

The National Catalyst

Volume XVIII, Issue 2

August 2007

A Publication of the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils



September 23 - 29, 2007

Councils Across the Nation to Observe RC&D Week

In this Issue

- ◆ National RC&D Week 1
- ◆ Goodsearch 1
- ◆ Circle of Diamonds 1
- ◆ President's Report 2
- ◆ Executive Director's Report 2
- ◆ Council in Spotlight 3
- ◆ Energy Forum 4
- ◆ Risk Management for Councils 5
- ◆ Recycle First 5
- ◆ Legislative Update 6

Resource Conservation and Development Councils across the nation will be celebrating RC&D week, September 23-29, 2007. RC&D week coincides with the anniversary of the founding of the Resource Conservation and Development Program in September 1964.

Have you ever heard of RC&D as the best kept secret? RC&D week is an effort to better market the RC&D concept and the accomplishments of Councils nationally. We encourage all Councils to participate. Involve your local elected officials and local press in an

Fundraising Option: Goodsearch.com

In an effort to hold dues at their current level and raise unrestricted funds for our legislative efforts, the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils, Inc. has signed up with www.goodsearch.com

GoodSearch.com is a new search engine that donates half its revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. You use it just as you would any search engine, and it's powered by Yahoo!, so you get great results.

Just go to www.goodsearch.com and be sure to enter National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils, Inc. as the charity you want to support. Just 500 of us searching four times a day will raise about \$7300 in a year without anyone spending a dime!

event which highlights the accomplishments of your Council. Suggestions from Councils have included an open house, a field tour, or ribbon cutting.

Councils have also used this opportunity to have resolutions passed in their towns and counties celebrating the role of RC&D in the community. The National Association will be sending sample resolutions, press releases and letters to the editor which can be adapted for your local use. Please join this effort to raise the profile of RC&D nationally.

Circle of Diamonds Becomes Priority

The Board of Directors of the National Association of RC&D Councils unanimously agreed in June to make the Circle of Diamonds a National priority. President Ruggi remarked that "It is our goal that by this time next year; at least one-half of our membership will be enrolled in the Circle of Diamonds!" Further, she noted that "Congress has invested in RC&D because of our track record. As such, we can demonstrate that our Councils are doing well by showing Congress that we have internal controls that ensure their investment is wise, sustainable, and brings forth great returns!"

The "Circle of Diamonds" is a unique program where members of the Circle will have proven their exemplary skills, public accountability, and their ability to achieve specific benchmarks set

See CIRCLE, Page. 5, Col 1

President's Report

From the Top

The National Catalyst

Published quarterly by the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils, Inc.

444 North Capitol Street,
NW Suite 345
Washington, DC 20001

Tel: 202-434-4780
Fax: 202-434-4783
<http://www.rcdnet.org>

President: Sharon Ruggi
Executive Director:
Roberta Jeanquart,
Editor: Andrew Gordon
Volunteer Editor: Ron Page

Distributed by:
Giziibii RC&D
3217 Bemidji Avenue N
Bemidji, MN 56601



Thanks for all your help on the legislative activities. The process has been a long one but I am hopeful our activities will pay off in August. This fall I will be traveling to the regional meetings in

Pac-Rim, Mid-Atlantic, New England, and Southeast. I look forward to seeing you there.

The NARC&DC will begin a series of on-line surveys to gather your feedback on our operations. We want to be sure that we are producing valuable and relevant services for your Councils.

This year the National Association is updat-

ing our strategic plan. We have designed a Council member survey that will help us identify the critical issues Councils are working on and their funding sources. The survey also asks council members to rate the effectiveness of our services. In addition, we ask for your suggestions on new services, training needs and for an evaluation of the partnerships we have entered on your behalf.

Please be sure that at least one person from your Council fills out this survey so that we can use the information in our strategic planning process. We ask that surveys be completed by August 17 so that we can review the material prior to our strategic planning session in late fall.

To take part in this survey, please contact Andrew Gordon, Director of Programs, gordon@sso.org.

See **PRESIDENT**, Page 4, Col. 2

Executive Director's Report

Bobbi's Report



NARC&DC is your eyes and ears in DC and there are many issues to watch, beyond the funding and farm bill legislative process.

First and foremost, the new NRCS RC&D program manual will be released shortly. The manual, which governs the operations of the RC&D program is expected to have new guidance on the area planning process. This policy manual outlines the operations of the RC&D program. Coordinators activities are emphasized and highlighted in this manual. As council members we need to be aware that this manual will change the Area and Annual

planning requirements to include SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-Oriented, and Time-Bound) Goals, Objectives and Strategies. The new format for Area and Annual plans will be phased in as plans are revised over the next 5 years. The National Association has a training program on the new Area planning process that is available for State and Regional meetings at no cost. Remember, all Councils need to have an area plan updated within the last five years and on file at NRCS headquarters in order to receive NRCS support (a Coordinator, office and equipment).

Another issue that is moving out in some states is a Memorandum of Understanding between local Councils and NRCS. NRCS has started this effort as a way to improve communications and create a better understanding

See **EXEC. DIR.**, Page 4, Col. 2

Council in the Spotlight . . .

GLACIERLAND - Going Strong After 12 Years



Full Council meets on site in preparation for training session.



Group observes demonstration on safe use of chainsaws.



Committee ponders ways to educate landowners on sustainable forestry techniques.

Located in the northeastern part of Wisconsin, Glacierland has set the pace for excellence since its organization in March 1994. This nine-county area consists of the counties of Brown, Calumet, Door, Fond du Lac, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Outagamie, Sheboygan, and Winnebago.

As one council member put it, “The ideal situation and one the Glacierland RC&D would like to strive for, is a balance of controlled urban development, keeping in mind the benefits of nature and necessary functional needs wherever possible, and the preservation, conservation and useful production of our natural resources.”

Operating on an annual budget of around \$100,000 the council has been very active in the area of renewable energy, holding major conference and several workshops on the subject, while at the same time continuing to lead the way in sustainable farming, forestry and outreach efforts. Under the leadership of President Jack VanDixhorn, the Onieda Nation has become an active member of the board, as the council reaches out to other under-represented groups as well.

Glacierland is one of the first to venture into the area of grazing of non-traditional animals, producing guides for five different animals. They also have been administering grants which provide for planting buffer strips along waterways in northeast Wisconsin to help preserve fish habitat.

The council applied for and was honored with a place in the Circle of Diamonds, further showing their dedicated spirit to “Making Things Happen.”

Additional information about the council’s efforts may be obtained by accessing their website at www.glacierlandrcd.org.

Glacierland is Successful.

How Does Your Council Compare?

RC&D - Making Things Happen!

Did you know?

- ↑ Work began in the formation of the National Association in 1986.
- ↑ Each regional president contributed \$50 from his/her own pocket to cover postage.
- ↑ The NARC&DC became a not-for-profit corporation in April of 1989.
- ↑ Mary Seccombe was elected the first President and served in that capacity until 1997.

PRESIDENT, *from Page 2*

Later this summer, we will also conduct a Council diversity survey to find out how our training and education materials are assisting you to increase Council diversity. We also want to know how you, the local Council, use this material. Finally, we would also like to do a pre-2009 National Tri-Annual Conference survey to gather your input into the types of speakers, programs and training that will be offered at National Conference in Albuquerque in June 2009.

Finally, thanks to all the Councils who have paid dues to the National Association. Your support enables us to provide you with the valuable advocacy services local Councils need here in Washington to survive. Timely dues payment has been critically important to us in this year when we are dealing with both a budget battle and the Farm Bill.

Energy Forum Teaches Farm Efficiency

Building on Thomas Jefferson's vision that "Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens," the National Association of RC&D Councils hosted the National Energy Conservation Opportunities on the Farm Training Conference on June 11-12 in Savannah, GA. The conference



brought together over 70 individuals from around the United States in an effort to help facilitate our Nation's energy sustainability. The training helped participants understand how energy is used

EXEC. DIR, *from Page 2*

of the Council versus NRCS responsibilities. Councils need to carefully review these MOU's prior to signing. The national board of directors looked at one state's MOU and suggested that it should not be adopted in its current format.

The board of directors wants Councils to know that MOUs are negotiated agreements of the partnership between NRCS and RC&D Councils. Councils should not sign anything they do not understand and Councils may want to use this opportunity to address concerns they have about RC&D in their state. Councils also need to know that they do not need to sign an MOU in order to receive NRCS support. Councils should feel free to ask for clarification on issues of concern and also suggest provisions that they want included in the MOU. If you are uncertain about the provisions of the MOU, talk with your program manager or send it over to the National Association staff to review. Our e-mail address is narcdc@rednet.org.

on farms, and how to identify efficiency improvements.

The event concluded with an onsite evaluation, of Ottawa Farms in Bloomingdale, GA, where participants learned from practical examples of energy savings on the farm, which could help farmers increase farm income.

Additional conferences and training events are being planned around the United States, so look to the NARC&DC's website for more information!



Council Skill Building

Councils Must Practice Risk Management

Does your Council do projects in the community or act as a pass through for funding? In either case, your Council, as an independent non-profit organization, should follow good business management practices to guard itself against the threat of lawsuits. While even the best practices are no guarantee that the board will not be sued, good board practices can be a strong defense in the case of unjustified allegations.

Best practices for Council members include:

1. Informed and regular review of financial statements
2. Regular attendance at board meetings.
3. Have a clear understanding of the board's role in personnel situations
4. Avoid conflicts of interest

In our increasingly litigious society it is critically important to obtain the proper insurance for your non-profit organization. All RC&D Councils should have directors and officers (D&O) and general liability insurance.

D&O insurance can help protect the directors and officers of the Council in the event a suit is filed against the council for its business practices and decisions. General liability insurance can help the council to cover the council's assets and property. General liability insurance may also provide protection for the council in the event a claim is filed against the Council by an individual who was harmed during participation in a Council project or activity.

As you shop for your coverage, be sure to obtain coverage through an agent that is knowledgeable about non-profit organizations. Insurance is the responsibility of the Council and policies and documents should only be signed by the Council - NOT Council employees.

General liability policies come in two types and Councils should be aware of the differences and purchase the right type to be sure they are covered. A business owner's general liability policy is one which covers Council activities when they act strictly as a

fiscal sponsor of projects. A standard general liability policy covers Council who are doing projects in the community.

A number of Councils help fledgling organizations begin projects and activities, and in turn your Council is also taking on the risk for the projects you sponsor. If your Council is not properly insured, they expose themselves to liability.

As you take on projects, Councils should always ask – who is responsible for insurance? If a partner organization or contractor says they will insure – be sure to obtain a copy of the certificate of insurance naming the council as additional insured.

The NARDC has partnered with Beehive insurance to obtain low cost D&O insurance for councils. If you would like more information on this please contact NARC&DC at 202 434-4780 or narcdc@rcdnet.org Councils should always do a cost comparison when purchasing services so be sure to consult with your local agents as well.

CIRCLE, from Page 1

forth in the application package. This program is designed to highlight Councils that produce quality programs within their local community. This mark of excellence will assist your Council in showcasing itself to your local community, other Councils, and the nation.

National Association of RC&D Councils truly believes in the Circle of Diamonds program and invites your Council to apply for membership to the Circle of Diamonds today!

RC&D Teams With Recycle First

The National Association has teamed up with Recycle First in an effort to provide RC&D Councils and their friends a very simple yet efficient means to ensure that used printer and fax cartridges are either remanufactured or disposed of properly.

Did you know that over 400 million cartridges are thrown away each year and it takes about a thousand years for them to break down in our landfills!

Together we can make a significant difference in our own community and raise the needed funds for your National Association without spending any money!

Cell phones are also collected too! The program is free; shipping materials are all postage paid and provided to your council at no cost to you. If your council would like to participate, please contact your National Office at 202-434-4780.

Regional Happenings . . .

Annual Meetings

Southeastern Association
September 9-12, 2007
Ashville, NC

Mid-Atlantic Association
September 16-19, 2007
Grantville, PA (Near Hershey)

RC&D Week
September 23-29, 2007
National

New England Association
October 18-20, 2007
Narragansett, RI

Pacific Rim Association
November 5-8, 2007
Oahu, HI

**NARC&DC Board of
Directors Meeting**
December 1-2, 2007
Albuquerque, NM

Western Association
January 13-16, 2008
Las Cruces, NM

**NARC&DC Leadership
Forum**
February 25-27, 2008
Washington, DC

Southwest States Association
March 2-5, 2008
St. Louis, MO

North Central Association
March 9-11, 2008
Rochester, MN

National RC&D Conference
June 2009
Albuquerque, NM

Mid-Atlantic Howard Coffield, President

The 2007 Annual Conference and business meeting will be hosted by the Pennsylvania Association of RC&D Councils. The conference will be held near Hershey, PA, September 16-19, 2007 at the Holiday Inn in Grantville. Conference information is available on the Mid-Atlantic Association web page(s) available at: <http://www.sjrkd.org/ma/mainindex.htm>

The Capital RC&D Council is happy to announce a workshop for any and all Mid-Atlantic RC&D council coordinators, members and partners to learn more about the carbon trading market, as well as to hear about what several RC&D Councils have done to develop their potential as service providers/aggregators to their constituents. The workshop will take place on Tuesday, April 10th from 9:30 AM until 3:45 PM at Penn State Harrisburg in Middletown, PA (just minutes off PA Turnpike, I-81 and I-83 as well as the Hbg. Airport).

Pacific Rim Bob Jones, President

The Pacific Rim Regional Association is in the process of finalizing plans for the upcoming Annual Meeting and Conference to be held at Makaha Resort on the Island of O'ahu, November 6-8, 2007. The theme of this year's conference is "Sustaining our Lands, our People and our Culture". We will be providing training for councils to become sustainable, both financially and capacity-wise. There will be some great educational tours showing examples of sustainable culture and agriculture. We are continuing to improve communication and active participation of the councils within the region. We would like to invite anyone to participate and attend the conference. For more information please go to: www.pacrimrkd.org.

Legislative Update . . .

House and Senate Appropriators Increase Funding to RC&D Committee Passed Farm bill includes RC&D Legislative Priorities

On July 19, the RC&D program received \$52,370,000 in House Appropriations Committee. The Senate Appropriations Committee also increased funding to \$53,150,000 for RC&D.

As you may recall the President's budget proposed cutting RC&D

funding to \$14.6 million by eliminating 325 coordinator positions and having only one RC&D coordinator per state. The national association has been meeting with Members of Congress on this issue throughout the spring to reinforce the messages local council members have sent to Congress. Last year's funding level was \$50,787,000.

President Sharon Ruggi and the

See LEGISLATIVE, Page 7, Col. 1

Legislative, from Page 6

national association board thank all council members who helped make this increase possible.

The next step in the process is for these bills to be considered for a floor vote in both the House and Senate.

On a similar track in Congress is the Farm bill. The Farm bill is written every 5 years and provides as an opportunity to propose changes to make the RC&D program work more effectively with local council member priorities. We are fortunate to have a champion in Congressman Zack Space of Ohio who has drafted legislation which includes NARC&DC's proposed changes for the RC&D program.

The House Agriculture Committee approved the Farm bill the week of

July 16. The proposed farm bill includes some of our RC&D Farm bill recommendations:

Specifically, the bill:

- 1) Calls for an area planning process, for the RC&D program, which is locally led;
- 2) Calls on the Secretary of Agriculture to designate a Coordinator for each Council to provide and assist in providing technical assistance;
- 3) Adds to the technical assistance definition - providing assistance for the implementation of area plans and projects; and
- 4) Adds to the technical assistance definition – providing services which bring to bear the resources of Department of Agriculture programs in a local community as defined in the locally led planning

process.

The next step is for this bill to go to the House floor for a vote the last week of July.

The Senate will draft its own version of the Farm bill. We encourage you to stay tuned to our website and the list serv for updates. Action on both the appropriations bills and the Farm bill is targeted for completion by September 30, 2007.



“If you stand up and be counted, from time to time you may get yourself knocked down. But remember this: A man flattened by an opponent can get up again. A man flattened by conformity stays down for good.”

— Thomas J. Watson, Jr

A Bit of History . . .

During the late 1980s, a loose organization of the RC&D regional association presidents got together and realized that speaking with one voice would have more clout than their fragmented efforts. This came directly from the yearly battles to save the program as it was zeroed out of the President's budget. Assistance was obtained from SCS's National RC&D coordinator and the group set the wheels in motions to form a national organization.

Ideas for the organization were solicited from each region. A consensus was reached that the initial

board would consist of two representatives from each region. Bylaws were developed and articles of incorporation were drawn up. At this point, people began to realize that these council members were serious.

With much apprehension and anticipation, all the paperwork was completed and approved. The Association was now an official not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization, incorporated in the State of Arkansas.

Original board members were:
Western Region - Mary Seccombe (MT) and Larry Sheppard (NE),
Southeastern Region - Jeanette

Jamieson (GA) and Robert Harbison (AL), Mid-Atlantic - Peggy McNeill (NJ) and William Sutton (MD), Southwestern Region - Paul Hunter (KS) and James Jordon (AR), New England Region - Ann Favreau (ME) and Edward Baker (RI), and Northcentral Region - Dick Karsen (MI) and Tom Roney (IN).

**Making Things
Happen is What
RC&D is All About**

Giziibii RC&D
3217 Bemidji Avenue N
Bemidji, MN 56601

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO 139
BEMIDJI, MN 56601

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?

Please contact Monica Johnson by:
Phone: 1-202 434 4780
Fax: 202 434-4783
Email: narcdc@rcdnet.org.

