The North Central Regional Work Planning Conference at the National Cooperative Soil Survey was held at Traverse City, Mich., on May 3–7, 1976. Rodney F. Harner, Michigan State Soil Scientist, was our host and organizer for the conference. All 12 states were represented by Soil Conservation Service (SCS), University Experiment Station and/or Forest Service personnel. A number of Extension Agronomists working with the soil survey program were also in attendance at the conference.

James R. Callison, Area Conservationist in the Traverse City area, welcomed the group to Traverse City. Jim indicated that the 13 county area around Traverse City comprised about 21% cropland, 17% grazing land, 54% woodland, 4% water and the remainder in other categories. The population of over 200,000 people increases by four to five times that number in the summer time. Major concerns of the RC & D Project in the area are shoreline erosion control and water base recreation development.

Dr. R. J. Sauer, Assistant Director of the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, commented on regional projects in progress in the Traverse City area. He emphasized the world food needs and the concern of land resource inventories projecting the role that they need to play. He stated “studies showing that we have adequate land for food production are of little consequence to local and regional areas experiencing major land use shifts.”

DeVon O. Nelson, Soil Group Leader for the Forest Service, discussed the Forest Service role in soil survey programs. He indicated that a task force has been appointed to study the role of the Forest Service in the national cooperative soil survey. The Forest Service has been defining their needs and would like to develop means for meeting their needs through the soil surveys.

The group enjoyed the presentation by Lindo J. Bartelli, Director of the Soil Survey Interpretations Division, SCS, Washington, D. C. Bart stressed a shift in emphasis of the soil survey program which would be providing for the use of the soil maps. He discussed the soil potential concept. This concept is a positive approach where soils which were previously not suited could become “well suited” once the limitation is removed.