

SANDHILLS RC&D

PLAN OF WORK 2011



Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program Background

The Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program was developed under the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, (16 U.S.C. 590a-590F), the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act, (16 U.S.C. 1010 and 1011), and the Food and Agriculture Act of 1962, and is authorized under subtitle H, title XV of the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981, (16 U.S.C. 3451-3461), as amended. The Food Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 permanently authorized the program. The Natural Resources Conservation Service administers the program.

The purpose of RC&D is to improve the capability of local leaders to plan and execute projects for resource conservation and community development in their geographically designated RC&D areas. Congress created this partnership between the federal government and local communities as a way of engaging local leaders in investing limited federal dollars in community projects, which are carried out in the areas of land conservation, community development, land management, and water management. The program's goal is to promote conservation, improve land use, develop natural resources, and enhance social, economic, and environmental conditions in primarily rural areas of the United States. Through the RC&D program, local governments, Indian tribes, non-profit organizations, and councils come together to carry out community oriented projects in accordance with the priorities of area residents.

Local leadership and decision-making is provided by a council that is established as a non-profit corporation with Internal Revenue Service IRS 501(c) tax exempt status. RC&D councils provide leadership in enhancing the environment and standard of living in their geographically designated areas. Councils are composed of local government officials, farmers, ranchers, civic leaders, business leaders and others who are interested in contributing to the overall well-being of the region. The local RC&D council sets policy, direction, and priorities for the operation of their non-profit within RC&D legislative authority and national guidelines. The council is required by law to prepare and implement an area plan. The development of an area plan encourages the RC&D volunteers to seek input from various interests and to identify what services are strong or weak in the geographic area they have chosen to serve. Councils can obtain technical and financial assistance from a broad range of sources including the Federal, State, and local levels of government, other public organizations, private sources, and individual contributions.

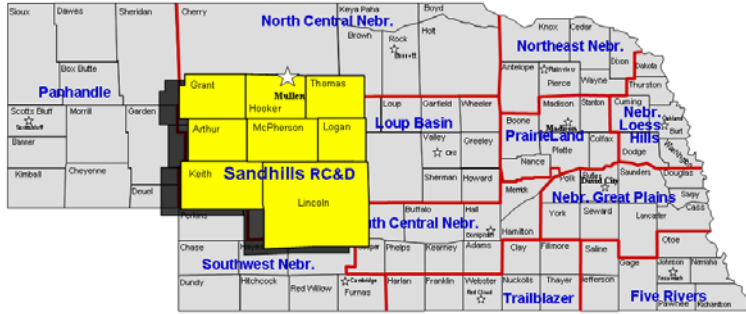
RC&D Councils have a national association with an office in Washington, D.C. More information about the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils, Inc. (NARC&DC), is available at rcdnet.org. NARC&DC is a member of the National Conservation Partnership.

NRCS State Conservationists are assigned Federal responsibility to follow national program guidelines for the RC&D program in each State. The State Conservationist ensures cooperation among the USDA services sought by the RC&D councils to implement local projects. NRCS employs coordinators to provide technical day-to-day coordination of resources sought by RC&D councils. RC&D coordinators assist local program participants in developing and implementing RC&D area plans that direct local action to improve environmental, social, and economic conditions within the designated RC&D area. Coordinators must understand programs that fit local needs and build working relationships with USDA, and other Federal, State, and local agencies. Coordinators match those resources with local RC&D council volunteers to implement the RC&D area plan.

Currently, there are 375 designated RC&D areas, and 32 applicant areas that are awaiting designation by the Secretary of Agriculture. RC&D areas serve more than 85 percent of U.S. Counties and over 80 percent of the U.S. Population.

Sandhills RC&D Background

On August 13th, 2001 the formal decision was made to pursue authorization by USDA. Individuals and groups from the area were determined and committed to establishing a RC&D that will meet many of the essential needs in the eight counties. On July 21, 2003 the Sandhills RC&D was announced for authorization and support by the USDA.



Vision

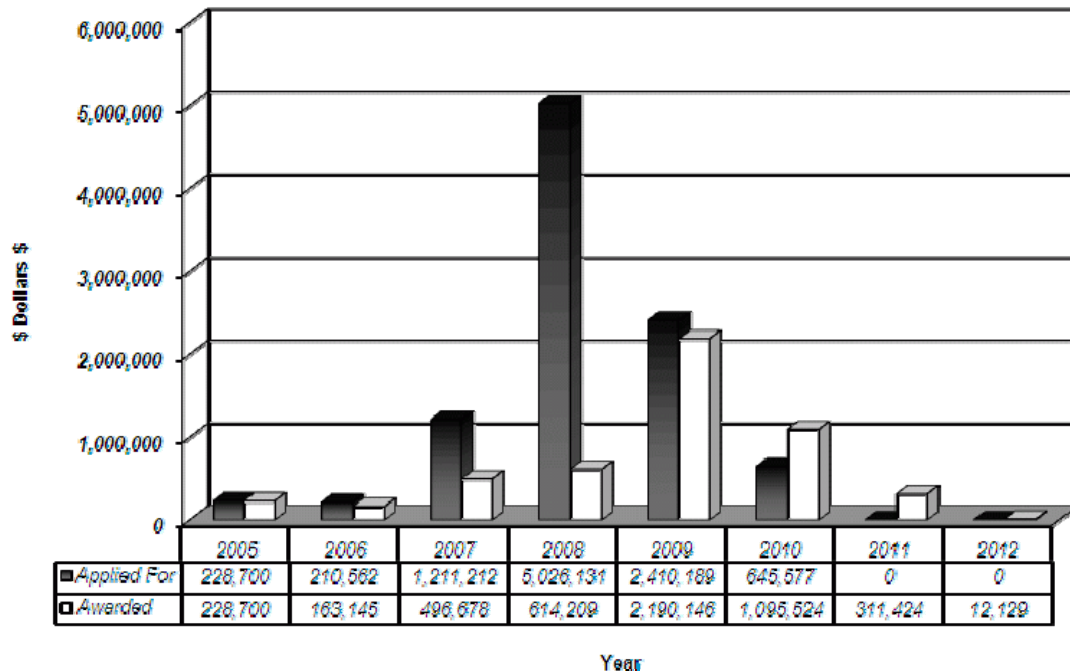
Citizens of the area collaborating to create a healthy rural economy along with sustainable communities and environment.

Mission

The mission of the Sandhills RC&D is to create an environment where all the citizens of the regions work together to revitalize the rural economy, enhance and protect the natural resources, improve community infrastructure, and improve and increase tourism opportunities.

Sandhills RC&D Project Funds

Grants and other receipts



Numerous partnerships have been formed to accomplish the goals and objectives defined by the local people.

LAND MANAGEMENT

GOAL 1: Promote sustainable land management activities that create new land-based business opportunities through the development of 5 projects by 2014.

OBJECTIVE 1: Provide education to 100 producers on the economic opportunities of producing alternative agricultural commodities and adding value to current agricultural production by 2015.

Strategy: Develop and implement a plan to promote the development of enterprises that add value to agricultural products by 2015.

Action: Agri-tourism Workshop

Responsibility: Scott Cotton – UNL Extension

Coordinator time: 10 hrs

Estimated Cost: \$3,000

Target Date: 3/31/11

Progress: First “Bonus Ranching” workshop scheduled for December 17, 2010 at Halsey 4-H Camp.

Action: Sandhill Ranchers Beef Company development

Responsibility: Ben Roberts – SRBC

Coordinator time: 50 hrs

Estimated Cost: \$250,000

Target Date: 9/30/12

Progress: Value Added grant app submitted to State of Nebraska. Plant renovation underway with plans to open operations after first of the year.

Action: Aronia Production Field Trip

Responsibility: State-wide Aronia Steering Committee

Coordinator time: 15 hrs

Estimated Cost: \$200

Target Date: 9/30/11

Progress:

OBJECTIVE 2: Assist in the development of 4 area renewable energy projects by 2015.

Strategy: Work with the “Wind for Schools” program, providing technical assistances to 2 or more area schools to acquire and install wind chargers by 2013 that serve as educational tools for high school students.

Action: Sandhills RC&D Renewable Energy project outreach & implementation

Responsibility: Jeff Hoelsing – Mullen Schools, Terry Hazard – Hyannis Schools, Sandhills RC&D staff

Coordinator time: 10 hrs

Estimated Cost: \$45,000

Target Date: 9/30/11

Progress: Wind for Schools turbines awarded funds through Nebraska State Attorney Generals office. Installation of equipment and infrastructure for wind charges beginning in Mullen and Hyannis. In November 2010, Sandhills RC&D sent 2 teachers and 3 students to Nebraska Wind Power Conference.

LAND CONSERVATION

GOAL 2: Protect and enhance land resources of the region by working with 4 conservation activities and related projects throughout the Sandhills RC&D area by 2015.

OBJECTIVE 1: Increase use of best management practices for soil conservation by partnering to provide information and education through 10 activities by 2015.

Strategy: Partner with appropriate organizations to offer three range management workshops for ranchers in the west central Nebraska region through 2015.

Action: Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition Partnership

Responsibility: Jim Carr, NGLC

Coordinator time: 40 hrs

Estimated Cost: \$5,000

Target Date: 9/30/11

Progress: NET grant app submitted for various portions of this strategy

Strategy: Support the SRM Youth Range Camp at the 4-H Camp near Halsey by developing annual grant proposals for funding assistance to the camp through 2015.

Action: Youth Range Camp grant search and submittal

Responsibility: RC&D staff & Shelley Taylor, Nebraska Society for Range Management

Coordinator time: 20 hrs

Estimated Cost: \$12,000

Target Date: 8/30/11

Progress: NET grant app submitted through Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 3: Improve economic conditions in the Sandhills RC&D area using economic development activities that assist in recruitment of residents and visitors through business development, community enhancements and promotion of the rural lifestyle by completing 30 community development activities by 2015.

OBJECTIVE 1: Strengthen the economy of the Sandhills RC&D area by sponsoring 10 business development programs (2011-2015).

Strategy: Develop a plan of action with appropriate partners to offer two educational opportunities about direct marketing and e-marketing opportunities by 2015.

Action: Project: Direct Marketing Workshop

Responsibility: Sandhills staff, coordinator and Sandhill Ranchers Beef Company

Coordinator time: 50 hrs

Estimated Cost: \$ \$5,000

Target Date: 8/15/2011

Progress: Value Added grant app submitted to State of Nebraska.

Strategy: Implement a plan with appropriate partners to host four trainings by 2015 that promote advanced technology development, utilization of internet resources, and provide necessary instruction so entrepreneurs can more fully utilize its capabilities.

Action: Sandhills Business Development Training
Responsibility: Melissa Garcia – Mid-Plains Center for Enterprise
Coordinator time: 5 hrs
Estimated Cost: \$2,500
Target Date: 5/1/11
Progress: Struggling to have critical mass to justify holding workshops. Will try another in spring 2011.

Strategy: Provide technical assistance through facilitation and strategic planning that will insure continued expansion of New Frontiers Development Network for entrepreneurs and service providers that assist with community and business development (2011-2015).

Action: New Frontiers Development Network commutations planning system
Responsibility: Cinch Munson - NFDN
Coordinator time: 20 hrs
Estimated Cost: \$4,800
Target Date: 12/31/11
Progress: BECA Planning Grant app submitted. Project research and diagnostic activities will build coalition awareness, allowing members to develop relationships and elevate their understanding of economic opportunities to improve the region.

OBJECTIVE 2: Provide technical assistance to at least 6 area organization's efforts to increase tourism and improve recreational development (2011-2015).

Strategy: Implement an action plan with the Upper Loup NRD, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission and Nebraska Department of Roads to improve canoe access to the Dismal River off Highway 97 by 2013.

Action: continue Hooker County Tourism Partnership
Responsibility: Mitch Glidden – Hooker County Lodging Tax Committee
Coordinator time: 3 hrs
Estimated Cost: \$1,500
Target Date: 9/30/11
Progress:

Strategy: Assist the Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway organization to implement their strategic plan that increases the economic benefits of tourism in the central Sandhills region (2011-2015).

Action: Byway RBEG implementation
Responsibility: Tom Witt – Scenic Byway Executive Committee
Coordinator time: 100 hrs
Estimated Cost: \$99,900
Target Date: 11/30/11
Progress: RBEG awarded in June 2010. Implementation of grant objectives under way.

OBJECTIVE 3: Provide technical assist to 8 area community projects to improve or build community facilities and community resources by 2015.

Strategy: Provide technical assistance to the Mullen Community Building Committee in project planning and procurement of funds to construct a multi-purpose building by 2015.

Action: Mullen Community Building development
Responsibility: Anna Baum - Mullen Community Building Committee
Coordinator time: 50 hrs
Estimated Cost: \$1,500,000
Target Date: 9/30/2013
Progress: Community surveys sent out and summary to be evaluated in December 2010.

Strategy: Provide technical assistance to implement a plan with the Village of Seneca for the renovation of the village park restroom facility by 2012.

Action: Seneca Park Restroom Renovation
Responsibility: Tom Hartman – Village of Seneca
Coordinator time: 20 hrs
Estimated Cost: \$10,000
Target Date: 9/30/2011
Progress: Village gathering bid and spec information.

OBJECTIVE 4: Continue implementation of current plan with 6 area counties to offer safe and affordable housing (2011-2015).

Strategy: Continue housing rehabilitation project in Thomas, Hooker, Grant, Arthur, McPherson, and Logan counties using \$150,000 of 2008-set-a-side funds for housing rehabilitation assistance of at least 6 homes by 2013.

Action: continue Housing Rehabilitation Phase IV
Responsibility: Leigh Alexander – Community Development Services
Coordinator time: 40 hrs
Estimated Cost: \$150,000
Target Date: 9/30/11 on-going
Progress: Sandhills RC&D designated for 3rd set-a-side of \$150,000 for housing rehab project. Implementation and use of these funds should start in August 2011.

OBJECTIVE 5: Develop and implement 5 projects with area fire/emergency departments to address need for essential services by 2015.

Strategy: Provide technical assistance to implement a plan with the Mullen Rural Fire District to replace equipment by 2014.

Action: Mullen Nursing Home Handy Van acquisition
Responsibility: Dee Arends - Mullen Nursing Home
Coordinator time: 10 hrs
Estimated Cost: \$30,000
Target Date: 3/31/2011
Progress: Application made to USDA-RD community facilities program. Awaiting funding announcement.

OBJECTIVE 6: Assist in the improvement of energy efficiency in 10 area facilities, businesses, and residences by 2015.

Strategy: Promote USDA Rural Development's Energy Efficiency Improvement Program and other similar funding sources and provide technical assistance to help 10 RC&D area businesses and residences reduce energy costs by 2015.

Action: continue Sandhills RC&D Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency Program

Responsibility: Mary Gambill, Lory Cappel – USDA - RD

Coordinator time: 20 hrs

Estimated Cost: \$50,000

Target Date: 9/31/11 on-going

Progress: Mullen Nursing Home awarded grant. Installation of boiler and windows in progress.

Outreach on-going for additional businesses that qualify for funding assistance.

OBJECTIVE 7: Improve recycling opportunities by placing multi bin recycling trailers in 4 area communities by 2015.

Strategy: Implement a plan of action with the Upper Loup Natural Resources District to provide and place multi-bin trailers in 4 communities for the collection of recyclable materials such as aluminum, glass, paper and plastics by 2015.

Action: Upper Loup NRD Recycling Project

Responsibility: Denise Vinton, Upper Loup NRD

Coordinator time: 10 hrs

Estimated Cost: \$40,000

Target Date: 9/30/11

Progress: Applications made to NET, pending award announcement.

OBJECTIVE 8: Promote the development of youth leadership qualities through the collaborative development of a minimum of 7 youth leadership activities by 2015.

Strategy 1: By 2013, develop and implement an action plan with appropriate entities to provide exposure to the agriculture and related industry that can benefit future generations of agriculturalists through student exchange and/or internship opportunities.

Action: Youth Leadership Seminars

Responsibility: RC&D Council & staff

Coordinator time: 5 hrs

Estimated Cost: \$ 10

Target Date: 9/30/11

Progress:

WATER MANAGEMENT

GOAL 4: Protect and enhance water resources of the region by working with 3 conservation activities and related projects in the Sandhills RC&D area by 2015.

OBJECTIVE 1: Partner with appropriate organizations to provide information and education to land owners to help protect their water and land resources from invasive weeds that threaten natural resource sustainability (2011-2015).

Strategy: Assist the West Central Weed Management Area, highlighting funding opportunities to maintain effectiveness of past invasive weeds treatments from 2011 through 2015.

Action: Platte River Habitat Restoration
Responsibility: Bill Carhart, WCWMA
Coordinator time: 20 hrs
Estimated Cost: \$ 150,000
Target Date: 9/30/2013
Progress:

Strategy: Partner with the North Central Nebraska RC&D and the Loup Basin RC&D to assist the Sandhills Weed Management Area to inform land owners concerning invasive plant threats in Grant, Hooker, Logan and Thomas counties through 2015.

Action: support Sandhills Weed Management Area by hosting forest cedar control tour at Halsey.
Responsibility: Larry Gibbons, SWMA
Coordinator time: 5 hrs
Estimated Cost: \$200
Target Date: 8/30/11
Progress:

Strategy: Partner with appropriate organizations to offer 2 integrated water management workshops for farmers utilizing irrigated cropping systems in west central Nebraska by 2015.

Action: Integrated water management workshop
Responsibility: Carol Eakins, NRCS
Coordinator time: 30hrs
Estimated Cost: \$2,000
Target Date: 9/15/11
Progress: Workshop planning under development

GOAL 5: Strengthen the Sandhills RC&D program participation and heighten public recognition of the programs benefits by utilizing outreach efforts directed at various populations of the Sandhills RC&D area (2011-2015)

OBJECTIVE 1: Continue an outreach program that will increase awareness of the RC&D program through 6 strategic activities (2011-2015).

Strategy: Make application to and become an Enhanced Level Member of National Association of Resource Conservation & Development Council's Circle of Diamonds Standards of Excellence Program by 2012.

Action: make application to NARCDC
Responsibility: Coordinator & Sandhills RC&D
Coordinator time: 20 hrs
Estimated Cost: \$100
Target Date: 8/1/11
Progress:

Strategy: Maintain a council web site at www.sandhillsrcd.org to be available 24 hours per day promoting council activities and awareness of the RC&D program (2011-2015).

Action: continue website updates
Responsibility: Coordinator
Coordinator time: 20 hrs
Estimated Cost: \$50
Target Date: 9/30/11 on-going
Progress: On-going updates continue monthly

Strategy: Release press articles related to completed and ongoing projects when appropriate (2011-2015).

Action: continue press releases as needed
Responsibility: Coordinator
Coordinator time: 40 hrs
Estimated Cost: \$500
Target Date: 9/30/11 on-going
Progress: On-going press release developed and continue as needed

Strategy: Produce and distribute an Annual Report highlighting RC&D projects and accomplishment (2011-2015).

Action: continue development of Annual Report
Responsibility: Coordinator
Coordinator time: 20 hrs
Estimated Cost: \$200
Target Date: 9/30/11 on-going
Progress: On-going Annual Report developed through-out the year as projects are completed

Strategy: Produce and distribute a quarterly Sandhills RC&D newsletter highlighting RC&D project accomplishments and listing upcoming events of interest (2011-2015).

Action: continue development of quarterly newsletter
Responsibility: Sandhills RC&D staff
Coordinator time: 40 hrs
Estimated Cost: \$700
Target Date: 9/30/11 on-going
Progress: On-going and continued development of quarterly newsletter

Strategy 6: Recruit youth representation to serve in membership or advisory capacity on the Sandhills RC&D Board of Directors (2011-2015).

Action: Identify youth with interest in community development and service.
Responsibility: Sandhills RC&D council & staff
Coordinator time: 10 hrs
Estimated Cost: \$ 200
Target Date: 9/30/11 on-going
Progress:

Sandhills RC&D

FY2011 Budget

To be adopted or modified at Annual Meeting in January 2011

Income

Interest Income	\$70
Membership Dues	\$900
Project Income	\$152,565
Other Income (includes NRCS Cooperative Agreement)	\$20,000
Total Income	\$173,535

Expense

Association Dues	
State	\$500
Western	\$250
National	\$450
Accounting	\$300
Treasurers Bond & D&O Insurance	\$685
Meeting Expense	\$100
Office Supplies	\$500
Travel Expense for Council	\$2,000
Project Expense	\$150,000
Misc. (includes petty cash)	\$250
Employee Expense	\$18,500
Total Expense	\$173,535

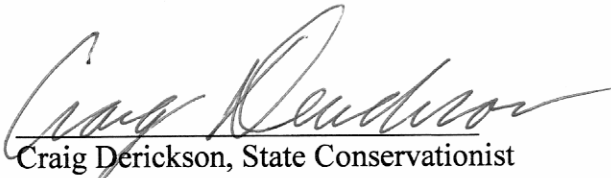
The Sandhills RC&D Council hereby adopts this 2011 Plan of Work and agrees to effectively use the assistance provided by the NRCS-USDA to achieve the goals outlined.



Berva Arensdorf
2011 President
Sandhills RC&D Council

November 30, 2010

Date



Craig Derickson, State Conservationist
USDA, NRCS, Nebraska

12/7/10

Date

"All programs and assistance of the RC&D Program are available without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital status. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA'S TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.