

2006 Annual Report

North Country Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area

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Message from the Chair

Once again, I have been honored to serve this Council as Chair over the past year. I believe 2006 was an important year for North Country RC&D. We continued to be actively engaged in discussions and actions relative to our mission and plan of work. We have examined and made a number of housekeeping improvements to our council's internal administrative and procedural processes, which are focused on the future continued success of the council. I believe we have improved and rationalized our focus. The energy, efforts and ideas from council members to enhance the future economic viability of the council, speaks loudly of our members' commitment.

As we know, the funding issue at the national level will, apparently, be with us persistently. The proposed 2008 Federal Budget would eliminate funding for the RC&D Coordinator position stationed in each RC&D Area. This is a reduction in RC&D Coordinator positions nationally from 375 to 50, one for each state. It would also mean the elimination of all administra-

tive assistants and federal support for RC&D office space. Our council, as a volunteer organization, would be faced with a daunting task for continued success, without the assistance of the NRCS/RC&D coordinator and staff. So, it is prudent for us to plan accordingly. In the meantime, you can help us by registering your support for our RC&D activities with our Congressional Delegation.

In 2006 we welcomed a new member to our council, Nate Miller, of the Upper Valley/Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission and a new USDA/NRCS State Conservationist, Mr. George Cleek.

I will reiterate that one of our challenges for the coming year is to attract dedicated volunteers and expand our ranks. The continued success and leadership of RC&D at the county, state and national level is directly related to the wisdom, vigor and depth of our volunteers. It's hard to deny the truth of this old adage that "Many Hands Make Light Work".

Russ Dowd

2006 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

NH Agricultural Innovation Program (NHAIP)

With federal funding through the USDA Rural Development and in-kind support provided by the NH Department of Agriculture—Markets & Foods, NH Farm Bureau Federation, UNH Cooperative Extension, Southern NH RC&D Council, Parker Hill Associates and the work of over 25 public and private business development consultants, 9 farms have completed a new business plan that will hopefully better insure their success as a small business.

Since it started in 2004, approximately \$100,000 of combined federal and local in-kind support has been utilized. The farms that have completed their business plans include: Swain Farm in Sanbornton, Currier Brook Farm in Wentworth, Thyme & Ewe Farm in Claremont, Bickford's Diamond B Farm in New Durham, Apple Annie Farm in Brentwood, Candy's Flowers, Herbs & Things in Gilmanton, Found Well Farm in Pembroke and Peaked Hill Farm in Gilmanton. 4 new farms were enrolled in the program in December, 2006.

The NHAIP has served as a model for the Governor's Farm Viability Task Force Recommendations for a state program to take the place of NHAIP that not only helps farms create new business plans,

but also provides financial help to implement the plan. North Country RC&D hopes that its role as a catalyst to help NH take this type of active support of its farming community seriously will someday result in an ongoing farm business support program.

2006 Small & Beginning +Farmers Conference



North Country RC&D was an active supporter and organizer of this year's Conference, which drew over 100 farmers from throughout northern New England. The 2-day conference was jammed-packed with useful workshops designed to help small and beginning farms be more successful operations. This year's event was the 3rd and it is hoped that the 2007 Conference will surpass the success of the previous three.

North Country RC&D part of Coos County Economic Adjustment Strategy

The closure of the pulp mill in Berlin cost many jobs and threatens the livelihood of the community. It also threatens the already volatile market for lower-grade and underutilized wood. Soon after the announcement of the paper mill closure, there were offers from PSNH and other private entities that a wood-fired electrical power plant, similar to those that already exist in NH, be built in Berlin or other Coos County location(s) as a way to replace lost jobs and stabilize the wood market.

Back in 1997, North Country RC&D commissioned a study that investigated the potential benefits of co-locating certain energy-consuming activities at the existing wood-fired energy plants. The study estimated great promise with a number of activities particularly greenhouse, aquaculture, lumber drying and simple building heating and cooling with the prospect of new wood-fired plants being built in NH.

North Country RC&D submitted a proposal in 2006 to the North Country Council, which administers the Coos County Economic Adjustment Strategy, that the 1997 study should be updated, taking into account new technologies and also the prospect of actually designing a plant from the start with co-located industry or co-generation of energy in

mind. The proposal was accepted. \$17,000 in EDA funds were dedicated to the project and North Country RC&D has raised an additional \$17,000 as match. We hope to get this project off the ground in early 2007.

Community Scale Biomass Heating

In 2006, North Country RC&D brought together a group of partners with the goal of increasing the use of biomass as a heating fuel for community-scale projects such as schools and public & private buildings. The technology to help such projects already exists, the job of getting this information into the hands of potential users is the challenge. Our neighbor to the west, Vermont, has been helping schools convert to biomass heating for over 20 years. Today, close to 30 schools are using the technology, saving hundreds of thousands on fossil fuel costs, helping the local economy by funneling fuel payments to local wood fuel suppliers and providing an additional market for lower grade and underutilized wood.

NH has the same potential and North Country RC&D is seeking funding to accomplish the following: Create up-to-date information on the dollars & cents of business heating; organizing tours & workshops for potential users; helping logging contractors & mills retool to pro

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NH Rural Fire Protection Initiative

The NH Rural Fire Protection Initiative (NHRFPI), is a project directed by the North Country and Southern NH Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area Councils.

The NHRFPI recently was awarded \$136,000 to provide rural communities with planning and technical assistance to improve their water supply capability for firefighting purposes through the development of a Water Resource Plan. The



planning effort will complement and enhance a community's hazard mitigation plan by identifying, evaluating, and locating water resource sites available to local and mutual aid fire personnel for fire fighting purposes in rural sections not served by pressurized water systems.

In addition, the plan will provide an assessment of current practices and regulations and identify areas in the community lacking water drafting facilities in relation to the community's growth planning issues. The funds were awarded by the New Hampshire Bureau of Emergency Management as part of FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Planning Grants. Under the grant, NHRFPI will work with 30 communities over a two-year period at no cost to the community. Development of a water resource plan makes the community eligible to apply to FEMA for project grant monies for installation of dry hydrants, fire ponds, or cisterns.

Currently the NHRFPI is working with the towns of Antrim, Alstead, Bath, Bradford, Berlin and Deerfield to conduct water resource planning. Other towns in the queue are Groton, Bethlehem, Pittsburgh and Epping.

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Biomass Heating

duce the higher grade chips needed for these heating systems; providing feasibility analysis services to help potential users understand the capabilities of converting their buildings to biomass heat. Biomass-based energy is considered "carbon neutral" and therefore is not a contribution to greenhouse gas emissions.

Winnepesaukee Cooperative Agreement

Through a partnership, North Country RC&D, the Lake Winnepesaukee Association, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service have pooled resources and efforts to complete projects, initiate planning and conduct outreach on conservation and watershed issues within the Winnepesaukee watershed.

Over the past year, this partnership arrangement helped complete a tributary water quality monitoring project on 11 tributaries around Lake Winnepesaukee. The results of the two year study can be found on the Lake Winnepesaukee Association's website, www.winnepesaukee.org, and have been used to promote and gain continued monitoring of some of the tributaries by the local communities. In addition, Subwatershed assessments have been completed on selected tributaries and combined with the tributary study will be used to conduct outreach to landowners and communities to encourage and facilitate conservation work, taking advantage of Farm Bill Conservation programs as appropriate.

North Country RC&D has been the lead organization in forming a Subwatershed group comprised of representatives of the communities of Gilford, Laconia, and Meredith whose stated mission is to ***"Work collaboratively as stakeholders to assess issues and concerns that impact our shared watershed resources; develop a management plan that will educate, motivate and be a catalyst for action that protects those resources for the people and communities of the Lake Winnepesaukee Watershed."***

A Thumbnail Sketch of RC&D

Resource Conservation & Development is usually shortened to "RC&D". RC&D encourages the conservation and development of natural and community resources within the RC&D Area.

RC&Ds are locally initiated, sponsored and directed Councils that usually cover several counties that share natural resource problems and opportunities. The North Country RC&D covers Belknap, Carroll, Coos and Grafton counties.

RC&D council members are responsible for faithful attendance at meetings, active participation, voicing their views and opinions, and having knowledge of the RC&D program including its goals, objectives, mission and vision. Members serve actively by developing ideas, reporting problems, devising a solution, relaying information and listening to concerns of their fellow citizens. The **most** important part of a Council member's job is **ACTIVE** involvement in the identification of area-wide problems and opportunities. The strength of the RC&D concept lies in the public participation and local control that comes primarily from the participation of Council members.

The North Country RC&D Area council meets on a bi-monthly basis in full session, with Leadership or Special Committee meetings as necessary. Members are notified of the time and place of meetings through email, written notices and/or telephone calls.

RC&D is a program sponsored by USDA and the Natural Resources Conservation Service has administrative leadership for the program. North Country RC&D is a 501(c)3 not for profit organization.

Summary of 2006 Finances (unaudited)

Assets on hand as of January 1, 2006	\$ 34,726.57
Total Income for 2006	146,192.19
Total Expenses for 2006	131,005.66
Assets as of December 31, 2006	\$ 50,664.74

Final 2006 Reconciliations will be available upon request once audited

North Country RC&D Area, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization
recognized by the IRS and State of NH

A complete list of project activities is available on request.

**North Country RC&D thanks the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
for its technical, administrative and financial support
valued at over \$160,000 in 2006.**

2006 Board of Directors

Russ Dowd, Chairman
Robert Harrington
Jeff Hayes
John Hodsdon

Dan McLaughlin, Vice-Chairman

Nate Miller
Lisa Rixen

Adam Tatem, Secretary/Treasurer

Joan Turley
Brenda Brown, Alternate
Steve Young, Alternate

North Country RC&D Staff

Patricia Tarpey
Karl Berardi
Kim L. Hunter

USDA/RC&D Coordinator

Rick DeMark

USDA Administrative Assistant

Janice Bisson Walker

North Country RC&D Thanks Our Sponsors & Partners

Sponsors of the North Country RC&D Area

Belknap County Conservation District
Carroll County Conservation District
Coos County Conservation District
Grafton County Conservation District
Grafton County Delegation
Lakes Region Planning Commission
North Country Council
Upper Valley/Lake Sunapee Regional
Planning Commission

Other Cooperating Federal, State, & Local Organizations in 2006

Heifer International
Jordan Institute
Kamigo Marketing
Lake Winnepesaukee
Watershed Association
New England Wood Pellet
Northern Forest Center
Parker Hill Associates
Small & Beginner Farmers of NH
Society for the Protection of NH Forests
Southern NH RC&D Area Council

NH

Association of Conservation Districts
Bureau of Emergency Management
Coalition for Sustaining Agriculture
Department of Agriculture,
Markets & Food
Department of Education
Department of Environmental Services

NH

Department of Resources &
Economic Development
Division of Forests & Lands
Farm Bureau Federation
Farmers Market Association
Rural Development Council
Small Business Development Center
NH Stories
Office of Energy & Planning
PSU Center for the Environment
PSU Center for Rural Partnerships
Timberland Owners Association
UNH Cooperative Extension System
UNH Office of Sustainability Programs
UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture
VT New Farmers Network

USDA

Farm Service Agency
Forest Service
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Rural Development

City or Towns of:

Amherst	Antrim
Alstead	Bath
Bradford	Berlin
Deerfield	Deering
Freedom	Gilford
Laconia	Lancaster
Loudon	Meredith
New Durham	Pittsburg
Salisbury	Shelburne
Springfield	Stark