

§ 6962. Natural Resources Conservation Service**(a) Establishment**

The Secretary is authorized to establish and maintain within the Department a Natural Resources Conservation Service.

(b) Functions

If the Secretary establishes the Natural Resources Conservation Service under subsection (a) of this section, the Secretary is authorized to assign to the Service jurisdiction over the following:

- (1) The Water Bank Act (16 U.S.C. 1301 et seq.).
- (2) The forest land enhancement program under section 2103 of title 16.
- (3) Title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3801 et seq.), except subchapter B of chapter 1 of subtitle D of such title [16 U.S.C. 3831 et seq.].
- (4) Salinity control measures under section 1592(c) of title 43.
- (5) The Farms for the Future Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 4201 note).
- (6) Such other functions as the Secretary considers appropriate, except functions under subchapter B of chapter 1 of subtitle D of title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 [16 U.S.C. 3831 et seq.].

(c) Special concurrence requirements for certain functions

In carrying out the programs specified in paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of subsection (b) of this section and the program under subchapter C of chapter 1 of subtitle D of title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3837–3837f), the Secretary shall—

- (1) acting on the recommendations of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, with the concurrence of the Consolidated Farm Service Agency, issue regulations to carry out such programs;
- (2) ensure that the Natural Resources Conservation Service, in establishing policies, priorities, and guidelines for each such program, does so with the concurrence of the Consolidated Farm Service Agency at national, State, and local levels;
- (3) ensure that, in reaching such concurrence at the local level, the Natural Resources Conservation Service works in cooperation with Soil and Water Conservation Districts or similar organizations established under State law;
- (4) ensure that officials of county and area committees established under section 590h(b)(5) of title 16 meet annually with officials of such Districts or similar organizations to consider local conservation priorities and guidelines; and
- (5) take steps to ensure that the concurrence process does not interfere with the effective delivery of such programs.

(d) Use of Federal and non-Federal employees**(1) Use authorized**

In the implementation of functions assigned to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Secretary may use interchangeably in local offices of the Service both Federal employees of the Department and non-Federal

employees of county and area committees established under section 590h(b)(5) of title 16.

(2) Exception

Notwithstanding paragraph (1), no personnel action (as defined in section 2302(a)(2)(A) of title 5) may be taken with respect to a Federal employee unless such action is taken by another Federal employee.

(e) Savings provision

For purposes of subsections (c) and (d) of this section:

(1) A reference to the “Natural Resources Conservation Service” includes any other office, agency, or administrative unit of the Department assigned the functions authorized for the Natural Resources Conservation Service under this section.

(2) A reference to the “Consolidated Farm Service Agency” includes any other office, agency, or administrative unit of the Department assigned the functions authorized for the Consolidated Farm Service Agency under section 6932 of this title.

(Pub. L. 103–354, title II, §246, Oct. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 3223; Pub. L. 104–127, title III, §336(a)(2)(D), (b)(2)(B), (c)(3), (d)(2), Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 1005, 1006; Pub. L. 107–171, title VIII, §8002(c), May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 473.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Water Bank Act, referred to in subsec. (b)(1), is Pub. L. 91–559, Dec. 19, 1970, 84 Stat. 1468, as amended, which is classified generally to chapter 29 (§1301 et seq.) of Title 16, Conservation. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 1301 of Title 16 and Tables.

The Food Security Act of 1985, referred to in subsecs. (b)(3), (6) and (c), is Pub. L. 99–198, Dec. 23, 1985, 99 Stat. 1354, as amended. Title XII of the Act, popularly known as the “Sodbuster Law”, is classified principally to chapter 58 (§3801 et seq.) of Title 16. Subchapters B and C of chapter 1 of subtitle D of title XII of the Act are classified generally to subparts B (§3831 et seq.) and C (§3837 et seq.), respectively, of part I of subchapter IV of chapter 58 of Title 16. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title of 1985 Amendment note set out under section 1281 of this title and Tables.

The Farms for the Future Act of 1990, referred to in subsec. (b)(5), is Pub. L. 101–624, title XIV, ch. 2, §§1465–1470B, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3616–3619, as amended, which is set out as a note under section 4201 of this title.

CODIFICATION

Section is comprised of section 246 of Pub. L. 103–354. Subsec. (f) of section 246 of Pub. L. 103–354 amended sections 2001, 2002, 2005, and 3862 of Title 16, Conservation, and repealed section 590e of Title 16.

AMENDMENTS

2002—Subsec. (b)(2). Pub. L. 107–171 substituted “forest land enhancement program” for “forestry incentive program”.

1996—Subsec. (b)(1). Pub. L. 104–127, §336(d)(2)(A), redesignated par. (3) as (1) and struck out former par. (1) which read as follows: “The rural environmental conservation program under title X of the Agricultural Act of 1970 (16 U.S.C. 1501 et seq.).”

Subsec. (b)(2). Pub. L. 104–127, §336(b)(2)(B), (d)(2)(A)(ii), redesignated par. (4) as (2) and struck out former par. (2) which read as follows: “The Great Plains Conservation Program under section 16(b) of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act (16 U.S.C. 590p(b)).”

Subsec. (b)(3). Pub. L. 104-127, § 336(d)(2)(A)(ii), redesignated par. (5) as (3). Former par. (3) redesignated (1).

Subsec. (b)(4). Pub. L. 104-127, § 336(c)(3), (d)(2)(A)(ii), redesignated par. (6) as (4) and substituted “measures” for “program”. Former par. (4) redesignated (2).

Subsec. (b)(5). Pub. L. 104-127, § 336(d)(2)(A)(ii), redesignated par. (7) as (5). Former par. (5) redesignated (3).

Subsec. (b)(6). Pub. L. 104-127, § 336(a)(2)(D), (d)(2)(A)(ii), redesignated par. (8) as (6) and struck out before period at end “and the agricultural conservation program under the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act (16 U.S.C. 590g et seq.)”. Former par. (6) redesignated (4).

Subsec. (b)(7), (8). Pub. L. 104-127, § 336(d)(2)(A)(ii), redesignated pars. (7) and (8) as (5) and (6), respectively.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 104-127, § 336(d)(2)(B), in introductory provisions, substituted “(1), (2), and (4)” for “(2), (3), (4), and (6)”.

§ 6962a. Cooperative agreements

Notwithstanding any other provision of law (including provisions of law requiring competition), the Secretary of Agriculture may on and after October 28, 2000, enter into cooperative agreements (which may provide for the acquisition of goods or services, including personal services) with a State, political subdivision, or agency thereof, a public or private agency, organization, or any other person, if the Secretary determines that the objectives of the agreement will: (1) serve a mutual interest of the parties to the agreement in carrying out the programs administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service; and (2) all parties will contribute resources to the accomplishment of these objectives: *Provided*, That Commodity Credit Corporation funds obligated for such purposes shall not exceed the level obligated by the Commodity Credit Corporation for such purposes in fiscal year 1998.

(Pub. L. 106-387, § 1(a) [title VII, § 714], Oct. 28, 2000, 114 Stat. 1549, 1549A-30.)

CODIFICATION

Section was enacted as part of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001, and not as part of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, which in part comprises this chapter.

§ 6963. Reorganization of Forest Service

(a) Required elements of reorganization proposals

Reorganization proposals that are developed by the Secretary to carry out the designation by the President of the Forest Service as a Re-invention Lab pursuant to the National Performance Review, dated September 1993, shall include proposals for—

(1) reorganizing the Service in a manner that is consistent with the principles of interdisciplinary planning;

(2) redefining and consolidating the mission and roles of, and research conducted by, employees of the Service in connection with the National Forest System and State and private forestry to facilitate interdisciplinary planning and to eliminate functionalism;

(3) reforming the budget structure of the Service to support interdisciplinary planning, including reducing the number of budget line items;

(4) defining new measures of accountability so that Congress may meet the constitutional obligation of Congress to oversee the Service;

(5) achieving structural and organizational consolidations;

(6) to the extent practicable, sharing office space, equipment, vehicles, and electronic systems with other administrative units of the Department and other Federal field offices, including proposals for using an on-line system by all administrative units of the Department to maximize administrative efficiency; and

(7) reorganizing the Service in a manner that will result in a larger percentage of employees of the Service being retained at organizational levels below regional offices, research stations, and the area office of the Service.

(b) Report

Not later than March 31, 1995, the Secretary shall submit a report to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate that describes actions taken to carry out subsection (a) of this section, identifies any disparities in regional funding patterns, and contains the rationale behind the disparities.

(Pub. L. 103-354, title II, § 247, Oct. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 3225.)

SUBCHAPTER VI—RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS

§ 6971. Under Secretary of Agriculture for Research, Education, and Economics

(a) Authorization

The Secretary is authorized to establish in the Department the position of Under Secretary of Agriculture for Research, Education, and Economics (referred to in this section as the “Under Secretary”).

(b) Confirmation required

The Under Secretary shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, from among distinguished scientists with specialized training or significant experience in agricultural research, education, and economics.

(c) Chief Scientist

The Under Secretary shall—

(1) hold the title of Chief Scientist of the Department; and

(2) be responsible for the coordination of the research, education, and extension activities of the Department.

(d) Functions of Under Secretary

(1) Principal function

The Secretary shall delegate to the Under Secretary those functions and duties under the jurisdiction of the Department that relate to research, education, and economics.

(2) Specific functions and duties

The Under Secretary shall—

(A) identify, address, and prioritize current and emerging agricultural research,