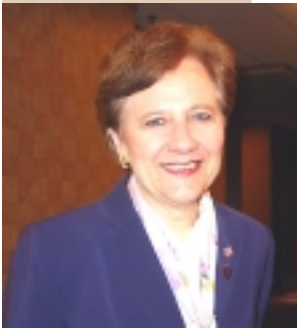


The National Catalyst

Volume XV, Issue 2, Summer 2005

Greetings From Your President

By Sharon Ruggi, President, NARC&DC



Sharon Ruggi,
President,
National Association
of RC&D Councils

It is with a great sense of pride in our councils that I write this article. Our National Association has been working hard to reinforce your messages to Congress. And Congress has heard loud and clear that RC&D is important to their constituents. At press time the House and Senate have restored funding to the RC&D program at \$51 million for all 375 councils. I have seen the 3-foot stack of copies of letters that went to Representatives and Senators and that is truly an awe inspiring sight. The budget process is not yet complete so stay tuned to our website for updates.

You have all heard me say that we cannot continue to say that we are "the best kept secret." This year has taught us exactly why we must endlessly promote the value of our projects. We will not continue to be successful by writing our Legislators once per year—there must be constant dialogue. Remember to send invitations to your Congressmen when celebrating the completion of a project. Write articles to be published in your local newspapers. Ask those who have benefited from your projects to send letters to Congress. And now is the perfect time to send a "thank you" to the Legislators for helping us with our budget crisis.

This should be a time of Council introspection. Is the value of your projects at least equal to the \$127,000 that Congress has appropriated for your Council? Is your Area Plan up-to-date, and is it a document that is a reflection of a true assessment of the needs in your Council area rather than just changing a few words of prior Plans in order to be able to put a new date on the Plan. Has your Council really thought about the changing demographics and is your Council being inclusive?

We are going to be under increasing pressure to be held accountable for the support we receive. One

of the best actions you can take is to join the National Association's Circle of Diamonds. There is no cost and takes only a small amount of time. I would truly like to have a list that includes all 375 Councils in order to prove that every Council is meeting the requirements of the Federal program.

In November, we are going to be holding our second Job and Business Growth Forum in Kansas City, MO at the Kauffman Foundation. Those who attended last year's event were extremely positive in their comments about the content of that meeting, and we are looking to expand upon the tools that were presented at that first meeting.

*"National
Conference,
June 18-20, 2006,
Savannah,
Georgia."*

We also hope that you are all planning on joining us next February for the 2006 Leadership Forum in Washington DC. Last year's Forum was our largest, and we are hoping that next year's will be even larger.

Our next National Conference will be held in Savannah, GA from June 18th-20th 2006. I have had the pleasure of visiting Savannah, and I can assure you that you are going to be extremely impressed with the city, the convention facilities and the program. Plan to bring your family!

In addition to the councils I also want to recognize Roberta Jeanquart, (Bobbi, our Executive Director), for the manner in which she so effectively orchestrated our Legislative effort that lead to this positive outlook. Bobbi's knowledge of "The Hill" was instrumental to our success, and it is impossible to articulate just how grateful we are to her. We also must thank Donna Hunter, Andrew Gordon and Monica Johnson for the extra effort and hours they devoted in preparing all of the materials that the Councils needed. We are truly blessed with a fantastic staff!

This issue features photos from the Golden Hills RC&D - Lewis & Clark Trail - Bicentennial Commemoration 2004-2006



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The Washington Report

By Roberta Jeanquart,
NARC&DC Executive Director

Congress heard loud and clear from council members across the country about the importance of RC&D and the need to fund all 375 RC&D councils. The House of Representatives funded the program at \$51.36 million and the Senate funded the program at \$51.228 million, the same level as last year. This is a huge victory given the overall federal budget constraints.



Senate Agriculture Committee profession staffer Betsy Croker, NASCAR driver Ward Burton, NACD CEO Krysta Harden and Executive Director of NARC&DC Roberta Jeanquart on Earth Day 2005 in Clover, Virginia at the Ward Burton Wildlife Foundation celebrating wetlands and the success of the WRP program.

Fun Country RC&D participates in a Rural Fire Protection program. This hydrant is being installed on a minority producers property in a historic black community in Carter County, Oklahoma. Those involved in the picture represent the local County Commissioner, regional Economic Development Authority and Fun Country RC&D.

Report language in the appropriations bill is

also extremely important to RC&D councils. Report language is direction from Congress to NRCS on how to use the funds provided. The report language follows:

The Committee has restored this account, rather than accepting the proposal to defund the 189 Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Councils that have been in existence for twenty years or more. The Committee would expect such a budget proposal to be based on the effectiveness and performance of councils rather than on council age. The Committee requests that NRCS work with the Councils to develop appropriate measures of effectiveness for both conservation and economic development. The Committee



expects the NRCS to promptly fill RC&D coordinator vacancies. The Committee expects support provided under this act to be allocated equitably among the 375 existing councils and that priority be given to providing every council a full-time coordinator.

NARC&DC requested the report language on coordinator vacancies, equitable allocations among all councils and the need to work with councils to identify effectiveness and performance measures in both conservation and economic development as a result of concerns councils raised with the national association. We will continue to pursue these issues on your behalf with NRCS. The funding level and report language are huge victories for RC&D given the federal budget constraints.

What's next? OMB developed the President's budget request and sited a concern about the lack of long term performance goals for RC&D. The NARC&DC has established a task force to look at these concerns and to make recommendations to NRCS on behalf of councils. We will be asking for advice from councils and look forward to receiving your input.

In addition, NARC&DC has a Farm Bill Task Force chaired by our Legislative Liaisons Jeanette Jamieson and Leroy Dangeau that will look at issues that need to be addressed for the long term future of the RC&D program.

In the coming months, Congress will work on a conference report for their appropriations bill. Stay tuned to our website at www.rcdnet.org for updates.

*"Stay tuned
at
www.rcdnet.org
for updates."*

NARC&DC Meeting Schedule

Dates	Meeting
July 22, 2005	Maine State Association Mtg.
Aug. 2-4, 2005	No. Carolina State Assoc. Mtg.
Aug. 4-6, 2005	Oklahoma State Assoc. Mtg.
Aug. 4-6, 2005	Tennessee State Assoc. Mtg.
Aug. 21-23, 2005	Kansas State Association Mtg.
Aug. 30-31, 2005	Minnesota State Assoc. Mtg.
Sept. 7-10, 2005	Southeast Regional Mtg.
Sept. 20-23, 2005	Mid-Atlantic Regional Mtg.
Sept. 22-23, 2005	Oregon State Association Mtg.
Sept. 26-27, 2005	California State Assoc. Mtg.
Oct. 4-6, 2005	Nebraska State Assoc. Mtg.
Oct. 20-23, 2005	New England Regional Mtg.
Oct. 25-27, 2005	Pac-Rim Regional Mtg.

NARC&DC Sponsors Two Bioenergy Conferences

As more and more councils are getting involved in alternative energy issues the NARC&DC, in cooperation with the NACD, is cosponsoring two conferences that directly impact Bioenergy in the United States.

The first conference will be held on August 29-31 in Athens, Georgia. This conference will discuss the "Status, Trends, and Future of the South's Forest and Agricultural Biomass." This conference is designed to provide an introduction to the growing arena of biomass commercialization and utilizing. It will also identify the challenges and barriers faced in the promotion of biomass as an alternative fuel source. The conference will feature prominent speakers such as Susan LeVan-Green of the USDA's Forest Service, Jim Higginbotham of the USDA's RD-Rural Utility Service, and our own Ron Bell of the Ozark Foothills RC&D Council.

The second conference entitled "When You Get Back Home," will be held on October 11-13 in Missoula, Montana. The conference will provide you the tools and resources to aid you in "Making Things Happen" at home. The second conference will feature prominent speakers such as Rebecca Watson, Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management at the U.S. Department of the Interior, Robert Rizzo, Mt. Wachusett Community College, MA and Member of the NARC&DC's National Energy Committee, and our own Russ Manwaring Coordinator of the Southwest Idaho RC&D Council.

What's different about these conferences is that Conservation Districts and RC&D Councils are the sponsors. It shows our organizations collaborative nature where Districts, RC&D's, and other community agencies and organization have come together to address the threat of wildfires and energy needs through fuel reduction and biomass utilization. These two forums are an ideal way to understand the importance of fostering new technologies and finding new ways to improve soil and water resources through collaborative and unique approaches.

A limited number of scholarships are available to Council members who wish to attend either conference. For more information please contact the National Association at (202) 434-4780. ■

NARC&DC to Hold its Second Forum on Job & Business Growth in Rural America!

On November 7-9, 2005 the NARC&DC will be holding its second Forum on Job and Business Growth in Rural America. The Forum will be held at the Kauffman Foundation's Conference Center



in
Kan-
sas

*"Job Growth is
Vital for Building
a Healthy
Community."*

City, MO. The goal of this Forum is to give you, the Council Members, additional resources on programs, services, and take home tools that provide job and business growth assistance to Councils in rural areas. The material presented at the forum will be designed to help build upon

our already successful community development components of the Area Plans. Our theme for this Forum is "Taking Rural Business Opportunities to the Next Level."

Don't miss your chance to learn about job and business growth for your RC&D Area! Keep an eye in early August to the NARC&DC's website at www.rcdnet.org for more information on this great forum. Attendance will be limited to the first 180 people registered, so register early to avoid being shut out!

Help us help you to "Make things Happen!" ■

*Lewis & Clark Trail -
Animals on the Trail
Demonstration -
Glenwood, Iowa*



Council Spotlight

Golden Hills RC&D - Iowa

The Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Commemoration will be observed in 2004-2006. Golden Hills RC&D is working with the Iowa Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Commission to plan and implement activities on the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail in Iowa. Partnerships have also been formed with the Nebraska Lewis & Clark Commission and the Omaha Tribe. Funding for various Lewis & Clark activities has been received from the National Park Service, Iowa West Foundation and Western Iowa Tourism Region.



Lewis & Clark Trail - Brownville, Nebraska - Sampling Military Camp Life

Passport Education Program

The purpose of this program is to provide a hands-on learning experience to visitors following the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail through Iowa and Nebraska. The program is designed to be a family-oriented

activity for all ages.

A series of educational sessions will be conducted at various locations along the Missouri River providing hands-on skills utilized by the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Tentative locations include Waubonsie State Park, Glenwood, Nebraska City, Fontanelle Forest, Western Historic Trails Center, Lewis & Clark State Park and Sioux City. Examples of session topics include Native American Living, Making Pemmican, Navigating by the Stars, Sketching Wildlife, Tanning Hides, Camp Set-up,

Lewis & Clark Trail - Omaha Tribe - Beads and Moccasins - Onawa, Iowa



The National Catalyst

Bull Boat Making, Native American Communication, Medical Remedies, Map Making, Food Gathering and Plant and Animal Identification.

The Passport Education Program was conducted from May to September in 2004 and will continue in 2005. Sessions will be scheduled to allow ample time for visiting other area attractions.

Passports were available at each session location and stamped to show participation in the session serving as a memento of the visitor's experience. The Passports contain Lewis & Clark history, visitor information and attractions in the area. ■

Regional Roundup

Mid-Atlantic Catalyst News

By Howard Coffield, President, Mid-Atlantic RC&D Association

The Annual Mid-Atlantic Conference will be held in West Point NY, September 20 – 23. The Conference is being hosted by the NY Federation of RC&D Councils.

"Send project descriptions and photos to NARC&DC."

The Potomac Headwater RC&D Council, WV has received a \$50,000 grant from the Forest Service for installation of dry hydrants throughout WV. Working with two other councils in WV the focus of the grant is aimed at critical urban/forest

interface where wildfires could have a significant economic Impact for property owners.

The Little Kanawha RC&D is hosting a one day grant writing workshop on July 13 in Cairo, West Virginia. For further information contact the RC&D office at 304-679-3639. The course is certified for Continuing Education Credits through West Virginia University.

As a result of a \$60,000.00 grant awarded to the Finger Lakes RC&D Council by the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, a team of volunteer bird watchers have spread out across Steuben, Schuyler, and Chemung Counties, investigating what birds are using local livestock pastures as a special habitat. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schuyler County is coordinating this research, with the cooperation of the Cornell Laboratory of

Continued on Page 5

Mid Atlantic

Continued From Page 4

Ornithology, Audubon-NY, and Cornell University's Department of Natural Resources.

South Jersey RC&D Council is expanding and revamping its Resource Information Serving Everyone (R.I.S.E.) weather stations. R.I.S.E. was developed and is maintained by the South Jersey RC&D Council. The R.I.S.E. system manages a network of weather stations that capture local weather data and calculates the water use of turf. R.I.S.E. can help reduce water use and non-point source pollution in both agricultural areas and around homes and businesses.

The Pennsylvania Stream Signage Program, that is funded by the Department of Environmental Protection's Growing Greener Program, makes identifying waterways crossed while traveling Pennsylvania's roads easier than ever. This project will also raise awareness, connect people to their watersheds, and encourage them to protect their water resources. 3,500 signs have been installed on 630 waterways all over Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania RC&D Annual Conference, hosted by Community Partnership RC&D (formerly Mid-State RC&D) is being held August 30-31 in Burnham. As in the past, this conference promises to be both informative and a time to renew old acquaintances as well as make new ones.

North Central Regional News

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

Hello to all our friends in Resource Conservation & Development. Has a nice ring to it, doesn't it? At our regional meeting we were reminded to use the whole organizational name when speaking to those who might be unfamiliar with our work. I have been trying to do that.

In the past few months we certainly have made our name known in Washington and this has helped us all be aware of the importance of contacts and communication. We have learned that we all benefit if we think of ourselves as a national organization, working together to have our work noticed. Out of this urgent need has come a way for us to think out of our own councils, states, and regions and bring

our united mission to those who need to hear it. Our elected officials are hearing us.

Let me urge you to sit down with your local businesses and organizations and offer to be a partner with them. They might just assume you are unable to help them prosper. On a trip back to my birthplace, I was reminded of how a little town could have its lifeblood siphoned off by loss of schools and businesses. Some rural communities need real help and we can find the way for them to turn around and feel good about themselves again. Resource, Conservation, and Development can be the answer.

Southeast Regional News

By Forest Hill, RC&D Coordinator, Two Rivers RC&D

PROJECT WINGS (Wildlife Incentives for Nongame and Game Species)

Georgia lands full of trophy bucks, plentiful quail, turkey and assorted songbirds. Sounds like a wildlife enthusiasts paradise, doesn't it? Well, it is and that's exactly what the founders of Project WINGS had in mind when this wildlife initiative was launched in 1996.

Brought about by RC&D council member's deep desire to expand wildlife habitat coupled with utility company needs to better manage transmission lands, Wildlife Incentives for Nongame and Game Species (WINGS) has transformed more than 13,000 acres of brush-covered utility rights-of-ways into productive wildlife

Continued on Page 6



Lewis & Clark Trail - Youth shown participating in program - Loess Hills National Scenic Byway

*"RC&D
Continues to
Improve Life in
Rural America."*



Lewis & Clark Trail - Brownville, Nebraska - Demonstration of Military Music

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Southeast Region
Continued From Page 5

habitat; a transformation that has not only earned national recognition, but one that has evolved into a government-private sector model that has already been replicated in three other states.



*Lewis & Clark State
Park - Onawa, Iowa -
Keelboat*

It is the project's simplicity and delivery system that makes it so successful. Utility companies must manage vegetation beneath electrical lines and above buried gas lines. If not managed, tall woody growth and deep rooted plants could quickly disrupt the

vast network of transmission corridors that power our homes, businesses and factories. Recognizing this basic principle of "service delivery", the Two Rivers RC&D Council devised a simplistic approach for awarding corporate cash grants to groups and individuals coupled with the statewide delivery of wildlife planning assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The mechanics of the project offers a three-year agreement with individuals (many of which are

sportsmen) to convert these idle transmission lands into productive wildlife habitat by following a management plan. Participants can do the work themselves. Once these wildlife practices are completed, participants then receive individual cash grants up to \$1,500. Seed, fertilizer, etc. receipts are not required. Typical management practices include planting temporary wildlife foods such as wheat, clover, oats, rye, millets or other cool season mixtures as well as permanent forages like bahia, chufas and lespedezas. Mowing can also be included in the management, if immediately followed by disking to encourage native forbs, grasses and legumes.

What started as a modest beginning with one utility has now grown into a 1.7 million dollar grants program. Georgia Power and the Georgia NRCS are to be applauded for their leadership and commitment to this wildlife enhancement effort. Since 1996, they have since been joined by four additional utilities, numerous state and national wildlife organizations and the Georgia Forestry Commission. Again, the success of Project WINGS can be attributed to the project's simplistic design as well as the unique private sector-government partnership which continues to serve Georgians and the environment we all share.