

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Great Plains Quarterly

Great Plains Studies, Center for

---

1987

## State and Local Regulations for Reducing Agricultural Erosion and Ecological Planning for Farmland Preservation

Charles Deknatel

*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly>



Part of the [Other International and Area Studies Commons](#)

---

Deknatel, Charles, "State and Local Regulations for Reducing Agricultural Erosion and Ecological Planning for Farmland Preservation" (1987). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 329.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly/329>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Quarterly by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

uses. Both documents offer guidance, methods and strategies aimed primarily at local and state action. Neither report offers conclusive analysis nor addresses the national and international market influences on agriculture policy.

Voluntary federal technical and financial assistance for soil conservation practices has been available for decades. Accomplishments are continually vulnerable to changing economic conditions. Coughlin focuses on the scattered state and local regulations now in use and on two model laws. Prescribed rates of soil loss and complaint procedures are common, but these regulations "appear to be designed for lenient enforcement." Coughlin supports local regulation of the most vulnerable topographic areas.

Steiner links an established methodology of "ecological planning"—the evaluation of natural systems to define appropriate locations for human activities—to the problems of conversion of agricultural land. The case of Whitman County, Washington, an area of wheat production, illustrates the analytical approach in the location of rural non-farm housing and the minimization of its effects on farms. Programs at all levels of government are noted in this report, which predates the publication of the definitive National Agricultural Lands Study.

Both works are useful. Neither program of action has to await resolution of agricultural policy at a larger scale.

*State and Local Regulations for Reducing Agricultural Erosion.* By Robert E. Coughlin. Chicago: American Planning Association, 1984. Photographs, tables, appendix. 42 pp. \$16.00.

*Ecological Planning for Farmland Preservation.* By Frederick Steiner. Chicago: American Planning Association, 1981. Photographs, illustrations, tables, figures, references, glossary, bibliography. 122 pp. \$15.95.

The authority to plan and regulate land use in the U.S. belongs to the states and is largely delegated to local governments. Agricultural policy is defined at the national level. These reports introduce planners to two major conservation problems in agriculture—soil erosion and conversion of farmland to other

CHARLES DEKNATEL  
Community and Regional Planning  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln