

The Earth Needs You— Join Our Team

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Imagine how you would feel if you knew you were doing your part to help take care of the Earth. Now, imagine how you would feel if you could do something to create a healthier environment for you and for future generations.

These emotions are not just dreams—they are a reality for more than 12,000 people nationwide. They are the people who, when combined together, form the

USDA Soil Conservation Service (SCS) Earth Team. They are a group of concerned men and women who volunteer to help SCS provide leadership in the wise use of our Nation's soil, water, and related resources.

The Earth Team Program began in 1982 as a provision of the 1981 Farm Bill. The program serves two purposes: It helps both SCS and the local soil and water con-



SCS Earth Team volunteer George E. Lechliden (right) explains the stages of corn growth to Melissa Howell (center) and Jeffery Brown (left) during a recent farm trip in rural Maryland.

Tim McCabe/USDA 90BW1619-36

ervation districts practice more conservation on the land, and it helps keep down Federal costs.

What Can Earth Team Volunteers Do?

Earth Team volunteers help SCS employees with conservation work—such as helping farmers, ranchers, and other landowners reduce wind and water erosion, conserve water, enhance wildlife habitat, reduce upstream flooding, and keep streams clear. They achieve this by doing everything from surveying and planting to typing and filing.

An Earth Team volunteer can assist SCS personnel with information and education programs by going to schools and explaining the importance of conservation. The volunteers may help teachers plan outdoor classrooms where students can learn about natural resources. This is especially helpful to inner-city schools where children might not otherwise have the opportunity to learn firsthand about the environment (see Chapter 38).

Essentially, Earth Team volunteers can do any job that paid employees do—the only requirement is that they be at least 16 years old. Here are some of the jobs volunteers do:

- Assist with a wetland inventory
- Prepare displays and exhibits
- Write press releases, newsletters, and publications

- Teach environmental education
- Enter computer data
- Manage audiovisual productions
- Assist with computer programming
- Maintain files
- Provide clerical assistance
- Assist with volunteer coordination
- Assist with information and education programs
- Conduct surveys

What Are the Benefits for Earth Team Volunteers?

By becoming an Earth Team volunteer, you not only get the satisfaction of doing some of the most important work in the country, you may also:

- Gain professional work experience
- Discover a lifetime career
- Earn academic credit
- Meet new people
- Receive recognition
- Have a chance for personal growth
- See firsthand the problems caused by the careless use of our natural resources
- Gain the satisfaction of knowing you have had a part in preserving the environment.

You will also be protected under the Worker's Compensation Program.

Earth Team volunteers come from many different backgrounds with varying degrees of education, but they share one important trait: They all care about what happens to our natural resources—our soil and water—now and for the future.

If you would like to do your part and make a difference, call 1-800-THE-SOIL. The Earth Needs You—Join Our Team! ■



Volunteers Steve Hoffman (left) and Helena Cuellar (right) help the USDA Soil Conservation Service district office in applying conservation practices on a Virginia farm.

Tim McCabe/USDA 91BW0706

Extension Volunteers Can Help

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by Rita Rogers, Public Affairs Specialist, Extension Service, USDA, Washington, DC

You'll find them in nearly every county and State—men and women, youth, seniors, and those in between—giving freely of their time, energy, and talents, devoting countless hours to helping others in their communities. They are Extension volunteers—people motivated not by money, but by true care and concern for their fellow neighbors.

Volunteers have aided the Co-operative Extension System (CES) since its inception. Volunteers helped establish many local CES offices, and they continue to serve on advisory groups and planning committees. Currently, Extension has more than 3 million volunteers working across all program areas and contributing significantly to community leadership,