

The National Catalyst

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“Going Green”

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RC&D Week Celebrations Honor Councils

Across the country, RC&D Week was celebrated from September 20 to the 26th. Every year, National RC&D Week commemorates the anniversary of the designation of the first 10 RC&D Areas by Congress. RC&D Week was designed to celebrate the growth and success of the program. In these times of economic downturns, RC&D Councils are invaluable in solving community problems in both conservation and community development. The National Board would like to congratulate Councils across the nation who celebrated the success of the program.

Here are examples of RC&D Councils that celebrated RC&D Week this year:

In Alabama, the Alabama Association of RC&D Councils asked Alabama Governor Bob Riley to recognize the RC&D program by officially proclaiming the fourth week in September to be RC&D Week. Alabama Mountain, Rivers, and Valleys RC&D Council also asked the Cullman County Commission to sign a similar proclamation in honor of their council. Brief ceremonies (with photo ops) commemorated both occasions.

Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D Council of Georgia provided outreach grants of \$1,000 each to the two area food banks that service the Council's 13-county area, the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia and the Georgia Mountain Food Bank. Representatives from the two organizations were invited to the council's September meeting, where the checks were presented to them.

King's Mark RC&D Council in Connecticut sponsored a recreational "Tour des Farms" bicycle ride on September 26 that provided riders with the opportunity to stop and buy produce from local farms. The ride began at the Jones Family Farm, a winery in Shelton, Connecticut, and continued to 15 area farms along routes of various distances. Jim Himes, one of Connecticut's members in the US House of Representatives, participated in the ride, and Rosa DeLauro, another Representative from Connecticut and Chair of the House Committee on Agricultural Appropriations, spoke at the accompanying ceremonies. NRCS volunteers picked up the purchases made by riders and delivered them to a collection point at the end of the route.

For more information on Council Celebrations see the website at www.rcdnet.org

NARC&DC National Conference

From June 14 through 17, council members, coordinators, and other RC&D partners from all around the country gathered in Albuquerque, New Mexico at the Triennial National Resource Conservation and Development Councils Conference. From the time the doors opened, a spirit of energy filled the convention center. Old friendships were renewed and new ones begun. All were inspired by the lessons and stories that show just how RC&D Councils are "Making Things Happen" throughout the country.

The many training sessions were the main feature of the conference. A total of 68 sessions explored



topics from council management principles to creating new partnerships to innovative strategies

National Conference continued on page 4

President's Report



Joan Smith Freeman

By Joan Smith Freeman

Message from your President

Greetings RC&D Council members and Partners!

It has been a very busy summer. Our

National Conference kicked off the season with a very successful event in Albuquerque, New Mexico with nearly 900 people in attendance! A very big thank you to all who participated and helped plan this momentous event! New Mexico Councils and the Western Region did an excellent job! Thank you, Bob Perry and your National Conference Planning Committee for a job well done.

Many of you have asked about the summary from the Wednesday Facilitated Sessions at the conference. They are on the NARC&DC's website at www.rcdnet.org. We appreciate all the good comments! The National Board will be discussing the results at our next board meeting the end of October in Portland Maine.

As many of you know, our Executive Director, Roberta Jeanquart announced that she was accepting a new position at our National Conference. She left our employment in June after 9 years. We truly appreciate all the good work she did for us over the years and wish her the best at her new job with the Department of Agriculture.

We conducted a search nationwide for a new Executive Director. We received many excellent applications and after interviewing the most qualified candidates we are pleased to announce that we selected John Haugen who has over 30 years experience on Capitol Hill. John resides in Florida and will begin duties as our new Executive Director on September 10, 2009. We are looking forward to working with John and will be introducing him to you in the coming months.

I want to make sure that all Councils are aware that the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee language would move RC&D funding to the Natural Resources Conservation Service Conservation Operations or CO account. What does this mean for RC&D?

- 1) RC&D Program support would not be a standalone line item;
- 2) RC&D Funding would be in direct competition with other USDA Conservation Programs (with limited funding and many needs this could be detrimental to our Program);
- 3) The Secretary of Agriculture and NRCS would decide which councils will receive funding based upon the notion of "Meritorious" Councils. No one has been able to tell us the definition of "Meritorious". This could impact all Councils no matter what good work you are doing in your local community. If meritorious is deemed completion of conservation projects and your Council is working on community and economic development – you may be deemed non-meritorious. No one knows at this time

(President continued to page 3)

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New Executive Director Announced

The National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils, INC (RC&D) is pleased to announce our new Executive Director, John Haugen.

Mr. Haugen brings thirty years of Capitol Hill experience in all facets of the legislative process with particular emphasis on agriculture, energy and the environment to his new job. Twenty-six of those thirty years on Capitol Hill were spent working for Congressman Charlie Stenholm (D-TX). The last two years were spent working for

Congressman Bob Goodlatte (R-VA). John has served as Communications Director and Deputy Chief of Staff/Press Secretary to the House Committee on Agriculture, which is one of the most bipartisan committees in Congress. In addition, he brings experience in press and media relations, leadership and fundraising.

John will begin his new duties on September 10. We are all looking forward to working with him and are excited to introduce him to all our Councils.

Washington Report: An Appeal to Congress

The Resource Conservation and Development Councils (RC&D), the core of the RC&D Area, are private nonprofit corporations, not federal or state agencies. Since RC&D Councils are not entities of government, but rather the citizen leaders in each of their Areas, the Council is not limited by the usual policies and constraints of local state and Federal government programs in the kinds of issues they decide to address or how they decide to address them. RC&D Council Members are volunteers who serve their area in an effort to build upon long-range resource development to improve areas based on local needs and priorities.

The RC&D Councils are comprised of several thousand volunteers who serve their communities in all 50 states and territories. Because local people are best able to determine the needs of and create solutions for their community, RC&D brings diverse groups of local volunteers together in a special partnership to identify problems, establish goals, and develop and implement plans that will make their community a better place to live.

At a local level, the program is carried out by a RC&D Council, and a RC&D Coordinator, within the context of the RC&D Area. Traditionally the RC&D program focused primarily on natural resource issues and worked primarily with NRCS. In the recent years however, the need for communities to balance their use of natural resources with economic and community development has resulted in new RC&D strategies that focus on overall community

sustainability and working with more government agencies.

With our budget into Conservation Operations, where we will have to compete for dollars to keep our Coordinators and have our councils judged on if they are “meritorious” by some standard that no one can devise is courting disaster. Losing the status of a standalone program and dumped into CO to compete, means less time spent getting match funds to complete our projects and more frustration for our volunteers.

We urge you to strongly support the language provided in the House Agriculture bill that maintains RC&D funding at a minimum of \$50,730,000 as a separate line item fund as has been historically done. We will never be a top down program, we do not fit into the OMB standard but we do what no other volunteer organization can do for this country. And we do it well. As non-profits, we are striving to be transparent and fiscally responsible. Please do not endanger this program. Give us a few years without having to fight for basic funding and you will be proud of the program that you created to address communities suffering from economic downturns.

RC&D Councils deliver for our country. We need your support. On behalf of our thousands of volunteers, thank you for your consideration.

(President continued from page 2)

As this legislation goes to conference, it is critical for councils to encourage the House to stand firm and to request that the House language be used for the RC&D program at conference. We must call and ask the Senate to defer to the House language.

Please ask your Member of Congress (both House and Senate) to support the House language by having your Member of Congress call the Chair or Ranking Member of the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee.

Who should your Member of Congress contact on the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee?

House:

Chair – Rosa DeLauro – CT

Ranking Member – Jack Kingston – GA

Senate:

Chair – Herb Kohl – WI


Ranking Member – Sam Brownback – KS

The RC&D program is a success story. To continue to ensure that your Council receives funding, and operates as a standalone entity, it is imperative that the RC&D program be funded at conference with the House language.

PLEASE CALL!

We are aware that House support is strong and Senate support is not as strong as we would like it to be. We are hearing that Senators and their DC staff are not aware of Council activity in all states. We have been asked to provide a list of the status of area and annual plans.

It is critical that you let your members of Congress know what is going on in your local area. It is also critical that you ensure that not only the district staff knows the program, but the DC staff as well. If you need help in contacting DC staffs, call our office and we will be more than happy to assist you in getting your message to Washington.





**Albuquerque BioPark
Aquarium**

RC&D- Making Things Happen!



**Local Dance Group
at Banquet**

National Conference*(continued from page 1)*

for natural resource conservation. Training sessions combined informative talks by experts from the public and private sectors with RC&D Council success story presentations by council members and coordinators. The seminar rooms were packed! Most attendees thought that the training sessions were the most valuable element of the conference.

There were several other important events on the schedule. The Resources Conservation Act (RCA) Listening Session provided the USDA with valuable feedback on conservation priorities. Second, facilitated discussion sessions focused on RC&D program performance and expectations. Attendees from Councils expressed their views on all aspects of the RC&D program and listed the things they most need from the NARC&DC, their regional and state associations, and the NRCS. Finally, exhibits staffed by conference sponsors and posters highlighting Council projects were open throughout the conference. They provided the opportunity to network with representatives from sponsoring organizations and further information to motivate new Council initiatives.

The conference was not all work, though. There were other events that motivated attendees or gave them the chance to relax and experience the culture of the southwest. The keynote speaker at the opening general session, Dr. Lowell Catlett, drew rave reviews for his dynamic style and vivid vision of a sustainable future. On Tuesday evening we visited the Albuquerque BioPark, which includes a wonderful aquarium and beautiful gardens, and watched a group of Aztec

dancers. Throughout the week we enjoyed the bright New Mexican sunshine – it was no surprise to anyone that the state symbol is a red sun on a yellow field!

The final highlight was the awards banquet, where the national board honored an array of great achievements. After a three-course meal and a show of local folk dancing, winners of the National Awards were announced.

This year's RC&D Hall of Fame inductee was Richard Bolli, honored for his 35 years of leadership in roles as diverse as council coordinator at Wes-Min and Golden Hills RC&D Councils, regional coordinator, national official, and now volunteer at Loup Basin RC&D Council in central Nebraska. His life has truly been dedicated to the RC&D program.

The six annual awards were announced:

- * Outstanding Performance by a Council: Northwest California RC&D Council
- * Outstanding Performance by a Coordinator: Charlie Meek of Northwest Alabama RC&D Council in Tuscumbia, Alabama
- * Outstanding Program Assistant: Nancy Lazenby of Southwest Mississippi RC&D Council in Brookhaven, Mississippi
- * Outstanding Performance by a Council Member: Wendy Crager of Rolling Hills RC&D Council in Cedartown, Georgia
- * Outstanding Supporting Organization: Missouri Department of Conservation
- * Outstanding Youth Involvement: Kansas Natural Resource Foundation

To close the evening and the conference, all current members of the Circle of Diamonds were recognized by the regional association presidents and received commemorative plaques made of Vermont maple and special quartz crystals mined in New York.

Hall of Fame Inductee

***Congratulations
Richard Bolli***

Richard Bolli with Awards Committee



Left to right: Robert Harbison, Olga Walters, Howard Coffield, Richard Bolli, Joan Smith Freeman

Outstanding Performance by a Coordinator



**Charlie Meeks
Northwest Alabama RC&D Council**

Outstanding Performance by a Council Member



**Wendy Crager
Rolling Hills RC&D Council**

Congratulations Award Winners!

Outstanding Program Assistant



**Nancy Lazenby
Southwest Mississippi RC&D Council**

Outstanding Performance by a Council



Northwest California RC&D Council

Congratulations Award Winners!

Outstanding Youth Involvement

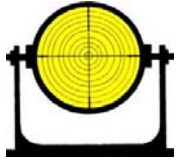


Kansas Natural Resource Foundation

Outstanding Supporting Organization



Missouri Department of Conservation



In the Spotlight...

New Programs and Services

New Service: Conservation Partner Membership

In an effort to provide enhanced services to our members, the NARC&DC is expanding its voluntary Conservation Partnership membership to Regional and State Associations. Regional and State Associations that join will receive the following services:

- 1) Member database maintenance;
- 2) Invitation for State or Regional Board members to NARC&DC special events;
- 3) Advance notice of NARC&DC events;
- 4) Ability to post events, workshops, seminars, and classes on the NARC&DC website;
- 5) Access to GrantStation Pro Membership (starting October of 2009); and
- 6) Basic meeting planning;
 - a. Includes agenda template;
 - b. Invites for national VIP's;
 - c. Training topics and contacts; and
 - d. Initial hotel contract negotiation.
- 7) Regional dues membership includes the ability to access web and/or telephone conferencing services. Conferences will cost as

little as 9 cents per minute per line for voice and 12 cents per minute per line for voice and web.

Basic annual membership dues will be \$1000 for a Regional Association and \$750 for a State Association.

Free Service for Member Councils:

In an effort to provide more services to local RC&D Councils, the NARC&DC, as part of annual dues, has purchased membership for all dues paying Councils to the GrantStation Pro, a value of over \$599.00 per year. Access to GrantStation Pro will help your local Council increase its funding possibilities. Membership includes online access to thousands of active national and regional grantmakers. You'll be able to quickly identify grantmakers with a specific geographic focus and match grantmaker preferences to your particular needs. You'll also have access to frequent updates of Federal grant opportunities and live links to State grantmaking agencies.

Meetings

Nebraska State Association

October 4-6, 2009

Illinois State Association

October 14-15, 2009

California State Association

October 21-23, 2009

West Virginia State Association

October 27-29, 2009

New England Regional

Portland, Maine
October 29-31, 2009

National Board Meeting

October 31- November 1, 2009

North Central Regional

April 11-14, 2010

Southeast Regional Meeting

Biloxi, Mississippi
September 22-25, 2010

Regional Happenings...

Mid-Atlantic Jim Ali, Secretary

At the Mid-Atlantic Annual meeting held in Albuquerque, NM, Pat Pinnell was appointed Treasurer and Olga Walter was appointed Vice President. The appointments were made since a quorum was not present.

Tour des Farms, developed as both a fundraiser for the First State Council and a means of spotlighting local farm stands and the Burlington County Farmland Preservation Program, a total of 194 riders wound their way through picturesque agricultural landscapes while stopping along the way to purchase locally grown farm products. Riders generated over \$1,400 in total farm sales directly related to the Tour.

Central NY Council - the "Chenango Bounty: Farmers Market at Your Door" project has expanded into a 2nd county and is now known as "Chenango-Madison Bounty". It has been delivering food since November 2007. As of

Week #74 local food sales have totaled \$133,819 with \$103,041 going into farmers' & local processors' pockets.

Currently the Finger Lakes RC&D Council is administering two federal grants which are providing the Council the opportunity to demonstrate the use of alternative energy (wind & solar) for powering livestock watering systems.

Greater Adirondack - the Venison Donation Program continues to grow, thanks to the cooperation between hunters and meat processors across New York State. The past year saw the donations grow to over 887 pounds of venison donated, providing 3,548 servings for the needy in their area. The NY Federation of RC&D's is coordinating the Venison Donation program throughout the state.

The Lower Hudson / Long Island RC&D Council and The Town of Orangetown Highway Depart-

Regional Happenings *continued on page 7*

ment are working with NY State Energy Research Development Agency to install a biomass furnace as a demonstration of an alternative heating source.

Capitol RC&D -the Claremont Community Gardens Project-The goal of the project is to develop an effective horticultural therapy program through the installation of garden sites within the Claremont Nursing and Rehabilitation Center (CNRC) in Cumberland County, PA. The CNRC is a county-owned facility that houses 270 patients, an adult and child daycare facility and is surrounded by a grounds area that historically was the county farm.

In an effort to improve water quality on livestock farms in northeast PA, Endless Mountains and Pocono NE RC&D and Northeast Project Grass are implementing a program that provides incentives to farmers for converting cropping acres into intensively managed pasture / hayland acres. Through this project we will be converting 450 acres to pasture / hayland and installing 10 solar powered watering systems.

Northern Panhandle, Mountain, and Great Kanawha Councils are all involved with Project Sharing. The RC&D Councils are helping to coordinate this effort in partnership with local non-profits who need to find additional sources of products to distribute to the underprivileged families or groups in the region. Surplus items are trucked in to the RC&D Area, unloaded to a warehouse & distributed to needy, local non-profits.

New England **John Guskowski, President**

New England RC&D Association to Host Key Conference, National Board

While most of the other Regional Associations held business meetings at the National Conference in Albuquerque, the New England RC&D Association was busily planning its Fall Conference to be held in Portland, Maine. In an effort to expand beyond its traditional business meeting format, the New England Association, led by the Maine State Association, is planning a larger, topic-driven program entitled "New England: Feeding Ourselves." This conference, to be held October 29-31, 2009 at the Eastland Park Hotel, seeks to respond to the increasing awareness and importance of maintaining and encouraging local agricultural viability. In addition to RC&D business meetings, conference participants will take part in concurrent workshops focused on 8 key elements of a successful local food system: Production, Processing, Marketing, Transportation, Financing, Education, Research, and Technology Transfer. These sessions will feature expert speakers on each topic and examples of successful projects supported by the New England RC&D Councils. It is hoped that the conference topic, speakers, and focus will elicit attendance well beyond the traditional RC&D conference participants and

will include a more active involvement of USDA at the highest levels.

Immediately following the conference, the New England Association will host a meeting of the NARC&DC Board of Directors in their first official visit to the region. New England Region President John Guskowski stated "We are thrilled to have the National RC&D Board agree to make the trip up to Maine in support of the New England Region's conference for their Board meeting. The conference topic and Board participation make for a tremendous opportunity for the New England Councils to show off the important work they are doing on behalf of local agriculture throughout the region."

More information on the conference can be found at www.newenglandrcd.org or by contacting Mark Hews at threshold@gwi.net.

Pacific Rim **Gary Freeman, President**

Pac Rim held its annual meeting in conjunction with the outstanding National RC&D Conference in Albuquerque. It was well attended by our councils and coordinators with nearly 75 attendees from all over our region. There were council members from all corners of our region, from the North part of Alaska to American Samoa to Nevada.

At the business meeting Pac Rim elected new officers for the next two years. The new officers are: President, Gary Freeman, Central Sacramento Valley RC&D, California; Vice President, Darci Salmon, Matsu RC&D, Alaska; Treasurer, Patrick Truman, Northwest California RC&D, California; Secretary, Laurelle Hughes, High Desert Nevada RC&D, Nevada; Past President, Bob Jones, SW Oregon RC&D, Oregon. We extend a big thank you to Bob Jones for his leadership of the Pac Rim during the last four years.

During our strategic planning session we identified two major goals; to assist our councils who need help or technical assistance and to look for new opportunities to help fund the ongoing programs of our councils and the Pac Rim. Our region will also continue to focus on renewable energy programs and projects.

The 2010 Pac Rim annual meeting will be held in mid-September, 2010. It will be held in the great state of Alaska. The location has not yet been determined. Our first Planning has already taken place with Alaska and the Pac Rim officers to ensure that the conference will showcase the unique RC&D projects including conservation projects and opportunities.

The Pacific Rim region looks forward to seeing council members from RC&D areas from all over the nation at our annual meeting in Alaska.

Giziibii RC&D
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Return Service Requested

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	_____
Platinum (Yearly)	\$100.00	_____
Gold (Yearly)	\$ 75.00	_____
Silver (Yearly)	\$ 50.00	_____
Regular (Yearly)	\$ 25.00	_____
Additional Donation	\$	_____
	Total \$	_____

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

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

Please mail to:

Partnership Alliance Program
National Association of RC & D Councils
444 North Capitol St. NW, Suite 345
Washington, DC 20001

Any questions?

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