

Level of conflict 24.1

"MODERATING CONFLICTS BETWEEN RESOURCE USES AND USERS

*Not "resolving" where there are no common*  
In preparing for today's session, I thought about all of the district

leadership meetings I've been privileged to be in the last several years as SCS representative. More and more, the program chairmen suggest a theme of "improving the environment" or "broadening the conservation effort." Today it is "moderating conflicts, etc."

They reflect, of course, what's on the minds of most Americans today, even if the generalized topics make for a few difficult hours in coming up with specifics.

What has been happening on the meeting circuit and in every community and every home is a search for a context--a larger meaning for the work that one landowner or a whole national organization does.

Americans are learning that the time is past when each of us can do his own thing in isolation--that there are enough of us, and enough different and sometimes conflicting goals, that it is not only useful but imperative that we all work together-- *or at least try!*

Assessing people's aims--the "public interest"--isn't an easy exercise. Those who share our land, air, and water see their environmental needs in many different and sometimes contradictory ways. How can we be sure our decisions are really in the best interests of all the people? Some interests are not always well articulated, some segments of the public are not as vocal as others. And any one person's needs or wants <sup>may</sup> conflict with one another and <sup>do</sup> change <sup>(even</sup> for day to day.)

Of course, participation by all interest groups and a roomful of final environmental impact statements will not mean that everyone will be satisfied with the end result. Choices must be made--priorities assigned. ~~And~~ the right choice is not always evident. There usually are relative values and possible alternatives. ~~And as many as possible of the decisions~~ should be made <sup>or as fully as possible</sup> by the people who will be affected by them.

The increased participation by conservation district officials is, I think a very meaningful step toward your goal of truly total resource development of your community, county, or area.

In working with landowners and local governmental units, you have gained a good understanding of many natural resource needs and opportunities. You have become a central source of assistance and information about a wide range of natural resource questions.

And you have learned a lot about what local people want!

Sister's  
this quote →

"In the end the public probably cares less about the technical aspects of soil conservation, forestry, wildlife, or any other discipline than it does about their environmental effects. People will support--with money and voices--those whose programs truly assure them of environmental improvement." This ~~last paragraph~~ is a direct quote from the leader of the NAT'L. Wildlife Institute--and I, for one, agree with the way it's said.

The importance and complexity of future decisions rest in the diverse qualities of the Nation's lands and waters, in the wide range of private and public interests seeking gain from them, and in the patchwork of ownership, traditions, laws and regulations under which they are used.

In the face of a growing population's demands--for food and fiber, for water, for minerals, for energy, for recreation, for fish and wildlife, for transportation, for living space--"determining the public interest" in land and water use will entail the wisdom of Solomon and the patience of Job.

Competition among separate interests and uses, some mutually compatible, but many not, is increasingly intense. *Questions include:*

- What uses can and should be tolerated?
- Under what conditions of conservation, management and compensation?
- How, and to what extent, are environmental values to be preserved?
- How and by whom will such questions be resolved?
- What can be--should be *realistically* the role of the conservation district in providing answers to these and similar questions?

*Dist. have the stature? see booklet*

The Future of Districts emphasized the need for local organizational

machinery to accomplish four purposes:

- fact finding and interpretation
- planning
- coordination
- action.

*Do Cons.*

*of course*

We are committed to ACTION, but we may see less and less to implement--if we neglect the first three:

\* Fact finding is the cornerstone of an adequate conservation and development program. Surveying is the identification, classification, and delineation of specifics such as kinds of soil, landscape features, and site evaluation for specific uses.

Monitoring is the periodic evaluation and recording of the extent and condition of an areas resources to determine and change or trends taking place.

The information in:

Soil surveys, sediment sources, snow surveys and other natural resource inventories is the basis for planning the improvement and maintenance of individual and community resource management systems.

> Districts have as a number one powers of districts and governing boards in most laws --to conduct surveys, investigations and research...

Planning is the process for reaching decisions on objectives, priorities, alternatives and actions. It makes use of "facts" and blends interpretations with conservation technology. Pertinent factors affecting resource use must be harmonized with other facets of general and operational planning. A recommended power to Districts is:

--"to develop resources conservation programs and annual work plans."

Coordination recognizes that as careful, planned multiple purpose use of resources becomes more critical, the need for reasonable and legitimate coordination of efforts increase. The power of districts to cooperate, enter into agreements, memos of understanding, etc., is clearly a mandate to ensure that mutual objectives can be attained.

Conservation districts grew out of a need for citizen involvement in the conservation, development, improvement, and management of land and water resources. This democratic participation by thousands of

volunteers is unequalled on a sustained basis. Now the attempt to have District

See booklet

- 1) Represent all the people
- 2) Develop programs for all the people.
- 3) Involve all the people
- 4) Accept and carry out responsibility on behalf of all the people - all

of these

is certainly an influence for moderation!

You did take out a role  
 for Districts w/ this sort  
 of charter.  
 Your goal was amb!

But, there are some risks -- some hazards in this "compromise" process. I'll finish with those later.

First, though, for discussion purposes -- what are some areas of possible conflict in land and water use? For instance -- I think of these:

1. Channels <sup>improvement that need your help!</sup> - drainage of flooded or wet lands -- vs value for woodland, wildlife, fishing streams, nature study, etc.
2. Prime land -- retention of vs use for transportation network, homes, shopping centers, etc.
3. Land used for mining -- gravel, coal -- other minerals -- vegetation, rehabilitation vs limited activity <sup>or strictly regulated use</sup>
4. Recreation areas -- public vs private use, access to recreation areas established with Federal funds, vs "income producing" recreation
5. Sites for power facilities vs water and air pollution (burning of residues).
6. Farm feed lots - waste disposal vs water quality standards.
7. Sanitary land-fills vs neighborhood concern, effect on water quality - surface water - underground water - clean streams
8. Septic tanks <sup>Community Dev.</sup> vs sewer lines. Soil suitability - urban sprawl.
9. Open space - beauty in the landscape vs compatibility with agriculture <sup>and forestry</sup>
10. Land use policy - national, state, local, fragile areas -- historic sites vs speculation in land, ordinances, regulation zoning, sediment control, enforcement, special interests.

There are more, but we soon get the idea that almost all uses of land and water are subject to possible multiple-use--or if single purpose -- conflict in use.

How <sup>then</sup> can a district effectively moderate conflict?

- Resources, Conservation program
  - \* - promote harmony.
- Maps of key resources - *Facts*
- Public hearings -- official status.
- Setting priorities.
- Cooperation with local government.
- Reporting and public information.
- Citizen involvement and commitment.
- As "Sponsors" (i.e., of projects - P.L. 566 and RC<sup>2</sup>D)

*It will need to be done w/ others*

Techniques of resolving conflict:

- Know who the key people are.
- Keeping <sup>key</sup> people fully and currently informed of everything they need to know of how they will be affected by the work being done or planned to be done.
- Seek advice and counsel of key people in the development of decisions that will affect them.
- Work with key people in attempting to solve the problem.
- Share with key people the task of setting goals or objectives and the criteria to be followed to reach those goals.

In summary, full participation of key people in the planning and conduct of work that affects them makes it possible for them to apply their whole intelligence to the task.

*Finally* - Hazards and opportunities. There are obviously risks to those who *try* to assume the role of moderating possible conflicts. They include:

- Do you have the facts?
- What is your private bias?
- What is your public responsibility?
- Will you have access to the technical support needed?
- Do you have the time? *the money? the staff*

*Can you stand the heat?*  
-> *I heard you EVEN TRY?*

The agonizing decisions that may be needed may not satisfy everyone, as we said before but as Phil Glick said several years ago:

What the current situation requires is the kind of leadership that will ease the task of decision that history has placed on supervisors by pointing the way in words that are clear and bold. For, "if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?"