

SANDHILLS RC&D

ANNUAL REPORT

2006



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Sandhills Resource Conservation & Development

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



"Making The Sandhills A Better Life"

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.

**Sandhills RC&D
FY 2006 Completed Projects**

| <i>Project Name</i> | *RC&D Contribution | **Partner Contributions | Total Cost |
|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| In-depth Grant Writing Course 2006 | \$8,272 | \$3,600 | \$11,872 |
| Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway Website | \$300 | \$5,250 | \$5,250 |
| Sandhills EDGE 2006 | \$7,091 | \$3,000 | \$10,091 |
| Foundation Center's Database | \$50 | \$1,395 | \$1,445 |
| eBay Class | \$150 | \$700 | \$700 |
| Sandhills Medical Clinic | \$500 | \$44,500 | \$45,000 |
| Sandhills RC&D 5 Year Area Plan | \$680 | \$3,840 | \$4,520 |
| Total | \$17,043 | \$62,285 | \$78,878 |

FY 2006 On-going Projects

| <i>Project Name</i> | *RC&D Contribution | **Partner Contributions | Total Cost |
|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Logan, McPherson County Housing Rehab | \$250 | \$200,300 | \$200,550 |
| Nebraska National Forest Friends | \$900 | \$2,400 | \$2,400 |
| Thomas County Housing Plan | \$0 | \$150,000 | \$150,000 |
| Seneca Auditorium Restoration | \$250 | \$5,300 | \$5,300 |
| West Central Weed Management Area | \$500 | \$750 | \$1,250 |
| Sandhills Weed Management Area | \$500 | \$12,500 | \$13,000 |
| 07 Nebr. Assoc. of RC&D Councils Conf. | \$3,000 | \$12,500 | \$15,500 |
| Proposed Middle Loup Lake Project | \$500 | \$20,000 | \$20,500 |
| Total | \$5,900 | \$403,750 | \$408,500 |

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

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

Sandhills RC&D Financials
1-1-06 through 12-31-06

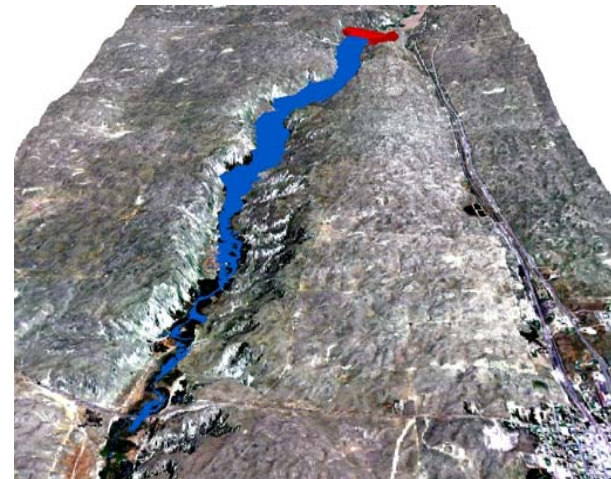
| | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Balance forward 12-31-05 | \$5,599.93 |
| Income | |
| Interest Income..... | \$149.66 |
| Membership Dues | \$850.00 |
| Project Income | \$20,820.00 |
| NRCS Cooperative Agreement..... | \$10,091.19 |
| Total Income..... | +\$31,910.85 |
| Expenses | |
| Association Dues: | |
| National..... | \$450.00 |
| State..... | \$300.00 |
| Western RC&D..... | \$200.00 |
| Insurance Bond | \$100.00 |
| Meeting Expenses | \$70.48 |
| Office Supplies..... | \$133.86 |
| Project Expenses | \$18081.23 |
| Travel Expense..... | \$120.00 |
| Misc. | \$100.00 |
| Total Expenses..... | -\$19,555.57 |
| Ending Balance 12-31-05..... | <u>\$17,955.21</u> |

Sandhills RC&D 5 Year Area Plan

The Sandhills RC&D Area Plan is the result of community leaders and volunteers working together to create a plan that sets forth the goals and objectives intended to strengthen their communities. The plan was completed after many hours of analyzing the needs identified in four specific areas. Those areas include resource conservation, water and land management, agriculture, and community development. The concern of an aging infrastructure in our communities, the need for constant economic development, and the stewardship of our natural resources are issues that will be addressed through partnerships with communities, service providers and through the private sector. This five-year plan will provide the basis to help keep rural agricultural communities alive. The future success of this region depends on partners working together to create a healthy rural economy along with sustainable communities and environment. The plan is available on the website www.sandhillsrcd.org/plan.pdf

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.

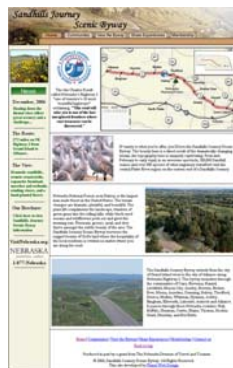


Foundation Center's Database in North Platte Library

Public access to the Foundation Center's FC Search 10.0 database is in the second year of availability located at the technology center at the North Platte Public Library. Thanks in part to a grant funded by the Mid-Nebraska Community Foundation based in North Platte; a continuation of the grant searching software is once again offered to the public in western Nebraska. This software is a collection of nearly 80,000 foundations, corporate givers and grant-making public charities across the United States. Just enter the type of grant or scholarship you are looking for and presto, it will bring up all of the matches for those types of giving organizations.

Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway Website

The Sandhills RC&D is assisting 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 countryside 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.



2006 Projects

2nd In-depth Grant Writing Course

Due to numerous requests for a second grant writing workshop, the Sandhills RC&D once again sponsored an In-depth Grant Writing Course that was held in west-central Nebraska. Dr. Don Udell of Oklahoma City returned as the instructor for the nine-day series of grant-writing workshops held in Broken Bow, North Platte and Thedford. Dr. Don Udell discussed 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. Over \$600,000 of successfully funded grant proposals was reported by participants in the first grant writing course, with many proposals pending at this time.



Dr. Don Udell of Oklahoma City returned as the instructor for a second year of the In-Depth Grant-Writing Training. Over \$600,000 of successfully funded grant proposals were reported by participants from the first grant writing course in 2005.



All work and no play makes grant writers some what cranky. So the group decided to take an evening tank float on the Middle Loup River during their final session in May.

Sandhills EDGE Course

No matter what your business is (retail, wholesale, manufacturing or agricultural), protecting your business through risk management is essential. Sixteen individuals who were interested in either starting a new business or who currently own a business, completed the twelve week Sandhills EDGE Course held at the Sandhills RC&D conference room in Mullen. The participants had the opportunity to map out their road to success by completing a comprehensive, effective business plan learning the tools to be more successful in a timely manner. The business plan allows the owners the opportunity to maximize resources available, understand financial aspects, increase management skills, and improve marketing skills to increase profits as well as plan for future opportunities such as the transition of business ownership to the next generation. After participants completed the EDGE course, four new businesses were formed which created nine new jobs.

Logan, McPherson County Housing Rehabilitation 2006

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 Logan and McPherson counties. 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.

eBay Class

The Sandhills RC&D in partnership with UNL Extension and the Hometown Competitiveness Program presented an eBay class for area residents. Topics included how to research for selling on eBay, how to set up a Seller's and Pay Pal account, how to prepare your item for sale and what to expect after the sale. There were fourteen participants for the two-week hands-on course held in November with four participants indicating they would start an eBay business.



eBay class participants utilized the UNL Bit-Mobile at a training held in Mullen. Sandhills RC&D partnered with UNL Extension and the Hometown Competitiveness Program as well as the Sandhills EDGE Coalition to host the training.