

Many Benefits of Soil Stewardship Named This Week

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The watershed in which you and I live is feeling the benediction of soil stewardship.

Our watershed is made of soil and the things that grow in and on the soil. It may be large or small. From it, or the larger watershed of which it is a part, flows the water we use — whether we get it through the city water system, from a well or from a mountain stream by our summer camp.

Soil stewardship, or soil and water conservation, influences the soil. It gives soil the mellow, life-containing feel that makes us love to sift a handful through our fingers on a balmy spring day.

But it also affects our food supplies, raw materials for industry, incomes of the individual and the community, the beauty of the landscape, number and kinds of wildlife, water supplies and their efficient use, and the frequency and size of floods.

At least some of the above facts have a deep significance to each of us. They are the reason man does feel a spiritual kinship to the soil and a moral responsibility to take good care of it. They are the reason Soil Stewardship Week, May 22 to 29 sponsored by the National Association of Soil Conservation Districts and cooperating national church organizations, has become a nationally recognized event.

To fail in our soil and watershed stewardship is to imperil the future of my pleasant portion a desolation on which man must depend for all time. For the Psalmist tells us, "they shall inherit the earth . . . and their inheritance shall be forever."

Man sometimes fails. In Jeremiah 12:10 we are told, "they have made by pleasant portion a desolate wilderness." But the Psalmist promised, "He maketh me to lie down in green pasture . . . He leadeth me beside the still waters."

Man had a choice then — as he does today. Let us each manage our "pleasant portion" so we may enjoy the green pastures and the still waters.

I believe America has made its choice.