

SANDHILLS RC&D

ANNUAL REPORT

2005



"Making The Sandhills A Better Life"

Sandhills RC&D Council

Cliff Welsh – President, Keith County

Eric Hansen – 2nd Vice President, Twin Platte NRD

Toni Ring – Treasurer, Grant County

Virginia Sizer – Arthur County

Dan Deibler – Hooker County

Merlin Ring – Village of Hyannis

Janelle Blake – McPherson County

Dorothy Davis – Keith County

Ed Sowders–1st Vice President, McPherson County

Tammy White – Secretary, Lincoln County

Dr. Steve Boyer – Upper Loup NRD

Stan Pettit – Thomas County

Scott Gaites – Logan County

Mitch Glidden – Mullen Commercial Club

Steve Brown – Thedford Service Club

Sandhills RC&D Partners

Natural Resources Conservation Service

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Mullen Commercial Club

Thedford Service Club

Nebraska Natural Resources Commission

Twin Platte Natural Resources District

Nebraska Rural Development Commission

Nebraska Cooperative Extension

Nebraska Forest Service

USDA Rural Development

Village of Thedford

Village of Mullen

Consolidated Telephone Co.

NPPD

Mid-Nebraska Community Foundation

Udell Consulting, Inc.

Community Development Services, LLC

Sandhills Community Builders

Nebraska Game & Parks Commission

Nebraska State Association of RC&D's

Upper Loup & Twin Platte NRD's

Nebraska Department of Economic Development

Nebraska Department of Tourism

All other Nebraska RC&D's

Forest Service

Sandhills Task Force

Sandhills Development Corp.

Village of Arthur

Sandhills EDGE Coalition

Custer Public Power

Lincoln County Convention & Visitors Bureau

Nebraska Community Foundation

Our 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.

Our Vision

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

**Sandhills RC&D Financials
1-1-05 through 12-31-05**

Balance forward 12-31-04\$1,632

Income

Interest Income\$ 85
Membership Dues\$700
Project Income\$24,638

Total Income+\$25,423

Expenses

Association Dues:

State\$300
Western RC&D.....\$200
Insurance Bond\$50
Incorporation Fees\$30
Meeting Expenses\$94
Office Supplies\$357
Project Expenses\$20,424

Total Expenses-\$21,455

Ending Balance 12-31-05..... \$5,600

2005 Projects

In-depth Grant Writing Course

It has been reported that \$304,000 has been received by participants in an In-depth Grant Writing Course that was held in west central Nebraska for persons interested in learning new fundraising skills necessary to successfully obtain grant funding. Dr. Don Udell of Oklahoma City was the instructor for the nine-day series of grant-writing workshops held in North Platte and Thedford. Dr. Udell discussed the pre-proposal preparation, structuring your organization for grant success and developing a professional grant writing business. The course provided detailed instructions on preparing essential components of a grant and gave the 22 participants actual experience in preparing project proposals. The feedback from the Grant Writing Course has been very positive and the Sandhills RC&D has received numerous requests for a second workshop. Plans are currently underway for the 2006 Grant Writing Course to be held in early spring. Watch for information arriving soon!



Participants of the In-depth Grant Writing Course

Sandhills EDGE Coalition

Potential, new and existing small business owners in the central Sandhills area currently have the opportunity to enhance business skills and profitability by participating in the NebraskaEDGE (Enhancing, Developing, Growing Entrepreneurs) training course which started in October 2005 and runs through February 2006. This comprehensive course is designed to assist local business owners in increasing management skills that lead to new, expanding and profitable businesses. Participants of the 12-week course will learn in a hands-on manner, developing a comprehensive business plan that covers business concerns such as operational issues, financials, marketing techniques and more. Along with providing sound business planning, the NebraskaEDGE course will also cover the following area effecting small businesses: legal issues, market research, management issues, budgets and cash flows, money sources, transfer of ownership, government regulations, contracts and more.

Stapleton, Tryon and Gandy Housing Rehabilitation 2005

With the success of round one of the Mullen, Arthur and Thedford rehabilitation program in 2004, the Sandhills RC&D continued with round two and applied for the Nebraska Affordable Housing Program through a grant application submitted to the Department of Economic Development. The Sandhills RC&D has successfully been awarded \$200,000 for the rehabilitation of nine owner-occupied houses in the Stapleton, Tryon and Gandy communities in 2005. The benefits of this program include the continuation of providing housing rehabilitation funds to eligible homeowners in the Sandhills RC&D region. Given the age of housing in this area of the state and the average family incomes in the targeted counties, there is a demand for these funds that far exceeds the amount available.

Foundation Development Workshop

The Foundation Development Workshop was offered to establish public availability on how to develop foundations. The workshop was instructed by Dr. Don Udell of Oklahoma City, OK and was held at the Lake McConaughy Visitors Center in June 2005. This workshop offered businesses, organizations and individuals the opportunity to learn what a foundation is and the different types of foundations. The training also included who is eligible to receive money and the steps needed in creating foundations and providing money needed for their cause.

Foundation Center's Database in North Platte Library

Western Nebraska now has public access to more funding with a new search database at the North Platte Public Library. The database, called the Foundation Center's FC Search 9.0 database, archives nearly 80,000 foundations, corporate givers and grant-making public charities across the United States. Public access to the FC Search database is available through six computers at the North Platte Public Library's technology center thanks in part to a grant funded by the Mid-Nebraska Community Foundation based in North Platte.



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Mullen Landscaping Project

Mullen was one of thirty-three communities in Nebraska to receive landscape funds through the 2005 Community Enhancement Program (CEP). The Hooker County Fire Department Highway Enhancement Project, coordinated by Don Earl with Technical Assistance from the Sandhills RC&D, received \$2,000. The funds were used to improve Nebraska highway and entryway corridors at the Hooker County Fire Department. The program encourages the use of sustainable, environmentally sound landscape practices and diverse plantings.

Range Youth Camp 2005

Every year during the month of June, the Society for Range Management Nebraska Range Youth Camp holds a week-long camp for local youth at the Halsey National Forest at Halsey. The Range Camp provides hands-on experience with rangeland resources. Campers learn to identify range plants and range sites, judge range condition and determine stocking rates. Other educational topics include wildlife, geology, nursery tours, range improvements and livestock health. Participants have the opportunity to participate in exciting outdoor activities including water relays, canoe races, scavenger hunts and a steak fry and dance to end the week.



2005 State Range Camp Participants

The 42nd Annual Range Youth Camp was held June 13-17, 2005, at the state 4-H camp in Halsey. Campers usually have a wide variety of experiences with range management, and everyone has a great time and makes lots of new friends.

Hooker County Medical Clinic Equipment

The Sand Hills Family Medicine Clinic in Mullen has been approved to receive \$24,800 from the USDA Rural Development. These funds are to be used for a new x-ray processor and a hydraulic procedure table. In order to continue as an effective and reliable Medical Facility to our community, as well as to surrounding communities such as Grant, Thomas, McPherson and Cherry counties, the Medical Clinic personnel feel it is necessary to update this equipment to therefore provide the best health care possible. Not only will our business profit from more dependable equipment but our home town patients, as well as our surrounding area patients, will be able to seek higher quality health care without having to travel hundreds of miles to do so.

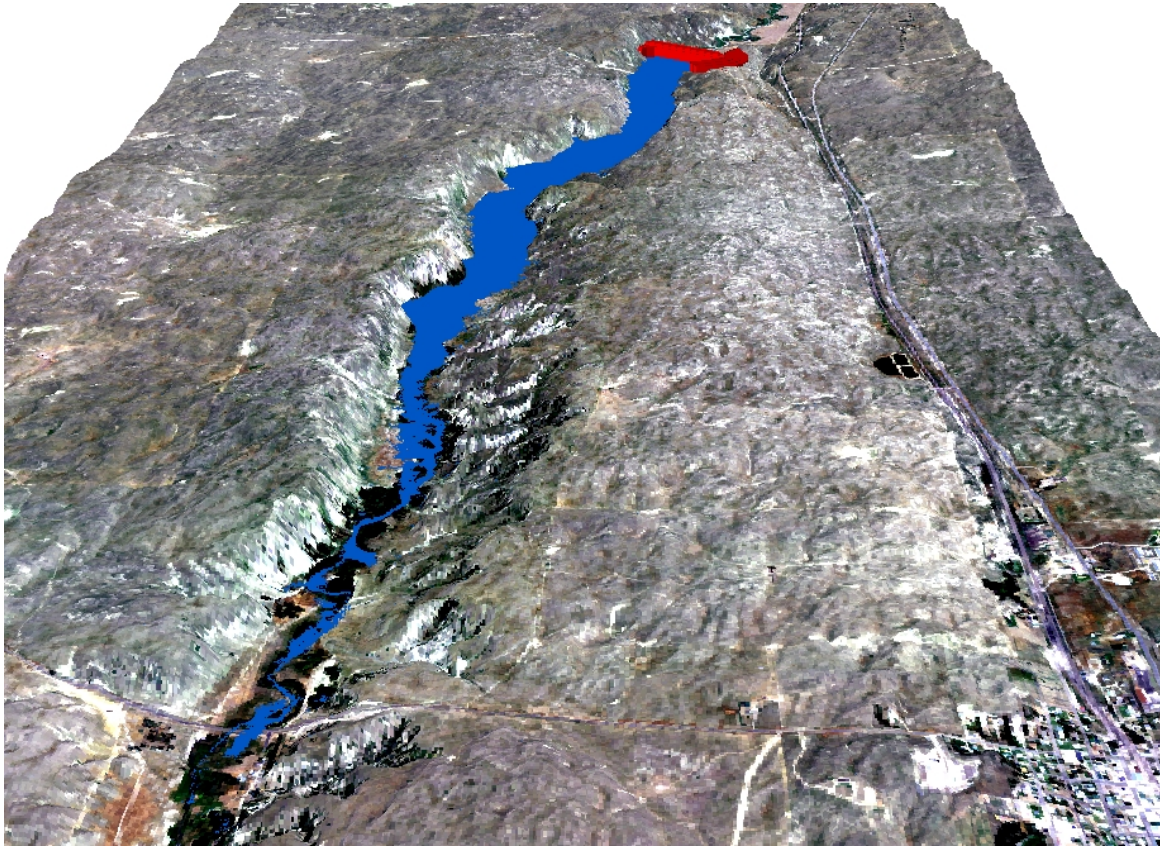
Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway

The Sandhills RC&D has partnered with Loup Basin and Central Nebraska RC&D's to assist the Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway organization with tourism efforts along Nebraska's Highway 2. Deemed one of the ten most scenic roads in the United States, Nebraska's "Sandhills Journey" takes you through some of the most remote and breathtaking country side you will ever see. This 272-mile byway extends between two of the state's "larger communities", the noteworthy city of Grand Island and the bustling railroad town of Alliance. Escape into one of the most unspoiled and beautiful landscapes found anywhere in America – where cattle, fence posts and windmills are the skyline. Cattle and buffalo outnumber people and hunters, fishermen and wildlife enthusiasts are drawn to this pristine area where water sports and outdoor recreation abound. The Sandhills Journey is just that – a journey! Be sure to check out the Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway's website at www.sandhillsjourney.com.



Proposed Middle Loup Lake Project

The Middle Loup Lake Project seeks to improve economic conditions by utilizing the areas abundant natural resources to create a recreational lake on the Middle Loup River near Mullen, Nebraska. Due to the nature of the areas geology and topography, the lake could support a unique trout fishery, thus creating the opportunity to boost the area economy by being a regional, if not national, recreational destination. Declining area populations as well as the slumping rural economy would be improved with the development of such a destination.



Sandhills RC&D

FY 2005 Completed Projects

Project Name	*RC&D Council Contribution	**Partner Contributions	Total Cost (\$)
In-depth Grant Writing Course	\$3,000	\$0	\$3,000
NCIP Project Networking Guide 2005	\$0	\$500	\$500
Range Youth Camp 2005	\$0	\$11,000	\$11,000
Foundation Center's Database Stapleton, Tryon & Gandy Rehab	\$1,200	\$950	\$2,150
Mullen Fire Dept. Landscaping Grant	\$0	\$200,000	\$200,000
Foundation Development Workshop	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,000
	\$2,500	\$0	\$2,500
Total	\$6,700	\$214,450	\$221,150

On-going Projects Project Name	RC&D Share (\$)	Other (\$)	Total Cost (\$)
Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway	\$0	\$5,000	\$5,000
Sandhills Medical Clinic	\$0	\$24,500	\$24,500
Theford Fire Hall	\$0	\$0	\$0
Sandhills EDGE Coalition	\$7,000	\$3,000	\$10,000
McPherson County Credit Union	\$0	\$0	\$0
Proposed Middle Loup Lake Project	\$500	\$20,000	\$0
Total	\$7,000	\$32,500	\$39,500
Combined Totals	\$13,700	\$246,950	\$260,650

* Partner Contributions = cash &/or in-kind contributions going directly to the project.

**RC&D Council Contribution - cash &/or in-kind contributions from the Council's own funding, volunteer efforts and grant dollars received by the Council for that project.



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Sandhills Resource Conservation & Development

*Serving Arthur, Grant, Hooker, Keith, Lincoln, Logan, & Thomas counties in
West Central Nebraska*

RC&D is a program supported by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The USDA prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or family status.