

## Natural Resources Conservation Service Earth Team Volunteer Program

# Orientation



### Welcome to the Earth Team!

As an Earth Team volunteer, you will be working side by side with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) corps of professional conservationists. We appreciate the generous contribution of your time, energy and abilities and hope you will enjoy sharing your skills, learning new ones, meeting new people and being part of a dedicated, national conservation effort.

### General Requirements

NRCS Earth Team volunteers must be at least 14 years old and may be signed up as individuals or as a member of a group. Volunteers do not have to be a citizen of the United States, but should be a citizen of an allied country.

### Volunteer Guidelines

Your tour of duty (schedule) will be negotiated between you and your NRCS supervisor.

It is very important to keep an accurate record of the actual hours you work, as you are protected under the Workers' Compensation Program and the Tort Claims Act while volunteering. NRCS-PER-004, Time and Attendance, is one timekeeping method.

You may be reimbursed for incidental expenses incurred while volunteering. Expenses must be negotiated in advance between you and your supervisor. Additionally, if your job duties require travel on behalf of NRCS, you may be authorized for official travel reimbursement.

If you are injured on the job, you must immediately report the injury to your supervisor regardless of how insignificant the injury initially appears. This ensures your protection if complications develop later.

### Use of Tools, Equipment, and Vehicles

You may be issued tools, equipment, a vehicle or other government property needed to perform your job. It is your responsibility to return all assigned items or to immediately report all lost or damaged property to your supervisor. If you lose or damage equipment through negligence, you may be required to pay for the loss or damage.

To drive a government vehicle, you must have a valid State driver's license, written authorization, and a document identifying you as a volunteer. You must report any vehicle accidents to your supervisor immediately; including minor scratches or dents.

To access a government computer you must undergo a complete background investigation.

### Ownership of Work Products

Please note that whatever you produce as an NRCS volunteer is government property and cannot be sold or copyrighted. This includes software, written material and photographic images.

### Conduct

NRCS is a federal agency and has a responsibility to maintain public confidence and support. Volunteers are expected to dress and conduct themselves in a way that reflects positively on the agency. While serving as an NRCS Earth Team volunteer, you are subject to the same responsibilities and guidelines for conduct expected of Federal employees.

### NRCS Overview

NRCS is an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Founded in 1935 as the Soil Conservation Service, the agency was renamed the Natural Resources Conservation Service as part of a reorganization in 1994.

The NRCS Chief reports to the Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment who reports to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Secretary of Agriculture is a Cabinet position appointed by the President of the United States.

### Conservation Assistance

NRCS helps America's farmers, ranchers and forest landowners conserve the nation's soil, water, air and other natural resources. All programs are voluntary and offer science-based solutions that benefit both the landowner and the environment. NRCS works at the local level, with field offices in nearly every county in the country.

For more information, visit: [www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/about/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/about/).

Thank you for donating your time and talent for conservation!

For more information on the Earth Team, visit: [www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/people/volunteers/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/people/volunteers/)

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Supervisor

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Phone Number

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Volunteer Coordinator

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Phone Number