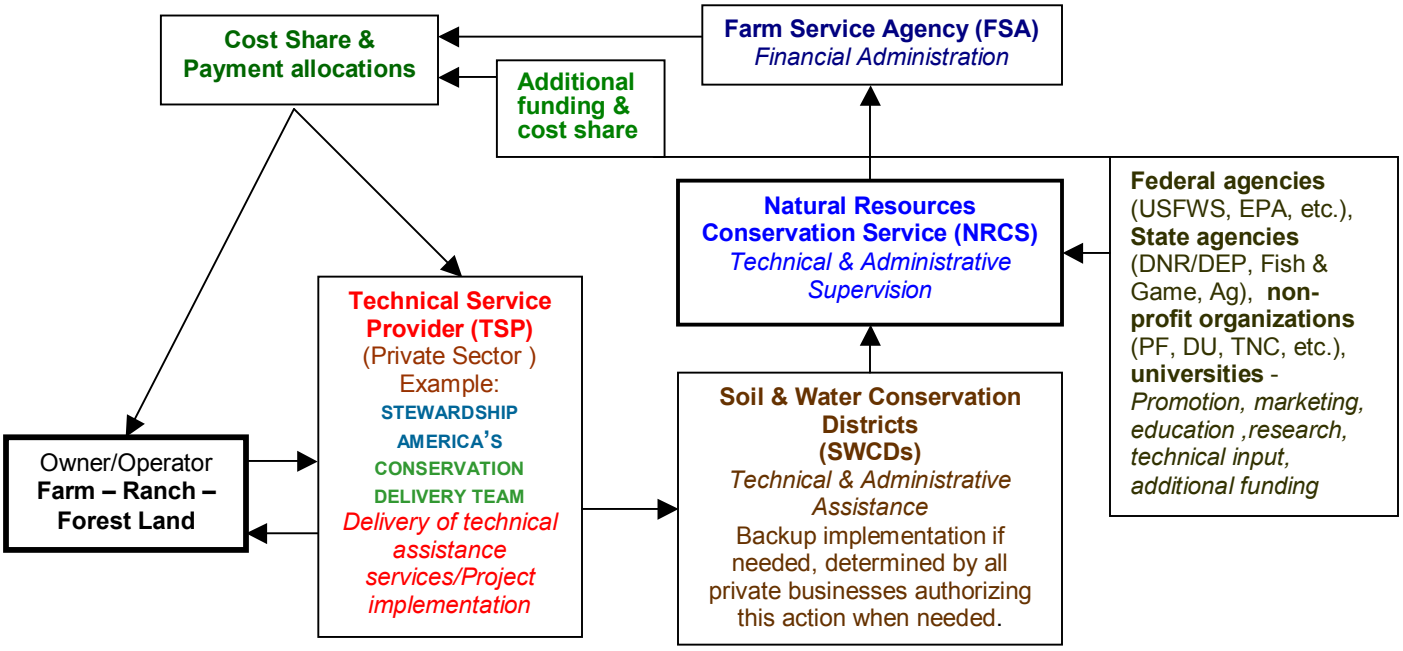
Flow of Money & Technical Services to Owners/Operators of Farm, Ranch & Forest Land



DEFINITIONS/FUNCTIONS

Agency/Organization Acronyms – **FSA** – Farm Service Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture; **NRCS** – Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture; **USFWS** – U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Interior; **EPA** – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; **DNR** – Department of Natural Resources; **DEP** – Department of Environmental Protection; **PF** – Pheasants Forever; **DU** – Ducks Unlimited; **TNC** – The Nature Conservancy.

Technical Service Provider (TSP) – Consists of private sector businesses that market and deliver technical assistance services to agricultural owners and operators. Stewardship America has organized a group of businesses with extensive ag production, scientific and conservation delivery expertise. These private sector businesses already have pre-established relationships with ranchers, farmers and producers which position these companies to be the most effective and most successful at reaching and assisting agricultural landowners and operators. Due to the nature of private business, these businesses can consistently deliver services at a lower cost and increased timeliness compared to government agencies.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) – Many NRCS field offices lack sufficient staff to keep up with the work loads that are expected of the agency through its field offices. As a result, there often are "bottle necks." With increased capabilities for the delivery of technical assistance through TSPs there is an opportunity to open up these bottle necks. But there is going to be a corresponding increase in the number of applications needing technical review and the number of projects requiring administrative oversight. SWCDs are positioned to become the primary technical and administrative "assistants" to NRCS. Currently, however, many SWCDs are forced to generate funds from retail sales of product sales and services to meet budget needs, which then competes with private businesses, and distracts them from the critical support roles they can play as local conservation partners to NRCS. It is therefore critical that SWCDs be funded 100% so that they do not compete with private businesses for retail sales (seed and trees) and services (consulting and planting). This will ensure a "united effort" – with each agency, conservation district, nonprofit organization and private sector business having specific roles that support and complement each other – to effectively and efficiently delivery technical services to private landowners and operators.

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) – NRCS will continue to supervise the delivery of technical and administrative services. It is important that NRCS operate as a "one minute manager," to quickly and efficiently review applications and contracts and provide technical oversight to avoid "bottle necks" in the delivery of services.

Farm Service Agency (FSA) – FSA will continue as the administrator of cost share, service and contract payments. Additional staff may be needed to accommodate increased applications and contracts. SWCDs also are well-suited for assisting FSA in application and contract preparations, crop history reviews, mapping, etc.

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