

The National Catalyst

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



NARC&DC: Accomplishments 2008

Ever wonder what happens at the National office? Here is a sampling of what we have accomplished over the past year.

On the legislative front, working with our Councils, we successfully turned back the Administration's efforts to eliminate funding for the RC&D program. In addition, the 2008 Farm bill was signed into law in June, and includes several legislative changes that we asked for in the RC&D Program.

- 1) Includes 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
- 4) Adds to the technical assistance definition – providing services that bring to bear the resources of all Department of Agriculture programs in a local community as defined in the locally led planning process.

In addition, during the past year, your National office was able to provide, through a cooperative agreement, 24 free Training Seminars to State and Regional Association meetings. The trainings have been supplemented with an update and reprint of the Guidebook for RC&D Directors Vol. I on Non-profit Management, and

a reprint of Guidebook for RC&D Directors Vol. II on Financial Management. This year we also produced the Guidebook for RC&D Directors Vol. III on Council Sustainability.

In February of 2008, the National Association of RC&D Councils held its annual Leadership Forum. At the Leadership Forum, a new MOU with the Student Conservation Association was signed.

We are committed to providing invaluable communications to our entire Council network. To serve that need, during the past year we have provided:

- * A quarterly newsletter;
- * Website at www.rcdnet.org;
- * List Serv, an electronic communications network that allows Council Members and Coordinators to freely communicate.
- * Regular monthly mailings to all Councils with information and resources for Councils
- * Fact sheets on:
 - 1) Area Planning
 - 2) Market Based Conservation
 - 3) Youth Outreach
- * Marketing and Media materials
- * Guide for Selecting an Engineering, Architectural, or Design Company for RC&D Council Projects;
- * A Guide to assist RC&D Councils to interact with Federal systems and the role they play in community response pre and post-community disasters
- * An Economic Development Planning Guide

Making Things Happen!

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President's Report



Joan Smith Freeman

By Joan Smith Freeman

Happy Holidays
RC&D volunteers!

I can't believe it is the end of 2008 already! I hope this finds you all doing well and

busy working on your RC&D projects, but also finding time to spend with your families. This is such a busy and wonderful time of year.

This year has been full of challenges for everyone economically. However, we know that RC&D is all about facing challenges and finding solutions for our communities while protecting our natural resources. Our 375 councils are in every state serving 185 million people in more than 85% of our counties, so we have the infrastructure on the ground to help resolve important local challenges during these critical times. As you well know, RC&D is a wonderful, unique program that is led by you, our local volunteer council members. Now more than ever, it is imperative that we demonstrate how we, as volunteers, work together to plan and carryout projects and activities that make our communities a better place to live and work. Keep up the good work!

I hope your RC&D week events went well in September. Remember to let us know about your activities and to send in copies or links to the articles in your local newspapers. We will add them to the ones already on our website to be sure to let everyone know the actions that your Council did to celebrate in your council area.

I want to encourage all council members to be involved in your national organization! This is your association and, as members, you can submit questions, concerns and issues for board consideration to either your regional representatives or directly to our National Association. National board meetings are open to the public and our minutes, tax forms and audits are available to you upon request.

Consider coming early to our annual Leadership Forum in Washington D.C. which will be held on February 9th and 10th and attend your National Board Meeting (February 7th & 8th, 2009), which will immediately precede it. Also, when making plans to attend our Triennial National RC&D Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, June 14th through 17th, 2009, consider coming early and attend the National Board Meeting on June 13th. We also will have facilitated sessions at the National Conference on what Councils, State and Regional Associations need from the National Association. This year's National Conference theme is "Partnerships Delivering Positive Change in America's Communities". Hope you plan to attend!

Wishing you and yours a very joyous holiday season.



CA RC&D President Bob Pickard presents the Sierra Nevada Coalition of RC&D's Outreach Materials to Jim Branham, Executive Officer, NARC&DC President Joan Smith and Ed Burton, CA State Conservationist

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Washington Report

By **Roberta Jeanquart, Executive Director**

The election has brought a whirlwind of activity to Washington DC. NARC&DC is closely following the transition activities of President-elect Barack Obama and will provide information on RC&D activities to the transition team. The appointment of the Secretary of Agriculture will likely be announced by late December.

There will be many political appointments taking place in the coming months at the Department of Agriculture. These appointees can have a significant impact on the priority placed on RC&D by the incoming Administration. The Administration will staff political positions from the top down, meaning the Secretary of Agriculture's position is filled first followed by the Deputy Secretary and on down. Among the appointments we are following are the Undersecretary and Deputy Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment and the Chief of the NRCS. These positions will likely take a few months to be filled.

President-elect Obama's campaign focused on three key issues for rural America: ensuring economic opportunities for family farmers; supporting rural economic development for farmers to create value added enterprises, like cooperative marketing initiatives and farmer owned processing plants; and improving rural quality of life through improving health care and education and upgrading infrastructure. Renewable energy is also a priority issue for the incoming Administration.

Typically, we see the President's budget come out on the first Monday in February. This year the release of the President's budget may be delayed. The outgoing Bush Administration will provide the incoming Obama Administration with a current services budget. Prior to the budget's release, the Obama Administration will have the opportunity to change funding levels and this process could delay the release of the budget. During the campaign Obama stated that he will systematically review what works and what does not work in the federal budget using a scalpel rather than a hatchet.

Realistically, this approach cannot be put in effect until after the FY10 budget is released when his staff are in place. Nonetheless, we are holding our Leadership Forum in early February so we can meet deadlines imposed by congressional committees for Member requests for funding.

The election has brought changes to the Congress. Over the next two months, Congress will organize and appoint committee members. Our critical committee, the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, could see some changes in Membership. On the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS) is likely to become ranking member, as Senator Robert Bennett (R-UT) is expected to move into the ranking position on another Subcommittee.

The House of Representatives will also see changes. The House Appropriations Committee lost seven members on the Republican side and a reshuffling of ranking members on subcommittees could take place.

NARC&DC will continue our efforts to educate key decision-makers on RC&D activities. We need your help as well, to make sure that your RC&D council is seen as an indispensable part of your community. We need to remind decision makers at all levels that Resource Conservation and Development Councils make things happen in our local community. By improving our economy and environment and strengthening our communities, RC&D Councils improve the quality of life for us all.



National Association Seeks Candidates for At-large National Board Position

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 15, 2009.

*“Never doubt
that a small
group of
thoughtful,
committed
citizens
can change
the world.
Indeed,
it is the only
thing that
ever has.”*

Margaret Mead

Retrospective: RC&D Week

From Governor’s official proclamations to outdoor computer mouse races, the Nation’s RC&D Councils celebrated RC&D week.

RC&D week, the fourth week in September, gives annual recognition to the Nation’s local RC&D areas and their volunteer-run councils. To celebrate the occasion this year, Councils arranged special events such as outdoor games, bicycle tours, open houses, and conferences. They issued press releases for both local and state print and online newspapers, and radio spots and jingles.

Officials, governors, legislators, and mayors, issued statements in honor of RC&D Week. Those appreciative proclamations came from across the country, showing how communities respect the work that RC&D councils perform. A variety of activities including the “mouse race” to honor a Council’s Electronic Recycling Program helped our volunteers to celebrate all their hard work.

We applaud all those volunteers and would like to thank everyone who shared their “RC&D Week” stories. For more information, be sure to check the website.

“Always Nice To Hear”

From a Speech at the Pac-Rim Regional Meeting: Michael Carrier, Natural Resources Policy Director, Oregon

... RC&D’s have played an important role in revitalizing rural communities and in helping our rural and agricultural sectors adapt to the forces of globalization and mechanization.

RC&Ds consistently demonstrate the leadership and vision that is required to rise to the challenges we face in a rapidly changing environment. ...

Frankly, given the role that rural areas and resources will play in our future economy and given the unique role that RC&Ds play in rural development, I don’t think we can do it without you...

IRS, the New Form 990 and Your Local Council

This year the IRS revised their 990 tax forms for non-profit organizations. This affects every Council that has a fiscal year beginning on or after January 1, 2008. The revised tax form is designed to give the IRS and the public more information about how tax-exempt organizations operate and emphasizes transparency and the relationship between tax compliance and good governance. The new core form consists of 11 parts that requests financial data as well as information on your organization's programs. It also contains a formal checklist (in Part IV) to help decide which schedules to fill out and attach to your return. The form includes questions about your organization's governance and whether you have adopted specific policies such as a conflict of interest,

document destruction and whistleblower. While some of these policies are not required by law for non-profits, the IRS has said that answering "no" on questions regarding these policies could result in greater scrutiny for the organizations.

So, what can you do to prepare for this new form? Your Council can form a committee or have a person assigned to review the changes and the impacts the new form will have on your Council. You can also review the draft form 990 and instructions at the irs.gov website or contact us at the National Association for more assistance on the changes and sample good governance documents.

Joint Venture / NARC&DC and SCA

The Student Conservation Association (SCA) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to build the next generation of conservation leaders and inspire lifelong stewardship of our environment and communities by engaging young people in hands-on service to the land.

SCA offers conservation internships and summer trail crew opportunities to more than 4,000 people each year who provide nearly 2 million hours of conservation service. SCA members complete projects in every conservation discipline - from archeology to zoology - in more than 500 parks, forests, refuges and urban green spaces in all 50 states.

SCA is focused on developing conservation and community leaders while getting important work done on the land. Founded in 1957 to restore and protect America's public lands and preserve them for future generations, SCA remains committed to this goal today.

Over the past 10 years, SCA has worked successfully with the NARC&D Councils on nationwide efforts to place intern teams in wildland fire and invasive species management. SCA's wildland fire teams conduct fuel load mappings, fuel reduction, community defensible space projects and public education programs. For invasive species work, SCA interns have conducted landscape mapping, invasive plant identification, manual and herbicide treatment and long-term monitoring. SCA interns have served a variety of function from administrative to field hands.

This year the National Association of RC&D Councils is pleased to have student intern Peter Costolanski. Peter is an asset in our services to our Councils, as well as a dependable pleasant addition to our staff. For further information on SCA, visit www.thesca.org or contact Joey Ruehrwein at jruehrwein@thesca.org or via telephone at 208-424-6734 ext. 403.

Happy Holidays



Council in the Spotlight. . .



Terry D'Addio, NRCS, Kit Sutherland, NRCS, Gail Kimbell, FS Chief, Bobbi Jeanquart, NARC&DC

Our featured Council is the Bitter Root RC&D Council located in western Montana. The Bitter Root RC&D,

authorized in 1965, was the twelfth in the nation and the first in the state of Montana. The 3 county area encompasses a total of 3,980,800 acres and has approximately 14 percent of the State's total population.

Approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the RC&D Area is forested and most of that acreage is under U.S. Forest Service management. The Council has an 18-member Board of Directors (six from each county) and approximately 20 part-time employees, which in fire season can increase to up to 130 employees.

Bitter Root RC&D is a model for building partnerships. Currently it works with all USDA agencies in its area on projects including recovery after fires, 2008 Capitol Christmas Tree, Healthy Kids – Healthy Forests, Hazardous Fuel Reduction and Fuels for Schools.

Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management and the State Forester work with the council on hazardous fuel programs. USDA's Rural Development representatives assist with the Council's first time homebuyers classes.

The Farm Service Agency is co-located with the RC&D and makes regular presentations at meetings. Department of Commerce's, Economic Development Administration worked with the RC&D

as a volunteer organization to keep its Economic Development District Status current so that they were eligible for extra assistance.

Small Business Administration and the Department of Justice recently funded safety programs within the Area.

For the past five years the RC&D coordinator and their Forest Service Partner have been invited to the National Fire Management Leadership Class to present how they work with communities to access vital human resources in recovery after landscape changing wildfires.

County Extension Agents are also an integral part of the RC&D, and interact with the Council on a regular basis. The Council also works with local entities on such projects as the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial.

The council has over 50 projects that include maintaining the national fuels for schools website, farmer's market coupon program and a bluegrass festival. For more information on the Council see their website at www.bitterrootrcd.org.



Kit Sutherland, the council's coordinator has been traveling with the Capitol Christmas Tree since November 4. The tree, a 70-foot subalpine fir from Montana's Bitterroot National Forest, was lit on Tuesday, December 2, by Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Members of the Montana congressional delegation and the Governor of Montana joined her.

Meetings

Legislative Forum

February 9-10, 2009
Washington, DC

National RC&D Conference

June 14-18, 2009
Albuquerque, NM

Regional Happenings . . .

Southwest States

Marva Beck, President

The big news from our region is that Don Gohmert has been assigned the duties as Acting Regional Assistant Chief for the Central Region. The region covers 15 states so Don will be on the road even more than before.

In case any of you missed the news back in September, Hurricane Ike hit the Gulf Coast with a vengeance a mere week before scheduled RC&D Week celebrations. Instead of our planned activities, we were running rescue and cleanup programs. In Texas, our governor was meeting with CNN and not RC&D. However, we did get Resolutions in the House, Senate, and from the Governor. I am passing these out to councils and doing photo ops as I travel around.

Arkansas is getting ready for its annual meeting starting on December 7 in Little Rock.

Kathryn Braden, Southwest delegate to the National Board, and I will be contacting councils in our region about Circle of Diamonds and Area Plans. We plan to have a good report at the next Board meeting. Councils, expect to hear from us!

Mid-Atlantic

Howard Coffield – President

The Mid-Atlantic's Annual Conference was hosted by New Jersey this past September.

Over 120 participations attended the conference. The Conference included Council success stories, tours, and training by Donna Hunter and Andy Gordon. During the business meeting several Committees were formed to take a look at The Association's financial policies. A publicity & marketing committee was also formed. During the election, Howard Coffield was re-elected President while Jim Ali was elected Secretary. The other officers are, Pat Pinnell, Treasurer and Olga Walter, Vice President. Awards were presented to Coordinator Larry Schardt and Council member Frank Pinto.

New England

John Guskowski, President

The New England RC&D Association held their Annual Conference in Mystic, Connecticut from October 23-25, 2008. The fifteen New England Councils and partners sent approximately 85 participants for two lively days of programs, discussion, tours and food.

The theme of the conference was "Building Sustainable Communities from the Sound Up," focusing on farmland viability, natural resource protection, and planning, with a play on words recognizing the conference's location in beautiful Mystic, an historic whaling center on Long Island Sound, the southern frontier of New England.

At its business meeting, the New England Association elected new officers for 2008-2010. Congratulations and good luck to President John Guskowski (CT); First Vice-President Raymond Robinson (RI); Second Vice-President Frank Farnsworth (VT); Treasurer Norris Conant (ME); Secretary Rudy Medeiros (MA); and Delegate Jim Sipperly (CT).

Featured guests included NARC&DC President Joan Smith Freeman and Executive Director Bobbi Jeanquart, as well as newly-appointed NRCS State Conservationist Doug Zehner. Conference attendees were also treated with a private tour of the magnificent Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Museum & Research Center and a concert by Native American musician and storyteller Hawk Henries. Other tours included a Connecticut Farmland Tour and a voyage on a Project Oceanography research vessel into the Atlantic Ocean.

As part of the business meeting, funds were allocated for the creation of an association website to improve inter-council communications. An appeal for wider participation in the Circle of Diamonds was also put to the Councils, who decided to make that topic the focus of their spring business meeting in Portland, ME. The Councils also decided to continue the rotation of Regional Meetings in New England, opting to hold its fall meeting in Maine rather than schedule it at the National Conference in Albuquerque.

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RC&D - Making Things Happen!



Become an Associate Member of NARC&DC

Partnership Alliance Registration Form

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

New Membership Renewal

Sign up for (circle your choice):

Out of This World (Lifetime)	\$500.00	_____
Diamond (Yearly)	\$250.00	_____
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
Phone: 1-202 434 4780
Fax: 202 434-4783
Email: narcdc@rcdnet.org.

