

Update from the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils –September 11, 2006

To keep member councils apprised of national association activities, a monthly update will be provided via e-mail to state and regional president's, on our website and to our list serv. Please feel free to circulate to your council members. Any questions regarding information in this newsletter should be directed to Roberta Jeanquart, NARC&DC Executive Director at robertaj@sso.org or 202 434-4780.

NARC&DC Board Activities – In a teleconference on Wednesday evening August 9, the NARC&DC Board of Directors voted to oppose efforts to designate applicant areas and have them share a coordinator with existing areas. The board expressed concern that council performance would suffer if this proposal were to be implemented.

In addition, the board considered and approved revisions to the Farm bill recommendations. These recommendations will be used to educate Congress as they continue their hearings on the 2007 Farm bill this fall. Specific legislative language will be drafted to address these concerns and submitted to Congress. The recommendations are posted on the NARC&DC website at www.rcdnet.org

Legislative Update – Congress is in session through the end of September. They will adjourn at the end of the month for the upcoming campaign season.

As you know, the President's budget proposed to cut the RC&D budget in half to \$26 million. At present, the House of Representatives took action to restore funding to the program and level funded RC&D at \$50,787,000. The Senate Committee has provided the same level of funding. A Senate floor vote has not yet been scheduled. Congress may act on agriculture appropriations this month but is more likely to complete action on final funding levels after the November congressional elections.

We encourage you to continue your contacts with your Members of Congress and keep them advised that we need \$56 million for RC&D.

Training Provided - Provided two trainings for the Kansas State Association Meeting: "Council Development; The How, What and Why" and "Achieving A Sense of Community; Volunteers". In October NARC&DC will provide training at the Rhode Island, Michigan, and Montana state meetings.

Council mailings – During the month of August the National Association has produced numerous mailings to member Councils. The mailings include the Bioenergy Series II fact sheets which provided useful information on the many energy opportunities, which are still available in the 2002 Farm bill. We also provided Council capacity fact sheets that highlight the programs and services of NRCS in the areas of Stewardship and Water Resources, Environmental Improvement Programs, Easement Programs, and Conservation Technical Assistance Programs and Activities. During this month you should have received the National Association's new Workbook for Understanding and

Improving Partnerships with American Indian and Alaska Natives. The National Association also sent to all Councils our annual call for Awards that included NACD's Diversity Awards.

Catalyst – The Summer issue of the National Catalyst was mailed in mid-August. This issue highlighted our 2006 National Conference, the new inductees into the National Association's Hall of Fame, and the importance of marketing your RC&D Council.

NARC&DC Committee Meetings – During the month of August the National Association's Energy Committee met to discuss a new project....creating a national network of farm energy auditors. The Energy Committee, through the assistance of local RC&D Councils, project partners, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service will be hosting two farm energy audit workshops entitled "Energy Conservation Opportunities on the Farm." The first conference will be held December 13, 2006 in Annapolis MD. More information will be available on the National Association's website and will be sent to Councils via US mail.

Calendar of Events:

NARC&DC President Sharon Ruggi attended the North Carolina state association meeting last week. She will meet with the new NRCS Chief Arlen Lancaster on September 12.

Cooperative Conservation Partnership Leadership Training Conference: In an effort to help Councils building strong leaders and organizations to more effectively deliver conservation programs the National Association will be co-hosting the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Leadership Training Conference in Nashville, TN on November 28-30, 2006. Each member of your State Executive Committee should have received an invite.

2007 NARC&DC Leadership Forum: On February 26-28, 2007 the National Association will be hosting its annual Leadership Forum at the Holiday Inn on the Hill in Washington, D.C. More information on this Forum will be posted to the website and sent to each Council.