



South Dakota Association of Resource Conservation & Development Council

FY 2015 Annual Report

MISSION STATEMENT

Serving the people of South Dakota by the transfer of information and by communicating the identity of Resource Conservation and Development Councils.

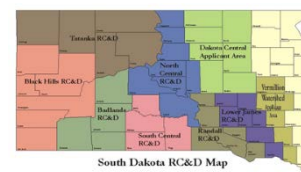
VISION STATEMENT

The vision of the South Dakota Association of RC&D Councils, Inc. is to be a self-governing organization that:

- Promotes RC&Ds;
- Shares information by networking;
- Increases community involvement; and
- Provides assistance to councils.

Year in Review

The Annual Report provides highlights of projects from the active RC&D councils in South Dakota. For more detailed information on an RC&D area, please visit their individual Web sites at <http://sdrcd.org>



President's Message

With the first year of being your president, I am learning all of the issues and accomplishments of individuals RC&D's. We are really fortunate to have the number of volunteers throughout the state that have dedicated time and other resources to improve our communities, watersheds, and land management. This year we lost a great supporter of RC&D's. Les Labahn of the Randall RC&D Council passed away on March 18th. Les was a leader in water quality initiatives and improving land management operations in south central South Dakota. Les left a lasting legacy with the many projects that he managed for the people of this great state!

Various opportunities are available to assist Councils with grants and support to accomplish local and statewide initiatives. The National Association is working to improve funding opportunities for land management and development, water development and management, and community development to address issues from the RC&D councils across this great nation!

The State Association met in Murdo April 12th and we only had three councils present out of the eight councils doing work in South Dakota. Andrew Gordon (National Association CEO) was available for the conference call and gave information on consolidating and merging councils to improve service. Andrew also discussed changes at the National Level to improve service to individuals RC&D's and also State

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Associations. If we work together we can make our councils stronger and more viable and hopefully attract new members with new ideas to identify projects and funding opportunities for the councils in South Dakota.

The annual report follows, so take a look at your accomplishments for 2015 and take pride in what you do locally in your communities, and how those projects makes South Dakota a better place to live!

To grow RC&D opportunities the State Association needs the support and ideas of those eight councils in South Dakota, become a member and provide your thoughts on how to improve delivery of projects on both the local and statewide landscape!

Thanks for your commitment to Resource Conservation and Development in South Dakota.

Sincerely,



Dennie Mann

Black Hills RC&D 2015 Annual Report



2015 was a year of successful mountain pine beetle collaboration and action

among many stakeholders living and working in the Black Hills of Northeastern Wyoming, and Western South Dakota.

In an effort largely unmatched throughout the country, private landowners,

County Weed and Pest Departments, Resource Conservation Districts, and

State Federal Agencies have joined together in a collaborative "all lands" approach to combat the current mountain pine beetle epidemic.

This collaboration has resulted in the Black Hills Regional Mountain Pine Beetle Strategy, a five year strategy for responding to the current epidemic in both Wyoming and South Dakota.

Using a variety of methods including forest thinning, sanitation harvest, cut and chunk, cut and burn, prescribed fire, and chemical spraying, the collaborators have treated hundreds of thousands of trees across

thousands of acres of infested and at-risk area throughout the Black Hills ponderosa pine forest.

There is a tremendous spirit of cooperation behind the work that is being accomplished. The larger Black Hills community of Wyoming and South Dakota is working together to slow progression of the mountain pine beetle in the Hills.

The State of South Dakota is providing technical assistance to private landowners in conjunction with a cost-share program for treating green-infested trees in select priority areas, and has held eight informational workshops on 2015. Custer State Park treated 29,000 trees, used timber sales to thin forests at risk, and preventive sprayed high value trees. US Forest Service has completed both commercial and non-commercial harvest on 30,000 acres in 2015. Through this cooperative effort 2015 surveys have shown a huge decline in MPB activity in the Black Hills!

The Spring Creek water project has been ongoing for over 10 years and BHRC&D involvement is to provide recommendations to the Pennington County Planning Department concerning the “Best Management Practices” concerning the Spring Creek project implementation and watershed management plan. In 2016 BHRC&D may be taking a larger role in this project by meeting with interested landowners to discuss projects that would improve and enhance this Black Hills watershed!

BHRC&D is also working with BARR Engineering on the implementation of a watershed management plan for the lower reaches of Spearfish Creek. This will be a collaborative effort with cities, irrigation districts, private landowners, and the public to improve the Spearfish Creek watershed. It was decided to hold off on submitting a grant application in 2015

BHRC&D had also applied for a \$50,000 grant through the Rural Energy for America Program. This grant will assist with energy efficiency improvements on farms and Ranches, businesses, cooperatives, tribal entities, and electric utilities. BHRC&D was unsuccessful in receiving this grant!



RANDALL RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT (RC&D) ASSOCIATION, INC.

FY-2015 ANNUAL REPORT

(October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2015)

Projects & Activities:

Lewis & Clark Watershed Implementation Project (LCWIP):

1. Completed 3 Soil Health/Grasslands Management workshops at Mission, Yankton and Chamberlain, December 2014 – 110 farmers and ranchers participated – Thank You - **Judge Jessop**, SD Grasslands Coalition, **Laurie Chauncey**, Todd Co. Conservation District, and **Jewell Bork**, South Central RC&D.
2. Keya Paha River (Todd & Tripp counties, SD) water quality improved. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved removing from list of impaired water bodies based on Total Dissolved Solids – bacteria concentration remains a concern. Ponca Creek (Tripp & Gregory counties) should receive designation in 2016. Choteau Creek (Douglas and Charles Mix counties) recognized in 2013. LCWIP is having positive impact on water quality!
3. LCWIP received in FY 2015 **\$400,000.00 federal Sec. 319 and State Water Quality Grant** funds to assist farmers and ranchers apply Best Management Practices through June 2017.
4. Rocky Knippling developed new application requesting **\$1.5 million Sec. 319 funds** from Federal FY2016 Budget plus State Water Quality Grant funds. If approved by EPA, federal funds would be available through June 2018.
5. Randall RC&D entered into partnership with James River Water Development District to jointly apply for **\$2.5 million for 5 years** (2016-2020) from **USDA Regional Conservation Partnership**

Program. If approved by USDA, grant will be used in Lewis & Clark Watershed Implementation Project area and Lower James River Watershed Project.

6. **Rocky Knippling, Project Coordinator, LCWIP**, resigned from SD Association of Conservation Districts to become employed by James River Water Development District – he will continue to serve as Project Coordinator for Lewis & Clark Watershed Implementation Project, plus serve Lower James Watershed Project.
7. **Alicia Bairey** resigned as co-Project Coordinator, LCWIP, to take advantage of career opportunity with USDA Farm Service Agency, Chamberlain, SD. Her enthusiasm, skills and talents are sorely missed.
8. **Many Thanks to Rocky Knippling for his dedication, hard work, and commitment to helping farmers and ranchers with common sense approach to putting Best Management Practices “on the ground”!**

Park Avenue Lake Project - Charles Mix County Lake Restoration Organization (CMCLRO):

1. CMCLRO successfully obtained SD DENR and US Army Corps of Engineers approval of Detailed Wetlands Mitigation Plan toward obtaining federal Section 404 Permit, plus state water rights permit. Permits will allow CMCLRO to dredge sediment, build water retention dike, install flowing artesian well - all necessary to create 18 acre fishing pond, plus outdoor natural resources classroom.
2. CMCLRO application for artesian well permit is pending approval by State Water Management Board at this time.
3. National Guard approved request for their help to dredge sediment, build dike plus water control structure in 2017.
4. CMCLRO is organizing fund raising campaign for this \$2 million plus project.
5. CMCLRO volunteers continue gathering water samples at several locations in Lake Andes which are analyzed at Andes Central High School. Results are filed with a statewide water quality data base. Randall RC&D uses Lewis & Clark Watershed Implementation Project funds to purchase testing supplies for these volunteers.

6. Adjacent to the Park Avenue Lake Project, dedicated volunteers recently installed new playground equipment. Future efforts will upgrade picnic shelter and rest room facilities.
7. Randall RC&D provides technical guidance to CMCLRO as to non-profit management, securing help from other resources and fund raising suggestions.

SD Birding Festival at Ft Randall:

1. Fifth Annual 3-day event held first weekend May 2015.
2. Social, presentations, field trips, bird banding, bus trips, workshop, banquet and prizes keep birders busy.
3. Ted Floyd, Editor of Birding Magazine, was featured speaker and field trip leader.
4. Sixty seven birders from across the state and region participated.
5. Diverse team representing state, federal, and private organizations is planning 2016 event.
6. Randall RC&D provides critical administrative support including keeping track of funds taken in and expended.



Locally Grown Specialty Food Products & Farmers Markets:

1. A Regional Food Hub, “**Dakota Fresh**,” continues progress toward becoming important market for locally grown foods plus supplier for schools, hospitals, & other institutions seeking nutritious locally grown foods. \$100,000.00 Implementation Grant was recently awarded to the SDSU Extension Service to assist with the start-up of physically and financially implement **Dakota Fresh** food hub. This will be the first Regional Food Hub in South Dakota.
2. Several meetings and workshops were conducted with **Kari O’Neil**, SDSU Extension Service, providing technical guidance.
3. Randall RC&D hosted special Food Security meeting at Bonesteel where **Karen Janousek**, Rural Office Community Services updated about Senior Citizens food programs. **Jeanne Applebee**, Bonesteel, SD, explained Back Pack Program which provides nutritious food for students over the weekends and holidays. **Father Lyle Martin** and **Bob Wik**, Gregory, SD, reported their

efforts to secure funding for local Food Pantry. **Kari O'Neil** talked about Regional Food Hub, **Dakota Fresh**, efforts.

4. Randall RC&D is interested in helping these dedicated volunteers meet communities and region needs.

Lake Fairfax Restoration:

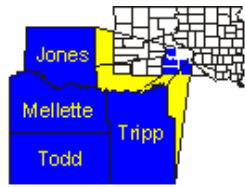
1. **Darrel Bentz**, Fairfax, SD, Randall RC&D Council member, continued work with SD Game, Fish & Parks to secure repairs of concrete spillway for Lake Fairfax (WPA built 1937). Finding adequate funds is major issue.
2. Randall RC&D has not received formal request for assistance but continues to monitor this potential project. Once this concrete spillway is repaired, beautiful Lake Fairfax can continue to serve this region another 80 plus years!!!



Leadership Capacity Development:

1. Randall RC&D and 6 other SD RC&Ds conducted 2015 Western RC&D Association Conference January 11-13, in Rapid City, SD. RC&D Councils representing 10 states came together to share what works and what needs improvement.
2. Randall RC&D conducted informal survey of its membership as to needed projects – this input will aid in updating Randall RC&D's 5-year Plan of Operations which guides future activities.

South Central RC&D



South Central RC&D had forty-four supporting sponsors, accepted four new projects, and partnered with the National RC&D office and Stars Creative to record two radio spots to promote the RC&D program. we are currently working with local radio stations to air them in the strike force area.

“A Producers Perspective on Soil Regeneration”

The 2014 Winter Road Show, hosted by the South Dakota Grassland Coalition, featured Gabe Brown from Bismarck, ND. Brown, one of the pioneers of the current soil health movement which focuses on regenerating our natural resources, he owns and operates a diversified 5,000 acre farm and ranch. Their ranch focuses on farming and ranching in nature’s image. The Brown’s holistically integrated their grazing and no-till cropping system, which includes a wide variety of cash crops along with multi-species cover crops with all natural grass fed beef, poultry and sheep. This diversity and integration has regenerated the natural resources on the ranch without the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and fungicides. The Todd County Conservation District and South Central RC&D assisted the Grassland Coalition with meeting and meal accommodations at the Mission location.



36th Annual Ranchers Workshop

The 36th Annual Ranchers Workshop was held on Wednesday, January 21, 2015 at the Community Events Center in White River, South Dakota. Each year the Ranchers Workshop committee looks to the “wagon wheel” symbol when choosing speakers. The wagon wheel is divided into four spokes: Natural Resources, Finance, Production, and Family. The wagon wheel concept is that if we can balance all four areas on our Farm/Ranch operation the



business will have a better chance of running more successfully. This concept has worked wonderfully to put on excellent workshop each year. Speakers this year included: Dave Steffen, Dr. Travis VanAnne, Professional Service Veterinarian (PSV), Ryan Taylor and David Koupal. The Ranchers Workshop is coordinated by: South Dakota State University Extension, Mellette & Todd County Conservation Districts, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Mellette-Todd County Farm Service Agency, and South Central Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc .

Todd County Environmental Fair

This year two hundred fourteen 5th graders from the Mission Middle School and eight outlying Todd County School District Schools attended this year's Environmental Fair. Presenters this year included Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Fire Team, Nathan Jones and Andy Oxford, from Pierre NRCS office, talked to the group about Soil Health and let the students crawl through the worm tunnel. Ken Graupman from the Discovery Center showed the students how to test water. Ruth Farnsworth and Kodi Blotsky, from the South Dakota Cattle Women, presented on "Wow that Cow". Aaron Wang, from the Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry, talked about the life of the trees, Leland Schoon and Tyrel Tucker presented on "Our Ag Community" where they showed several different items that are produced on the farm. Chris Dekker, Wildlife Conservation Officer, displayed several different animal pelts and let the youth touch them and ask questions. Kiley Whited showed the students different types of prairie grasses. In the afternoon the Todd County Conservation District and South Central RC&D presented the different responsibilities and personalities of trees and the use of shelterbelts. Several comments from the youth included "the different tables were really cool" to "trees live a long time."



Summer Reading Program

The Woman's Club Library Club received a \$800 Bessie Minor Swift Grant to use toward the Summer Reading Program. With these grant funds the Library Club was able to purchase 80 books, various craft items,



incentives for attendance and final “goodie bags”. Over the 10 week program fourteen children and four adults attend the story time. A total of forty-seven books were read. Due to the weather and insect issues the group was unable to enjoy activities outdoors like they had planned so those activities were moved inside. The kids enjoyed coloring, etching, picture finds, visiting and sharing other books. Prizes were given out each week that went along with what types of books that were read.

Farmers Market

This was the 3rd year for the farmers market in Murdo. We lost a couple of venders but had four steady ones each week. This year with a grant from the SD Department of Agriculture we purchased three razor flags, gave away \$20 in Market Bucks each week, paid for advertising, and will purchase a new Farmers Market banner to replace the one the wind destroyed.



Murdo City Park Trail

This year the Jones County Turner Youth received a \$7,500 grant from Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield to be used to promote healthy living. The funds were used to purchase outdoor fitness equipment and playground equipment that will be installed along the walking path that outlines the park dam.

Western RC&D Conference

South Dakota hosted the Western RC&D Conference on January 11-13, 2015 at the Ramkota Conference Center in Rapid City, SD. The attendance was small with only thirty-three registered attendees but we had a lot of great speakers. Representing the National RC&D was executive director Andrew Gordon, Susan Smith from Beehive Insurance, and Casey Peterson and Associates updated on non-profit compliance. The group had several success stories that were highlighted by different states and the group was entertained with Bonnie Krogman's poetry on county life and Holly Hoffman's shared her adventures as a survivor from the TV movie “Survivor: Nicaragua. Several people were recognized for all their hard work for the R&D:



Clyde H. Nick Nemec accepting Presidents
Perform Award for Ty & Rosalie Linger for
Clearwater Heifers for South Dakota project.



Pam Gouse-Presidents Award



Bruce Kroetch received Hall of
Fame Award.

Attendees for the
Western Conference
holding their snicker
bar from Holly
Hoffman.



South Dakota Association of RC&D Councils Awards



Mountain Pine Beetle Working Group won Outstanding Project Award-Black Hill RC&D



Rural Development guest speakers
Darlene Bresson and Christine Sorensen



Dennie Mann Outstanding Program
Assistant-Black Hill RC&D

Les Labahn accepting a plaque from Ellen Reddick in recognition of all the support he has given the RC&D program over the years. We lost Les on March 17, 2016. He will be greatly missed.



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