

The National Catalyst

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Making Things Happen!

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Celebrating Our Volunteers... National RC&D Week September 21-27

Forty-four years ago, a brand new program began. It had the hopes and dreams of people who believed in the power of the community.

RC&D Week was declared in recognition of that program which has grown from 10 to 375 designated areas to cover 85% of our country. The National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils salute the 375 RC&D Councils and all of its volunteers who continue to "Make It Happen" across our country.

Joan Smith Freeman, President of the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils, is looking forward to celebrating with the thousands of volunteers to commemorate the Service that RC&D Councils provide to America. She noted, "Local people who determine their community needs and create solutions to these needs should be honored in our communities and in the media. Their selfless hours of work are an acknowledgment of their belief in the strength of the RC&D program."

2009 National Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico

"Partnerships Delivering Positive Change in America's Communities"!

June 14-17 2009 RC&D Councils will meet in NM for the National Triennial Conference. The National Board is working with the New Mexico State RC&D Association to bring Albuquerque a great conference. The site is ideal for an excellent meeting and great spot for a family vacation. Both adults and children will find wholesome adventures and amusements. Mark your calendar and start your planning. Future monthly mailings will include information on things to see and do in Albuquerque.

The National board voted to include an incentive for Councils to solicit exhibitors and sponsors. Several sponsorship

opportunities are already sold to state and regional associations.

For each \$4,500 a Council secures, the Council receives one complimentary registration. For each \$10,000, a complimentary exhibit booth is included.

There are two hotels adjacent to the conference center, which will offer internet connection and open lounges for conference members to utilize. This is the prime location. Remember that there are a very limited number of government rate rooms available.

2009 Conference continued on page 7

President's Report



Joan Smith Freeman

By Joan Smith Freeman

Hello RC&D volunteers!

First, I would like to thank you for all your letters of

support and for the phone calls to your congressional delegations. Your hard work has helped the RC&D program retain level funding this year despite the fact that the President's budget did not provide financial support. While the funding level needs to grow to sustain the program, the budget does enable our program to remain viable in a very tough budget year.

It appears that the appropriation process is unlikely to be completed by the beginning of the new fiscal year that starts October 1. In that case, Congress will likely pass a continuing resolution in September that will fund federal agencies and programs through February.

Please continue dialogue with your Members of Congress on the impact of level funding on our program. Many coordinators are no longer full time with the RC&D program and most program assistants have been eliminated. We need to continue to make our target for funding to be \$56 million to maintain the program.

I wanted to make all of our councils aware that the National Association recently adopted a new strategic plan. The goals from the plan are:

1. Develop and implement a strategy for influencing policy making at the national level on issues that a broad majority of councils are working on.
2. Increase the resources for the Councils and the National Association,
3. Increase recognition of RC&D by marketing our organization all year round – nationally, statewide and locally.
4. Have 100% of our 375 Councils' participation in the Circle of Diamonds.

The National Board believes that as a key delivery system for federal programs we need to expand our focus and influence beyond just advocacy for RC&D funding by partnering and taking positions on critical issues that are facing our nation.

By raising visibility and focusing on the Circle of Diamonds program, our Councils will improve transparency and provide accountability to Congress and our partners. Let's make sure that all our area plans are up to date and that we are complying with all the legal requirements of the statute governing RC&D.

Please help us celebrate National RC&D week! This is a part of our national marketing campaign to raise greater public awareness of Resource Conservation & Development Councils and all the RC&D activities in your local communities. Remember RC&D week September 21-27 by planning an event locally and do not forget to invite your Congressmen, Senators, Partners and the media.

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Washington Report

By Roberta Jeanquart, Executive Director

After a two year journey through a difficult legislative process, the new Farm bill, the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008, was signed into law in June. In our last issue, we highlighted the changes we were seeking in the RC&D portion of the Farm Bill. Those changes were included in the final bill and are a great victory for the RC&D community.

The new Farm bill also renewed many existing programs and includes new opportunities which may be of interest to RC&D councils as sources of funding for council projects. NARDCDC will be tracking those opportunities through the rule-making and appropriations processes. In addition, this fall NARDCDC will put out a series of fact sheets on the Farm bill that will give you more detailed information on programs that may be of interest to your council and community.

This new Farm bill invests in conservation, nutrition, rural development, forestry and renewable energy programs. It also includes provisions that create equitable access to programs for limited resource and minority farmers.

Existing mandatory conservation programs like CRP, CSP, WRP and EQIP are reauthorized. Discretionary programs like the Conservation Innovation Grants and Conservation of Private Grazing Lands programs will continue under the provisions of this bill. There are two new programs in the conservation title that councils may find of interest to address regional conservation issues that affect multiple operations. The Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (under the EQUIP program) is targeted to partnership projects that encourage water conservation or water quality restoration or enhancement projects; irrigation systems improvement and activities to mitigate the effects of drought. The Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative includes supplemental grants and payments that address area wide conservation projects involving multiple landowners enrolling in Conservation Stewardship Program, the Wildlife Habitat Incentive program and EQUIP.

In the area of nutrition, RC&D councils may be interested in provisions that invest in food security through promoting local food networks. The Senior Farmers Market Nutrition program is expanded. The bill also establishes a Healthy Urban Food Enterprise Development Center and provides funding to help bring fresh foods into urban areas and a Community Food Projects grant program for innovative community projects.

This Farm bill provides for a number of rural development activities. Funds are authorized for rural infrastructure programs like waste disposal grants, rural water and wastewater circuit rider programs and an emergency program to rural towns to improve the quality of drinking water. There are also new programs established to assist rural business growth including a micro enterprise program; a grant program to help disabled people get jobs in rural areas; and a business investment program that allows multicounty regions to invest in rural development projects. Value-Added Agricultural Product Market Development Grants offer planning and working capital for marketing value-added products.

Many RC&D councils have begun to do on-farm energy audits to conserve energy on the farm and increase farm income. Energy conservation has been added as a priority under the EQUIP program and can help us advance RC&D training of council members to do on-farm energy audits.

The new Farm bill invests over \$1 billion over five years for new research, development and loan programs for energy and renewable fuels. Funding is also included for loan guarantees for biorefineries that produce advanced biofuels. In addition a new Biomass crop assistance program is included in this farm bill to support cellulosic crops grown for energy facilities. Programs are also included in the forestry title of the farm bill that address the use of forest biomass for energy production like the Rural Revitalization Technologies program and the Community Wood to Energy Program.

The programs discussed in this article represent a small cross section of opportunities to enhance our communities. Look for our Farm bill fact sheets this fall and let us know whenever you have questions.



Council in the Spotlight. . .

NARCDC gets copies of press releases from a number of councils. Rarely a week goes by without some sort of e-mail from Northeast Nebraska promoting their activities. To encourage marketing at the local level, we asked their coordinator, Jan Jorgenson to highlight all the ways the Northeast Nebraska RC&D council promotes itself. This council spotlight provides valuable advice for marketing RC&D year round.

Meetings

Southeast Regional Meeting

September 11-13, 2008
Wytheville, VA

Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting

September 21-24, 2008
Clinton, NJ

Pac-Rim Regional Meeting

October 19-23, 2008
Portland, OR

New England Regional Meeting

October 23-25, 2008
Mystic, CT

National RC&D Conference

June 14-18, 2009
Albuquerque, NM

Northeast Nebraska RC&D Marketing Tools

By Jan Jorgensen, RC&D Coordinator

When asked to share the marketing tools used by the Northeast Nebraska Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council I had to write down the variety of ways the council used to get the word out about this RC&D. I was shocked when 19 items ended up on the list! Many of these things have been done for a long time, but still lots of people are unaware of RC&D. I've learned that until people have a need for the project or the organization they won't hear or see it, but when that time comes the information has to be available. I've been asked how this Council always gets things in the regional paper – a personal relationship with the media and repetition with articles and information. They like to promote good works and that's what RC&D does.

- ◆Monthly news release after each Council meeting
- ◆Sent to all newspapers and radio stations around the region plus NAR&D, NRCS-Nebraska, NRCS This Week newsletter editor and more. This simple effort keeps RC&D in front of them, they

choose to use it or not, but at least they have the information.

- ◆News releases on grants received - often funders request this be done and it's just another way to show RC&D success.
- ◆Project-related news articles before and after events – it's easy and a free way to announce upcoming events plus it provides an opportunity to demonstrate results.
- ◆New in 2007 a newsletter with a real editor!
- ◆Council wanted it, staff didn't have time, a former Council member is a freelance writer and provides the service at low cost.
- ◆Very well received, professionally done, available hard copy or via email.
- ◆Radio spots whenever there's project promotion needed - local radio announcers know staff and some board members, but welcome information anytime.
- ◆Brochure - makes a great handout and is a chance to highlight projects and their benefits.
- ◆PowerPoint presentations for groups, organizations, annual meeting, special events.
- ◆Good way to showcase projects so people realize they're done by RC&D.
- ◆Award nominations - takes time, but worth it to get the name out and gives recognition.
- ◆Booths at County Fairs, State Association meetings, National RC&D Week, project-related meetings.
- ◆Logo magnets for sale for Council vehicles and refrigerators everywhere!.
- ◆Open houses for special office displays and artist exhibits - gets people in the door to see what goes on and showcases entrepreneurs/artists.

Council Spotlight continued on page 6

Regional Happenings . . .

Mid-Atlantic RC&D Association Howard Coffield, President

The Mid-Atlantic RC&D Association is gearing up for their Annual Conference, to be held in Clinton, NJ, September 21-24, 2008. The Conference will feature project highlights from Mid-Atlantic RC&D Councils, field tours of local RC&D projects, a visit to the historic Red Hill Museum Village and a keynote address by Andy Lipkis, Founder and President, of TreePeople (<http://www.treepeople.com>).

The Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Professionals (PAEP) recently presented the 2008 Karl Mason Award to Pennsylvania RC&D Councils during their annual conference. The PARC&D was recognized for the work its nine regional RC&D Councils are doing to enhance the environment and quality of life in local communities throughout the state. PAEP commended the PARC&D Councils for their "outstanding service and support of resource conservation and development in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania through innovative and dynamic leadership and by nurturing partnerships among public and private agencies, corporations, organizations and citizens to protect, restore, and enhance the environment" during the presentation of this prestigious award. The Karl Mason Award is given each year to an organization or project that has made significant contribution to the betterment of Pennsylvania's environment.

The West Virginia RC&D Association, in partnership with the WV Conservation Districts Association, the WV Conservation Agency, and the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, sponsored a portion of their annual summer legislative tour in August. Representatives from Senator Robert Byrd, Senator John D Rockefeller, and Representative Shelley Moore Capitol's offices spent 3 days with members of the participating agencies and organizations, visiting project sites in 7 of the north-west counties of the state that border the Ohio River. Those on the tour were able to learn about USDA farm

bill programs, local RC&D projects, flood control dams, stream bank restoration projects, and more.

North Central Region Ed Miller, Vice President

Greetings from the North Central Region

Fall seems to be the time for state annual meetings and conferences in our region. Lincoln Heritage RC&D in Illinois, annual meeting is in Charleston IL on August 20th. Mr. Jim Elliott is the new Illinois President. The NC Region would like to welcome Jim as a State President in this great RC&D family.

Iowa Lakes RC&D is hosting the Iowa League of RC&D fall meeting on September 4th and 5th in Storm Lake Iowa. As presenters, they have a number of Iowa State Officials and Department heads, including Bill Northey-Iowa Secretary of Agriculture and Denny Michel- Private Lands Forestry Supervisor with the Iowa DNR. National president, Joan Smith-Freeman will be their banquet speaker.

The Wisconsin RC&D Association's Conference will be hosted by their newest Council-Town and Country RC&D on September 11th and 12th in Oconomowoc WI. The conference Title is "GOING GREEN-SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AND FARMS". The key speaker for this conference is Dr. John Magnuson, Professor Emeritus, Center for Limnology, University of WI, Madison, Mr. Clay Nesler, Vice President of Global Energy and Sustainability, Johnson Controls and Dr. John Ikerd, Professor Emeritus, University of Missouri at Columbia.

For those of you who haven't heard, the Emerald Ash Borer has found its way to Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Association and its member Councils are gearing up to plan for the long-term implications of this ash tree-killing insect. Let me urge all states to learn as much as you can about this horrible destructive insect.

Have a GREAT RC&D Day!!!

Regional Happenings continued on page 5

Regional Happenings continued from page 5

Pacific Rim Report
Bob Jones, President

Councils around the region are planning events for RC&D Week in September, everything from publicizing success stories, working with the media, to having counties passing resolutions declaring RC&D Week.

The Pacific Rim Regional Association's Next Annual Meeting and Conference will be held at Doubletree Hotel in Portland, Oregon, October 19-22, 2008. The Convention Center, Rose Garden, and Lloyd's Center Shopping Mall are all nearby and you have a great view of the Willamette River and downtown Portland. The theme of this conference is "Expanding Partnerships for a Renewable Future". We will continue to stress Financial Sustainability, Building of Partnerships, Conserving our Resources and Making Things Happen in our communities. We will have a "Partners Panel" by our USDA partners sharing of opportunities for RC&D's, A "Funders Panel" which will provide an "Insight" to foundation funding, and an "Ecosystem Marketing Panel" which will provide information on Wetland's Mitigation Banking, Ecosystem Marketing, and Carbon marketing opportunities for councils.

In addition, there will be training on Area Planning, Circle of Diamonds, and Marketing/Public Relations. Councils will share "Success Stories" and we have 3 great tours planned. We invite all RC&D council members, coordinators, and other supporters to visit and share the Northwest Experience. Check our website for more info: www.pacrimrcd.org

Southwest States
Marva Beck, President

Greetings from the hot humid Southwest! Hot air pops popcorn. It works the same here in Southwest. It's hot and things are a-poppin'. I just returned from Junction City, Kansas...their annual meeting and a two day Energy Conference. I felt like a sponge and couldn't wait to get home and apply some of the ideas. Of course, I drove 65 MPH home and got 38.9 MPG. Saved energy! It was a very good conference with

some really superb speakers from Tetra Tech and Westar Energy. Kudos to Kansas for an inspired conference.

Here in Texas, we are getting ready to kick off a state wide agriculture energy saving program partnering with EnSave and our State Energy Conservation Office, Rural Development and all 22 RC&D Councils. The state has put up \$300,000.00 to offer free energy assessments to producers that qualify. There will be four week long trainings, two in August and two in September to train data collectors and grant writers. Four councils in Texas received a Meadows three year \$99,000.00 grant to further the Rural Fire Protection Project with recruitment and retention programs.

I'm headed to Natchitoches, Louisiana late next week for their first ever annual state conference. President Fran Bartee is really excited and I'm looking forward to seeing what has transpired since we were there for the Southwest States meeting in Lafayette. This conference will be an opportunity for councils to bring the state closer together and hopefully forge a stronger partnership.

We are all getting ready for RC&D Week, some plans firmed up, other pending but it sounds like we will get the word out in a big way.

Council in the Spotlight *continued from page 4*

- ◆Plastic bags with name & logo – for promotional materials, gifts, community celebrations.
- ◆Wildflower postcards and pencils as Thank You's, freebies, promotional items.
- ◆Big sign in front of office.
- ◆Coordinator's monthly column in a regional newspaper - requested initially by an RC&D-friendly writer, but continues since it gets read.
- ◆Council member business cards.
- ◆Website – the weak link and in disrepair, but council members feel it's important to fix it up and make it work.

**RC&D -
Making Things
Happen!**

Program and Services Corner

Andrew Gordon

The National Association has been hard at work to give your council the resources that you have been asking for. Over the past few months your Council has received: A Guidebook for RC&D Directors 2nd Edition, A Guidebook for RC&D Directors: Sustainability and Fundraising, The Economic Development Planning Guide, Fact Sheets on Bioenergy, Youth Outreach, and Market Based Conservation and information on Disaster Planning and Response for RC&D Councils. If you need additional copies of the material, please contact the National Office at narcdc@rcdnet.org or call us at 202-434-4780.

Over the coming months you will receive new fact sheets on alternative energy and forestry related mat-

ters, information and resources on social equity, and critical information on how the 2008 Farm bill impacts the RC&D Program.

We hope that each and everyone one you reading this article will join us in February 2009 for training specific to our RC&D Community at our annual Leadership Forum in Washington, DC. We are also hard at work gearing up for our 2009 Tri-Annual National Conference, June 14-18, 2009 in Albuquerque, NM.

Don't forget to utilize all your National Association has to offer such as the Circle of Diamonds, Training Classes, Grant Research and the RC&D Community Listserv.

Calling for 2008 National Award Nominations

Andrew Gordon

Time to begin preparing your nominations for the highest honors given by the National Association of RC&D Councils. Watch for the National Association's Awards package coming to you via U.S. Mail and E-mail. This year we have the following categories:

1. Hall of Fame
2. Outstanding Performance by a Council
3. Outstanding Performance by a Council Member
4. Outstanding Performance by a Coordinator
5. Outstanding Supporting Organization
6. Outstanding Youth Involvement Award
7. Outstanding Program Assistant Award

The Conservation Partnership's Diversity Awards will be presented at the same time. Three awards will be given to recognize a Conservation District, an RC&D Council/Project, and a State Conservation Agency who are addressing diversity needs to improve delivery of conservation programs.

Remember that all nominations should be derived from a regional awards process and only the Regional Association President may submit the nominees for the National Awards to the National Association of RC&D Councils. The National Association must receive all nominations by January 2, 2009. We look forward to seeing your nominations.

2009 Conference continued from page 1

To improve success story presentations and the quality of training, some success stories will be incorporated into individual training programs.

Story Categories were mailed to each Council office in August. Submission deadline is November 15, 2008. The new training format will make all trainings more relevant. The National Board is very excited that the new format will pair training with real life experiences.

Stories will have a higher visibility at the 2009 conference, so they must include outcomes or benefits to the community to be selected for presentation. Only completed projects will be considered for presentation. Contact the National RC&D office if you need more information on success story format or the address for the submission.

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RC&D - Making Things Happen!



Become an Associate Member of NARC&DC

Partnership Alliance Registration Form

Please indicate if this is a new membership or a renewal:

New Membership Renewal

Sign up for (circle your choice):

Out of This World (Lifetime)	\$500.00	_____
Diamond (Yearly)	\$250.00	_____
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Regular (Yearly)	\$ 25.00	_____
Additional Donation	\$	_____
	Total \$	_____

Name: _____
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City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Signature: _____

You will receive a card that shows you are a member in good standing. So act today!

Please mail to:

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National Association of RC & D Councils
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Any questions?

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