

APPLICATION
FOR
RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

FOR THE
SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN RC&D AREA
State of Michigan

March 1, 2010

With Assistance From:

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Natural Resources Conservation Service
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Phone: (517) 324-5270 / Fax: (517) 324-5171

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DATE: March 1, 2010

TO: Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture

THROUGH: Dave White, Chief
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Washington, DC 20013-2890

We, the Southeast Michigan RC&D Council, do hereby apply for designation as a Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) area and have ratified this application. We agree to support the RC&D program to improve the well being of the people of our area.

By: 

Morse L. Brown

Title: Chairman

Date: March 1, 2010

PREFACE

The goal of the Southeast Michigan Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) is to “help the people of the area take better care of their natural resources; better utilize the services of the USDA and other local, state, and federal agencies; and, at the same time, improve the community’s economy, environment, and quality of life.”

It is our Council’s expectation that we will be successful with implementing this goal for the following reasons:

- We have strong multi-county sponsorship representing County Boards of Commissioners or County Executive Offices, and County Conservation Districts.
- We have additional support from the Alliance of Rouge Communities, City of Detroit, Lenawee County Board of Commissioners, watershed councils, State and Federal agencies, and universities.
- We have strong leadership on our Executive Council.
- We have obtained our 501(c)(3) non-profit status.
- We have a proven track record for “getting things done,” having planned and implemented numerous RC&D projects with area organizations and agencies since our Council was formed in 1997.
- We have used public input when developing our Area Plan.
- We have developed an Area Plan that includes sound strategies for addressing critical resource management and economic development needs in our diverse region.

SUMMARY OF APPLICATION

SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT AREA

Lenawee, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, & Wayne Counties

The Area encompasses over 3 million acres, or 4,780 square miles.

SPONSORS:

Lenawee County Conservation District	St. Clair County Conservation District
Macomb County Board of Commissioners	St. Clair County Board of Commissioners
Monroe County Conservation District	Washtenaw County Conservation District
Monroe County Board of Commissioners	Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners
Oakland County Executive's Office	Wayne County Conservation District

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS:

Alliance of Rouge Communities, City of Detroit, Lenawee County Board of Commissioners, watershed councils, Michigan Department of Agriculture, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (note: the Michigan Departments of Environmental Quality and Natural Resources have been combined into a new Department of Natural Resources and Environment by Executive Order as of January, 2010), Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, Michigan State University, USDA Forest Service, and USDA Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF COUNCIL AREA:

The Southeast Michigan RC&D Area is located in the southeastern portion of Michigan and is made up of seven counties, as well as the City of Detroit. The population in this area is 4,775,432, which accounts for approximately 47% of the state's total population. The area is 37% agricultural, 35% urban, and 24% is made up of forest and wetland areas. According to the 2002 Census of Agriculture, there are 6,688 farms in the area with sales totaling \$407.2 million (\$327.6 million from crops and \$79.6 million from livestock sales). According to 2002 data from the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, 80% of the area's employment occurs in the service, manufacturing, or retail industries. The average unemployment rate in this heavily populated area was 14.5 percent as of December, 2009.

COUNCIL PRIMARY CONTACT:

Morse L. Brown, Chairman

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Phone: (269) 208-1443 / Fax: (734) 432-9763 / E-mail: brownmo@msu.edu

U.S. SENATORS:

Carl Levin (D – Detroit, MI)

Debbie Stabenow (D – Lansing, MI)

U.S. REPRESENTATIVES:

John Conyers, Jr. (D – District 14)

Sander M. Levin (D – District 12)

John D. Dingell (D – District 15)

Thaddeus G. McCotter (R – District 11)

Carolyn C. Kilpatrick (D – District 13)

Candice S. Miller (R – District 10)

Gary C. Peters (D – District 9)

Mike Rogers (R – District 8)

Mark H. Schauer (D – District 7)

Congressional Districts: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, & 15

BODY OF APPLICATION

COUNCIL NAME

Southeast Michigan Resource Conservation and Development Council

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

The Southeast Michigan Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area consists of seven counties in southeastern Michigan (see map). The counties are Lenawee, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne. The area encompasses 3,059,273 acres or about 4,780 square miles. Just under half of the 9.9 million plus people of Michigan live in this one area and depend, in part, on the area's water and land resources for their quality of life. Yet, even with this large population, 37% of the area is agricultural, with only 35% designated as urban. Together, these two land covers account for 72% of the area. Land cover categories are listed in the table below.

Land Cover Categories

Land Cover	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	1,144,167	37
Urban	1,063,855	35
Forest, Grassland, Shrubs, Wetlands	748,171	24
Water	77,402	3
Barren & Extractive	25,678	1
TOTALS:	3,059,273	100

Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) and U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Geophysical features that characterize the RC&D area are the result of continental glaciers that once covered all of Michigan. The deposits left behind by the glaciers, collectively termed glacial drift, include moraines, ground moraines (till plains), and lakebed sediments. Ground moraines comprise most of the western part of the area consisting of various combinations of clay, silt, sand, and gravel deposited directly by the glacier and its melt waters. Lakebed deposits comprise the eastern portion of the area consisting of clays and sands deposited into former glacial lakes. Modern soil surveys have been completed for the study area (excluding the City of Detroit) and clearly delineate all surface soil types.

The eastern border of the seven-county area is formed by two Great Lakes (Lake Huron and Lake Erie), Lake St. Clair, and the Detroit River. These waterways offer inexpensive bulk trade and transportation for heavy industry and natural resource products such as coal, sand, gravel, logs, grain, iron ore, and chemical products. Further, there are major commercial air transportation terminals in Detroit and Romulus. The RC&D area is well served with surface transportation, having main highway arteries running both north/south and east/west. Interstates 75, 94, 96, and U.S. 23 are the chief connectors for the region, converging on the City of Detroit. Major state highways also provide significant surface transportation access and include M-24, M-59, M-1, M-3, M-53, and M-97. Interstate 94 (Detroit to Chicago) is one of the busiest trucking routes in the United States and is a principal NAFTA trade highway.

This region encompasses Detroit, one of the major cities in the United States, and its surrounding metropolitan area. The metropolitan area includes the counties of Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne.

Other chief cities include Pontiac (Oakland County), Ann Arbor (Washtenaw County), Port Huron (St. Clair County), Adrian (Lenawee County), and Monroe (Monroe County). The area presents a powerful mix of business/industry, agriculture, and education with metropolitan Detroit as a global automobile center. Ann Arbor is a world-renowned center for research, computer information, and emerging technologies. Five major universities serve the area including The University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University, Wayne State University, Oakland University, and University of Detroit. Unique among most American regions, the Detroit metro area is an international port with border access to Canada and to the St. Lawrence Seaway. The region is part of the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) between Canada, Mexico, and the United States.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INFORMATION

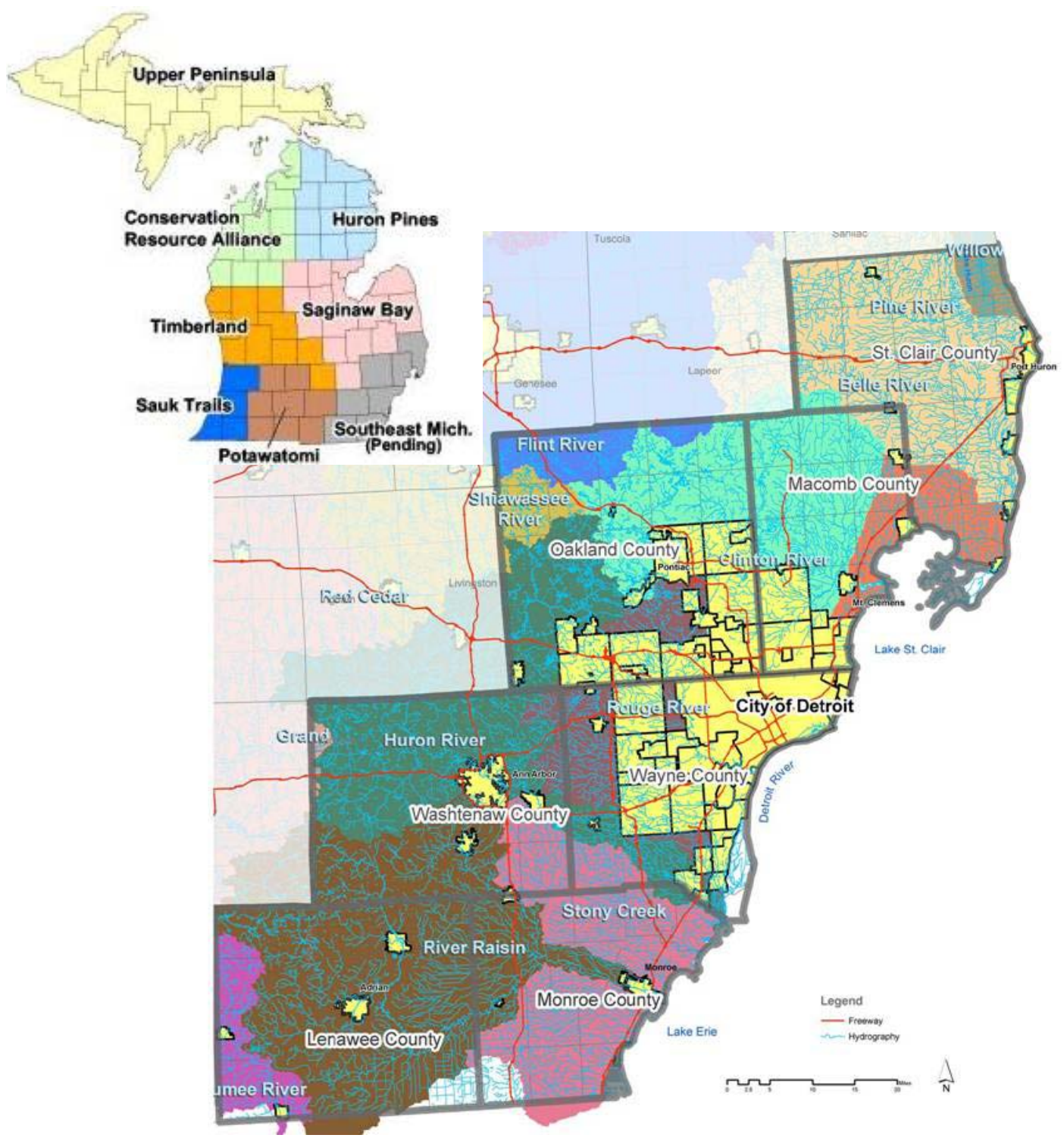
The seven counties in the area have 47% of the state population with 4,775,432 persons in the area as of the 2000 census. Rural residents comprise 7% of the population, with the balance of the population being urban. Of the persons living in rural areas, 11,167 live on farms and 315,819 are non-farm rural residents. The population grew by 8.9% from 1990 to 2000, and according to the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, the population is projected to grow by over 10% by the year 2030. The area continues to experience development along lines of infrastructure with the strongest occurring along the I-75, I-94, and I-96 corridors. (U.S. Census Bureau, USDA Economic Research Service, and SEMCOG, 2000)

In the area, the population is 72.2% white, 22.5% black, 3.4% Asian and Pacific Islander, 3.5% Hispanic origin, and 0.4% American Indian. Median home values range from \$99,400 (in Wayne County) to \$181,200 (in Oakland County) with an average of \$137,257. Median household income ranges from \$37,742 (in Wayne County) to \$63,534 (in Oakland County) with an average of \$50,647. This is slightly more than the state median household income of \$46,291. Per capita income is \$24,602, which is higher than the state level of \$22,161. Average unemployment in the area is 6.7%. This is approximately the same level as the state.

While median household income and per capita income are higher in the region than statewide, this region has significant numbers of persons with income below the poverty level (11.2%). In the state there are 1,113,295 people below the poverty level with 48% of them, or 539,579, living in this seven-county area. Large population centers of the area (Wayne County, in particular) have a higher poverty rate than the state of Michigan. U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts show that 18.8% of people are living below the poverty level in Wayne County, which contrasts significantly with the 12.5% rate for the State of Michigan as a whole. The proposed Southeast Michigan RC&D Council area includes the City of Detroit, where economic conditions are particularly dire. The Michigan Chronicle reported in a recent article ("*Step Up*," dated March 5, 2008) that, "Two years ago, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that one in three residents in Detroit lived below the federal poverty level — \$19,157 for a family of four — making Detroit America's poorest big city."

Manufacturing is the biggest employer with 488,378 persons employed. The area also has 462,225 people working in retail trade. The bulk of persons that are employed are private for-profit wage and salary workers. Other major employment categories in the area include construction, transportation, communications and utilities, wholesale trade, finance, insurance, real estate, personal services, entertainment, health services, education, and public administration. There were 6,688 farms in the area counties according to the 2002 Census of Agriculture (SEMCOG and Region 2 Planning).

MAP OF SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN RC&D AREA



PURPOSE FOR CREATION – MISSION AND VISION

Purpose: The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council was created to improve the well-being of the region's citizens through wise stewardship of natural resources and sustainable economic development.

Mission: To help the people of the Area to take better care of their natural resources; better utilize the services of the USDA and other local, state, and federal agencies; and at the same time, improve their community's economy, environment and quality of life.

Vision: The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council's vision is to support the community by:

- Helping people to help themselves. Through the RC&D Program, the Council seeks to enhance the quality of life for the area's people by providing social, environmental, and economic benefits vital to the health and well-being of the community.
- Developing productive working relationships that effectively balance natural resource conservation and economic development. This includes assisting communities with accessing the valuable services of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other state and federal agencies.
- Analyzing community needs, developing plans to meet those needs, and coordinating the resources required to accomplish successful outcomes.
- Sharing knowledge and experience with others in Southeast Michigan and across the state.

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

To better understand how this application has progressed to this point, the following information is provided:

RC&D Organization: In 1996, NRCS assisted local sponsors and citizens with establishing a RC&D area in Southeast Michigan. Sponsors included Conservation Districts, County Commissioners, City of Detroit, and the River Raisin Watershed Council. This initial group was referred to as the Southeast Michigan RC&D Steering Committee.

Between September, 1997 and November of 1998 officers were elected, by-laws were completed, and an annual work plan was completed. Following the completion of the by-laws, the Steering Committee assumed their "council status."

Legal Status: The Council is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational, and scientific purposes, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under sections 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

By-laws: The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council's by-laws were adopted on November 19, 1998.

Charitable Status: The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council's 501(c)(3) application (non-profit) was approved on July 28, 1999.

Role: The role of the Southeast Michigan RC&D Council is to improve the well-being of the region's citizens through wise stewardship of natural resources and sustainable economic development.

Operation: The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council has made every attempt to operate as a designated Council, since its inception in 1998, even without designation status. The Council has focused on implementing the activities included in grants received by the Council, through its one staff member. Without a fully operational office, Council volunteer leadership has provided time to Council activities and programs to make them successful, as needed.

Purpose: To help the people of the Area to take better care of their natural resources; better utilize the services of the USDA and other local, state, and federal agencies; and at the same time, improve their community's economy, environment and quality of life.

Staffing: The Council hired a Natural Resources Specialist, Jessica Simons, in June, 2004.

Priority Establishment: The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council establishes its priorities and actions as a result of comprehensive discussion, evaluation, and consensus by its board members. The board members of the Southeast Michigan RC&D represent a diverse cross-section of the public served by this organization – urban and rural, industrial and agricultural. The sponsoring organizations have a variety of independent methods to evaluate the needs in their communities and environments; collectively, these needs are reported back to the Council. Priorities are determined when the Council identifies needs that 1) fit within its local mission and meet national RC&D program goals, 2) have multi-county applicability, 3) do not duplicate the existing efforts of other agencies, 4) have potential funding sources, 5) can serve the region's diverse population, and 6) are both doable and manageable.

Underrepresented/Underserved Issues: The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council has a strong commitment to serve the needs of our diverse community and to specifically address those who have been traditionally underrepresented. The Detroit Metropolitan area, which is encompassed by our RC&D region, contains some of the most diverse and the most economically challenged communities in the state. Recent Southeast Michigan RC&D activities, such as urban forestry training programs in inner-city Detroit, and proposed activities, such as completing the soil survey for Wayne County, bring much-needed services to this largely underserved area. The Southeast Michigan RC&D, together with the NRCS, has additionally been working to increase outreach to limited resource and minority farmers in the area, alerting them to federal and local programs that can bring assistance. The Council has also successfully worked in partnership with local Native American basketmakers on numerous events in the past several years through the Ash Utilization Options Project, which explores uses for trees killed by the emerald ash borer.

The Council's Chairman, Morse Brown (who is also Project Director of Michigan Food & Farming Systems Multicultural Farmers Program), has taken a particular leadership role not only in the Council's diversity outreach, but also by acting as Group Leader on the Michigan Association of RC&D Council's efforts to reach out to minority and limited resource audiences, inform them about RC&D, and include them in program planning and implementation. The strategies that Brown's team has set forth for Michigan's RC&Ds this year include 1) making personal one-on-one contacts with Tribal Councils (informing 25% statewide) and inviting them to participate with local councils; 2) developing information packets on RC&D suitable for outreach to Native Americans, Hispanics, and African Americans; and 3) contacting five key minority organizations and presenting information about the MARC&DC and individual RC&D Councils.

RESOURCE NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Twelve local resource needs have been identified along with opportunities for Council action. These new proposed Council actions, along with current Council activities and initiatives, are described below in the discussion of each element.

LAND CONSERVATION ELEMENT

1. Local Need: Stream bank erosion is a major contributor of sediment. Large quantities of eroded materials from exposed banks can be carried swiftly downstream. When this happens, water quality is negatively impacted and channel flows can be disrupted. Although stream bank erosion is a natural process, it can be accelerated in urbanizing areas. This can be due to the disruption of the vegetated buffer along watercourses and increased runoff caused by impervious surfaces.

On a demonstration basis, the Natural Resources Conservation Service has conducted five stream bank stabilization projects using soft engineering techniques in the area. These were completed on a contractual basis with the City of Detroit, the City of Dearborn, and the Office of the Washtenaw County Drain Commissioner. The City of Detroit workshop was conducted in cooperation with the Detroit River (American Heritage Rivers Program) Steering Committee with Council sponsorship.

1a. Council Opportunity: (*Completed Action*) Provided technical assistance and educational materials on the use of soft engineering to address stream bank erosion concerns in this RC&D area.

2. Local Need: Land conservation issues rarely receive much public focus in urban areas. Many citizens do not recognize the need for strong conservation planning in areas of high population density. Even existing statewide conservation groups (such as the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts) tend to concentrate their focus on rural applications of conservation strategies. There is a strong need in the area to provide a better forum for collaborative resource management planning for stakeholders in Michigan's urban areas and to promote the conservation activities taking place in this region.

2a. Council Opportunity: (*Ongoing Action*) Working with Conservation Districts in the area, we are exploring the formation of an Urban Conservation Districts Council (UCDC). This may be modeled after the Mid-American Resource Conservation Districts (MARC) Council in Kansas City, Missouri. If this approach is used, USDA could potentially contribute funding for an urban office. Several additional Council projects, described below, may also be undertaken in conjunction with the UCDC.

2b. Council and UCDC Opportunity: (*Proposed Action*) Conduct educational programs on services available through conservation districts.

3. Local Need: Soil erosion, caused by both water and wind is occurring throughout the RC&D area. Improper land management accelerates it. Areas contributing the most sediment include construction sites, farmland, and stream bank erosion. Construction activities on commercial and residential sites disrupt vegetative cover, often leading to accelerated erosion and off-site damages from sediment.

The State's Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Law is implemented by local entities with varying degrees of success. Increased urban development also results in higher volumes of runoff due to increases in impervious surfaces. This can lead to storm water management concerns. A coordinated effort by the Southeast Michigan RC&D Council and the partners of an Urban Conservation Districts Council could provide directed guidance to improve the enforcement of existing soil erosion policies.

3a. Council and UCDC Opportunity: (*Proposed Action*) Consider hosting a workshop for the purpose of exploring working with Conservation Districts as Local Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Enforcing Agencies.

4. Local Need: The Michigan Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (Act 451 of 1994) is a complex collection of the state's policies "to protect the environment and natural resources of the state; to codify, revise, consolidate, and classify laws relating to the environment and natural resources of the state; to regulate the discharge of certain substances into the environment; [and] to regulate the use of certain lands, waters, and other natural resources of the state..." Public understanding of these regulations and the cooperating agencies is currently quite limited.

4a. Council and UCDC Opportunity: (*Proposed Action*) Consider seeking funding for a multi-conservation district staff person to review Public Act 451 (Natural Resources & Environmental Protection) public notices received from MDEQ. This specialist could then educate the public about the statutes within Public Act 451 and assist them with working with appropriate agencies as needed.

5. Local Need: Many urban centers contain urban forests that are over mature and need proper management to prevent them from becoming a danger and hazard to homes and businesses in these areas. This is especially true when there are wind storms, as over mature trees tend to be brittle and are subject to breaking and crashing onto homes, businesses, and individuals located nearby. These trees are not able to be managed by the units of governments due to lack of awareness and/or lack of sufficient monetary resources. These urban centers are also the locations of the most racially, ethnic, economic, and culturally diverse populations of the Southeast Michigan RC&D area.

5a. Council and UCDC Opportunity: (*Proposed Action*) Investigate grants that focus on areas that are our most diversely populated and contain trees that are in bad need of selective removal to reduce the likelihood of property damage and injury as a result of these trees falling during storms or at other times.

WATER MANAGEMENT ELEMENT

6. Local Need: Invasive species are an increasing threat to native ecosystems in the Southeast Michigan RC&D Area. According to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, more than 160 species have been introduced into the region in the last 200 years. These non-native species threaten not only the biodiversity and stability of native habitats, but also the economic and recreational potential of local waterways. While a number of Michigan agencies work on invasive species issues, more opportunity exists for direct public education, specifically in providing technical assistance to landowners.

6a. Council Opportunity: (*Proposed Action*) Coordinate public education about and support management of invasive species on inland lakes.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

7. Local Need: Southeastern Michigan has struggled with major industrial closures and a decline in manufacturing jobs from its once-thriving production center. These developments have strong negative effects on local communities, resulting in an area with some of the highest rates of unemployment and home foreclosure in the nation. According to the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments' March 2007 report, *A Region in Turbulence and Transition*, the area has lost 126,000 jobs from 2000 - 2007.

The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council recognizes the tremendous impact that can be made to local communities by supporting the growth of emerging industries. However, the Council is resolute in focusing on those businesses that will bring benefits that are both ecologically and economically sustainable. Some industries of particular interest to the Council include value-added product development and renewable energy.

7a. Council Opportunity: (*Ongoing Action*) Continue to promote the economic benefits of natural resource protection, through public/private cooperative efforts. The Council's efforts to date on this issue have highlighted how wise use of local resources can meet regional needs while creating new jobs and economic opportunities.

7b. Council Opportunity: (*Ongoing Action*) Continue to facilitate promotion of small, natural resources-related businesses. The Council has discovered that it can play a valuable role in providing individualized technical, networking, and marketing support for the area's emerging businesses.

7c. Council Opportunity: (*Ongoing Action*) Continue to take a leadership role in promoting the development of renewable energy projects & demonstrations in the area.

7d. Council Opportunity: (*Ongoing Action*) Continue to support and assist Council sponsors with the restoration of water resources, recreational, and other community features.

LAND MANAGEMENT ELEMENT

8. Local Need: As communities in southeastern Michigan are increasingly faced with tighter budgets, many urban forestry departments are experiencing changes in staffing and responsibilities. In many cases, forestry positions are either eliminated or significant tasks are left to private contractors. These challenges have become even more pronounced as communities deal with forest health threats such as the emerald ash borer outbreak or the failure of cities to maintain or remove older urban trees. These situations often result in excessive costs to residences and businesses when hazardous trees fall due to wind and storm damage. In many cases, local municipalities are dealing with forest management only on a reactionary basis. Few resources currently exist to help communities train forestry employees or develop long-term forest management plans.

8a. Council Opportunity: (*Ongoing Action*) Create resources to promote urban forestry restoration, support community forest management & planning efforts, and provide training for municipal employees.

9. Local Need: The USDA NRCS is currently promoting the use of Rapid Watershed Assessments in order to efficiently gather data and prioritize conservation planning on a regional basis. According to the NRCS, these assessments "provide initial estimates of where conservation investments would best address the concerns of landowners, conservation districts, and other community organizations and stakeholders. These assessments help land-owners and local leaders set priorities and determine the best actions to achieve their goals... by inventorying agricultural areas, identifying conservation opportunities and current levels of resource management, and estimating impacts of these opportunities on the local priority resource concerns."

Rapid watershed assessments, which use regional data collection to create more efficient local conservation planning, require cooperative partnerships among many groups (including NRCS, Conservation Districts, and other local agencies) to be successful. As shown by other Councils in

Michigan, RC&Ds are a natural fit for leading these efforts. Southeast Michigan could greatly benefit from pursuing this type of analysis.

9a. Council Opportunity: (*Proposed Action*) Lead effort to mobilize partners and conduct rapid watershed assessments in the Southeast Michigan area to assist in future conservation planning and implementation.

10. Local Need: The Detroit metropolitan area has experienced rapid developmental expansion in recent years. This has led to increased millage to fund the expanding infrastructure. Projections by SEMCOG indicate that Macomb County alone will lose another 29,000 acres of open land to development, subdivisions and shopping centers, over the next 20 years. In the seven-county SEMCOG Region, another 234,000 acres will be developed by 2020. Nationwide, 400,000 acres of open space are developed each year.¹

When best management practices are incorporated into developments, improved environmental benefits can be realized. As a response, a few developers have begun to incorporate environmentally friendly features into their projects. This topic, “Development - Working With the Environment,” was highlighted at the Michigan Association of RC&D Council’s annual meeting in March of 1999. The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council sponsored this well-attended event. Now, nearly a decade later, there is still significant need to showcase successful sustainable development in the area and to promote the use of a conservation-minded ethic in on-going planning.

10a. Council Opportunity: (*Proposed Action*) Working with County Planning Departments, facilitate the development of a video that highlights "environmentally friendly" developments in the area and conduct follow-up educational workshops.

11. Local Need: Loss of prime farmland in Michigan is occurring at a rate of 10 acres an hour, according to the Agriculture Trends Fact Sheet of the Michigan Society of Planning Officials. “From 1982 to 1992, Michigan lost 854,000 acres of farmland—equivalent to a tract of land the size of Rhode Island,” the fact sheet says.

As noted in an article published in the Macomb Daily, “Michigan’s population is expected to grow by about 1 million people the next 20 years, and those people will use up as much land for development as is now used for the state’s nine million people.” The article further states that, “Detroit’s infrastructure, developed in the 1950’s for 1.8 million residents, is going to waste with an exodus that reduced its population to one million.”²

Michigan is losing about 240 acres of agricultural land each day, as farmers receive lucrative offers from developers who want to buy their land for subdivisions and commercial development. The result of this conversion is that the State now has more residents (9.9 million) than acres of farmland. In spite of this, agriculture is still Michigan’s second largest industry. Its health is critical to the state’s economy. The pressure on Michigan’s farmland is greatest in southeast Michigan, especially in the metropolitan Detroit area, where farmland is disappearing at a rate more than five times that of the state average. For example, in 1982 Macomb County had 819 farms, by 1992 that number was down to 558 farms, a 32% drop in just ten years. Oakland County showed a 27% decrease in farms over the same period (Agricultural Statistics Service, Michigan Department of Agriculture).

¹ Macomb Daily – “Wide Open Spaces” article by Chad Selweski

² Macomb Daily – “Groups Gain Momentum Protecting Agricultural Land” article by Robert Selwa

It is important to keep agriculture and farmland in the mix of land use for many reasons, but one of the most important is for quality of life and for the local economy. Numerous studies have shown that farmland generates more money in taxes than what it costs to provide services. For each \$1.00 in taxes paid by farmers, public services requested by farms only average thirty to forty cents. Developed land, in contrast, costs \$1.20 to \$1.50 in services for each dollar collected in local taxes.

In short, the region should not have to choose between growth and sustainability, but instead should be given the tools for better planned growth and open space/farmland. With three county planning departments represented on the Council, the Southeast Michigan RC&D can bring partners together to prevent haphazard urban expansion in southeast Michigan.

11a. Council Opportunity: (*Proposed Action*) Work with local townships, municipalities, and counties on planning tools related to farmland protection and open space zoning, open space inventories, smart growth, purchase of development rights programs (PDR), etc.

12. Local Need: Demand for soils information from land use planners, homebuyers, farmers and others have been high. Current supplies of soil surveys are exhausted, or near exhaustion, in Wayne, Oakland, and Washtenaw Counties. Because of this, demand is often not being met. The soil survey in Lenawee County is in need of updating. Digitized soils databases are either inadequate, or do not exist.

As of this date, the city of Detroit has not been soil mapped by the USDA. This was requested at a public forum that was sponsored by the Wayne County Conservation District. The Steering Committee for the Detroit River, which was designated as an “American Heritage River” (AHR), has also recognized the need for soil mapping in Detroit. In response, a Wayne County Soil Survey Local Steering Committee was formed. Since then, the Wayne County Commissioner's Way and Means Committee voted in support of updating the soil survey.

12a. Council Opportunity: (*Proposed Action*) Working with Conservation Districts, County Commissioners, County Planning Departments and the USDA, lead the effort to seek funding for soil survey updates. In addition to the surveys, an emphasis will be placed on developing digital databases for all counties in the Council area.

COUNCIL GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

As listed in the Southeast Michigan Council’s by-laws and as determined in subsequent strategic planning, our general goals and objectives are as follows:

Council's Goal: To help the people of the Area to take better care of their natural resources; better utilize the services of the USDA and other local, state, and federal agencies; and at the same time improve their community’s economy, environment and quality of life.

Council's Objectives

1. To plan, promote, and implement sound resource conservation and sustainable development practices. Resources of concern include, but are not limited to, people, soil, air, water, forests, plants, animals, and man-made improvements.
2. To significantly reduce soil erosion, caused by both water and wind, occurring throughout the RC&D area, with a focus on improper land management associated with construction sites, farmland, stream bank erosion, and storm water.

3. To strengthen public conservation education within urban areas by improving access to other partners, providing trainings and educational tools, and/or offering technical assistance.
4. To protect surface water quality in the region by supporting education and management related to aquatic invasive species.
5. To support the growth and development of sustainable emerging industries in the region by encouraging the wise use of local resources in meeting local needs.
6. To improve the quality of our region's urban forests while providing resources to struggling communities by creating systems to support sustainable long-term urban forest management plans.
7. To improve local planning efforts with local and municipal governments and interested organizations by identifying and protecting critical open space and farmland in the area while controlling rapid, haphazard urban expansion. Sound planning can be supported through efforts to collect watershed and soils data, educate partners, and create management tools for communities.
8. To improve outreach to limited resource and minority landowners in the RC&D Project area. Many limited and minority farmers and landowners have not received assistance through traditional agencies and organizations. The Southeast Michigan RC&D will work with other agencies and non-profit organizations to assist these landowners and insure that they receive the needed assistance.

Beginning in May 2006, the Southeast Michigan RC&D Council began a process of new project prioritization. This process was initiated as members acknowledged the successful completion of several Council-led, grant-based projects and recognized the need for directed leadership in addressing new conservation and development issues in the region. A special meeting of Council members was brought together to develop, evaluate, and prioritize ideas for the new Area Plan. After creating a comprehensive list of potential projects, each was evaluated for suitability in order to ensure that all Southeast Michigan RC&D Council plans: 1) meet national RC&D program goals – addressing land conservation, land management, water management, and/or community development; 2) have multi-county applicability; 3) have limited duplication of existing efforts; 4) have potential for external funding opportunities; 5) have potential to serve the needs of our region's diverse population; and 6) are doable and manageable.

Potential projects were voted upon, ranked, and prioritized by Council members to show which goals met the most pressing area needs. While the objectives listed have been identified and updated very recently, they clearly build upon previous goals set forth by the Council and show how the organization's consistent outreach reveals the community's ongoing needs and identifies opportunities for successful cooperative activities.

The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council is uniquely placed by its mission and goals, by its leadership and membership, and by its past efforts and future plans to assist the citizens and organizations of our region. The Council's unique emphasis sustains our natural resources base and improves community development by bringing together effective partnerships to meet publicly recognized needs.

In relation to the NRCS Strategic Plan, the Council has specifically targeted its efforts to promote cooperative efforts to achieve urban conservation goals and to facilitate the growth of market-based

opportunities that encourage business and industry to create effective conservation-based public-private partnerships. The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council has planned the following specific goals and objectives for the coming year:

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

Sub-Element: Facilitate the promotion of small, natural resources-related businesses.

Goal: To create jobs and improve resource conservation by strengthening the capacity of local businesses to produce value-added products from reclaimed urban wood.

Objective: To create new opportunities by 2011 for at least five local wood products businesses to remain competitive in a complicated regulatory environment, while also ensuring that their products are safe and free from risks of transporting the emerald ash borer and other invasive species.

Strategies: Implement Forest Service Economic Action (Wood Education Resource Center) Grant, “Safe Firewood, Secure Industry: Creating Viable, Affordable Firewood Treatment Method for the Wood Industry to Prevent the Spread of Emerald Ash Borer and Other Invasives”, as follows:

- Award a \$30,000 “technology innovation grant” for the local design and manufacture of an effective and affordable firewood de-barker in early 2010. The design plans for this equipment will be made available to the area’s firewood businesses at no cost.
- Work with local Conservation Districts to conduct at least three training programs to teach local firewood businesses how to effectively build and use debarking systems to promote a safer firewood product by the end of 2010.
- Fund \$21,000 in research on the safety of debarking and chemical treatments on firewood by the end of 2010.

Objective: To research the opportunities and challenges facing entrepreneurs in emerging wood product sectors and develop plans for helping to improve local markets.

Strategies: Implement Forest Service Wood Education Resource Center Grant, “Marketing Urban Wood Through Certification and Branding”, as follows:

- Working with the neighboring Potawatomi RC&D Council, conduct at least three training/networking programs in 2010 to address the wood fuel pellet sector by exploring topics such as wood residue collection, technology needs, market limitations and drivers, and expansion opportunities.
- In collaboration with partners throughout Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin, conduct two working summits in 2010 to explore marketing and branding opportunities for urban wood products.

Sub-Element: Promote the development of renewable energy projects and demonstrations in the area.

Goal: To reduce fuel costs, provide energy security, and support the local economy by promoting alternative energy options.

Objective: To have at least one wood biomass boiler successfully operating in a local public institution that is reducing fuel costs and creating a market for locally-generated wood residues by the end of 2010.

Strategies: Implement Forest Service Economic Action (Wood Education Resource Center) Grant, “Ash Utilization Options: Supporting Biomass Energy Development and Wood Industry Training in Southeast Michigan”, as follows:

- Through funding from the USDA Forest Service, provide demonstration grant funding of \$65,000 and technical support to one local community to create a wood energy demonstration boiler project. The project will use wood fuel generated by urban forestry efforts in the nearby municipalities, reducing both the facility’s heating costs and wood disposal expenses for the community. The demonstration project will be completed by the end of 2010.
- Continue to update and promote the *Michigan Wood Energy* educational website and interactive tools.
- Continue to support the use of wood boiler engineering assessments in local institutions. Council-funded wood biomass feasibility studies were recently completed at six local facilities (including a public university, two municipalities, a U.S. military facility, and two private businesses).

LAND MANAGEMENT ELEMENT

Sub-Element: Create resources to support urban forestry efforts in local municipalities.

Goal: To improve public forestry operations by creating innovative partnerships that can retain the value in removed urban trees and lower costs wood disposal costs related to tree removal operations, particularly in response to the emerald ash borer outbreak in Michigan.

Objective: To provide technical support to municipal arborists to educate them about urban wood utilization strategies and opportunities for public-private partnerships through 2010.

Strategies: Implement Forest Service Wood Education Resource Center Grant, “Improving Urban Wood Utilization for Forest Products Industry Competitiveness in Southern Michigan through Creation of a Regional Demonstration and Training Center”, as follows:

- The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council’s Ash Utilization Options Project website (<http://www.semircd.org/ash>) will be maintained throughout 2010 to alert users of new resources, news, and events that may be of assistance for those pursuing urban wood use options.
- Create a large-scale demonstration for urban wood utilization planning in a local community in 2010. This project will include educational demonstrations on topics such as forest management, wood processing, and green building.
- Conduct training programs to improve local urban wood utilization and forest stewardship by educating local municipalities, organizations, and industries on topics such as: utilization-focused urban and woodlot forest management, log harvesting and handling, wood processing, creative uses for value-added urban wood products, and marketing products and services.
- Fund research to determine baseline data for 1) the costs and benefits associated with a large-scale urban wood utilization operation (as contrasted with traditional wood grinding and disposal) and 2) a life-cycle analysis of environmental impacts for the wood products created at the aforementioned demonstration site.

SPONSORS

Five County Boards of Commissioners/County Executive's Offices and five county Conservation Districts within the RC&D area are represented as sponsors of the Council.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Each sponsor has appointed a person to serve as a Director on the RC&D Council. The following is a listing of current Directors:

- A. Lenawee Conservation District- Kathlene Kurowicki
- B. Macomb County Board of Commissioners-Gerard Santoro
- C. Monroe County Board of Commissioners-Royce Maniko (Ryan Simmons, alternate)
- D. Monroe Conservation District-Catherine Acerboni
- E. Oakland County Executive's Office-Larry Falardeau
- F. St. Clair County Board of Commissioners-Gordon Ruttan
- G. St. Clair Conservation District-Stacey Kautz
- H. Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners-Jeff Krcmarik
- I. Washtenaw Conservation District-Dennis Rice
- J. Wayne Conservation District-Connie Boris

Other supporting organizations that are not sponsors, but have representatives approved to participate on the Council Board include:

- A. City of Detroit-Todd Mistor
- B. Lenawee County Board of Commissioners-James VanDoren
- C. Clinton River Watershed Council-Anne Vaaara
- D. Huron River Watershed Council-Laura Rubin
- E. River Raisin Watershed Council-Gayle Mitchell

ACTIVITIES UNDERWAY TO IMPLEMENT GOALS IN AREA PLAN

The Community Development and Land Management activities completed by the Southeast Michigan RC&D Council have all been a part of the Council's successful ongoing wood utilization programming. Since 2003, the Southeast Michigan RC&D Council has been awarded \$1,139,439 in grants for this work from the USDA Forest Service, the USDA Federal State Marketing Improvement Program, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth. These funds have been leveraged by an additional \$2,306,088 that the Council has generated in matching contributions so far, with more expected as these grants progress. Specific details of these projects, along with the Council's Land Conservation activities, follow in the sections below. See also Attachment A: 2010 Plan of Work, for current activities planned.

Land Conservation:

Promoting erosion control through soft engineering – The use of soft engineering to address stream bank erosion concerns in this RC&D area is in demand, but there had been a shortage of technical assistance to demonstrate the use of this practice. As a result, the Council secured an EPA 319 grant to fund educational workshops and to provide hands-on installation training for soft engineering practices in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. Trainings were held in the City of Detroit (Wayne County) and in Oakland, Lenawee, Macomb, St. Clair, and Washtenaw Counties. An informational website (<http://semircd.org/buffers/overview.php>) was also developed to highlight the workshops/demonstration projects and to provide additional soft engineering resources to the public. Finally conservation buffer packets (which detailed site selection and design information on filter strips and riparian forest buffers) were created and distributed to drain commissions, road commissions, and watershed councils in the area.

Community Development:

Promoting the economic benefits of natural resource protection through public/private cooperative efforts – The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council has implemented a series of projects as part of its Ash Utilization Options Project. This project aimed to provide resources and technical assistance to community foresters and wood industries in order to create value-added products from removed urban trees (in particular, from ash trees killed by the emerald ash borer). Goals of this project, funded through the USDA Forest Service, included creating new recycling opportunities for ash and other wood waste, reducing the burden on local landfills, and reducing wood disposal costs for local communities.

The Council has used this “finding value in urban trees” message to promote community development through a sustainable local urban wood products industry. So far, the Council has provided training opportunities and demonstration grant funding to showcase these opportunities.

- Three training programs were held for the wood industry to build their skills in log grading, sawing for grade, railroad tie production, kiln drying, and lumber grading. Over twenty local businesses participated in these eleven days of training.
- Eight demonstration grants were given to local businesses and communities:
 - Two \$50,000 grants were given to local businesses in 2004 to assist with the development of successful urban sawmilling operations.
 - A \$20,000 grant was awarded in 2006 to bring an additional kiln operation into the region.
 - Another \$5,000 grant was used to produce two art exhibits in 2007, showcasing the works of local woodworkers using salvaged wood.
 - A \$30,000 grant to the Ann Arbor District Library supported the use of local urban wood within the construction of a new city library, which opened in 2008.
 - Three mini-grants (of \$1,000 each) were awarded to encourage local communities to partner with area sawmills for the value-added recovery of wood from urban tree removals.

Summaries of these activities and an educational resource library for urban wood use can be found on the Council’s Ash Utilization Options Project website, <http://www.semircd.org/ash>.

Facilitating the promotion of small, natural resources-related businesses – To date, the Southeast Michigan RC&D has been particularly successful in acting as a “clearinghouse” for information related to urban wood use, by regularly connecting generators and potential users of wood residues. This role was acknowledged by the U.S. Forest Service when it recognized the Council within the 2006 National Forest Products Utilization and Marketing Personnel Directory. Additionally, the Council was given a seat on the board of the Great Lakes Section of the Forest Products Society.

Through a partnership with Recycle Ann Arbor, a local recycling organization, the Council is also working to create a system to assist five urban wood products companies with marketing products, educating consumers, and accessing retail opportunities. As a part of this effort, the Council developed and launched a website, <http://urbanwood.org>, for marketing locally made urban wood products.

Promoting the development of renewable energy projects & demonstrations – The Council has coordinated several projects to support the use of urban wood residues in biomass energy production. In this role, the RC&D has also established itself as a cooperating partner in statewide energy initiatives by participating in the Michigan Renewable Energy Program’s Biomass Committee and

providing technical assistance on the Michigan 21st Century Energy Plan's wood energy task force. Additional energy projects will be pursued as opportunity and funding allow.

- Grants were issued to six local facilities to fund engineering assessments. These assessments reviewed the feasibility of fueling the heating systems at these sites with locally generated wood waste.
- Grant funding has been secured through the USDA Forest Service to fund a woody biomass demonstration project in the RC&D Area. A \$65,000 grant will be issued in early 2010 to assist in converting the boiler system of a public building in the area to a waste-wood-fueled operation.
- The Council has sponsored a statewide study of boiler systems through grants from the USDA Forest Service and the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth's Energy Office. This study, performed by CTA Architects and Engineers, produced a list of the top 35 potential wood boiler projects in each county of Michigan. Additionally, the project created the Michigan Wood Energy website. The website includes a calculator that allows users to enter specific information about their site's existing fossil fuel costs and energy needs. This data is then analyzed to produce an estimate of the cost of installing a wood-fueled boiler and the potential for annual fuel savings. The full boiler study report and the wood energy calculator may be found at <http://michiganwoodenergy.org>.

Land Management:

Creating resources to support urban forestry management & planning efforts - Several activities within the Council's Ash Utilization Options Project addressed key land management concerns in the area:

- Nine chainsaw safety and timber harvesting workshops (over 34 days) were held for local tree care professionals and landowners in partnership with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Approximately 100 people participated in these events, which were held at nine different locations throughout the RC&D region.
- Numerous successful education and outreach programs were held to educate the public, industry members, and local leaders about opportunities in creating value from removed urban trees. The Council planned and executed events for a variety of audiences (including a legislative tour, public wood education fairs, two regional conferences, and dozens of focus group and networking meetings). Additionally, the Southeast Michigan RC&D presented information on urban wood use opportunities at over 100 events (including state, national, and international conferences). Council staff created extensive public communications materials for the projects as well, including press releases, brochures, newsletters, informational guides, and website copy. Significant communications occurred with local and national media to promote project activities, resulting in Council-authored articles for several statewide and national publications.
- Five major research projects (totaling \$218,427) were sponsored by the Council in order to better understand the availability and processing options for the local urban wood residue resource:
 - An inventory that characterized the volume, quality, and estimated value of southeastern Michigan's urban trees and other types of urban wood waste (Sherrill and MacFarlane, 2007).
 - A study of preservative treatments of ash lumber (Nzokou, Pankras, and Kamdem; 2006).

- A study of the use of borate and imidacloprid to sanitize EAB-infested logs in order to allow for safe log transport to mills outside of quarantined zones (Nzokou, Petrice, Haack, and Kamdem; 2006).
- Research on heat treatments of logs infested by the emerald ash borer (Nzokou, Tourtellot, and Kamdem; 2007).
- An analysis of wood wastes processing and utilization in southeastern Michigan (Nzokou and Tourtellot, 2009).

These resources are available online at: <http://www.semircd.org/ash/research>. Three additional related research projects, at a projected cost of \$71,000, are planned for 2010.

LEVELS OF SUPPORT

USDA support from the Regional and State level has been strong and consistent to the Southeast Michigan RC&D Application Area since its inception in 1996. This support can be characterized in the following ways:

- The Southeast Michigan Application Area has been recognized by USDA in Michigan by inclusion of the area in the maps and brochures about the RC&D program in Michigan.
- USDA staff has been made available to assist the Council with the application process.
- USDA staff has been involved in Southeast Michigan RC&D projects.
- NRCS has had a written Cooperative Working Agreement with the Southeast Michigan RC&D Council since 1996.
- NRCS Annual Business Plan has contained activities that directly support the Council's application.
- Council members and USDA staff in the application area have been included in USDA meetings, training sessions and teleconferences relating to the RC&D program in Michigan.
- USDA staff members have attended all council meetings, events and activities.
- The Michigan Association of RC&D Councils and the USDA in Michigan continue to make obtaining the authorization of the Southeast Michigan RC&D Area Application a very high priority.

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION

Southeast Michigan communities have played a major role in the development of the RC&D Council's Area Plan. The needs, problems, and opportunities in this region, as well as the goals and specific objectives for the RC&D Council were identified and prioritized through numerous public meetings with area citizens and interested agencies since the Council's inception in 1996.

Some of these events and activities included: the USDA-sponsored Southeast Michigan River Basin Study, the Michigan Association of RC&D Councils Annual Meetings, Wayne County Soil Survey

Public Forums, the Council's Annual Legislative Breakfasts, project-based interagency meetings, and local public workgroups.

Locally elected Directors represent the Conservation Districts (CDs) in this RC&D area. They have taken the lead in requesting and/or sponsoring projects such as the River Basin Study and conservation projects in the Rouge, River Raisin, and Huron River Watersheds. The CDs complete County Resource Assessments using public input every five years. The Council has also participated in this process. Upon completion, these will be utilized for future updates to the Council's Area Plan.

The Council has had broad representation and input on community needs and applicable goals and objectives from each of the County Boards of Commissioners/County Executive's Offices, the City of Detroit, Conservation Districts and watershed councils in the region. All have helped to identify and prioritize needs, recognize opportunities, and bring vast public input to the RC&D Council.

Council representatives have also participated in and given leadership to a variety of non-RC&D conservation/economic development programs:

1. Michigan Food and Farming Systems
2. Ottawa River Habitat Restoration Committee
3. Michigan Forestry Assistance Program
4. Michigan Restoration of Our Trees (ROOT) Program
5. Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
6. Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program
7. Green Oakland (GO) Educational Fair Planning Group
8. Oakland Backyard Wildlife Habitat Certification Team
9. Oakland Native Plants Education Program
10. Oakland Lakescaping Education and Technology Transfer Program
11. Washtenaw County Subdivision & Site Condominium Advisory Committee
12. Institute of Water Research High Impact Targeting Tool (Conservation Innovation Grant) Program
13. River Raisin Watershed Management Planning Team
14. Maumee River Basin Project with Ohio Department of Natural Resources
15. Lenawee Agribusiness Education Center for Excellence
16. Fellows Creek Shoreline Restoration Project
17. Wayne County Community College (Downriver Campus) Woodlot Management Planning Team
18. Washtenaw County Waste Knot Program
19. Washtenaw County Consortium for Solid Waste Management
20. Washtenaw County Home Toxics Reduction Program

As is apparent, the communities of Southeast Michigan have had significant input in and played a major role in the development of this RC&D's mission, long range plans, annual plan, and current goals and objectives.

REQUIRED CLAUSES

The local sponsors make application for Federal assistance under the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 Public Law 97-98, 16 U.S.C. 34523461 as amended by Public Law 101-624, Section 1452. The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council's program will be conducted in compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions as contained in Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (Pub. Law 100-259) and other nondiscrimination statutes; namely, Section 504, of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education

Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and in accordance with the regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture (7 CFR-15, Subparts A & B) which provide that no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, marital status, or handicap/disability be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial (or technical) assistance from the Department of Agriculture or any agency thereof.

The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council agrees that the signing of this document constitutes agreement to comply with federal laws concerning restrictions on lobbying, a drug-free workplace, and responsibilities for procurement, suspension, and disbarment.

The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council has had this application reviewed by the state. Comments made through the state single point of contact have been considered prior to submission of the application and that all applicable procedures have been followed. An environmental impact statement will not be prepared during the development of the area plan, but an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement will be prepared concurrently with the development of each project, when applicable, in accordance with federal procedures.

RC&D APPLICANT AREA ACTIVITY REPORT

General Council Activities During the Past Year

- The full RC&D Council has met quarterly.
- A successful financial statements compilation was completed for 2008.
- Council members Morse Brown and Gordon Ruttan attended the 2009 National Association of RC&D Council's "Leadership Development Conference" in Washington, D.C. They made key political contacts with U.S. Congressional members from Southeast Michigan. Brown and Ruttan also made key legislative contacts while attending the Leadership Development Conference in Washington, D.C. in 2007; all are supportive of the S.E. Michigan RC&D receiving official designation.
- The Council conducted a successful U.S. Congressional Breakfast at the Lyons Oak Golf Course in Oakland County in February, 2009. Representatives from the following congressional offices attended: Congressman Mike Rogers, Congressman Thaddeus McCotter and Senator Carl Levin. The purpose of the breakfast was to provide information on activities and to gain support for the Council's application.
- Council members Morse Brown, Gordon Ruttan and staff member Jessica Simons attended the Michigan Association of RC&D Councils spring meeting in March, 2009. Brown and Simons also attended the Michigan Association of RC&D Councils fall meeting in October, 2009.

Project Activity During the Past Year

The Council has been implementing their Ash Utilization Options grant project. Through this program, the Council is partnering with local sponsors to complete educational workshops, provide technical assistance, and conduct demonstrations throughout the RC&D region. As part of this grant, the following actions were completed in 2008-2009:

- Finalized wood energy assessments at six institutions – Oakland University, City of Monroe, City of Ann Arbor, U.S. Army's Detroit Arsenal, J.H. Hart Urban Forestry, and Vergote & Son Greenhouse.
- Hosted a conference, *Green: 2008 and Beyond*, along with the Great Lakes Section of the Forest Products Society to help participants learn more about green wood products. Awarded funding for five demonstration grants to local communities and industries.

- Sponsored the *Sustainable Energy Project Development Workshop for Public Institutions* workshop at Oakland University.
- Developed the *Urbanwood Project*, an effort to help local urban wood businesses better market their products and services. The Council helped the five participating businesses develop an online storefront, create a logo and other marketing materials, improve retail operations and tradeshow events, hold a reception for urban wood art at a local gallery space, gain better visibility in the green building sector, and secure photography assistance through the National Network of Forest Practitioners' People and the Land Fellowship.
- Announced the grand opening of the Ann Arbor District Library Traverwood Branch's ash wood use demonstration project. This library was awarded a \$30,000 grant from the Council to harvest and process dead ash trees from their new building's development site. The resulting wood was used as flooring, paneling, and beams for the new facility. This building's ash wood use was featured in the documentary *Up from Ashes*, which was selected for the 2009 Greenbuild International Conference Film Festival.
- Assisted with the promotion of *It Grows on Trees II*, an art exhibit featuring Michigan woodworkers.
- Coordinated a tour of emerald ash borer sites and demonstrations for the 2009 Soil and Water Conservation Society's International Conference in Dearborn, MI.
- Began work on three new USDA Forest Service grants: an effort to create safer firewood products, a regional urban wood marketing initiative, and a large-scale urban wood use demonstration center.
- Provided grants to encourage public-private partnerships that support better urban wood use. These grants funded wood utilization projects at the Saginaw Conservation District, the City of Grosse Pointe Park, and the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.
- Created the *Urban Wood Use Planning Worksheet for Communities*, a step-by-step questionnaire intended to walk a municipal forestry planner through developing a more comprehensive city wood use plan.
- Released *Wood Waste Processing and Utilization in Southeastern Michigan*, a Council-sponsored, Michigan State University study of local wood disposal yards. This research looked at how much wood waste is generated in the area, how efficiently it is recovered, and which products show the most promise for turning recycled wood into economic gain.
- The Council also worked to act as a resource clearinghouse to support communities, businesses, and citizens in learning more about urban wood use opportunities through ongoing website improvements, electronic newsletters, and one-on-one technical assistance. In addition to the educational presentations on wood utilization and the emerald ash borer given within Southeast Michigan, the Council worked in partnership with groups in other areas to provide technical assistance on this issue. Specifically, the Council gave formal presentations on wood use topics at three community events outside of the Southeast Michigan RC&D area, three statewide meetings, two out-of-state workshops, one regional conference, and one national conference.
- Completed outreach training and/or networking programs for local wood industries to provide small businesses with marketing assistance and access to new customers.
- Expanded the *urbanwood.org* website to increase its role as a marketing center for local urban wood products. This website, a project of the Southeast Michigan RC&D Council and Recycle Ann Arbor, includes an urban wood products inventory and promotional videos, showcasing the available products and services from the Urbanwood Project's local business members.
- Created and distributed print marketing and branding tools to promote local wood industry services with green building-related businesses to make them aware of the sustainability of local urban wood products.

- Strengthened the network of urban wood generators, processors, and users across public and private ownerships by creating a membership agreement for participants in the Urbanwood Project marketing program.
- The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council's Ash Utilization Options Project website (<http://www.semircd.org/ash>) was maintained throughout 2009 to alert users of new resources, news, and events that were of assistance for those pursuing urban wood use options.

Interagency Cooperation

Local and state agencies involved in area plan implementation include: local Conservation Districts, County planning departments, Drain Commissioners, City of Detroit, and watershed councils. Numerous state and federal agencies, including the USDA Forest Service, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and Michigan Department of Natural Resources (now the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment), and the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, have cooperated on Council projects.

Incorporation Status

The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council has been incorporated as a Domestic Nonprofit Corporation with the State of Michigan Department of Commerce and Industry Services, Corporation, Securities and Land Development Bureau as of May 28, 1999.

Non Profit Status

The council has received a ruling of federal tax-exempt status as of July 28, 1999.

Attachment A

SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN RC&D COUNCIL PLAN OF WORK: 2010

ELEMENT	OBJECTIVE & STRATEGIES	TARGET DATE	STAFF / BUDGET	ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Goal 1: Implement Forest Service Grants.				
Community Development	Implement Forest Service Wood Education Resource Center Grant #09-DG-11420004-085, "Marketing Urban Wood Through Certification and Branding."	6/1/10	Simons / \$87,183	
Land Management	Implement Forest Service Wood Education Resource Center Grant #09-DG-11420004-086, "Improving Urban Wood Utilization and Forest Products Industry Competitiveness in Southern Michigan through Creation of a Regional Demonstration and Training Center."	12/31/10	Simons / \$94,830	
Community Development	Implement Forest Service Economic Action (Wood Education Resource Center) Grant #06-DG-11244225-268, "Ash Utilization Options: Supporting Biomass Energy Development and Wood Industry Training in Southeast Michigan."	6/30/11	Simons / \$65,000	
Community Development	Implement Forest Service Economic Action (Wood Education Resource Center) Grant #08-DG-11420004-302, "Safe Firewood, Secure Industry: Creating Viable, Affordable Firewood Treatment Method for the Wood Industry to Prevent the Spread of Emerald Ash Borer and Other Invasives."	3/31/11	Simons / \$67,434	
Community Development	Complete Federal State Marketing Improvement Program Grant #FSMIP 08-01, "Supporting the Growth of Southeast Michigan's Urban Wood Industry."	2/26/10	Rice Simons / \$10,360	
ELEMENT	OBJECTIVE & STRATEGIES	TARGET DATE	STAFF / BUDGET	ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Goal 2: Implement new projects.				
Organizational Capacity	Consider selection of additional projects from "Potential New Projects" list prepared in January, 2007.	12/31/10	Council	
ELEMENT	OBJECTIVE & STRATEGIES	TARGET DATE	STAFF / BUDGET	ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Goal 3: Submit updated application to the USDA Secretary of Agriculture.				
Organizational Capacity	Complete application edits and updates.	3/1/10	Rice	
	Obtain Congressional letters of support.		Executive Committee	
	Maintain Congressional legislative support contacts.		Executive Committee Council	
ELEMENT	OBJECTIVE & STRATEGIES	TARGET DATE	STAFF / BUDGET	ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Goal 4: Council Board reorganization.				
Organizational Capacity	Implement plan to reorganize Council Board prepared by Board Development Committee.	12/31/10	Board Committee Council / \$1,000	

ELEMENT	OBJECTIVE & STRATEGIES	TARGET DATE	STAFF / BUDGET	ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Organizational Capacity	Goal 5: Conduct and attend meetings.			
	Host Congressional update breakfast meeting.	3/25/10	Council / \$300	
	Host Michigan Association of RC&D Councils spring conference.	3/26/10	Planning Committee / \$3,800 for all Strategies	
	Attend State, Regional and National RC&D meetings.	12/31/10	Appointed attendees / \$3,800 for all Strategies	
	Attend other meetings, as requested.	12/31/10	Appointed attendees / \$3,800 for all Strategies	
ELEMENT	OBJECTIVE & STRATEGIES	TARGET DATE	STAFF / BUDGET	ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Organizational Capacity	Goal 6: Complete administration and promotional activities.			
	Collect 2010 membership dues.	12/31/10	Rice / Council	
	Complete 2009 financial audit.	5/1/10	Rice / \$2,900	
	Complete grant quarterly reports.	12/31/10	Rice	
	Complete other reports, as needed.	12/31/10	Rice	
	Maintain and update Council web site.	12/31/10	Rice Simons / \$2,375 + grant expenditures	
	Conduct promotional activities, as determined.	12/31/10	Council	