

Photo: Tim McCabe, USDA NRCS

# National Agricultural Landscapes Forum

Landscape Integrity and Water Security  
in the 21st Century

April 7 & 8, 2011  
Washington, D.C.

The Forum's co-hosts—USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), American Farmland Trust and Farm Foundation NFP—and the Forum's Blue Ribbon Panel—thank you for joining us to consider 21<sup>st</sup>-Century approaches to conservation and the issues facing policies and programs that will shape the future of the agricultural landscape and rural regions.

The Forum's goal is to provide policymakers with information and insights to strengthen delivery of services and the efficiency and effectiveness of federal programs aimed at improving environmental quality and rural development. Sessions have been designed to provide multiple perspectives on resource issues, program needs and policy approaches. We hope you will actively engage in Forum discussions, sharing your knowledge and experience to help achieve this goal.

The Forum is part of an assessment process, required by Congress under the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act (RCA), of how well USDA conservation programs are serving the long-term needs of the nation. Reauthorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, the RCA places new emphasis on the importance of assessing conservation needs, evaluating the effects of conservation practices and analyzing alternative approaches to conservation programs. NRCS is the lead agency on the assessment, collaborating with nine other USDA agencies. The outcomes of Forum discussions today and tomorrow will contribute to USDA's program report to Congress for the RCA assessment.

Thank you for joining us here in the nation's capital and for your commitment to protecting America's working lands, keeping them healthy and planning for their future.



## Blue Ribbon Panel

### Roger Allbee

Former Secretary, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

### Varel Bailey

Bailey Farms, Anita, Iowa

### Craig Cox

Senior Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources, The Environmental Working Group

### Otto Doering III

Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics, Purdue University

### P.J. Haynie

Secretary–Treasurer, National Black Growers Council  
Haynie Farms, Hague, Virginia

### A.G. Kawamura

Former Secretary, California Department of Food and Agriculture; Orange County Specialty Crop Producer and Shipper

### Teresa Lasseter

Former Administrator, USDA Farm Service Agency

### Patrick O'Toole

President, Family Farm Alliance  
Ladder Ranch, Savery, Wyoming

### Ross Racine

Executive Director, Intertribal Agriculture Council

### Charles Stenholm

Former Congressman (Texas); Senior Policy Advisor, Olsson Frank Weeda Terman Bode Matz PC

### Sara Wyant

Editor, Agri-Pulse Communications, Inc.

## Keynote Speaker

**Kathleen Merrigan** is Deputy Secretary of the USDA. Working alongside Secretary Tom Vilsack, Merrigan oversees day-to-day operations of USDA's many programs and spearheads the USDA budget process. She serves on the President's Management Council, working with other Cabinet Deputies to improve accountability and performance across the federal government.

Merrigan brings a wealth of knowledge to USDA from a decades-long career in policy, legislation and research related to the many missions of USDA. Recognizing the history and scope of her work, *Time* magazine named Merrigan among the "100 Most Influential People in the World."

## Regional Roundtables

During February and March, Farm Foundation NFP organized a series of regional roundtables across the country: Rock Island, Illinois; Fort Collins, Colorado; Cobleskill, New York; Mesa, Arizona; Portland, Oregon; and Columbiana, Alabama. At each roundtable, a panel of invited speakers offered perspectives on three broad topic areas: water security, climate variability and landscape integrity. Roundtable participants then discussed major policy themes and points of consensus and divergence.

During Thursday morning's session, moderated by NRCS Chief Dave White, the Blue Ribbon Panel members who led the regional gatherings will share outcomes of the roundtables.

*Additional information about the regional roundtables is available on Farm Foundation NFP's Web site at [www.farmfoundation.org](http://www.farmfoundation.org).*

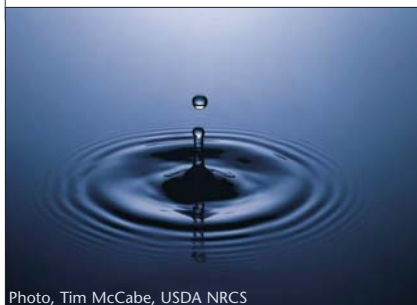
## Resource Issues on the Forum Agenda

**Landscape Integrity** – Connected landscapes that support agricultural production and provide environmental benefits face increasing challenges from urban/suburban development, climate change and other forces. *How much land do we need for food, energy, bio-diversity and ecosystem benefits? Have we already converted too much? How can jurisdictions work together on a regional or landscape scale to address growth and development? What will be the effects of increased weather variability on the agricultural landscape? How can we build our soil resources and address regional differences in definitions of prime and unique farmland?*



Photo, USDA NRCS

**Water Security** – Agriculture is our nation's largest water user, but increasing demand and shifting consumption patterns are challenging water quality and quantity for all sectors, including agriculture. *How much water do we have? Do we need? Have we already diverted too much? How do we improve how communities grow to protect water rights and ensure enough water to grow our food as well as our cities? How might new policies encourage producers to work together in a strategic, coordinated fashion to improve water quality? Is there a way to streamline the regulatory framework between agencies like USDA and EPA to improve environmental outcomes?*



Photo, Tim McCabe, USDA NRCS

## AGENDA

### Thursday, April 7

**9:00–10:00**

#### **Welcome**

Jon Scholl – President, American Farmland Trust

#### **Opening Keynote**

USDA Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan  
*The Next Generation of Soil & Water Conservation*

#### **Outcomes of the Regional Roundtables**

**10:15–11:45**

Moderator: Dave White – Chief, USDA NRCS

Blue Ribbon Panel Members – Roger Allbee, Varel Bailey, A.G. Kawamura, Teresa Lasseter, Patrick O’Toole, Ross Racine

#### **Lunch (reservations required)**

**12:00–1:15**

Speaker: A.G. Kawamura – Former Secretary, California Department of Food & Agriculture  
*Envisioning Healthy Rural Communities of the Future: The Convergence of Watersheds, Energy Sheds & Foodsheds*

#### **Water Security: Quality, Quantity and Water Rights**

**1:30–3:00**

Moderator: Patrick O’Toole – President, Family Farm Alliance

#### Panel:

Jose Aguto – Policy Advisor, National Congress of American Indians  
Jeff Jacobs – Scholar, National Research Council, Water & Technology Board  
G. Tracy Mehan III – Principal, The Cadmus Group LLC  
Kristen Saacke Blunck – Director, Agriculture & Environment Center, Penn State University  
Marc Thalacker – Manager, Three Sisters Irrigation District

#### **Landscape Integrity**

**3:15–5:00**

Moderator: Roger Allbee – Former Secretary, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

#### Panel:

J. Gordon Arbuckle – Assistant Professor, Iowa State University  
Richard Barringer – Research Professor, University of Southern Maine  
Craig Cox – Senior Vice President for Agriculture & Natural Resources, The Environmental Working Group  
Jeff Herrick – Research Soil Scientist, USDA ARS  
Walter Hill – Dean of Tuskegee University (invited)  
Charles W. Rice – President, Soil Science Society of America

#### **Dinner (reservations required)**

**6:00–7:30**

Speaker: Krysta Harden – Chief of Staff, Secretary of Agriculture  
*Choosing a Future for Conservation*

### Friday, April 8

#### **Innovation, Technology and Research to Develop Solutions for Producers and the Agricultural Landscape**

**8:00–9:15**

Moderator: Varel Bailey – Bailey Farms, Anita, IA

#### Panel:

John Copple – President & CEO, Sanborn Total Geospatial Solutions  
Raymond Forney – Global Stewardship Manager, DuPont Crop Protection  
Leonard Gianessi – Director, Crop Protection Research Institute, CropLife Foundation  
Mark S. Kieser – Principal & Senior Scientist, Kieser & Associates

#### **Reaching Across Jurisdictional Authorities**

**9:15–10:45**

Moderator: Otto Doering – Professor, Purdue University

#### Panel:

Earl F. (Buddy) Hance – Secretary of Agriculture, Maryland  
Bruce Knight – Principal & Founder, Strategic Conservation Solutions  
Doug O’Brien – Acting Deputy Under Secretary, USDA Rural Development  
Ross Racine – Executive Director, Intertribal Agricultural Council  
Steve Robinson – Former President, National Association of Conservation Districts

#### **What Do We Need in a 21st-Century Agenda for Conservation**

**11:00–12:45**

Moderator: Charles Stenholm – Former Congressman, Texas

#### Panel:

Larry Elworth – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Tom Hebert – Principal & Founder, Bayard Ridge Group  
Bill O’Conner – Senior Agricultural Policy Advisor, McLeod, Watkinson & Miller  
Will Shafroth – Deputy Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior  
Dave White – Chief, USDA NRCS

#### **Closing Remarks**

Dave White – Chief, USDA NRCS  
*Bringing It All Together*

Visit AFT’s Forum Web pages  
[www.farmland.org/aglandscapes](http://www.farmland.org/aglandscapes)  
for Blue Ribbon Panel, speaker and panelist bios.



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**American Farmland Trust gratefully acknowledges the support of:**

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American Farmland Trust is the leading conservation organization dedicated to saving America's farm and ranch land, promoting environmentally sound farming practices and supporting a sustainable future for farms. Since its founding in 1980, AFT has helped save millions of acres of farmland from development and led the way for the adoption of conservation practices on millions more.

[www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org)



At Altria, we believe in treating others with integrity and respect. We think the same principle applies to the environment around us.

By working to reduce our impact on our surroundings, and supporting organizations who are leading stewards for the environment, we are taking action to protect the natural resources we all share.

The people of Altria gratefully acknowledge American Farmland Trust and their efforts to help protect the communities around us.

We Live  
Here Too

To learn more,  
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