

USDA Photo Shows Problem Area On Roy Phillips Farm In Mitchell County

REAP Program Reflects Conservation Needs

By Neil Young
Rural Environmental Assistance Program (REAP) is the chief program in Mitchell County administered by the county-farmer committees under the general direction of ASCS.

This program became known as REAP in 1971 and is basically the same program known in the past as ACP. The change in name is significant because it indicates change in emphasis. REAP puts more emphasis on environmental protection and improvement and places priorities on enduring conservation practices which result in the control of erosion and the prevention of siltation.

Siltation caused by soil erosion is a most serious pollution problem. Though an estimated 50 million tons of sediment are kept out of the Nation's rivers every year by use of cover crops alone, 4 billion tons of sediment--much of it from farmland--still erode away and are carried to new locations each year by water. Approximately 30 million tons of dust, most of it from blowing soil, enter the atmosphere each year.

Americans are becoming increasingly concerned about the quality of their environment. They are distressed to find the air they breathe carries with it dust, exhaust fumes, and chemicals. They are disturbed that many of their once clear streams and lakes are now so polluted that they are no longer safe for swimming, fishing, or as a source for drinking water. Therefore, there is no doubt that farmers will be subjected to increasing pressure to clean up pollution. So the major purpose of REAP is to help farmers to prevent or abate agriculture-related pollution of water, land, and air; and to conserve agricultural soil, water, woodland and wildlife resources.

Local conservation and pollution priority needs are reflected in the list of approved REAP practices, specifications and cost-share rates. A farmer who wishes to participate in REAP should file a request at the ASCS

office before he starts the practice for which he desires the cost-share assistance. If the committee approves the request, the practice must meet definite installation specifications to qualify for REAP cost-shares. After the practice is completed, the farmer certifies this to the county office. He must also maintain the practice. His cost-share may be in the form of either a check or a purchase order for a conservation service or material. If the farmer pays the total cost of establishing the approved practice, he is later reimbursed for the Government's share of the cost.



Photo Shows Roy Phillips Farm After REAP Practice Completed

Recreation Enterprises

The American farmer is the most successful farmer in the world. One reason is that he is always ready to capture new markets for his products. The door to another new market has now been opened to him--perhaps the most lucrative of all.

City people who don't have room to play, hike, swim, or camp are looking for outdoor fun and are willing to pay for it.

If you are a landowner or operator and want to know more about this coming business boom, you should ask the local representative of the Soil Conservation Service, or the local office of other agencies of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture for a copy of AIB 277, "Rural Recreation Enterprises for Profit". Just off the press this publication lists and describes the many ways you can get started in the recreation business and take advantage of the increasing demand for fun in the sun. The local SCS Offices have copies.

Logging Practices Show Concern For Environment

In years past, when a timber sale was cut out, the logging roads used to remove this timber were forgotten and left unprotected from the forces of nature. Today many of these old logging roads on private land have active streams running down them or appear as deep gullies on the hillsides. This means that tons of valuable soil is wasted into nearby streams and lost forever.

Now when a timber sale is closed on Forest Service lands, these logging roads are outloped, water-bared, and seeded with grass. This

holds the erosion to a minimum.

Once a logging road is seeded, it is closed to all vehicle traffic. If traffic continues to use the road after it is closed, the water bars will soon be cut out and the grass torn up, exposing the soil for erosion. This is why it is very important that these roads not be used by vehicles.

On National Forest Lands the timber sales operator has the option to either plant these logging roads himself or pay the Forest Service to do it for him. If the opera-

tor chooses to do the work himself the results must meet Forest Service standards.

The seeding of these roads with grass helps hold erosion to a minimum but it also has another important function. That is to provide food for wild life. Grouse and turkey use these grassed roads to catch insects and deer graze these areas year long.

So next time you see one of these seeded roads and are tempted to drive on it instead of walking, remember this road provides you with more wildlife to hunt,

better foot access to hunting areas, and helps keep silt out of the streams you like to fish. The extra time required to walk instead of riding is well worth the effort.

Living With Our Land

By Ray Bryant District Conservationist

Many people who live outside our mountain region carry in their mind's eye a far different picture of the beauty of our area than the one that they find exists upon a visit here. This is especially true of our streams. A mountain stream is supposed to be clear, cold, and fast running water abounding in trout and other game fish. When the visitor first sees the Toe River and some of its tributaries, he is in for a rude shock, because these otherwise beautiful streams are so choked with mud, silt, and sewage that they are far from beautiful.

Although landscape beauty, sediment control, conservation and prosperity should go hand in hand, visitors and industry encouraged to locate in this region are repelled by the scarred landscape, waste dumps, eroded spoil banks, and polluted streams, caused by many years of mining operations.

The detrimental effects of mining offset the many favorable factors which could bring about an economic growth and thus contribute to the prosperity of the region.

No one denies the vast amount the mining industry has played in the industrial and economic growth of the region. It has provided jobs, raised the standard of living, and contributed to the happiness and well-being of those that work and live here.

Whether we like it or not, we have to live with the environment we create for ourselves.

The waters of an unpolluted stream can be put to many uses, and yet the purity and beauty can be protected.

The earth can still give up its minerals and still be managed to provide a wholesome and satisfactory environment.

The need to restore and enhance the beauty of the mining areas and control the sediment in the streams in order to provide an attractive and wholesome environment has long been recognized by the Mitchell County Soil and Water Conservation District.

In 1969 the District initiated the first serious effort, in cooperation with the Soil Conservation Service and the Future Farmers of America, to find remedies that are more satisfactory and more efficient for the use of the mined areas.

We know that plants can, and we know what plants will grow on these critical areas, but the cost of establishing such plants prohibits the use of them. We are seeking and searching to find a plant or a combination of plants at the lowest possible cost that will grow, prevent run-off, thereby control the sediment in the streams, and still be of value for future use.

In April of 1970, we planted plots, on a trial basis, of low growing shrubs, plots of grasses, plots of legumes, and different combinations of these. Some of the shrubs are: Autumn Olive, Jersey Tea, Honey and Brickly Locust, also plots of Fescue with Crown Vetch, Weeping Lovegrass with Crown Vetch, Switch Grass with Lespedeza, Lovegrass with the different Lespedezas, and Lovegrass alone. These plots are on both the sand and mine spoil areas.

All the grasses and legumes planted on the hot, dry sand came up, but died during the hot summer months, with the exception of the Lovegrass. None of the plants died on the mine spoil areas.

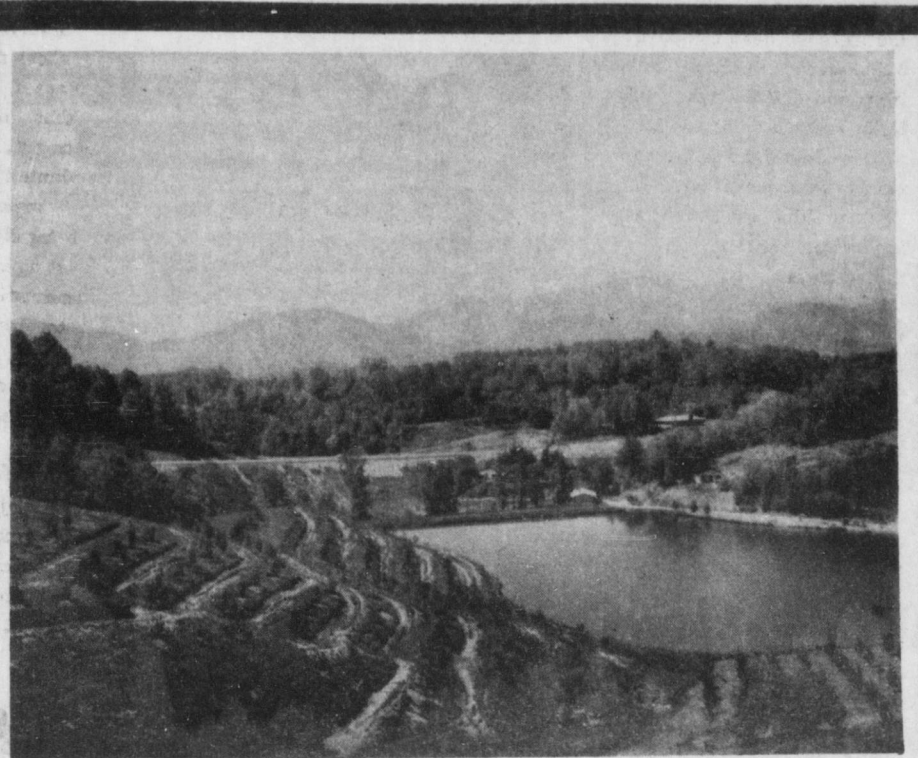
It is too early to make an accurate appraisal of all these plants. By this time next year, we should have the information to pass on to anyone that desires to heal the land and clear the waters.

FHA Community Loans

Loans and grants are available to communities and public bodies for the purpose of installing and improving central community domestic water and waste disposal facilities including sanitary sewer facilities including collection lines, treatment plants, outfall lines, and disposal fields.

In addition, storm sewers for the collection and disposal of surface drainage.

To continue, a loan and grant may be obtained to purchase equipment and facilities for solid waste.



Contour Orchard And Farm Pond On The Farm Of J.L. Saylor

'Every American Who Loves His Country Should Support A Vigorous Continuing Policy Of Conservation.'

- Franklin D. Roosevelt

BUCHANAN & YOUNG

Chrysler-Plymouth-Dodge-Dodge Trucks

Warren Buchanan Partner

Phone 688-4913 Bakersville, N.C.

Joe Young Partner



I Have Written Many Verses, But The Best Poems I Have Produced Are The Trees I Planted On The Hillsides." - Oliver Wendell Holmes

KAREN DALE KNITTING MILLS

ELLEN KNITTING MILLS