

# Conservation Reclaims Strip-Mine Devastation

Washington, Sept. 14 — Surface-mined land can be transformed from a hazardous eyesore into acreage useful for many farm or community purposes, USDA Soil Conservation Service Administrator Kenneth E. Grant said recently.

More than 10,000 private landowners reclaimed over a third of a million acres from 1965-71 alone, Grant said. He cited recent SCS reports from each state showing that landowners and mine operators had reclaimed a total of 338,000 acres in the seven-year period.

"Their work has resulted in significant reductions in soil erosion, sedimentation, and acid pollution of streams from these sites," Grant said. "They have added to the beauty of the countryside. And they have helped turn useless land into valuable property for forest, pasture or range, wildlife habitat, recreation areas, crop production, building sites, and other uses."

Grant stressed that much more work needs to be done, since

more than 4 million acres had been disturbed as of January 1, 1972, in surface-mining operations to harvest coal, sand and gravel, and some 40 other commodities.

"More than 90 percent of this land is privately owned," Grant said. "It is intermingled with farm, ranch, forest and other land in rural and suburban America—on which SCS already is giving conservation help through districts and in watershed projects and resource conservation and development projects."

Of the total acreage disturbed, Grant said that 2,181,200 acres needs land shaping, plantings, or water-control structures to prevent further land and water damage. The remaining 1,823,700 acres already have been reclaimed or have stabilized themselves over a period of years. Grant said that surface mining has been practiced for more than 100 years.

"About 15 percent of the land needing reclamation has been treated in the last seven years,"

Grant said. "This is significant progress when you consider that to date there is no formal program for technical and financial help on these problem sites on private land. District cooperators have undertaken mined-land reclamation as part of their overall conservation activities."

Grant said that about half of the States now have statutes calling for some form of surface-mined land reclamation work. Their provisions vary widely.

SCS participation in surface-mined land restoration began in the 1930's, Grant said. In addition to recommending vegetative and mechanical measures to restore a mined area, SCS also is active in developing new plants that can survive under the difficult slopes and acid conditions found on most surface-mined land.

One of the 20 SCS plant materials centers, at Quicksand, Ky., was established specifically to locate, study, and increase the supply of plants for surface-mined land. Several other centers also are turning out useful plants. Among those found especially well suited are deertongue grass, switchgrass, 'Cardinal' autumn-olive, 'Chemung' and 'Emerald' crownvetch, 'Latcho' flatpea, 'Arnot' bristly locust, 'Rem' Red Amur honeysuckle, Japanese bush lespedeza, and weeping lovegrass.

"These plants are well adapted to mined-land conditions and

provide a higher percentage of surface cover in a shorter period of time than trees," Grant said. "They also provide excellent food

and cover for many species of wildlife. And their flowers and foliage have a high esthetic value."

## State Grange Convention Program Announced

A full staff of officers will be elected for two years by the Pennsylvania State Grange at its 100th annual meeting October 23-26 at Williamsport. A. Wayne Readinger, master, said they will bridge the transition from the Grange's first century of service to the start of the second century at the 101st convention October, 1973, in Reading where the state organization was formed in 1873. They will serve until the meeting in 1974.

Incumbents eligible for reelection include Readinger; overseer, Clifford Tinklepaugh, Thompson; lecturer, Miss Mildred M. Shultz, Somerset; steward, Marvin Miller, Gettysburg, RD3; treasurer, John H. Minor, Morgantown, W. Va.; secretary, J. Luther Snyder, Camp Hill; gatekeeper, Robert E. Steese, Grove City, RD1; Ceres, Mrs Ruth Fish, Towanda, RD5, Pomona, Mrs. J. LeRoy Cooke, Cross Creek; Flora, Mrs. William Buffington, Chadds Ford, and Glen Whelpley, Brock-

way, executive committee. Committee members are elected for 3-year terms, all officers for two years.

Aside from elections, the Williamsport session will act on resolutions, hear officer and committee reports and addresses by visiting speakers, select winners in a wide range of talent contests and exhibits, and consider convention sites for the next several years, including one for 1976 when the Grange will join in celebrating the nation's bicentennial. Speakers will include Lieutenant Governor Ernest P. Kline.

Oldest and largest farm family fraternity in both state and nation, and possibly the world, the Grange (Order of Patrons of Husbandry) has been active in Pennsylvania since early 1871 when Eagle Grange, No. 1, at Montgomery, Lycoming county was instituted, just four years after the founding of the order nationally

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## FEED LETTER

# 1/4"

Scientists tell us that the reticulum (the second stomach of a cow) acts as a screen. Its purpose is to keep the large particles of feed in the rumen, where the bacteria can break down the fiber in the ration. They are pretty sure that pieces greater than 1/4" will be kicked back into the rumen and those smaller will pass on to the rest of the digestive tract. Fiber is digested mostly in the rumen. Wonder what happens to ground corn cobs, hay, and other high fiber ingredients, when they are mixed in a grain ration?

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