

responsibility concerning natural resources, that the administration of this act should properly be in the Department of the Interior.

I think Agriculture certainly has a strong case that on the reclamation side they should have a major responsibility. I want to be frank enough to say that.

Senator NELSON. But their expertise isn't just in reclaiming the damaged land. I don't know what your Department has done in this field, but I don't think any department has come close to matching the efforts of the Soil Conservation Service in 5 years in reclaiming 127,000 acres of land in cooperation with over 5,000 private landowners.

The reason they are qualified to do reclamation is that they are experts in watershed management and work in it all the time. They are experts in soil management. The Department has the Forest Service, which has the expertise in forestry, and though your Department has people who understand mining; mining isn't the problem here.

Private enterprise has showed us how to get the coal and ore out and desecrated the landscape along the way. I am sure you have plenty of mining experts who understand how to get the ore out too, but the Soil Conservation Service has the expertise that understands watershed management, drainage problems, restoration of the soil, topsoil, proper use of the topsoil, and in every single area where there is a mine in America there is a soil conservation district. They have been at this for 40 years and everybody who is familiar with the work of the Soil Conservation Service, as I have been for 20 years, recognizes (1) that they have the expertise; (2) that they have the confidence of the local people with whom they have worked all these years, and they are there and on the spot. It seems to me a tragic omission to fail to include them in this cooperative effort. I don't know where your expertise is that matches theirs in this area.

Mr. UDALL. Senator, I don't want to be too modest about my own Department and I am certainly not going to indicate that simply because my Department regulates the development of resources we have any less concern with the quality of the environment than the Department of Agriculture does.

Senator NELSON. I don't think you do. I didn't say that.

Mr. UDALL. Indeed, what we have tried to do is to orchestrate the whole effort so that we carry out our total natural resources activities in a balanced way. I will concede that the Soil Conservation Service, which has a major responsibility, and that Agriculture, because of the fact that the highly successful Soil Conservation Service has been in that Department, have a special expertise. But when it comes to watershed management I won't defer at all to Agriculture.

I have the Geological Survey. I have the Water Pollution Control people. I have under my jurisdiction far more land than the Forest Service has in terms of the total lands of this country.

Nearly 30 percent of the land of this Nation is under the management of my Department, and so our competence runs rather large in this entire area. I want at the same time, because Ed Cliff is here, to indicate that I think the Forest Service is highly competent and that they do an excellent job and I wouldn't want to say even that we do better than they do. I have a high regard for their ability to do their