

# The Soil Conservation Service: Debate and Diplomacy in the Dust Bowl

Nicole Xiang

Senior Division

Historical Paper

Paper: 2,500 Words

Process Paper: 500 Words

## Process Paper

During the Dust Bowl, the Great Plains fell to furious dust storms, enduring drought, and a farming catastrophe that threatened the region's identity as the nation's grain belt in only a decade, a large part under plunder and neglect for its intricately balanced and developed resource; soil. This year, I wanted to select a topic that featured the history and values of my state. While researching the Dust Bowl, I was shocked by the magnitude of the disaster. I then wondered how a population could recover and become stronger after experiencing a decade of unreal suffering concurrent with the Great Depression. While searching for answers, I learned of the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), a dedicated agency who was essential in ending the Dust Bowl and changed American agriculture forever. Interested in the topic's relationship with conservation and agriculture, an important part of Oklahoma, I was excited to share the story and contributions of the SCS.

To begin, I explored causes and conditions of the Dust Bowl, noting economic, social, and environmental factors. After understanding context, I researched the SCS, building a foundation upon its creation, services, and progression. Throughout this, I utilized a wide range of sources, including websites, letters, books, legislative works, oral histories, and newspapers, making sure to analyze different viewpoints of important groups. One important source was "Letters from the Dust Bowl", a collection which gave me first-hand accounts from Caroline Henderson, a pioneer who experienced federal and conservational influences in the Dust Bowl, resulting in reform to her agricultural community. Oral histories were also critical in describing life in the Dust Bowl and gaining reasoning behind local opposition or support towards political and conservation actions. An interview with specialist Dwain Philips revealed SCS workers'

perspectives in balancing conservation and relational strategies and gave me a deeper look into SCS tasks.

I presented my project as a paper to share my topic in an in-depth and vivid method that was efficient in communicating ideas. After organizing an outline, I began the writing process. Feedback from teachers and judges were invaluable in revising the paper.

This year's theme is intertwined throughout the creation, actions, and impact of the SCS, as the Dust Bowl was ultimately resolved through cooperation of multiple groups, driven by compromises and trust. Hugh Hammond Bennett, "the father of soil conservation," fought to create the SCS, the first federal soil agency in the world. With governmental assistance, the SCS entered debate over what had caused the disaster, and sought to introduce, or in many cases, reintroduce conservation techniques on farms. This would help end the Dust Bowl, reform agricultural practices, and allow federal assistance for farmers to support conservation, including the creation of conservation districts. It took debate and diplomatic strategies of the SCS such as demonstrations, examinations, and AAA (Agricultural Adjustment Administration) contracts to make soil conservation possible on the Great Plains. Their success established a system in which conservation, agriculture, and government are invariably linked to protect the sustainability of our nation's soil.

## Introduction

Black Sunday had arrived. A one-thousand-foot-tall duster rolled across the broken Plains, its downward-boiling clouds meeting rising dust columns in midnight-dark explosions.<sup>1</sup> Hundreds of birds desperately flew ahead the terrifying intensity of advancing dust. Sixty-mph winds silenced everything but the “awfulest noise” of dirt as it enveloped houses and swept out the sun with an impenetrable darkness.<sup>2</sup> “My mother started praying. She thought it was the end of the world,” described Opal Blancett.<sup>3</sup>

Storms like these occurred frequently throughout 1931-1941, in which one hundred million acres of land were rendered as helpless as farmers themselves.<sup>4</sup> Hard-coaxed crops would “blow out of the fields” and wilt after continuous attacks from droughts, dust, and jackrabbits, forcing farmers in 1938 to feed their livestock and families with stored crops from 1931.<sup>5</sup> Machines became dilapidated and indistinguishable under expansive sand dunes. Livestock and people perished, suffocated by dust pneumonia and stranded amidst blinding storms.<sup>6</sup> Unacknowledged, spreading soil erosion wore away land that had been “the center of all thought

---

<sup>1</sup> Hurt, Ray. *The Dust Bowl: An Agricultural and Social History*. Nelson Hall, 1981, 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> Ganzel, Bill. “The Dust Bowl of the 1930s.” *Wessels Living History Farm*, 2003; Wanetta Perkins, Ledru Perkins, Della Poorbaugh, and Mary Spurgeon. Interview by Steven Kite and Jennifer Paustenbaugh. *Oral History Interview With Wanetta Perkins, Ledru Perkins, Della Poorbaugh, and Mary Spurgeon*, Dust Drought and Dreams Gone By: Women in the Dust Bowl, Oklahoma Oral History Research Program, Oklahoma State University. Typescript. 8 Nov. 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Betty, Kirtley, Opal Blancett, Lucile Hart, Pearl Morrison, and Mildred Stringfellow. Interview by Shelly Lemmons and Steven Kite. *Oral History Interview With Betty Kirtley, Opal Blancett, Lucile Hart, Pearl Morrison, and Mildred Stringfellow*, Dust Drought and Dreams Gone By: Women in the Dust Bowl, Oklahoma Oral History Research Program, Oklahoma State University. Typescript. 10 Jan. 2001.

<sup>4</sup> History.com Editors. “Dust Bowl.” *History*, 5 Aug. 2020.

<sup>5</sup> “Writer and Cameraman Brave Dust Storms to Picture Horror of Ravaged Southwest Bowl.” *The Bismarck Tribune*, 18 Mar. 1936. *Library of Congress*; Henderson, Caroline. *Letters from the Dust Bowl*. University of Oklahoma Press, 2001, 137.

<sup>6</sup> Wanetta Perkins, Ledru Perkins, Della Poorbaugh, and Mary Spurgeon. Interview by Steven Kite and Jennifer Paustenbaugh. *Oral History Interview With Wanetta Perkins, Ledru Perkins, Della Poorbaugh, and Mary Spurgeon*, Dust Drought and Dreams Gone By: Women in the Dust Bowl, Oklahoma Oral History Research Program, Oklahoma State University. Typescript. 8 Nov. 2001.

and hope and effort” of its residents.<sup>7</sup> “I’m just here holding down my hands and waiting. If we get it down here like we did the last two years, it’s all off,” spoke a weatherbeaten farmer.<sup>8</sup>

## **Thesis**

Struggles of the Dust Bowl, derived from a combination of climate and detrimental farming practices, were heavily influenced and mitigated by relationships of farmers, government officials, and conservationists. Conservationists such as Hugh Hammond Bennett debated against damaging farm practices and prompted Congress to create the Soil Conservation Service (SCS). The SCS, through diplomacy with farmers, encouraged, established, and enforced soil conservation. This helped the Plains recover from the Dust Bowl and led to victories in U.S. agriculture by creating conservation districts, agricultural assistance policies, and conservation techniques to protect the fertility and potential of our most basic asset.

## **The Dust Bowl**

Unnoticed damage to the Southern Plains began long before the Dust Bowl. Government land policies, such as the Homestead Act of 1862, promised “acres enough of better soil than anywhere else... to give homes to one million and a half people.”<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, a string of wet years occurred in the semi-arid Plains, persuading farmers, politicians, and even scientists to believe “rain follows the plow;” that plowing new farmland would permanently change and improve the climate.<sup>10</sup> A massive migration ensued, transforming a sparsely populated West to the home of eleven-thousand farms by 1910.<sup>11</sup> The movement largely relied on newly laid railroad tracks, a key component in developing the western frontier. Railroad companies, enticed

---

<sup>7</sup> Henderson, 140.

<sup>8</sup> “Writer and Cameraman Brave Dust Storms to Picture Horror of Ravaged Southwest Bowl.” *The BisTribune*, 18 Mar. 1936. *Library of Congress*.

<sup>9</sup> “The Homestead Act.” *Nebraska advertiser*, 19 June. 1862. *Library of Congress*.

<sup>10</sup> *The Dust Bowl*. Directed by Ken Burns, Florentine Films; WETA-TV, 2012; History.com Editors. “Dust Bowl.” *History*, 5 Aug. 2020.

<sup>11</sup> Ray, 21.

by the prospect of customers, joined the government in advocating for settlement, often utilizing deceptively ideal descriptions of the Plains.<sup>12</sup>

With the onset of WWI in 1914, demand for wheat in Europe caused prices per bushel to double and was reinforced by the government's urging "WHEAT WILL WIN THE WAR."<sup>13</sup> Families who barely supported themselves were now capable of earning a fortune. Encouraged to increase yields, and buoyed by patriotic spirits, farmers began vigorously plowing eleven-million acres of unturned grasslands. This was made possible by replacing horse-drawn plows and the labor of drafted sons with tractors "going all night long with headlights burning."<sup>14</sup> Afterwards, crops could be rapidly transported by railroad in a cheap and efficient manner. Prosperity of the Great Plains allowed for the industrialization of its agriculture. Equipment such as the lister, which created furrows to check soil blowing, were abandoned for the one-way disc plow, a cheaper plow that cut through thick sod more efficiently. After WWI, prices fell, but remained higher than pre-war times.<sup>15</sup> Farmers continued to expand their land under promising circumstances and the need to pay back machinery loans.<sup>16</sup>

In 1929, the Great Depression hit the nation. The Great Plains didn't immediately feel its effects, but after two years, wheat prices began to drop. "If your crop prices are low, you produce more to make up... More production is always the answer to the problem." The government, sensing disaster, begged farmers to reduce their acreage. It was too late; farmers were rewarded with one of their greatest harvests in 1930.<sup>17</sup> However, overproduction dropped prices from

---

<sup>12</sup> Egan, Timothy. *The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006, 8, 15.

<sup>13</sup> "Wheat Will Win the War." *The Hartford Republican*, 19 July. 1918. *Library of Congress*.

<sup>14</sup> *The Dust Bowl*. Directed by Ken Burns, Florentine Films; WETA-TV, 2012; "The Dust Bowl." *National Drought Mitigation Center: University of Nebraska*.

<sup>15</sup> *The Dust Bowl*. Directed by Ken Burns, Florentine Films; WETA-TV, 2012.

<sup>16</sup> "The Great Depression, the Dust Bowl, and New Deal in Oklahoma." *Oklahoma Historical Society*.

<sup>17</sup> *The Dust Bowl*. Directed by Ken Burns, Florentine Films.

ninety-nine cents per bushel to thirty-four, half the cost of farming the wheat.<sup>18</sup> With the economy caught in a choke-hold, each harvest descended farmers deeper into poverty.<sup>19</sup> Just as the Great Plains fell into depression, the region's most severe, prolonged droughts began. Repeated use of the one-way plow had pulverized the soil, making it "as fine as face powder."<sup>20</sup> When crops died from relentless droughts, there were no roots to keep such soil from blowing.<sup>21</sup> The Bismarck Tribune lamented, "No longer can you see the miles of waving golden wheat there used to be."<sup>22</sup>

Throughout this, a shallow understanding of the land, soil conservation, and its importance was prominent. Environmental findings were not published or made available to the general population.<sup>23</sup> This caused farmers to implement strategies such as raising "one crop after another," not fully knowing its effect on exhausting the soil, and many who did use soil conservation practices abandoned them in the Great Plow-Up.<sup>24</sup> As foreseen by conservationists, ranchers, cowboys, and Indians, the land was never equipped for plowing, but rather a haven for cattle and buffalos' controlled grazing.<sup>25</sup> In the rush to expand, farmers had also pushed into submarginal lands, which when farmed, contributed greatly to nutrient-leaching and soil erosion, and when inevitably abandoned, were ignored and spread erosion to farms nearby.<sup>26</sup> "Suitcase farmers", businessmen who did not live on the farm but collected its gain, left massive lands in a similar fashion after their gamble failed.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Ray, 29.

<sup>19</sup> Egan, 105.

<sup>20</sup> "Writer and Cameraman Brave Dust Storms to Picture Horror of Ravaged Southwest Bowl." *The Bismarck Tribune*, 18 Mar. 1936. *Library of Congress*.

<sup>21</sup> Ray, 30.

<sup>22</sup> "Writer and Cameraman Brave Dust Storms to Picture Horror of Ravaged Southwest Bowl." *The Bismarck Tribune*, 18 Mar. 1936. *Library of Congress*.

<sup>23</sup> "The Dust Bowl." *National Drought Mitigation Center: University of Nebraska*.

<sup>24</sup> "Raise One Crop After Another." *The Beaver Herald*, 4 Aug. 1921. *Library of Congress*; "The Dust Bowl." *National Drought Mitigation Center: University of Nebraska*.

<sup>25</sup> Egan, 253.

<sup>26</sup> "Plains Governors Tackle Drought." *Evening Star*, 25 Apr. 1954. *Library of Congress*.

<sup>27</sup> Egan, 80.

## Creating the SCS

Hugh Hammond Bennett, a surveyor of the Bureau of Soils, dedicated himself to the cause as early as 1905.<sup>28</sup> “Productive soil is life,” he spoke, “and productive soil is vanishing with each passing year.”<sup>29</sup> Debating and educating the public on the severity of wasting this life-giving resource, Bennett wrote an array of journals, articles, and speeches, but many were ignored or rebuffed.<sup>30</sup> USDA Bulletin 55 proclaimed soil to be “the one resource that cannot be exhausted; that cannot be used up,” concluding that soil damage was a small-range, simple, and circumstantial issue, and that eroded soils formed ‘wonderfully productive’ riverbeds.<sup>31</sup> Similar ideas were popular throughout Great Plains farmers as well. “Let the wind blow the top soil away. We can plow up more... You just can’t seriously hurt this land out in the Panhandle,” remarked one Oklahoman farmer.<sup>32</sup> However, Bennett’s position was strengthened when his bulletin, *Soil Erosion: A National Menace*, coincided with the Dust Bowl and gained national attention for the unrestrained, “evil effects of the scourge of the land.”<sup>33</sup>

In 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt was inaugurated. A passionate environmentalist, FDR supported reform, relief, and recovery of the Great Plains through conservation.<sup>34</sup> On August 25, 1933, an emergency control program, the Soil Erosion Service (SES), was created by Congress, which Bennett was asked to lead. He selected a team of conservationists, engineers, biologists, economists, and technicians, bringing a diversity of ideas to conservation.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> “Hugh Hammond Bennett.” *Youtube*, uploaded by TheUSDANRCS, 1 Nov. 2017.

<sup>29</sup> “HHB Quotes: Quotes from Hugh Hammond Bennett.” *Natural Resources Conservation Service*.

<sup>30</sup> Helms, Douglas. “Hugh Hammond Bennett and the Creation of the Soil Erosion Service.” *Natural Resources Conservation Service*.

<sup>31</sup> Whitney, Milton. *Soils of the United States of America*. Washington DC: USDA; 1909.

<sup>32</sup> Ray, 68.

<sup>33</sup> Bennett, Hugh and William Chapline. *Soil Erosion: A National Menace*. Washington DC: USDA; 1928, 2.

<sup>34</sup> “The Great Depression, the Dust Bowl, and New Deal in Oklahoma.” *Oklahoma Historical Society*.

<sup>35</sup> “Hugh Hammond Bennett.” *Youtube*, uploaded by TheUSDANRCS, 1 Nov. 2017.



Although the SES created demonstrations and research centers from 1933-1935, the program only served “an infinitesimal part of what should be done.”<sup>36</sup> Expiration of the funds and contract from Congress drew near, but storms, drought, and poverty still ravaged the Plains. In May, 1935, Bennett proposed and testified to create a permanent soil conservation agency. Anticipating his greatest demonstration, Bennett dragged out Senate hearings. Finally, the sky darkened as a two-mile high monster tore through D.C. Apprehensive officials from eastern cities looked on, and many who considered the problems of erosion trivial were now forced to admit the severity of the Dust Bowl. The bill passed unanimously.<sup>37</sup> On April 27, 1935, the Soil Conservation Act was approved, establishing the SCS and declaring “policy of Congress to provide permanently for the control and prevention of soil erosion and thereby to preserve natural resources.”<sup>38</sup> With renewed hope, the previously dormant government began to focus on the plight of farmers in the Dust Bowl.

### **Wiping the Dust**

The SCS used federal powers to enable farmers to develop new agricultural methods and heal “hopelessly ruined” lands.<sup>39</sup> “We did not wait ourselves for the government or any one to tell us to go to listing our own fields,” explained Caroline Henderson, but manpower, machinery, and financial restraints made it difficult for farmers to use all necessary aspects of soil

---

<sup>36</sup> Helms, Douglas. “Hugh Hammond Bennett and the Creation of the Soil Erosion Service.” *Natural Resources Conservation Service*, 2018; “HHB Quotes: Quotes from Hugh Hammond Bennett.” *Natural Resources Conservation Service*.

<sup>37</sup> “Hugh Hammond Bennett.” *Youtube*, uploaded by TheUSDANRCS, 1 Nov. 2017.

<sup>38</sup> United States, Congress. Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act. *U.S. Farm Bills: The National Agricultural Law Center*.

<sup>39</sup> Henderson, 141.

conservation.<sup>40</sup> “To be genuinely effective,” she noted, “such a plan must be carried out on a large scale and not left to piecemeal efforts.”<sup>41</sup>

The greatest barrier the SCS faced when collaborating with farmers was doubt and disapproval towards government interference. Although families needed to accept federal assistance in the Great Depression, many Dust Bowl farmers valued agriculture as a self-reliant business.<sup>42</sup> A belief that government should serve a passive role in agriculture was rooted, and farmers feared federal programs “encouraged people to continue in businesses that were not economically feasible,” a practice contrary to capitalistic energy.<sup>43</sup> In addition, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA) hurt relationships when officials butchered livestock to combat overproduction. “If somebody owns something, he can do what he wants to with it, back then... It was his, and he could do what he wanted to,” recalled Marietta Foreman.<sup>44</sup> The SCS respected this mindset. The agency was determined to develop solutions that “fit not only the needs and adaptabilities of the land but the needs and adaptabilities of the farmer as well.”<sup>45</sup> Henderson spoke of weariness, claiming “We have been through too much to be alarmed or charmed by mere words,” but the SCS sought genuine action.<sup>46</sup> As conservationists walked beside farmers, examining eroded lands, they first listened to experience, goals, and concerns

---

<sup>40</sup> Henderson, 145; Allen, Fern, Marietta Foreman, Bonnie McCune, and Ruth Hollowell. Interview by Shelly Lemmons and Steven Kite. *Oral History Interview With Fern Allen, Marietta Foreman, Bonnie McCune, and Ruth Hollowell*, Dust Drought and Dreams Gone By: Women in the Dust Bowl, Oklahoma Oral History Research Program, Oklahoma State University. Typescript. 10 Jan. 2001.

<sup>41</sup> Henderson, 145.

<sup>42</sup> “The Dust Bowl.” *National Drought Mitigation Center: University of Nebraska*.

<sup>43</sup> Garrett, Betty, Norma Gene Young, Elizabeth Hinderliter, Margie Moore. Interview by Shelly Lemmons and Steven Kite. *Oral History Interview With Betty Garrett, Norma Gene Young, Elizabeth Hinderliter, and Margie Moore*, Dust Drought and Dreams Gone By: Women in the Dust Bowl, Oklahoma Oral History Research Program, Oklahoma State University. Typescript. 11 Jan. 2001.

<sup>44</sup> Allen, Fern, Marietta Foreman, Bonnie McCune, and Ruth Hollowell. Interview by Shelly Lemmons and Steven Kite. *Oral History Interview With Fern Allen, Marietta Foreman, Bonnie McCune, and Ruth Hollowell*, Dust Drought and Dreams Gone By: Women in the Dust Bowl, Oklahoma Oral History Research Program, Oklahoma State University. Typescript. 10 Jan. 2001.

<sup>45</sup> “HHB Quotes: Quotes from Hugh Hammond Bennett.” *Natural Resources Conservation Service*.

<sup>46</sup> Henderson, 119.

that farmers held. “It’s their land, their money,” explained specialist Dwain Philips. Afterwards, SCS servicemen and farmers would tailor a plan to address individual needs of each farm.<sup>47</sup>

Although the community preferred to meet their difficulties through neighbors and individual resourcefulness, people appreciated the “moral support in feeling that agencies more comprehensive and powerful than any one person can control are supplementing our efforts.”<sup>48</sup>

The SCS provided financial support, technical education, and resources to farmers through private land inspections, but demonstrations as well.<sup>49</sup> Demonstrations were held to over three thousand farmers from thirty counties.<sup>50</sup> “Hundreds of men and machines began a one-day task that resulted in a new land and a new life for the Thrasher family,” noted the *Evening Star* on one project. These demonstrations created an agreement in which the farmer would receive direct aid in return for “co-operating by following through as a conservation farmer.” In addition, any farmers viewing could enter a five-year contract to prevent soil erosion on their farms.<sup>51</sup>

These services drastically reversed farming practices, restoring the Southern Plains and reducing eroded lands by seventy-five percent.<sup>52</sup> Great Plains farmers adapted to conservation techniques including contour plowing, strip cropping, crop rotation, crop diversification, terracing, leaving stubble after harvesting, creating furrows, and using remodeled machines that left minimal impact. These methods recollected moisture, returned nutrients, and checked erosion.<sup>53</sup> “Of course, if it doesn’t rain for four years, it’ll go blowing again,” admitted Eck Brown, a Texas rancher. “But the soil is better tied down now.”<sup>54</sup> In 1938, conditions began to

---

<sup>47</sup> Philips, Dwain. Interview by Tanya Finchum and Larry Caldwell. *Oral History Interview with Dwain Philips*, Oklahoma’s Conservation Heritage, Oklahoma Oral History Research Program, Oklahoma State University. Typescript. 27 Sep. 2022.

<sup>48</sup> Henderson, 146.

<sup>49</sup> “Hugh Hammond Bennett.” *Youtube*, uploaded by TheUSDANRCS, 1 Nov. 2017.

<sup>50</sup> Ray, 69.

<sup>51</sup> “The Thrasher Farm- A Year Later.” *Evening Star*, 14 Aug. 1949. *Library of Congress*.

<sup>52</sup> Ray, 84.

<sup>53</sup> Bennett, Hugh and William Chapline. *Soil Erosion: A National Menace*. Washington DC: USDA;1928.

<sup>54</sup> “Some Scoff at Idea of New Drouth.” *The Midland Journal*, 22 Mar. 1946. *Library of Congress*.

abate, and by 1941, rainfall opened upon the Great Plains, coinciding with WW2.<sup>55</sup> National and Dust Bowl economies rose to recover, but most officials and farmers refused to ‘bust sod’ as they did in WW1.<sup>56</sup>

The SCS’s collaboration with the AAA compensated farmers who took submarginal lands out of production. Previously, the AAA had paid farmers to not grow certain crops, which had minimal impact.<sup>57</sup> Few farmers gave approval, arguing “Such measures are contrary to the whole theory and habitual practice of agriculture.”<sup>58</sup> Thus, the SCS and AAA proposed a strategy, that farmers would receive payment for practicing soil conservation and planting grass in barren lands, restoring them to original plains.<sup>59</sup> These checks provided much-needed income to Dust Bowl families.<sup>60</sup> Farmers responded well, and fifty-three million acres of cropland were taken out of production, increasing the price of agricultural goods and recovering the economy. This diplomatic skill of paying farmers to reduce production was used throughout the 1970’s and 1980’s, keeping commodities profitable.<sup>61</sup>

These collective actions led to creation of Soil Conservation Districts. In 1937, the Standard State Soil Conservation Districts Law was approved to “provide for the organization of ‘soil conservation districts’ as governmental subdivisions of the State.”<sup>62</sup> SCS leaders agreed more local leadership was needed, “experts who knew their neighbors and the history of the soil in their backyards.”<sup>63</sup> After a district’s organization, farmers would vote on a community District

---

<sup>55</sup> “The Dust Bowl.” *National Drought Mitigation Center: University of Nebraska*.

<sup>56</sup> “Many Sections Fearful of New Dust Bowl in ‘46.” *The Midland Journal*, 22 Mar. 1946. *Library of Congress*.

<sup>57</sup> Gates, Staci. “Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933.” *Center for the Study of Federalism*, 2006.

<sup>58</sup> Henderson, 143.

<sup>59</sup> Gates, Staci. “Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933.” *Center for the Study of Federalism*, 2006.

<sup>60</sup> Allen, Fern, Marietta Foreman, Bonnie McCune, and Ruth Hollowell. Interview by Shelly Lemmons and Steven Kite. *Oral History Interview With Fern Allen, Marietta Foreman, Bonnie McCune, and Ruth Hollowell*, Dust Drought and Dreams Gone By: Women in the Dust Bowl, Oklahoma Oral History Research Program, Oklahoma State University. Typescript. 10 Jan. 2001.

<sup>61</sup> Gates, Staci. “Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933.” *Center for the Study of Federalism*, 2006.

<sup>62</sup> Roosevelt, Franklin. *Letter to All State Governors On A Uniform Soil Conservation Law*. 26 Feb. 1937. The American Presidency Project, California, Santa Barba. Typescript. *The American Presidency Project*.

<sup>63</sup> “Hugh Hammond Bennett.” *Youtube*, uploaded by TheUSDANRCS, 1 Nov. 2017.

Supervisor, who oversaw the processes of carrying out conservation, extending financial aid, signing contracts, and forming land-use ordinances.<sup>64</sup> As a locally-led legislation, farmers felt greater involvement, driving conservation and bringing agricultural perspectives and voices into government. “It becomes their program and their planning, rather than the Government’s,” proclaimed the *Evening Star*. The Great Plains became “virtually blanketed” with districts.<sup>65</sup> In 1939, thirty-seven existed over nineteen million acres.<sup>66</sup> “Without him, at that particular time, we would have had a different United States,” reflected Historian Darlington Mundende on Bennett and SCS workers.<sup>67</sup>

## Conclusion

Soil conservation techniques engineered to fight the Dust Bowl are principal methods by which farmers cultivate their land.<sup>68</sup> In 1994, the SCS was renamed as the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), reflecting broader tasks and awareness in conservation. Today, the NRCS relies on principles behind the SCS in effective communication and diplomacy to educate and provide for a sustainable future.<sup>69</sup>

Great Plains farming communities continue to work with perseverance, adaptability, and “a good-natured humor that seems to defy all nature,” the same qualities exhibited in the Dust Bowl.<sup>70</sup> They produce twenty-five percent of American agricultural goods and serve at front lines of conservation.<sup>71</sup> However, beneath prosperous farmlands lay once-barren fields of the Dust Bowl, when winds “swapped the farmers’ real estate like careless horse traders”, prompting

---

<sup>64</sup> Ray, 74.

<sup>65</sup> “Dust Bowl Now in Shape For Emergency Planting.” *Evening Star*, 18 Feb. 1951. *Library of Congress*.

<sup>66</sup> Ray, 74.

<sup>67</sup> “Hugh Hammond Bennett.” *Youtube*, uploaded by TheUSDANRCS, 1 Nov. 2017.

<sup>68</sup> “How Do Today’s Farmers Care For the Soil?” *Ask Farm Aid*, 22 Nov. 2012.

<sup>69</sup> “Honoring 86 Years of NRCS.” *Natural Resources Conservation Service*.

<sup>70</sup> “Writer and Cameraman Brave Dust Storms to Picture Horror of Ravaged Southwest Bowl.” *The Bismarck Tribune*, 18 Mar. 1936. *Library of Congress*; Hudson, John. “Agriculture.” *Encyclopedia of the Great Plains*.

<sup>71</sup> Hudson, John. “Agriculture.” *Encyclopedia of the Great Plains*.

two-and-a-half million people to desert their lands.<sup>72</sup> Fortunately, those who stayed carried a powerful determination to reclaim the “American Sahara.”<sup>73</sup> The SCS, along with farmers, formulated and executed a plan against soil erosion one farm at a time. Through debate and diplomacy with government and farmers, the SCS was able to deliver demonstrations, surveys, and compromises, representing an understanding side of both groups. With conservation serving as a central goal for all groups, trust and understanding grew, bringing meaningful aid to conservation and agriculture. This created conservation districts, a system representing diplomacy at its highest state.

Controversies regarding conservation play an important role in shaping agricultural and political landscapes. Many environmental problems have yet to be responded to, in the dire need to guard our natural resources in a modernizing world. Increasing industry farms, a growing population, decreasing profits, and shrinking land are conflicts faced between farmers and government today. The SCS set out an example of how to achieve balance. Their success has forever reformed American agriculture by bringing forth a model of long-term, sustainable production driven by a co-existence between agriculture, conservation, and government to protect our soil.

---

<sup>72</sup> “Some Scoff at Idea of New Drouth.” *The Midland Journal*, 22 Mar. 1946. *Library of Congress*; History.com Editors. “Dust Bowl.” *History*, 5 Aug. 2020.

<sup>73</sup> “Dust Bowl Now in Shape For Emergency Planting.” *Evening Star*, 18 Feb. 1951. *Library of Congress*.

## Appendix A



Dust Storm.

History.com Editors. "Dust Bowl." *History*, 5 Aug. 2020,  
<https://www.history.com/topics/great-depression/dust-bowl>. Accessed 12 Jan. 2022.

## Appendix B

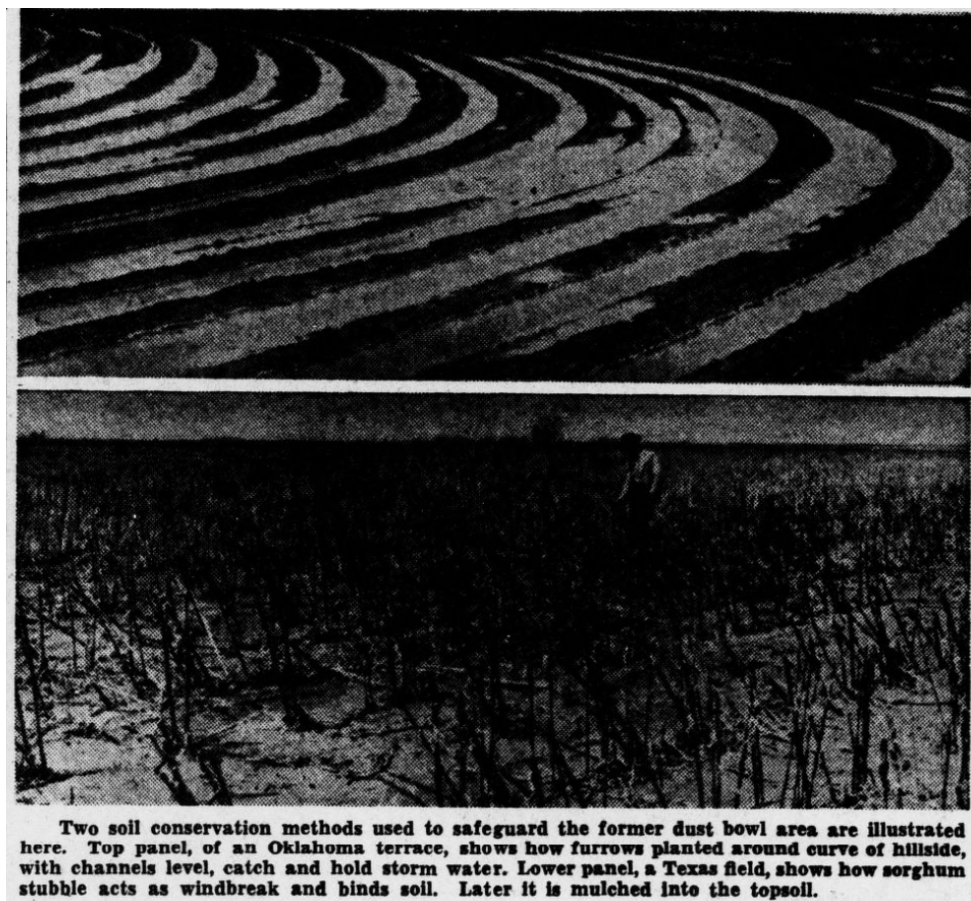


Bennett (left) at meeting for farmers.

“Honoring 86 Years of NRCS.” *Natural Resources Conservation Service*,  
[https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/about/history/?cid=nrcs143\\_021392](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/about/history/?cid=nrcs143_021392).  
Accessed 5 Feb. 2022.



## Appendix C



Conservation techniques.

“Dust Bowl Now in Shape For Emergency Planting.” *Evening Star*, 18 Feb. 1951. *Library of Congress*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1951-02-18/ed-1/seq-47/>.

Accessed 15 Jan. 2022.

## Annotated Bibliography

### Primary Sources

Allen, Fern, Marietta Foreman, Bonnie McCune, and Ruth Hollowell. Interview by Shelly Lemmons and Steven Kite. *Oral History Interview With Fern Allen, Marietta Foreman, Bonnie McCune, and Ruth Hollowell*, Dust Drought and Dreams Gone By: Women in the Dust Bowl, Oklahoma Oral History Research Program, Oklahoma State University. Typescript. 10 Jan. 2001, <https://dc.library.okstate.edu/digital/collection/Dustbowl/id/3193/rec/1>.

This was extremely helpful in giving me a perspective of life in the Dust Bowl, as well as the power and ways people believed government should be limited to controlling agriculture. Through this, I was able to better understand the type of assistance that farmers needed.

Bennett, Hugh and William Chapline. *Soil Erosion: A National Menace*. Washington DC: USDA;1928.

This was a bulletin written by soil scientist Hugh Hammond Bennett and William Chapline of the Forest Service. From this, I learned of the severity of economic and environmental damage caused by soil erosion and Bennett's determination to highlight the issue. In addition, this source addressed solutions to control soil erosion and elaborated on soil conservation techniques.

Betty, Kirtley, Opal Blancett, Lucile Hart, Pearl Morrison, and Mildred Stringfellow. Interview by Shelly Lemmons and Steven Kite. *Oral History Interview With Betty Kirtley, Opal Blancett, Lucile Hart, Pearl Morrison, and Mildred Stringfellow*, Dust Drought and Dreams Gone By: Women in the Dust Bowl, Oklahoma Oral History Research Program, Oklahoma State University. Typescript. 10 Jan. 2001, <https://dc.library.okstate.edu/digital/collection/Dustbowl/id/3107/rec/1>.

This oral interview gave me a look into a generally positive consensus into government actions. From this, I was able to understand how several farmers had a neutral or positive stance on government services coming in to shoot cattle, as a great number of surplus

livestock would have died from lack of feed. I also took a quote from Opal Blancett in describing Black Sunday.

“Dust Bowl Now in Shape For Emergency Planting.” *Evening Star*, 18 Feb. 1951. *Library of Congress*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1951-02-18/ed-1/seq-47/>. Accessed 15 Jan. 2022.

From this newspaper article, I was able to better understand the impact that the SCS made in promoting new agricultural farming methods, as this article gave me information on how farmers and the government reacted in the second World War. This article also featured discussions with Hugh Hammond Bennett. These discussions reflected the triumph conservationists held in the advancement and impact of the SCS and reflected positive attitudes towards soil conservation districts, but also the humble attitudes in delivering the credit to farmers who were able to make the work happen. This gave me insight and consideration toward farmers who picked up soil conservation on their farms as important heroes in the Dust Bowl. The picture from Appendix C comes from this newspaper, featuring agricultural practices of contour plowing and leaving stubble on worked fields.

“Dust Bowl to See Good Times Again Soon, Tree Rings Say.” *Evening Star*, 25 Mar. 1937. *Library of Congress*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1937-03-26/ed-1/seq-14/>. Accessed 5 Feb. 2022.

This newspaper article described to me the incredible hope and confidence that conservationists held in their ability to reverse circumstances for both the land and its inhabitants. It also explained the circumstances and consequences of farmers abandoning damaged lands.

Garrett, Betty, Norma Gene Young, Elizabeth Hinderliter, Margie Moore. Interview by Shelly Lemmons and Steven Kite. *Oral History Interview With Betty Garrett, Norma Gene Young, Elizabeth Hinderliter, and Margie Moore*, Dust Drought and Dreams Gone By: Women in the Dust Bowl, Oklahoma Oral History Research Program, Oklahoma State University. Typescript. 11 Jan. 2001, <https://dc.library.okstate.edu/digital/collection/Dustbowl/id/3137/rec/4>.

In addition to a discussion on life and coping in the Dust Bowl, this interview detailed local attitudes toward government. From it, I learned that one reason farming families disapproved of government aid programs was the fear that people would become overly reliant on such programs, ridding farming of its emphasis on capitalism and

independence. The interview also reflected upon the self-motivation of today's citizens, which made me think deeper into the multi-faced long term impacts that government aid services lead to. In addition, this source revealed to me the surrounding selflessness and compassion of Dust Bowl communities in supporting each other and even risking their lives to help a stranded neighbor.

Henderson, Caroline. *Letters from the Dust Bowl*. University of Oklahoma Press, 2001.

This source was a collection of letters by Caroline Henderson, one of the pioneers in settling the Great Plains, and proved crucial to my research. Henderson's letters detailed the beginnings of her settlement onto the Southern frontier, prosperous days on the farm, the dark days of the Dust Bowl, and her thoughts on conservation and government.

"Many Sections Fearful of New Dust Bowl in '46." *The Midland Journal*, 22 Mar. 1946. *Library of Congress*,  
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn89060136/1946-03-22/ed-1/seq-7/>. Accessed 15 Jan. 2022.

This newspaper described the relief, confidence, and pride citizens felt after the recovery. Although this article also brought up the possibility of another Dust Bowl, it assured that conditions have reached a somewhat consistent normality. From this, I was able to observe the continual apprehensiveness and remembrance of the Dust Bowl and the situations behind it, reinforcing SCS impacts.

Philips, Dwain. Interview by Tanya Finchum and Larry Caldwell. *Oral History Interview with Dwain Philips*, Oklahoma's Conservation Heritage, Oklahoma Oral History Research Program, Oklahoma State University. Typescript. 27 Sep. 2022,  
<https://dc.library.okstate.edu/digital/collection/p17279coll13/id/90/rec/1>. Accessed 5 Feb. 2022.

This was an interview with Dwain Philips, an SCS specialist. From this interview, I learned the details of the tasks that SCS members took on. This interview emphasized the importance of farmer-SCS communication to create understanding and trust. It was also interesting to learn about the evolution of conservation techniques as technology progressed and the integration of minorities into the Soil Conservation Service.

"Plains Governors Tackle Drought." *Evening Star*, 25 Apr. 1954. *Library of Congress*,  
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1954-04-25/ed-1/seq-32/>. Accessed 16 Jan. 2022.

This article brought out many questions and difficulties that had to be addressed by conservationists and the government. Although conservation proved beneficial to the long-term, farmers had to take tremendous sacrifices and faith, as conservation did not seem to benefit their current situation. For example, farmers that survived off their meager crop production could not afford to produce even less. From this, I realized that many conservation issues still surround the same conflict, and viewpoints from all sides must be taken in order to create a long-term solution.

“Raise One Crop After Another.” *The Beaver Herald*, 4 Aug. 1921. *Library of Congress*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn93066071/1921-08-04/ed-1/seq-5/>. Accessed 15 Jan. 2022.

This article illustrated the carelessness of farming techniques during the Great Plow-Up, as it stated that repeatedly planting crops in the soil was the best way to maintain a healthy and productive land.

Roosevelt, Franklin. *Letter to All State Governors On A Uniform Soil Conservation Law*. 26 Feb. 1937. The American Presidency Project, California, Santa Barba. Typescript. *The American Presidency Project*. <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/letter-all-state-governors-uniform-soil-conservation-law>. Accessed 18 Jan. 2022.

This was a letter that FDR sent to all state governors urging the approval of conservation districts in their state. From this letter, I was able to understand the accomplishments of conservation districts and the purpose they served. A greater federal recognition for conservation was also seen through this letter.

“Some Scoff at Idea of New Drouth.” *The Midland Journal*, 22 Mar. 1946. *Library of Congress*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn89060136/1946-03-22/ed-1/seq-7/>. Accessed 15 Jan. 2022.

This article featured a description of farmers after the recovery of the Dust Bowl. I learned that farmers were confident in having gone through dust, drought, and pestilence and did not appreciate accounts of pity or overreaction. However, they were still cautious and aware that another Dust Bowl could develop. I also used a description of the dust storms in my paper.

“The Homestead Act.” *Nebraska advertiser*, 19 June. 1862. *Library of Congress*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84020109/1862-06-19/ed-1/seq-2/>. Accessed 23 Feb. 2022.

This source advertised the Homestead Act of 1862. From it, I understood the appeal of settling into the Great Plains under this act that promised free land as long as improvement and cultivation was made after five years. This policy was also rendered effective to a diversity of people, many who had never owned land before.

“The Thrasher Farm- A Year Later.” *Evening Star*, 14 Aug. 1949. *Library of Congress*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1949-08-14/ed-1/seq-112/>. Accessed Feb 12. 2022.

This newspaper article described a demonstration project on the Thrasher farm, in which SCS and Civilian Conservation Corps workers restored the eroded Thrasher farm using soil conservation. From this source, I was able to see the clear impact the SCS had on changing farms, and in doing so, lives. In addition, this source explained agreements farmers and viewers could make in demonstrations.

Wanetta Perkins, Ledru Perkins, Della Poorbaugh, and Mary Spurgeon. Interview by Steven Kite and Jennifer Paustenbaugh. *Oral History Interview With Wanetta Perkins, Ledru Perkins, Della Poorbaugh, and Mary Spurgeon*, Dust Drought and Dreams Gone By: Women in the Dust Bowl, Oklahoma Oral History Research Program, Oklahoma State University. Typescript. 8 Nov. 2001, <https://dc.library.okstate.edu/digital/collection/Dustbowl/id/3122/rec/4>.

This interview gave me insight on how life was affected by the Dust Bowl, and exemplified perseverance and adaptability of farmers to the adverse disaster. I also learned about the scenes of Black Sunday and constant fear of storms.

United States, Congress. Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act. *U.S. Farm Bills: The National Agricultural Law Center*, <https://nationalaglawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/assets/farmbills/soilconserv1935.pdf>.

This was the Soil Conservation Act, which not only created the SCS, but also deemed it as a governmental responsibility to aid and supervise all conservation works.

“Wheat Will Win the War.” *The Hartford Republican*, 19 July. 1918. *Library of Congress*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86069313/1918-07-19/ed-1/seq-6/>. Accessed 15 Jan. 2022.



This was a newspaper article urging farmers to plant more wheat for soldiers of WW1. From this, I realized that it was not only governmental urging and lucrative prices that resulted in the Great Plow-Up, but a sense of duty and patriotism as well.

Whitney, Milton. *Soils of the United States of America*. Washington DC: USDA; 1909.

This publication contained USDA Bulletins 50-55. From Bulletin 55, I learned about the extensive misinformation towards soil conservation, as scientists concluded that after a quick fix in farming methods, small pieces of eroded lands would be easily restored. The bulletin famously regarded soil as an eternally productive and healthy resource, taking its properties for granted. I realized that afterwards, the Dust Bowl proved the exact opposite conditions.

“Writer and Cameraman Brave Dust Storms to Picture Horror of Ravaged Southwest Bowl.” *The Bismarck Tribune*, 18 Mar. 1936. *Library of Congress*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042243/1936-03-18/ed-1/seq-7/>. Accessed 16 Jan. 2022.

This was an account from a writer visiting the Dust Bowl regions, containing descriptions of the tragic conditions of the land, a scene scourged with ruin, while noting the undefeated, resigned population of the Dust Bowl.

## Secondary Sources

Egan, Timothy. *The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006.

This source was extremely helpful for my paper. With detailed interviews following several stories, it displayed a first-person timeline of XIT cattle ranchers, farmers, residents, and businessmen, bringing characters and scenes of the Dust Bowl to life, which revealed to me the unimaginable suffering farmers endured and overcame. In addition, the source explained how railroads influenced western settlement and the Dust Bowl, along with finer details of economic motivators leading to the Great Plow-Up. Farming families of the Dust Bowl were able to make eight-thousand dollars per year during the Plow-Up, eight times the salary of a Ford assembly line worker. I also learned that before Roosevelt and the SCS came to action, government was mostly dormant in sending aid to Great Plains farmers. This was followed by anger and violent demonstrations by farmers who found themselves and their families caught in endless struggle.

Ganzel, Bill. "The Dust Bowl of the 1930s." *Wessels Living History Farm*, 2003, [https://livinghistoryfarm.org/farminginthe30s/water\\_02.html](https://livinghistoryfarm.org/farminginthe30s/water_02.html). Accessed 3 Mar. 2022.

This source featured interviews from residents of the Dust Bowl and explained how life for farming families was affected. From this site, I learned of grasshopper plagues, winds blowing seeds out the ground, and other hardships that came with drought and storms.

Gates, Staci. "Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933." *Center for the Study of Federalism*, 2006, [https://encyclopedia.federalism.org/index.php/Agricultural\\_Adjustment\\_Act\\_of\\_1933](https://encyclopedia.federalism.org/index.php/Agricultural_Adjustment_Act_of_1933). Accessed 1 Mar. 2022.

This website article pointed out services and responses to the AAA. From this, I was able to support the idea that federal authority increased through the Dust Bowl and Great Depression.

Helms, Douglas. "Hugh Hammond Bennett and the Creation of the Soil Erosion Service." *Natural Resources Conservation Service*, 2018, [https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1044444.pdf](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1044444.pdf). Accessed 1 Mar. 2022.

This source provided information of SES activities and victories, such as setting up soil



experiment centers and research projects through funds secured from Congress. However, limitations were present in SES authority to conduct surveys and demonstrations. From this, I was able to understand the impact and need to create a permanent soil conservation agency.

“HHB Quotes: Quotes from Hugh Hammond Bennett.” *Natural Resources Conservation Service*, [https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/about/history/?cid=nrcs143\\_021412](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/about/history/?cid=nrcs143_021412). Accessed 1 Mar. 2022.

I utilized quotes from this website from Bennett’s published works. I learned of Bennett’s vision and devotion to control soil erosion, and what it meant for the creation and future of the SCS. From this, I also noticed that Bennett was an extremely skilled speaker, and shared his ideas in a practical and logical manner.

History.com Editors. “Dust Bowl.” *History*, 5 Aug. 2020, <https://www.history.com/topics/great-depression/dust-bowl>. Accessed 12 Jan. 2022.

This website article introduced me to the Dust Bowl, giving a frame of historical context for when the SCS took action. From this website, I learned the severity of harsh environmental factors and notable events, such as Black Sunday. The article also explained a bit about the causes of rapid civilization to the West. The photo from Appendix A came from this source, showing the drained state of soil and properties.

“How Do Today’s Farmers Care For the Soil?” *Ask Farm Aid*, 22 Nov. 2012, <https://www.farmaid.org/blog/ask-farm-aid-dust-bowl/>. Accessed 15 Jan. 2022.

This article described life-giving values of soil, as well as viewpoints of its agricultural usage today. From this, I was able to see how, through the Soil Conservation Service, farmers gained understanding to create sustainable farming methods that are in use today. This article also brought up current environmental issues found in U.S. agriculture.

“Honoring 86 Years of NRCS.” *Natural Resources Conservation Service*, [https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/about/history/?cid=nrcs143\\_021392](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/about/history/?cid=nrcs143_021392). Accessed 5 Feb. 2022.

This website article from the USDA described the creation of the SCS, providing an overview and important dates. In addition, future goals and impacts of the NRCS were explained here. The photo in Appendix B also came from this source.

Hudson, John. "Agriculture." *Encyclopedia of the Great Plains*,  
<http://plainshumanities.unl.edu/encyclopedia/doc/egp.ag.001>. Accessed 14 Jan. 2022.

This article described physical properties of the Great Plains and discussed its agricultural capabilities concerning soil types, climate, and original cultivation. From this, I learned of the original Native peoples and how they understood and took care of soil in the Great Plains by utilizing diverse conservation methods and a diverse economy.

"Hugh Hammond Bennett." *Youtube*, uploaded by TheUSDANRCS, 1 Nov. 2017,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G78ihulTx1k&t=990s>.

This video was extremely helpful in my research and provided information on Bennett's history. From this, I learned of his background, motivations, and leadership in the SES and SCS. The source also focused on Bennett's testimony to Congress and gave information on SCS activities, including demonstrations and surveys with diplomatic skills needed to carry them out.

Hurt, Ray. *The Dust Bowl: An Agricultural and Social History*. Nelson Hall, 1981.

This book provided me with a very detailed overview of the Dust Bowl, including the operation of soil conservation districts. Statistics and dates regarding land settlement, farm prices, and conservation scopes were explained in this source.

Mundende, Chongo. "Soil and Water Conservation." *Oklahoma Historical Society*,  
<https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=SO005>. Accessed 5 Feb. 2022.

This source provided me with the important knowledge of how conservation before the Dust Bowl were steps of piecemeal, uncoordinated efforts. In addition, SCS cooperation with other governmental agencies, such as the Civilian Conservation Corps, Soil Bank, and Great Plains Conservation Service was detailed.

"Study Agriculture in the U.S." *International Student*,  
<https://www.internationalstudent.com/study-agriculture/>. Accessed Jan 15. 2022.

This article gave information on the practice of agriculture today, in which the U.S. is a leader in science, technology, and conservation. From this, I was able to conclude the impact the SCS had on driving sustainability and production in our nation's farms.

*The Dust Bowl*. Directed by Ken Burns, Florentine Films; WETA-TV, 2012.

Part One of this documentary explained the timeline of the Great Plow-Up and analyzed the effects of WW1's start and finish on farm economics and practices. Through interviews of farmers of the Dust Bowl, I realized that many farmers were in fact aware of the tragedy destroying the soil would bring but continued to do so in the belief of providing for a successful future.

“The Dust Bowl.” *National Drought Mitigation Center: University of Nebraska*, <https://drought.unl.edu/dustbowl/Home.aspx>. Accessed 13 Jan. 2022.

This website gave me a more detailed overall understanding of the causes behind the Dust Bowl. Information about farmer response to war and reasons behind it was elaborated upon, such as advanced technology and drafted sons. In addition, this website brought up how lines around governmental actions were relaxed during the Great Depression, which encouraged me to consider how the same would be true in the Dust Bowl.

“The Great Depression, the Dust Bowl, and New Deal in Oklahoma.” *Oklahoma Historical Society*, <https://www.okhistory.org/learn/depression1>. Accessed Jan 14. 2022.

From this source, I learned of the timeline from settlement, WW1, the Dust Bowl, and recovery, and how the New Deal impacted these processes. From this, I was able to make a connection between FDR's vision for relief, reform, and recovery and the purpose of the SCS in soil conservation.