter all work. Remember, this is a group of retired SCSers." (Moore, former ASTC, Louisiana, reports he and his wife have a small farm with about 60 head of mature cattle and the whole place is in grass.) Dennis F. Gowder ('72), Hohenwald, Tenn., former DC: "Keep retirees informed on what progress congress is making for the benefit of employees and retirees. Keep retirees informed on major changes being made in the organization. Let retirees know what they can do to promote better conservation in our communities." F.D. Abbott ('70), Colorado Springs, former state resource conservationist, Kansas: "One section of the newsletter might be devoted to hobbies; arts and crafts. Members could exchange ideas and experiences. Example: I have developed a method of making Christmas wreaths out of pine, spruce and fir cones that are readily available in this area. The Junior Chamber of Commerce takes my wreaths on consignment during the holiday season. If you would like, I'll try to write a brief description of how I put these wreaths together." (We've asked for this information.) J. Dale Schott ('70) Bluemont, Va., Former soil conservationist who spent five years in Thailand, 1965-70: "As a volunteer in SCORE, I have wondered why SCS or USDA could not use retired soil conservationists as SBA uses qualified retirees in the SCORE program. As you know, SCORE is one of the volunteer agencies under ACTION. It would be much more interesting if assignments were always more in keeping with experience -- in our case, resource conservation -- with an individual farmer, group of farmers, conservation district, or a public or private utility. Volunteers could receive reimbursement for travel and out-of-pocket costs as they do under ACTION." John S. Barnes ('65), former California STC, Berkeley: "I have observed the local Forest Service retirees. Fifteen or 20 get together four times a year and have lunch and hear the Regional Forester or Experiment Station Director or another 'active' bring them up to date on current problems. The Regional Forester mails national and regional newsletters to retirees." (Note: The FS retirees have a reputation for being a powerful outfit. They are generally credited with stopping the FS reorganization a year ago, a plan

that would have eliminated several regional offices.) R.J. Seitz ('72), Gastonia, N.C., former DC in Gaston and Lincoln SCDs: "I urge strong leadership toward enactment of ordinances at state, county, and town levels to control the unwise development of non-agricultural land uses before we fill all the streams and rivers with silt! I like the seven objectives of ARSCSE." John L. Parker ('73) Idaho Falls, Idaho, former soil scientist, Columbia, Montana: "I would like to see more emphasis put on soil surveys and getting colleges to update the courses for soils in the universities. I'm glad to see that someone is thinking of the 'old has beens' who fought the battles of long ago."

USING SCSA BOOKLETS. The Otsego (Mich.) SCD provides the Welcome Wagon organization with SCSA color cartoon booklets and information about the district's program. The booklets, by the way, are for sale by SCSA, Ankeny, Iowa 50021. If you haven't seen them, you can buy a complete sample set of booklets for \$1 and a set of teachers' guides for the same price. There are eight booklets in the series. And they are exceptionally well done.

ODDS 'N' ENDS. Harold E. Tower ('73) former STC and field representative, keeps his home in Arlington, Va. but spends May to November on his 100-acre sprinkler-irrigated farm near Flathead Lake in western Montana close to his 93-year-old father, a former district supervisor. William W. Russell ('71) former Wisconsin STC, is a registered lobbyist in the Wisconsin State Legislature assisting the Wisconsin State Association of SWCDs. Donald Dinsmore ('73) migrated from one salmon fishing country to another when he went from Maine, where he had been STC, to Puget Sound, Wash. Minott (June Silliman) ('73) former WO planning division, moved from Virginia to his old farm home near Toulon, Ill. not far from Peoria. June was a member of the ARSCSE organizing committee before he left the Washington area. Charles W. (Spike) Koechley ('70) former head of Cartographic, also a member of the ARSCSE organizing committee, has been working on a history of the SCS Cartographic Division since 1934. Mildred C. Langan ('73) former secretary to the chief of operations and administrative assistant in the WO, went back to her native Brookings, S. Dak. to enjoy the "land of infinite variety." Arnold J. Baur ('70) former principal soil correlator for the NE, now of Caro, Mich., reports that SCS and Michigan State U. soil scientists are forming an organization of soil classifiers in Michigan with a nucleus of 33 members. A few cherry trees have blossomed prematurely, the magnolias are blooming, and ditto the forsythia. Spring cannot be far behind along the banks of the polluted Potomac.