

MP-218

630

T31m

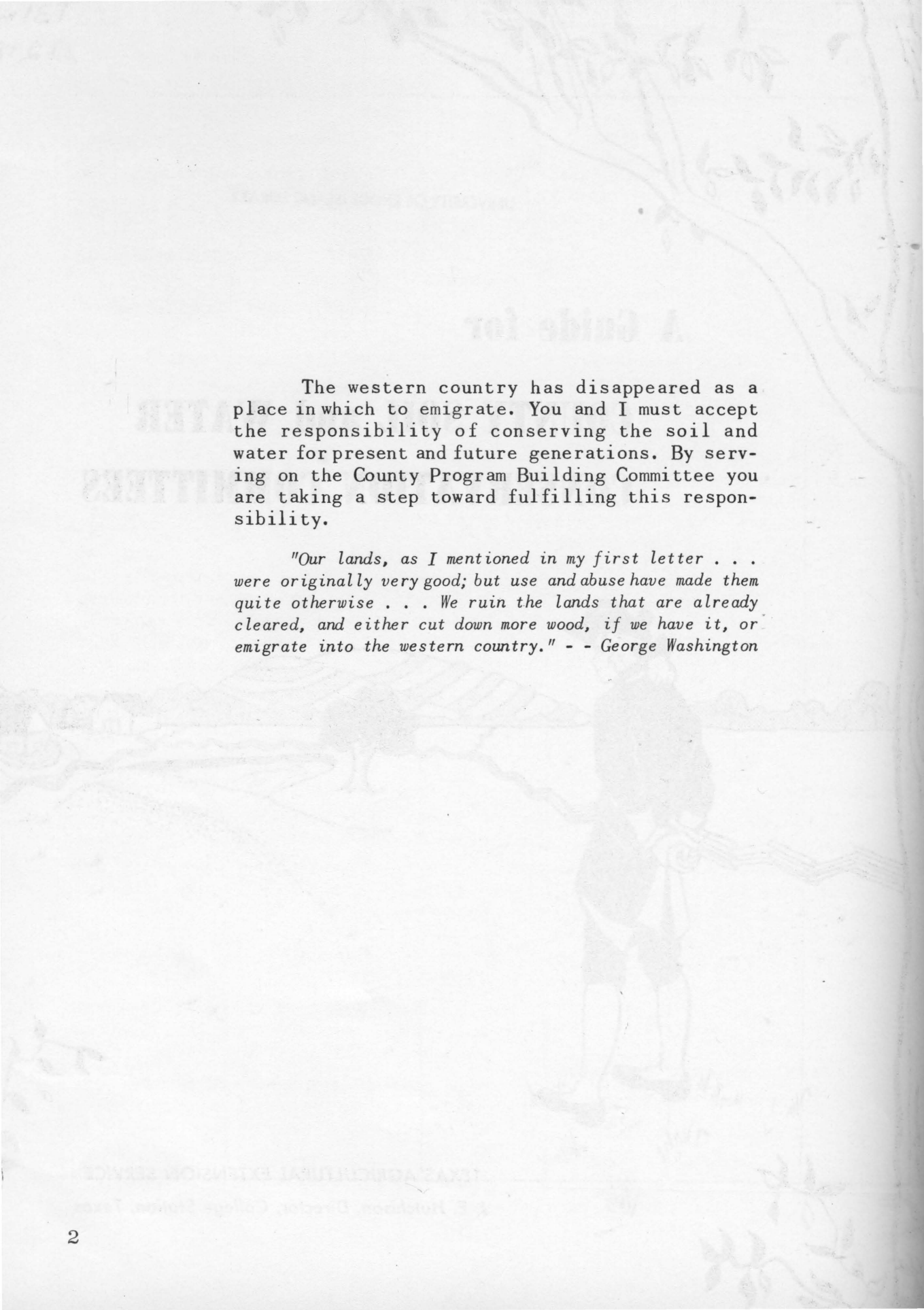
No. 218

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND LIBRARY

A Guide for
COUNTY SOIL and WATER
CONSERVATION COMMITTEES



TEXAS AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
J. E. Hutchison, Director, College Station, Texas



The western country has disappeared as a place in which to emigrate. You and I must accept the responsibility of conserving the soil and water for present and future generations. By serving on the County Program Building Committee you are taking a step toward fulfilling this responsibility.

"Our lands, as I mentioned in my first letter . . . were originally very good; but use and abuse have made them quite otherwise . . . We ruin the lands that are already cleared, and either cut down more wood, if we have it, or emigrate into the western country." - - George Washington

A Guide for COUNTY SOIL and WATER CONSERVATION COMMITTEES

JACK BARTON

Extension Soil and Water Conservation Specialist
Texas A. & M. College System

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION is essential to wise land use and ultimately a better level of living and greater security for everyone.

A well-informed and "conservation-minded" people is fundamental to sound agriculture. By agreeing to serve on the soil and water conservation subcommittee of the county program building committee you have accepted a responsibility to help lay this cornerstone.

Bear in mind that your soil and water conservation educational program should be aggressive, alive and up to date; at the same time it must be practical, furnish sound information, include all phases of conservation and, above all, be tailored to fit your county's needs.

This guide is written to assist you in developing an educational program. Its contents are mere suggestions to be adapted by your ideas, experiences and abilities.

The Committee

The greatest achievements in conservation follows a well-planned, coordinated educational program which includes the thinking of individuals, organizations and agencies interested in conservation. The following interest groups and organizations may be represented on the soil and water subcommittee.

1. Banking
2. Soil conservation district
3. ASC county committee
4. FHA county committee
5. Other farm organizations (Farm Bureau, Grange, Farmers Union)

6. School system representative
7. Ministry and church organizations
8. Civic clubs and chambers of commerce
9. County home demonstration council
10. 4-H Club representative
11. Farm editors and radio farm directors

Responsibility of the Committee

Each Texas county needs an up-to-date, forward-moving soil and water conservation program. This program should furnish proved conservation information to farmers and ranchers. The information should be practical and fit your county's needs. Your responsibilities as members of the soil and water conservation subcommittee are:

1. Determine and list the local soil and water conservation problems.
2. Determine and list the solutions to these problems, if possible.
3. Decide what resources are available to help carry out the program.
4. Select activities to be worked on this year.
5. Prepare a calendar of these activities, recommending the time and area where the activity applies.
6. Assign members of the committee to be responsible for each activity.
7. Present the soil and water conservation educational program and

the committee's recommendations to the county program building committee.

Determining the Problems

Soil and water conservation problems may range from human to technical in nature. Some may be countywide or regional, others may apply only to a community. Your soil and water conservation subcommittee should consider all the conservation problems within the county. Examples of some common problems that you may find are:

1. Lack of interest and participation in existing programs.
2. Lack of understanding of conservation purposes, problems and programs.
3. Absence of adequate finances.
4. Effects and causes of soil erosion and low soil fertility.
5. Need for more water conservation and management information.

Solution to the Problems

The solutions to many conservation problems are long-time projects. To give a picture of the total job to be done, your committee should determine, if possible, and list the final solution to each problem. Be specific wherever possible; i.e. number of farms, acres, ponds, miles of terraces or other units of measure. Some examples of long-time projects follow:

1. Get every farm and ranch to participate in at least one conservation program.
2. Terrace, contour or drain every acre in the county that requires these measures.
3. Construct enough properly designed ponds to supply adequate livestock and farm household water needs.
4. Control soil erosion and install water conservation measures on every acre of agricultural land.

Available Resources

In every county, certain human, political and natural resources can help do the conservation job. These resources and abilities may range from leadership to financial. You, as a committee member, should consider the talents of every person and organization and how these talents may be used to do the conservation job. Some of the resources that may be available to you are:

1. **County agricultural and home demonstration agents** are educational specialists. They are familiar with the agricultural and homemaking picture in your county. Through them, the resources of the Texas A. & M. College System are available to you. These resources include subject-matter specialists, experimental results, planning assistance, demonstration materials and educational publications.

2. **Soil conservation district supervisors** are elected officials within your local phase of self government. They are concerned with the total field of conservation. Your district may be able to furnish certain farm equipment, planning assistance, leadership and sponsorship of some of your educational activities. The supervisors also will be able to furnish information on state and national conservation awards programs.

3. **Soil Conservation Service personnel** are technical conservation specialists. These men furnish full-time technical assistance to the soil conservation district and to cooperators within the district. Technical soil and water conservation information and farm conservation planning are available through this group.

4. **Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation county committee** and the **Farmers Home Administration county committee** can furnish financial information and guidance. Many conservation programs are financed by these agencies

and their assistance can be invaluable to your conservation committee.

5. **The press, radio and television** can keep the people in your county informed of your conservation educational program and report its results. One or more representatives of these media can assist you in planning and disseminating public information that your committee wishes to prepare.

6. **Other resources** should not be overlooked. Many local organizations, such as home demonstration clubs, garden clubs, 4-H Clubs, Scouts, civic clubs, farmer organizations and community groups, have a vital interest in conservation. These groups can assist in carrying out organized educational programs and group activities.

7. **Interested individuals**, such as ministers, vocational agricultural instructors, bankers and school officials, can furnish ideas, needs and leadership for many soil and water conservation activities. Seek their assistance in planning and carrying out a sound conservation educational program.

Activities for this Year

Part of your committee's responsibilities is to select soil and water conservation educational activities that are suitable and needed in your county. These activities may be adapted to the county as a whole or to an individual community. Long-range objectives were discussed under the sections entitled *Determining the Problems* and *Solution to the Problems*: Suitable activities for this year will be projects that can be accomplished or initiated as steps toward the long-range goal. For example, assume that 100 stock ponds are needed to help meet water conservation needs and to supply ample stock water. Enough interest and finances can be found to indicate that 15 of these ponds can be constructed this year.

Suitable activities for this year under this phase of the conservation educational program might be: (1) prepare and release five news articles and five radioprograms giving information on pond construction; (2) encourage ASC committeemen to include stock pond construction in the county agricultural conservation program; (3) include properly constructed ponds on one or more field days; (4) obtain the agricultural engineering specialist from the Texas Agricultural Extension Service staff for one county meeting. Examples of other suitable activities for this year are:

1. Hold four community meetings to discuss soil improvement and conservation practices.

2. Encourage the soil conservation district and district cooperators to participate in one or more awards programs.

3. Encourage all ministers to participate in Soil Stewardship activities.

4. Obtain sponsors for and conduct a countywide Land Evaluation and Soil and Water Conservation Demonstration program.

5. Provide speakers on soil and water conservation for garden clubs, civic clubs, scout groups and others.

6. Plan and conduct field days and tours to show the results of sound soil and water conservation.

7. See that information pertaining to soil and water conservation meetings, activities and results reaches the public.

Prepare a Calendar of Work

Your committee's success depends on the results it produces. A vital part of a successful campaign is the timetable or schedule. After your committee has decided on suitable activities for the year, it should consider the time of year and location

within the county that the activity is to take place. In this way each activity can be planned adequately, suitable assistance can be obtained and advance information can be released. An approach to this calendar of work might be:

1. January

A. Assist the soil conservation district in making its annual plan of work and annual report.

B. Plan for a land evaluation training session and contest to be held in March.

2. March

A. Hold land evaluation training session and contest.

B. Plan soil and water conservation tour and field day in cooperation with the local soil conservation district. Set final date for the tour and decide the personal responsibilities.

3. August

A. Hold cover crop meetings in Tigertown, Edcouch, Hale Center and Ola.

B. Get soil analysis and soil sampling articles in all newspapers and over all radio and television stations.

Responsibility Assignments to Committee Members

Each committee member has a definite role in developing and carrying out the soil and water conservation educational program. In many cases you

will want to call on other people for assistance; however, one of the committee should be assigned responsibilities along the lines of her or his interest. Examples of this are:

1. The community leaders could arrange facilities for meetings.

2. The press, radio or television representative could prepare information on the activities in soil and water conservation.

3. The county agent could arrange for specialist and other program assistance.

4. The soil conservation district representative could provide program material for state and national awards programs.

5. The home demonstration club representative could contact and assist other clubs with their conservation activities and programs.

Presenting Committee Recommendations

Now that the subcommittee has determined the soil and water conservation problems and has taken an inventory of the resources available to solve these problems and has developed a plan of attack, it is time to make recommendations to the county program building committee. These recommendations can be made in many ways. As a committee, the members can decide how to best convey its wishes to the program building committee. The following chart is suggested:

Our problems	Possible solutions	Action this year	Time of action	Responsible committee member	Resources to do the job

Have You Met



. YOUR COUNTY EXTENSION AGENTS? If not, drop by to see them soon. They represent both the United States Department of Agriculture and The Texas A. & M. College System in your county and they can furnish the latest information on farming, ranching and homemaking.

Most county extension agents have their offices in the county courthouse or agriculture building. Get to know them and take advantage of their services.

This publication is one of many prepared by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service to present up-to-date, authoritative information, based on results of research. Extension publications are available from your local agents or from the Agricultural Information Office, College Station, Texas.