

The National Catalyst

Volume XV, Issue 3, Winter 2005

President's Update

By Sharon Ruggi, President, NARC&DC



NARC&DC President,
Sharon Ruggi

As we approach the end of the year, I am reflecting on a year that, while challenging, has been exciting. In February, we were faced with the possible elimination of funding to 189 of our Councils. We asked for letters to Congress, and you all responded!!! It was your letter writing that enabled the National Association to be well armed when entering Congressional offices and asking for restored funding. Thankfully, we were successful—all 375 Councils will be funded in 2006.

We were also made aware that Natural Resources Conservation Service's RC&D program received a failing grade on our Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) score. It was that low grade that resulted in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) recommendation that our budget be cut in half. We now know that RC&D will undergo another PART analysis in March 2006. The National Association's Board of Directors felt strongly that we needed to address the concerns of OMB. The lack of measurable, long-term performance goals was an area targeted by OMB. It was critical that we, the National Association, be proactive in establishing these goals in order to ensure that your local decision-making would not be compromised. I appointed a "Standards Committee", and that committee recommended eight long-term performance goals that would allow Councils to address the wide range of activities that flow from the four elements of the Area Plan: land conservation; land management; water management and community development. These goals have been adopted by the National Board and shared with NRCS (which is also working on their own recommendations for long-term performance goals). I am hopeful that our recommendations will be incorporated into the NRCS goals.

Despite the stress of our budget woes, it was an extremely enjoyable year for me. Attending Regional meetings, as well as many State meetings, allowed me to learn about the endless array of projects that are

having a dramatic impact on our communities across America. But, above all, I have appreciated the opportunity to talk with all of you and to listen to your concerns.

Now it is time to plan for 2006. It will be a year of change. We will see a change in the way that projects are reported. However, it is important to recognize that while reporting will change, you will be able to continue with the projects that have been identified in your Area Plans as priority needs. I also see this as a year for visioning. I am sure that you all recognize that in the face of tight federal budgets for the foreseeable future, we need to consciously assess where we see

RC&D in 5 years. What changes can we make in order to assure our long term viability? How do we continue toward our goal of nationwide coverage with 32 applicant areas while at the same time assuring that the designated councils have funding to continue their work? What changes can we make in order to satisfy the

OMB concerns while maintaining the integrity of the local area planning process? These are the tough questions we will be facing and we will do this by seeking the advice of local councils.

I trust that you are all planning to attend the Leadership Forum in February. The timing is perfect as the President's budget will be announced the day that our Forum begins. We are extremely fortunate that we will be in Washington, which will afford us the opportunity to react immediately. Next will be our National Conference in Savannah, Georgia starting on June 18th. I think you will be pleased with the strength of the agenda as well as the location in this beautiful city.

Finally, I want to send "Seasons Greetings" to all of you. As we reflect on our good fortunes in 2005, let us remember to thank our National Staff: Bobbi, Donna, Andy and Monica. I look forward to seeing all of you in 2006!

*"All 375
RC&D Councils
Will Be Funded
in 2006"*



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Resource Conservation &
Development Councils
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Volume XV, Issue 3

Washington Report

By Roberta Jeanquart, Executive Director,
NARC&DC

The staff at the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils work for you, the council members. We are employees of the national association – a 501(c3) nonprofit organization. We hope that the programs and services we offer are helpful to your council. We are always open for advice so if there is something you need or something we can do better, feel free to contact us at 202 434-4780 or at narcdc@rcdnet.org.



President Ruggi welcomes NRCs speaker Smith Covey at the Forum on Job and Business Growth in Rural America.

This has been a tough year for RC&D and our priority has been to insure that all RC&D councils received federal support. The President recently signed into law the agriculture appropriations act which includes \$51.3 million to fund all 375 designated RC&D councils. This is the same level of funding as last year.

Through our efforts, we were also able to clarify in legislative language, that all councils should receive the assistance of a full time coordinator, that councils can continue to provide both conservation and economic development assistance, and that any effort to implement program goals must be done in consultation with councils.

We asked for your help in writing letters and you did a great job in responding. Later in the year we sent you a survey, which helped us to gather information on the operations of councils. That survey will help us better represent your interest with the Administration and the Congress. If you have not already completed it please do so soon. We ask that the survey be completed by council members and not the coordinator.

Your council dues also assist the NARC&DC in providing valuable services to councils. These services include:

- ◆ Grant Center and Grant Station Insider – a free grant research service and electronic newsletter for councils
- ◆ Awards, Hall of Fame and Circle of Diamonds recognition
- ◆ List Serv and Newsletters
- ◆ Publications and mailings with resources for council projects and activities
- ◆ National Conference, Leadership Forum and other educational forums

- ◆ Training materials such as the Guidebook for RC&D Directors and the Financial Management Guidebook
- ◆ Consultation services with NARC&DC staff on issues of importance to councils
- ◆ Low cost directors and officers liability insurance

In addition, your dues help support our website www.rcdnet.org, our efforts to secure new national partnerships and to market RC&D nationally. In the past year we have concluded partnerships with the following organizations: National Association of Conservation Districts, Sirolli Institute, National Network of Forest Practitioners, National Association of Counties, and the International Code Council.

The NARC&DC relies on the participation and support of its member Councils. Without your continued and valuable assistance the National Association could not be the dynamic Association providing the services that you expect. We look forward to serving you in the upcoming year.

National Association Seeks Candidates for At-large National Board Position

“Visit our website at: www.rcdnet.org for information on upcoming forums.”

The National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils is seeking candidates for an open at-large national board position to reflect diversity. The candidate will serve a three year term, is expected to attend 3 NARC&DC national board meetings a year, and be an active member of the under-represented task

force. Qualifications include knowledge of the RC&D program and service on a RC&D council. To be considered for this position, the candidate should submit a resume and cover letter outlining their qualifications. In addition, candidates need to submit a letter of support from their local RC&D council. Please forward cover letter outlining qualifications, resume, and council letter of support to NARC&DC, 444 North Capitol Street NW, Suite 345, Washington, DC 20001 by January 10, 2006.

National Marketing Committee

The National Association Board of Directors' Marketing Committee is seeking new members. If you have what it takes to be a positive addition, please send a letter detailing your qualifications to the National RC&D office marked to the attention of Nedda Simon.

The National Association of Resource Conservation & Development Councils

Annual Leadership Forum Registration and Hotel Information

The NARC&DC is pleased to announce our Annual Leadership Forum on February 6-8, 2006. The theme of this forum is: RC&D Leading the Way in Cooperative Conservation. The meeting will be held at the Crystal City Hyatt - next to Reagan National Airport. Free shuttles will be provided, by the hotel, to and from the national airport and the metro stop. The meeting will begin with a general session at 1 PM on Monday Feb 6. A reception will be held that evening. Tuesday will feature morning and afternoon training sessions and our annual awards luncheon. Wednesday will feature a breakfast meeting with a congressional speaker, followed by a day of hill visits. The event will conclude with a reception on Wednesday evening.

February 6-8, 2006 " Hyatt Regency Crystal City At Washington National Airport " Washington, D.C.

REGISTRATION FORM

First Name _____
 Last Name _____
 Council Affiliation _____
 Mailing Address _____
 City, State, Zip _____
 Phone _____
 Fax _____
 E-mail address _____

REGISTRATION FEES AND PAYMENT INSTRUCTIONS

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early Registration (through January 15): | \$200.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Late Registration (on or after January 15): | \$250.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guest Fee for Awards Luncheon: | \$35.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guest Fee for Monday and Wednesday Reception: | \$21.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guest Fee for Wednesday Breakfast: | \$21.00 |

The registration fee includes two evening receptions on Monday and Wednesday, lunch on Tuesday, and breakfast on Wednesday.

Mail: Complete this form and mail with a check (payable to the National Association of RC&D Councils) to: Colleen Campbell NARC&DC National Conference, 11260 Roger Bacon Drive, Suite 402, Reston, VA 20190.

Questions: Please contact Andrew Gordon at 202-434-4780.

Cancellation and Returned Check Policy

Cancellation of registration must be received in writing no later than January 20, 2006 and is subject to a \$25 handling fee. No partial or full refund will be made after that date. If you are unable to attend, you may send a substitute. You must notify The National Association of RC&D Councils of the substitute's name. Returned checks are subject to a \$25 fee.

Hotel Information:

Blocks of rooms have been made at the:
 Hyatt Regency Crystal City At Washington National Airport
 2799 Jefferson Davis Highway
 Arlington, VA 22202 USA

Please call for reservations at 703.418.1234 or 1.800.233.1234 and ask for the RC&D Council rate of \$169.

Please make hotel arrangements early, the cut-off date for reservations at the reduced rate is January 20, 2006 and be sure to use Group Code "NARC."



Rep. Cleaver addressing the participants of the Forum on Job and Business Growth in Rural America.

2006 National Conference: CALL FOR SUCCESS STORIES

Share your knowledge and expertise! We are proud of the work we as volunteers do to enhance our local communities to increase conservation of natural resources, support economic development and enhance the environment and standard of living to all. The National Association of RC&D Council's purpose is to support the needs, and leverage the success of the local RC&D Councils for the benefit of that Council, and the State, Regional and National Associations. We invite you to share your success story and report vital information to our partners and supporters.

NARC&DC holds Two Bioenergy Forums Across the Nation

The NARC&DC, with assistance from the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, and several partners, including the Bitter Root RC&D Council, held two bioenergy forums across the Nation.

The first forum was entitled **Bioenergy: "Status, Trends, and Future of the South's Forest and Agricultural Biomass."** The forum was held to help address the rising energy prices and our nation's need to develop and procure renewable energy resources. The forum provided an introduction to the growing arena of biomass commercialization and utilization; and to the challenges and barriers faced in the promotion of the biomass alternative fuel source. The conference featured prominent speakers, such as, Susan LeVan-Green of the USDA's Forest Service and our own Ron Bell of the Ozark Foothills RC&D Council. In addition, other nationally recognized speakers from government and industry discussed system development, financial planning for new markets, state-level actions, and state organizations that are leading the way toward environmental and economical sustainability.



Participants at the
Forum on Job and
Business Growth in
Rural America.

STORY CATEGORIES

- (1) Land Conservation
- (2) Community Development
- (3) Land Management
- (4) Water Management
- (5) Council Self-Sufficiency

PROCEDURES Submit the items listed below via email or on disk

(Microsoft Word) no later

than **JANUARY 16, 2006** to: Colleen Campbell NARC&DC 2006 National Conference - Stories
ColleenCampbell@conferencemanagers.com
11260 Roger Bacon Drive, Suite 402
Reston, VA 20190 (703) 964-1240 x16.

1. Your Name, Organization, Title, Mailing Address, Telephone, Fax and Email address
2. Category (choose from list above)
3. Story Title
4. Story Description (limit 50 words)- the description will be used in the on-site program
5. Total Project Value
6. Federal RC&D Funds
7. Return on Federal Investment: Project Value/ Federal RC&D Funds (%)
8. Outcomes: (i.e. jobs created, people trained, etc.)

Only completed projects will be considered for a success story presentation.

All programs and services of the RC&D Councils are offered on a non-discriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital or family status, disability or political beliefs.

*"Bioenergy Gains
Popularity as
Energy Costs
Rise."*

The second forum was entitled **"When You Get Back Home" Partnering for Field-Level Solutions to Hazardous Fuel Reduction, Woody Biomass Utilization And Other Forest Health Issues.** This forum was a regional forum that focused on 14 states including, Montana, Idaho, Colorado, Utah, Washington, Oregon, Wyoming, Nevada, North and South Dakota,

California, Arizona, Alaska and New Mexico. It was designed to foster working relationships at the local level among conservation districts, RC&D Councils, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, county and other local units of government, state forestry agencies, state soil & water conservation agencies, and the Forest Service in solving woody biomass utilization issues. Speakers, such as, Robert Rizzo, from Mt. Wachusett Community College and member of the NARC&DC's National Energy Committee, and our own Russ Manwaring, Coordinator of the Southwest Idaho RC&D Council, shared on-the-ground experiences that illustrated the powerful role RC&D Councils and Conservation Districts can play in addressing forest health and biomass utilization in their communities. Electronic copies of the presenter's material and the NARC&DC's Bioenergy Fact Sheets, will be released on the NARC&DC website and sent to all councils in the next few weeks.

Partnership Alliance

These are very exciting times for the RC&D Organization. The National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils has begun an aggressive campaign to provide independent resources. We would like to begin to work toward building a fund which would eventually support the National office and provide awards and seed money for projects.

The first goal is to make the National office self supporting. We are actively seeking corporate sponsorship and that means being able to show that we are supported by our members! Your individual support is a major and significant part of this effort. It also sends a strong message that you support the great work that our councils are doing across the country.

The National office continuously brings our message to Congress and the Administration. In order to do this and to provide other services such as conferences, the Catalyst, monthly mailings, forums, training/workshops, websites, the list serv, the Grant Resource Center, Award programs, and general day to day information as needed by our councils. Show Your Support - Clip and Send to the National Association Office: 444 North Capitol St. NW, Suite 345 Washington, DC 20001

“Second National Forum on Jobs and Business Growth a Success.”

NARC&DC Holds Second Forum on Job and Business Growth in Rural America in Kansas City, MO

The NARC&DC, with assistance from the United States Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service, held its second forum on Job and Business Growth in Rural America at the Kauffman Foundation’s Conference Center in Kansas City, MO. The event attracted over 95 individuals from around the Nation, and highlighted the vital role that rural communities and entrepreneurs play in our Nation’s economic stability and growth. This year’s forum featured Congressman Emanuel Cleaver (D-MO) and Suzanne Mulvehill, MBA, President and Founder, of the Emotional Endurance Institute, as keynote speakers. Of the many highlights at this year’s forum were presentations on: Profiles of America; The economic and social character of rural America and its impact on conservation and RC&D Area Planning by Smith Covey, National RC&D Program Coordinator, USDA NRCS; and How to Start and Grow a Small Business by Ed Fritsch of the SCORE “Counselors to America’s



Small Business” program. The forum also highlighted topics such as: How Local Entrepreneurs Can Assist in the RC&D Area Planning Process to Create and Expand Local Business; The Utilization of Small Diameter and Underutilized Wood to Assist with Business Growth and Retention; and Alternative Enterprises, Agritourism

and Income-Producing Opportunities That Promotes Conservation on the Land. In addition, the Kauffman Foundation’s Director of Entrepreneurship, Munro Richardson, addressed the audience on the history of the Foundation and how local RC&D councils can be vital tools in working with the Foundation to promote entrepreneurial development across the Nation. Copies of the presenter’s material will be released on the NARC&DC website and sent to all councils in the next few weeks.



Gerald Willis, Special Assistant to Chief Knight, reporting on bioenergy resources for local RC&D Councils.

Participants of the Job Forum reporting from their breakout sessions.

Partnership Alliance Program Sign up for:

Out of This World (Lifetime)	\$500.00
Diamond (Yearly)	\$250.00
Platinum (Yearly)	\$100.00
Gold (Yearly)	\$75.00
Silver (Yearly)	\$ 50.00
Regular (Yearly)	\$25.00
Other	\$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

You will receive a NARC&DC pin and a card that shows you are a member in good standing.

Corporate Partnership

Chairman of Corporate Sponsorship for the National Board of Directors, Nedda Simon, is pleased to announce corporate partnerships with Caterpillar and Pioneer. Both corporations have provided support for the Leadership Program. Pioneer has provided additional support for a farm safety grant program. Details will be announced in the council mail. Both corporations are dedicated to improving the quality of life while sustaining the quality of our natural resources. We are excited to have them join us in our goals.

Regional Roundup Section

NEW ENGLAND REGION

*By James S. Sipperly,
President, New England
RC&D Councils*

The New England Region of RC&D Councils held their 2005 Annual Fall Conference on October 20-22, in Belfast Maine. The theme of the conference was "Our

fisheries: Past, Present and Future". The theme was appropriate due to adverse impacts and issues facing fisherman and resources throughout New England. Access to the coastal areas are threatened by development due to the pressure to build on the scenic coastline. Public access is becoming restricted as well. Tours included a visit to a federally owned hatchery/aquaculture facility targeted to restocking the population of wild North Atlantic salmon. New England's coast is home to a number of aquaculture businesses that raise finfish and shellfish. In Maine, aquaculture is a large part of the marine resource economy generating sales and revenue in excess of \$100 million annually.

The meeting also was a celebration of our 41st Anniversary as an association. The agenda was full including business meetings, awards, luncheons, and training workshops. The training provided by the National Board staff Donna Hunter on Grant Administration and Board Financial Responsibilities was excellent and well attended. Maine Senator

Dennis Damon, chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources, was a keynote speaker.

As president of the New England Region for the past year, I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the Executive Board: Peggy Fantozzi, Vice President; Frank Farnsworth, 2nd Vice President; Rudy Medeiros, Secretary, and Norris Conant, Treasurer. We all have strived to improve communication among the region's 15 councils. We have recently adopted an updated vision and mission statement and have developed a strategic plan. We have identified priority issues from that plan that include funding, communication, capacity building and leadership development. Frank Farnsworth has developed a list serve for our region. To post a message: rcdnewengland@yahoo.com, to subscribe: rcdnewengland-subscribe@yahoo.com.

The St John Aroostook RC&D Council celebrated their 40th Anniversary of service to Maine's northern regions. A booklet was developed to tell the success stories of the past 40 years of the Council. The New England Region is pursuing this concept on New England regional scale.

The meeting concluded with a successful auction. A portion of these funds typically are used to fund a Special Projects Fund, where Councils in New England can apply to fund small projects.

NORTH CENTRAL

*By Nedda Simon, President, North
Central RC&D Association*

The fall season is the time to harvest, finish projects around the house, and prepare for the winter. It is also the time for good Resource, Conservation, and Development meetings, projects to consider, begin and complete. Two important meetings are being planned for councils. The Leadership Forum in February in Washington D.C. and our national conference in Savannah, Georgia in June 2006. These meetings are so important for fostering our education and strengthening our program. Please plan to attend.

The North Central RC&D annual regional meeting will be held at the national conference next year, and then in 2007, Michigan will host our regional meeting.

As I write this article, I will be traveling to Maine to attend the New England Regional Meeting for Sharon Ruggi, our president.

Continued on Page 7



MT Energy Forum participants learning about the Darby Fuels for Schools Project.

North Central

Continued From Page 6

Please have a safe fall season - harvesting, hunting or whatever your activities.

PACIFIC RIM REGION

By Bob Jones, President, Pacific Rim Regional Association of RC&D Councils

The Pacific Rim Annual Meeting was held on the Big Island, Hawaii in October. The Big Island RC&D did a great job organizing and hosting the conference.

Attendees began the conference with an all-day training tour to the Natural Energy Lab of Hawaii Authority (NELHA) and the Kahua Ranch, as well as a brief stop of sugar cane fields that have been converted to growing trees. NELHA founded in 1974, began as an experimental lab to explore a wide spectrum of uses of the natural energy resources of the ocean and the coastal zone. It now boasts nearly 30 thriving businesses which generate \$30-40 million per year in total economic impact. The Kahua Ranch, is a family owned, self-sustaining ranch that operates off the grid on renewable energy, wind, solar with backup generators and are proud of their conservation. They have added agritourism to their business plan to educate and improve their sustainability.

Donna Hunter, NARC&DC did a fantastic job of providing financial and media training. Bobbi Jeanquart, Executive Director, NARC&DC brought us up to speed on funding and legislative issues, council standards and performance goals, and many of the programs that the National Office provides to all its member councils, including training, leadership forum, Circle of Diamonds, Grant Station, just to name a few. Sharon Ruggi, President of the National Association, gave us words of encouragement and offered National's support to all councils. Gerald Willis, Special Assistant to the Chief, echoed the Chief's support for the RC&D program.

Council success stories were shared by councils from all states in the PacRim Region, including farmers markets, renewable energy, restoring of native plants and reducing invasive plants, agritourism, water quality improvement, biomass, and conservation of natural resources.

The following officers were elected for the next two years; President, Bob Jones; Vice-President, Larry

Komata; Secretary, Wendell Black; and Treasurer, Gary Freeman, with Joan Smith as Past President.

The conference concluded with the awards ceremony honoring all those council members, coordinators, councils, and others that have done an exceptional job this past year. For more information about PacRim and it's councils, visit our website at: www.pacrimrcd.org.

WESTERN REGION REPORT

By Paul Calverley, President, Western RC&D Region

In August, as many of you know, Keith Kessler resigned as your president of the Western Region of NARC&DC. The Western Association Board asked if I would agree to step in and serve as acting president through the convention in Kearny, Nebraska in January. I agreed to give it a shot even though I know there is a man in Joe Leichtnam, the first vice president, who is fully capable to step up to the position. I appreciate the responsibility the board has put in my hands.

I have just had the pleasure of attending a conference on fuel reduction and woody biomass utilization in Missoula, Montana entitled "When You Get Back Home." This is an update on what's transpiring in the field of wood biomass as primarily a renewable energy source, and other use for small diameter wood. Wood biomass removal is a tremendous problem in most of the west region states. As one of the presenters noted, "It will go out in the back of a truck to be used or go out in a fire." Over 200 people attended this three day conference.

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NARC&DC Energy Committee member Robert Rizzo presenting at the MT Bioenergy Forum.

GA Bioenergy Forum participants Lori Barker and Ron Bell.

"Highlights From Your Region."

Gizilbil RC&D

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Western Region

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A key issue in the removal of woody biomass from the forest before it results in fueling monstrous wild fires is in its economic feasibility. In most cases no removal has been cost effective at lease in the short run. High fossil fuel prices are causing people to take a second look. Grants and incentives available through a plethora of agencies have been employed to get a start on an almost insurmountable task. Details of who has the funding can be found by referring to Steve Yadoff's presentation.

Steve is the National Coordinator for woody biomass utilization for the U. S. Forest Service in Washington D.C.

Tours included visits to one of the largest cardboard box makers operations in the U.S. that is using chips and other wood waste to make their products, a High School with a heating system that uses wood chips, a wood stove pellet making operation using Douglas Fir and Lodge Pole Pine as major components, and a sawmill operation where everything from a small diameter log is utilized.

There are several items to keep in mind when handling woody biomass:

- Startup costs for any operation to process woody biomass is expensive, easily running to six figures
- Grants and incentives are almost a must
- It's unwise to rely solely on Federal funding
- Some processors require a clean, abundant water supply
- Transportation systems to move products needs to be economical
- An adequate supply of raw material has to be in a fairly close proximity to the processor (Cost of getting material out of the woods is a break even proposition)
- A few operations toured would in all likely hood not have located in the Missoula area if they knew U.S. Forest Service timber sales would be almost nonexistent

As David Dodd, keynote speaker for the conference said, "The time is now for RC&Ds to exercise motivational leadership (Fossil fuel energy prices are skyrocketing, catastrophic wild fires or on the horizon and money is available to tackle the problem with woody biomass conversion. We as RC&Ds with viable partnerships need to confront the challenge before the crisis.



Gail Norton, US Secretary of Interior, pictured on the left with Reggie Skains, Past President, NARC&DC, and Sharon Ruggi, President, NARC&DC