

Department of the Interior

Departmental Manual

Effective Date: 2/16/71

Series: Public Lands

Part 606: Soil and Moisture Conservation

Chapter 1: General Policies and Responsibilities

Originating Office: Bureau of Land Management

This chapter has been given a new release number.* No text changes were made.

606 DM 1

6.1 Authority.

A. General. The Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act of April 27, 1935, (49 Stat. 163; 16 U.S.C. 590a-590g) as amended, declared it to be the policy of Congress to provide permanently for the control and prevention of soil erosion, and directed the Secretary of Agriculture to coordinate and direct all activities with relation to soil erosion. That Act also established the Soil Conservation Service to exercise the powers conferred on the Secretary of Agriculture. Reorganization Plan No. IV of June 30, 1940 (54 Stat. 1234; 5 U.S.C. 133t) transferred to this Department all functions of the Soil Conservation Service with respect to soil and moisture conservation operations conducted on lands under jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior.

B. Related Authority.

(1) Section 6 of the Indian Reorganization Act of June 18, 1934 (48 Stat. 984), directed the Secretary of the Interior to make rules and regulations for the operation of Indian forestry units on the principle of sustained-yield management, to restrict the number of livestock grazed on Indian range units to the estimated carrying capacity of such ranges, and to promulgate such other rules and regulations as may be necessary to protect the range from deterioration; to prevent soil erosion; to assure full utilization of the range; and like purposes.

(2) Section 2 of the Taylor Grazing Act of June 28, 1934, as amended (43 U.S.C. 315r (1964); 48 Stat. 1269), pertaining to the management and use of public grazing lands, among other things states, A...and the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to continue the study of erosion and flood control and to perform such work as may be necessary amply to protect and rehabilitate the areas subject to the provisions of this Act,...@

(3) The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (Public Law 91-190, January 1, 1970; 83 Stat. 852) declared it to be National policy to promote efforts which will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere.

(4) Executive Order 11514 - Protection and Enhancement of Environmental Quality, issued March 5, 1970, directs the Heads of Federal agencies to monitor, evaluate and control their activities so as to protect and enhance the quality of the environment.

6.2 Responsibilities. The Secretary of the Interior is responsible for soil and moisture conservation on lands under the jurisdiction of the Department. The Assistant Secretary- Public Land Management is responsible for coordinating the program within the Department, providing information and staff assistance to the Secretariat as required, and serving as liaison to the Department of Agriculture. Bureaus are responsible for performing soil and moisture conservation operations on or for the benefit of lands under their administration. Each bureau concerned will include in its annual estimates such funds as are needed for the orderly presentation of its long-range program and submit reports of expenditure and accomplishment as requested.

6.3 Policy.

A. General. The Departmental policy is to plan and effect programs that will aid in achieving the objectives established by legislation. These objectives include:

(1) Prevention and control of soil erosion including the preservation and improvement of soil fertility.

(2) Diminution of exploitation and wasteful and unscientific use of National soil resources.

(3) Promotion of economic use and conservation of land.

(4) Protection of rivers and harbors against the results of soil erosion in aid of maintaining the navigability of waters and in aid of flood control.

(5) Prevention of the impairment of reservoirs.

(6) Protection of the public health.

(7) Protection and enhancement of the total environment.

B. Limitation on Application of Measures.

(1) There is no limitation on application of conservation measures on lands under the jurisdiction of the Department.

(2) The Department of the Interior may perform soil and moisture conservation operations on lands not under its jurisdiction, provided that the operations have as their primary purpose the protection and benefit of lands which are under the jurisdiction of the Department.

(3) Suitable arrangements must be made with owners or operators for work to be performed by Interior bureaus on lands other than those administered by the Department.

(4) Engineering operations creating structures are not to be applied in the absence of effective land utilization and management systems.

C. Cost Sharing. Conservation measures result in permanent improvements which represents capital investment. Bureaus shall solicit contributions from benefitting users of Interior lands to be applied on the cost of the conservation measures. Contributions may be in the form of labor, materials, supplies or cash. The amount solicited will be based on the estimated benefits to be derived by the cooperator.

*

2/16/71 #3486

Replaces 2/16/71 #1268