

North Country RC&D
2008/2009 Plan of Work
Project Updates and Coordinators Report

June 3, 2008

New entries from last Project Update are in bold font.

This Project Update is a transition from the 2007/2008 to the 2008/2009 Plan of Work. Projects appear in the order they occurred in the 2007/2008 Plan of Work. The newly approved 2008/2009 Plan of Work needs to be prepared for the NRCS State Conservationist signature. This is an update of the 01/14/08 Project Updates and Coordinators Report.

NH Agricultural Innovation Program, (Bob Harrington and Lisa Rixen are the Project Liaisons for NCRC&D, Dick Babcock for SNHRC&D. An advisory team has representatives from NH Farm Bureau, UNH Cooperative Extension, NH Dept of Agriculture and the private sector. Charlene Andersen is a hired project coordinator)- This statewide project is underway and on track for completion in December, 2007. Four new farms were enrolled in January, 2007. 17 farms are on track to complete their business plans. 17 is 3 less than the original goal. Discussions are underway with USDA Rural Development to potentially use an anticipated surplus in grant funds for an ongoing web based dialogue. There is also the possibility of applying to USDA RD again. There was State of NH legislation this past session to start an NHAIP style Farm Viability program, but it was returned to Committee. A new Commission has been formed to study how NH can expand on the NHAIP model. I have been nominated to the Commission and have received NRCS approval to serve on it. The Commission has met twice. It looks like some form of agricultural viability program will be presented for legislation this session. However, additional funding for UNH Cooperative Extension may take precedence. We are getting close to the end of the project. We will be close to our goal of 20 plans but perhaps a few short. NHAIP participants will be attending the Small and Beginning Farmer Conference on Oct. 27. A case study booklet and posters for most farms have been completed. The posters were displayed at the 2007 Small and Beginner Farmer Conference. USDA-RD has given approval to extend the project until all funds are disbursed, which means that more farms can be added for business planning assistance. The Advisory Committee will need to meet to determine how that will happen without a contracted project coordinator. The Commission is still meeting, but it is unclear at this point what will be the outcome. The NHAIP Project Advisory Committee met last on 11/28/07. At that meeting it was decided to continue providing assistance to 3 farms that were currently in the program and that Charlene Andersen would serve as Team Leader. No additional farms would be added until the amount of grant funds available could be verified and that will take a final invoicing from UNH Cooperative Extension through 12/31/07. It was also agreed to pursue additional funding to continue the NHAIP from the USDA-RD. NCRC&D would begin preparation of a new grant proposal. The Advisory Committee planned its next meeting for January 16, 2008. However, that meeting has been postponed due to the fact that no final billing from UNH Cooperative Extension has been received. No progress has yet been made on

a new grant proposal. We are still waiting on official word from USDA-RD on the extension to June 30, 2008. **USDA-RD granted an extension until September 30, 2008. Charlene Andersen continues as Team Leader on 5 or 6 farms still being assisted. We are trying to line up more farms as there are ample funds.**

2007 Small and Beginning Farmers Conference (Bob Harrington and Lisa Rixen are the Project Liaisons for NCRC&D, Dick Babcock for SNHRC&D))- The 2006 Conference Planning Committee has met and made a proposal for a one day 2007 Conference to occur on October 27/28, 2007. A conference coordinator has been hired by the Committee. Her name is Darlene DeSilva. Save the date information is going out in the next BF Bulletin and post cards will be mailed soon as well. This committee is meeting monthly. The Conference brochure has been mailed out and well underway for another successful conference. The Conference was held on October 27 & 28, 2007 with approximately 100 participants including speakers. This number is a little more than last year. The Conference Committee still needs to meet to go over the evaluations and final financials. The Conference Committee will be meeting on January 17, 2008 to go over final finances and evaluations. **Project is complete. Small and Beginning Farmers of NH has taken over the planning of the 2008 Conference. USDA FSA has offered them \$1000 in financial support.**

Livestock Processing (Lisa Rixen and Dan McLaughlin are Project Liaisons for NCRC&D. No discussions have taken place to enlist SNHRC&D into this project)- This statewide project has not yet moved forward. Preliminary goal is to explore conducting a feasibility study on the idea of forming a livestock servicing company similar to what exists in NY State. **No updates to report since last report.**

Plymouth Local Foods- (Joan Turley is Project Liaison) No substantive progress on this project from NCRC&D. PAREI has received funds to produce a handbook that would help other communities/regions establish programs similar to Plymouth Local Foods. NCRC&D needs to discuss this project with PAREI to determine the actual role for NCRC&D. No updates to report since last report. At the 12/11/07 NCRC&D Leadership Team Meeting it was agreed to remove this project from the 2008/2009 Plan of Work. **No updates to report since last report.**

Groveton Co-Location/Co-Generation (Russ Dowd, and Jeff Hayes are Project Liaisons) - The first Advisory Committee meeting for this project is scheduled for August 21, 22 or 23rd. A copy of the Signed MOU with North Country Council will be available at the 7/24/07 NCRC&D Board meeting. The Advisory Committee met on August 21, 2007. It is a very lively and committed group. A sub committee was created to prepare a Scope of Services document. That document is ready for presentation to the Advisory Committee when it meets next on September 27th. The Advisory Committee has met again. The Scope of Services and Request for Letters of Qualifications has been released. Submissions are due November 16, 2007. The announcement of the closure of the Wausau Paper Mill in Groveton has heightened the need for this project to create jobs as well as explore district heating. Three Submissions were received. The Selection Sub-Committee of David Auger, Peter Riviere and Morris Pierce agreed that three

submissions of qualifications were sufficient to move forward. Using the Qualifications Based Selection Process, the Sub-Committee ranked the Biomass Energy Resource Center and Horizon/Ramboll as the top two candidates and chose them for interviews. Interviews were conducted on 12/12/07. Based on the interviews and the Qualifications Based Selection Process, the firm ranked as number 1 was Horizon/Ramboll. The entire process was reported to the Advisory Committee on 12/18/07. Decisions of the Selection Sub Committee were ratified unanimously by the Advisory Committee and a new Contract Negotiations team of David Auger, Russ Dowd and Morris Pierce began contract negotiations with Horizon/Ramboll. The Advisory Committee authorized the Negotiations Team to finalize the contract and if satisfied forward it on to NCRC&D and North Country Council for their approval. At this point the contract is finalized, has been signed by Horizon/Ramboll and is being forwarded to NCRC&D and NCC for their signatures. The next step is a Public Information/Public Input Session that is scheduled for January 22, 2008 in Groveton. **The Horizon/Ramboll consulting Team has been working on the Feasibility Study. We are hoping for a presentation of the Draft Report during June.**

Community Scale Biomass Heating (Russ Dowd is Project Liaison. A project Liaison from SNHRC&D is not in place. An advisory team includes representative from the NH Dept of Education, USDA-FS, SPNHF, UNH Coop Ext, NH Div of Forest and Lands, NH Timberland Owners Association, PSU Center for Rural Partnerships, Jordan Institute, NH Office of Energy and Planning, SNHRC&D Coordinator, and the private sector)- This statewide project expanded from schools to include other institutional and private utilization of biomass heating technology. An Advisory Committee has met three times. The funding proposal submitted to the US Forest Service that was described in the last Report was not approved for funding, however the language for that proposal was used to develop a new funding proposal which has been submitted. Copies of that proposal will be available at the 7/24/07 Board Meeting. A new funding proposal under the USFS Biomass Energy Jump Start Program was selected for funding. It includes conducting feasibility assessments at the new DRED warehouse at Bear Brook State Park, a feasibility assessment to convert PSU's co-gen plant to wood chips and three yet to be named schools or other public facilities. In addition, the project will prepare informational packets for schools and communities on the potential benefits of conversion to biomass heating, conduct 2 tours and 3 workshops. This project is now underway! Two Requests for Qualifications for biomass heating feasibility studies have been released, one for the DRED Warehouse and the second for the Co-Gen facility at Plymouth State University. The Project Advisory Committee met last on November 6, 2007 and sub committees for the 3 elements of the Project were created. Sarah Smith of UNH Cop Ext and Charlie Niebling of New England Wood Pellet will plan workshops and tours for school and other municipal officials (targeting the February vacation period). Ed Murdough of NH Dept of Education and Joanne Morin of NH DES will plan informational materials development. Kirk Stone of the Jordan Institute and Rick DeMark will develop the Request for Proposals that will be sent to schools and communities offering financial assistance for 3 local feasibility studies to convert existing electric, oil or gas heating plants to woody biomass. The DRED Warehouse Feasibility Project has selected the Biomass Energy Resource Center to conduct that Feasibility

Study. NCRC&D has not yet received a copy of that agreement. The PSU Feasibility project interviewed candidate firms on January 9, 2008. It is not known at this time if PSU has made a decision on a firm to conduct their feasibility study. The Advisory Committee for the entire project meets next on January 17, 2008 to finalize workshops and tours, an educational brochure and the process for offering financial assistance to schools and municipalities. The workshops/tours are tentatively scheduled for February 26, 27 and 28, 2008. **The workshops and tours were held and deemed very successful. The Feasibility Study for the DRED Warehouse has been completed. The feasibility Study for PSU is in progress. Eight (8) proposals for additional Feasibility Studies were received by the deadline of May 16. The Advisory Committee has tentatively selected the awardees pending cost negotiations. The Advisory Team for this project has a conference call meeting on Thursday June 5 to confirm selections.**

Helping Develop Wood based Business in the North Country- (Russ Dowd is Project Liaison) No substantive progress has been made yet on this project. No updates to report since last report. At the 12/11/07 NCRC&D Leadership Team Meeting it was agreed to remove this project from the 2008/2009 Plan of Work. **No updates to report since last report.**

Natural Resource Business/Technology Coalition, Conference and Fair AKA E4(Lisa Rixen is Project Liaison. A project Liaison from SNHRC&D is not in place. This project is being coordinated by the PSU Center for Rural Partnerships. NCRC&D's role is supportive)- The E4 Conference titled Exploring Your Woodland opportunities was held June 1&2, 2007. The conference had fair attendance. The work of forming the E4 Coalition is ongoing. Current focus of the E4 is on "incubating forest based businesses and meets next on July 31, 2007. The July 31 meeting was cancelled and rescheduled to October 10 in Berlin. This group has disbanded, at least for the time being. At the 12/11/07 NCRC&D Leadership Team Meeting it was agreed to remove this project from the 2008/2009 Plan of Work. **No updates to report since last report.**

Rural Fire Protection (Dan McLaughlin is Project Liaison for NCRC&D, Jim Moore for SNHRC&D. Pat Tarpey and Karl Berardi work for the NCRC&D approximately 24 to 30 hours per week each on this project out of the NC RC&D office in Laconia)- This project continues to assist communities statewide and is on its way of assisting 30 communities with water resource assessment as part of their All Hazards Mitigation Plans. Project completion deadline is June, 2008. One issue to be resolved is whether the RC&D Councils will continue this project. A meeting was held with NCRC&D staff and Dick Verville of NH BEM on June 21, 2007. At that meeting Mr. Verville explained that future funding for the development of Water Supply plans and related technical assistance could come directly from NHBEM and not through FEMA. This is something (continuation of this project) that the 2 RC&D Councils will need to discuss and decide on within the next few months. The Project team met on September 6, 2007. A report of their meeting will be passed out at the next meeting of the Board of Directors. The Project team and Staff are developing a proposal for the possible continuation of this project past June 30, 2008, when current funding will end. Meanwhile, work continues

as the Staff prepares Water Resource Plans across the State. **No extension will be sought for the current project. It is anticipated that the performance goal of 30 community wide Water Supply Plans will be met by the June 30, 2008 deadline. New funding has been approved by the NH Office of Homeland Security. This \$80,000 one year grant will fund the completion of 10 community wide Water Supply Plans, 20 hydrant designs, maintain the two part-time staff positions at North Country RC&D and add a third 8hours/week project administrator which will be located at the Southern NH RC&D office in Concord.**

Winnepesaukee Watershed (John Hodsdon is Project Liaison. Pat Tarpey works for NCRC&D approximately 8 to 16 hours/week on this project)- Tributary sampling is completed. Public outreach and coordination is underway. The current MOU with NRCS and LWWA has been extended to Sept. 30, 2007. Outreach coordination is being negotiated with BCCD and CCCD. Hopefully, contracts with both CCCD and BCCD will be ready for NCRC&D approval at the 7/24/07 NCRC&D Board Meeting. The Coordinator kept the NCRC&D Board informed on the submission and progress of this project moving forward for funding through the American Express Members Project. It was learned on July 23, that the project did not make the top 5. Contracts are now signed with both BCCD and CCCD. Workshop components have been completed. BCCD and CCCD are conducting outreach to landowners in the selected tributaries and Pat Tarpey is completing sub watershed assessments. The agreement with NRCS is now complete. The project partners (LRPC, PSU, LWWA and NCRC&D) continue to seek funding for a watershed wide program. A pre-proposal was submitted to DES. The Pre-proposal was accepted and NH-DES has offered \$76,000 to the project. The Project partners are now re-writing the proposal to fit the reduced budget. **Pat Tarpey will be working on this project as a PSU grad student located at NCRC&D. \$12,000 has been allocated to cover her time in planning additional water quality sampling and testing watershed modeling techniques. The mechanics of compensation have yet to be finalized. More funds need to be raised for sampling that will occur in 2009.**

Watershed Planning- (John Hodsdon is project liaison) There have been no new requests for watershed assistance since the request from the Town of Freedom. No updates to report since last report. At the 12/11/07 NCRC&D Leadership Team Meeting it was agreed to remove this project from the 2008/2009 Plan of Work. **No updates to report since last report.**

Re-Print of Guide to developing and redeveloping Shoreland Property in NH (John Hodsdon is project liaison)- No progress to report on this project. **No updates to report since last report.**

Discover the Forest of NH Brochure (Joan Turley is project liaison)-No progress to report on this project. No updates to report since last report. At the 12/11/07 NCRC&D Leadership Team Meeting it was agreed to remove this project from the 2008/2009 Plan of Work. **No updates to report since last report.**

Discovery Trail Agreement (Joan Turley is project liaison)-- A Stewardship Agreement with the WMNF is still in place. The WMNF will be asking NCRC&D to help print a guide to the Discovery Trail by June 1 of this year. NCRC&D has arranged for tree signs and a new updated Discovery Trail Guide to be printed. Once these items are completed the Stewardship Agreement can be closed out. Interpretive brochures have been printed and delivered to the USFS WMNF. Tree signs were order and delivered as well. This project is completed. At the 12/11/07 NCRC&D Leadership Team Meeting it was agreed to remove this project from the 2008/2009 Plan of Work. **No updates to report since last report.**

Northern Forest States Wood Net Project- No updates to report since last report. I have been unsuccessful and getting any response back from Sandra Morgan, the originator of this project since July. Still no discussion with the originator of this project. I will make another attempt to find out if the project applicant is still interested in moving forward. At the 12/11/07 NCRC&D Leadership Team Meeting it was agreed to remove this project from the 2008/2009 Plan of Work. **No updates to report since last report.**

Coos County Economic Action Plan- Energy Technical Review Committee- This is a new project that will be voted on at the November 13, 2007 NCRC&D Board meeting. A schedule of meetings for the Energy TRC has been determined. The dates are January 15, January 23 and January 29, 2008. The meetings will take place in Plymouth, at the Center for Rural Partnerships. **The Energy TRC completed its work with a presentation of their recommendations to the Coos County Economic Action Steering Committee in April. NCRC&D needs to submit its final report and invoice to receive the balance of the \$5000 fee for facilitating this process. Copies of the Final recommendations will be available at then June 3, 2008 Board Meeting.**

North Country Farm Fresh Cooperative- This is a new project that was adopted by the NCRC&D on 11/13/07. The Project Liaison is Lisa Rixen. NCRC&D's role in the project is to provide technical advice and fiscal agency to the fledgling Cooperative until it can function on its own. The Coordinator and Project Liaison met with the Julie Moran of Colebrook (the organizer of the project) and drafted an agreement that will be presented to the NCRC&D Board on January 15, 2008. **Much has been happening with this project. A \$1000 Agricultural Mini Grant was submitted and approved by the NH Dept of Agriculture. It will be matched with \$1000 supplied with funds raised by the Cooperative. A one year \$45,000 Rural Business Enterprise grant was submitted and approved by USDA Rural Development. This grant will be used to hire a project coordinator (Julie Moran). Hire a book-keeper for the emerging Cooperative. Hire a Consultant who will provide coaching to the Project Coordinator and Cooperative Steering Committee to take them through the Cooperative formation process. Provide business planning assistance to farmer members of the Cooperative. Provide \$2000 to NCRC&D for administrative expenses. Agreements have been finalized between the NCRC&D and Cooperative Steering Committee and between NCRC&D and the Project Coordinator. Additional agreements need to be developed and executed between NCRC&D and the Cooperative's book-keeper (Christine Charman) and between NCRC&D and**

the cooperative development consultant, who is Lynda Brushett of the Cooperative Development Institute. A conference call meeting with all the players of this project is happening on Friday, June 6, 2008 at 8:30am. Rick DeMark is meeting with the Project Coordinator and the North Country Farm Fresh Cooperative Steering Committee on Monday June 9, 2008. The Cooperative has begun making deliveries of produce to 4 local restaurants in the Colebrook area.

Board Development items (Under the direction of the Leadership Team)-

1. By Law review- Due by September 2007 This did not happen. On the 11/13/07 agenda. Dan McLaughlin and Rick DeMark met on January 9, 2008 to discuss possible ByLaw changes. This is on the agenda for the January 15, 2008 Board meeting. **No updates to report since last report.**
2. Board Training- training survey conducted in May, 2007. Results will be discussed on July 24, 2007 meeting. **The NCRC&D and SNHRC&D Boards need to decide on a time to conduct training. NRCS has agreed to cover the cost of bringing in a trainer.**
3. Recruitment- Due by November, 2007 Jeff Hayes has notified the Coordinator that he can no longer fulfill duties as representative of the NCC on the NCRC&D Board. He will discuss a replacement with his staff and Board of Directors. The Coordinator has informed the GREAT organization in Groveton that it is looking for Board members from Coos County and asked them to suggest potential NCRC&D Board members. Nothing more to report. This was discussed at the November Board Meeting and again on the 12/11/07 Leadership team Meeting. It was agreed that each county would evaluate their own recruitment needs and provide names of potential Board members or Associate Board members to the Nomination committee by the January 15, 2008 Board of Directors Meeting. **No updates to report since last report.**
4. External Communications Plan- Plan in place. A summer 2007 newsletter was published and distributed. A sub committee of Lisa Rixen and Joan Turley met with the Coordinator on September 14th. It was voted on in September that the next Annual Report be of higher quality than in the previous years. A committee will be created at the 11/13/07 meeting to get this done. The new RC&D intern, in Durham, Chris Powles will be working on a newsletter. Nothing new to Report. Nothing new to Report. **A distribution plan for the 2007 Annual Report needs to be finalized.**
5. Self-Sustainability- Due by December 2008. **No updates to report since last report.**

Coordinator's Report on other activities since January 14, 2007 are in Bold

- Am now a participant in NRCS NH bi weekly Program Staff Meetings
- Member of NRCS State Efficiency Plan Committee which worked from March through April to develop a new staffing plan for the NRCS NH operation. The

- new SEP was completed and will be released to NRCS employees on August 17, 2007 and the partners (NCRC&D) after that.
- Participant in both the North Country and Lakes Region Comprehensive Economic Development (CEDS) Committees. 2/7, 2/28, 4/25, 5/9. 9/5 & 9/11
 - Attend Coalition for Sustaining Agriculture meetings when possible.
 - Member of NH Rural Development Council, 1/22, 3/19, 6/4
 - Member of NH Forest Advisory Board, 4/13
 - Developed NH RC&D display and attended the E4 Exploring Your Woodland Opportunities Conference, June 1 & 2, 2007
 - Committee member, Northern Forest Biomass Energy Initiative 5/22
 - I now have the collateral duty of Outreach Coordinator for the NH-NRCS. I will brief the NCRC&D Board when I have been provided details of this assignment and better understand the potential impacts to my regular duties.
 - Coordinator is assisting the SNHRC&D with a project involving the creation of Community Gardens in Manchester. Assistance is focused on helping organize a steering committee to operate the project.
 - Attended the BCCD Annual Meeting on May 30, 2007 and made a presentation on Community Scale Biomass Heating.
 - Attended a training session on cooperative development on June 15, 2007
 - Coordinator was asked to assist the NHACD plan the 2008 NACD Northeast Regional Meeting happening in August 2008. This committee has met twice, 6/21 and 7/17, 8/23,12/19/07 and 01/11/07, **and 2/28/08.**
 - Attended the NH State Technical Committee Meeting on 7/24/07.
 - Assisted the NCRC&D Leadership team conduct an outreach for a new bookkeeper
 - Met with Washington DC NRCS staffer Dan Mularkey to discuss RC&D Area Plans, Annual Plans of Work and POINTS on 8/17.
 - Was a presenter on the aspect of Business Planning as part of NRCS Conservation Planning on 8/28.
 - I have met with the new Heifer Coordinator for the North East, Lindsey Ketchel a couple of times.
 - Attended the LWWA annual Meeting on 8/30.
 - Participated as a speaker at the Living by the river program of BCCD on 9/11 as part of their contract with NCRC&D.
 - Participated in the NH Agricultural Viability Commission Meetings on September 12, October 17.
 - Attended the New England Association of RC&D's fall Conference on October 18 and 19 with Lisa Rixen and Dan McLaughlin.
 - Attended the 2007 Small and Beginner Farmer Conference on October 27 and 28th.
 - Participated in the Lakes Region CEDS Meeting on 12/5/07.
 - Was on Leave from 12/20 to January 4.
 - **Accompanied Lisa Rixen and Adam Tatem at a meeting with the NCRC&D accountant Dennis Denoncourt to discuss 2007 audit/financial review options.**

- **Help prepare information packets for the NH Congressional Offices that were delivered during the National RC&D Leadership Forum Feb 25-27, 2008.**
- **On leave 3/18-3/21, 2008. Became a Grampa!**
- **Attended NRCS EEO training 4/23 and 24, 2008**
- **Participated in NH State Foresters Tour on 5/6/08**
- **On Leave 5/12 -5/16, 2008. Grampa trip plus more.**
- **Attended SNHRC&D Board of Directors meeting on 5/19/08.**
- **Attended Carbon Trading Workshop on 5/20/08**
- **Attended Lakes region Conservation Commission Meeting on 5/22/08**
- **Busy moving old furniture out, new furniture in and dealing with computer issues May 22-30, 2008.**

Requests for Assistance or Action

- **The Northern Forest Center has asked NCRC&D if it confirms it's endorsement to the Northern Forest Biomass Energy Action Plan. Done and Completed.**
- **The Carroll County Conservation District has requested assistance from NCRC&D in helping launch a bikeway project in the Conway area. This will be discussed at the June 3, 2008 Board Meeting.**