

**Big Springs
Resource Conservation & Development
Council**

**Area Plan
2009-2013**



**Serving Butler, Carter, Reynolds, Ripley, and Wayne
Counties in Missouri**

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I. Introduction

This long-range plan for Big Springs Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council Area, Inc. was developed by soliciting public input through a survey of Conservation District Boards, County Commissions, Chambers of Commerce, City Councils, Partnering agency personnel, Big Springs RC&D Council members, and the public in the 5 county area served by the Big Springs RC&D. In addition to the survey results, local Council members were provided guidance to the development of this plan. The counties served by this plan include the following: Butler, Carter, Reynolds, Ripley, and Wayne.

The purpose of this plan is to provide a strategic direction of the organization. The Council is strong, yet more efforts are needed to ensure a strong sustainable organization that serves the communities in our area.

Congress passed the Food and Agricultural Act of 1962, which authorized Resource Conservation and Development Areas. The purpose of the act was to expand opportunities for conservation districts, local units of government, and individuals to improve their communities in multi-county areas. This included assistance in enhancing the economic, environmental and social well being of the RC&D Areas. Currently, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service administers the RC&D program. This document serves as an agreement between NRCS and the Big Springs Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc.

II. Organizational Overview

A. Vision Statement:

The Council believes that it must give future generations a model of progress by which to live that best provides a common link between people and their natural resources. The Big Springs RC&D hopes each generation will compliment the other through wise management procedures implemented for future citizens of our area.

B. Mission Statement:

The Big Springs RC&D was created to provide an avenue for people to work together to develop and carry out an action oriented plan for the social, economic and environmental betterment of our area.

The purpose of the Big Springs RC&D is to enhance the quality of life for present and future generations with a local grass roots approach using area human and natural resources with sustainable results.

C. Background and Structure of the Council

The original sponsors of the Big Springs RC&D Council were the County Commissions and Conservation Districts in the 5 counties. The RC&D area and first area plan were authorized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture on December 19, 1975. The Big Springs RC&D Council became a 501C3 organization on February 27, 1987.

The Council is made up of one member from each of the 5 County Commissions in the Big Springs area, one member from each county's Soil & Water Conservation District board in the area. Two members at large, who are chosen from each county, to represent a cross section of business, industry and local organizations make up the remainder of the council.

D. Overview of the Area

The Big Springs Area encompasses 2,181,120 acres or about 3408 square miles. The area's resources are vast and varied from food and fiber production, forestry, minerals, fisheries, recreation, wildlife, to its people. Numerous lakes, spectacular rushing streams, pure bubbling springs, impressive timber stands, rugged topography, and abundant fish and wildlife make the area highly appealing to its residents, and contribute to its growing attraction for tourists and outdoorsmen.

Forests make up approximately 67 percent of the land area within the 5 county area. Approximately 50 percent of the forestland is under private ownership. Approximately 250,000 acres are used for producing annual crops in the southeast part of Butler and Ripley counties. Major crops produced include corn, wheat, soybeans, rice, and a limited amount of other specialty crops. There is sufficient groundwater available and the topography is suitable for irrigation. The agricultural land in the remainder of the area is used primarily for livestock production, hay and pasture which make up approximately 20 percent of the area.

Several federal and state government agencies own and manage lands within the RC&D area including the US Forest Service, Corps of Engineers, National Park Service, MO. Department of Conservation, and MO. Department of Natural Resources. Together these lands make up approximately 632,673 acres or about 29 percent of the area.

The geology of the area is very diverse. The area in northern Reynolds and Wayne counties is composed of Precambrian age igneous volcanic rock which is estimated to be approximately 2 to 3 billion years old. The southern portions of Butler and Ripley counties are composed mostly of river sediments that accumulated in a deep, subsiding basin deposited by the Mississippi River. The majority of the area is comprised of Cambrian and Ordovician age sedimentary rock consisting of limestone, dolomite, sandstone, and chert.

The topography and soils of the area are also very diverse. Elevation ranges from a high of around 1650 feet in Reynolds County to a low of about 280 feet in Butler County.

Slopes can be very steep (>60%) to flat (<1%). Soils can be very shallow (<10”) to very deep (>100’); excessively well drained to very poorly drained; very acidic to alkaline; extremely gravely and bouldery to very fine textured.

Total population of the area in 2006 is estimated to be 81,019 people according to the US Census Bureau which is a 1% increase in population from the 2000 Census.

Approximately 51 percent of those are in Butler Co. Butler, Carter, and Ripley counties have had an increase in population from 2000 to 2006 ranging from 0.3 to 3.2 percent. Reynolds and Wayne counties have had a population decrease of 2.1 to 2.0% respectively from 2000 to 2006. Per capita income according to 2005 statistics averages \$24,154 which is well below the state average of \$31,231. Poverty rates remain high in all counties with an average of 20.2 percent of the population in 2004. Poverty rates have been over 20 percent for decades. Major sources of income are from wood products, agriculture, tourism, mining, and general manufacturing as well as service industries including education, hospitals, health care, and government services.

E. Demographics

The Big Springs RC&D Area remains a predominately rural area. 32 percent of the people live in communities larger than 100. 21 percent of the people live in Poplar Bluff and 51 percent live in Butler county.

City	Population
Poplar Bluff	16,651
Piedmont	1992
Doniphan	1932
Ellington	1045
Van Buren	845
Naylor	610
Neelyville	487
Qulin	467
Greenville	451
Williamsville	379
Ellsinore	363
Fisk	363
Grandin	236
Centerville	161
Total	25982

County	Population	Area Sq.Mile	Population/Sq.Mile
Butler	41,582	698	58.5
Carter	5956	508	11.7
Reynolds	6547	811	8.2
Ripley	13,937	630	21.5
Wayne	12,997	761	17.4
Total	81,019	3408	23.7

F. Natural Resources

Water Resources – One of the most valuable natural resources of the Big Springs area and one which makes it unique, is its water resources. There are 5959 miles of perennial and intermittent streams, 2 Corps of Engineers flood control lakes (Clearwater and Wappapello), several smaller public lakes, and many springs including Big Spring in Carter county which is considered the largest single outlet spring in the U.S.

The major perennial streams are the Current, Black, and St. Francois rivers that feed into the Mississippi River system. The Current River in Carter County is listed as an Outstanding National Resource Water by the EPA. In Carter county, the Current is part of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways administered by the National Park Service. Several stream segments of the Black & Little Black Rivers in Reynolds and Ripley counties respectively are listed as Outstanding State Resource Waters by the MO. Department of Natural Resources.

Ground water is the main supplier of rural and community water supplies and agricultural irrigation systems and is generally high quality. Clean water resources are the basis for many recreational activities including fishing, swimming and boating.

County	Stream Length/Miles(Perennial & Intermittent)
Butler	1329
Carter	864
Reynolds	1400
Ripley	1113
Wayne	1253
Totals	5959

Forest Resources – Forests make up approximately 67 percent of the land area within the 5 county area. Approximately 50 percent of the forestland is under private ownership. Forests provide a source of environmental and ecological benefits and are vital to the region’s economy both directly and indirectly. Trees help to hold soil in place, reducing erosion and preventing silt from washing into rivers, lakes, and streams and damaging organisms. Forest soils soak up water and help control flooding by regulating water flow within a watershed. The complex structure of forests creates many niches where animals and plants can find food, shelter, and space to reproduce.

Hardwoods such as oak, ash and hickory species make up the largest share of the forests. Softwoods such as shortleaf pine, maple, and sycamore are species less represented. Railroad ties, pallets and flooring make up the largest share of wood products in secondary processing with wood for cabinetry and other high end uses also being important. Charcoal from waste wood is also a major product of the area. The forests are now being scrutinized for energy sources such as cellulosic ethanol.

Forests of the area have been exploited since they were first cut in the late 1800's and early 1900's with little thought to future harvests. It is estimated by the Missouri Department of Conservation that less than 10 percent of the forest is being actively managed for future harvests and wildlife. Oak decline which is a problem caused by a complex interaction of environmental stresses and pests and given the name oak decline is affecting the forests of the area.

Soil Resources – The soils of the area are very diverse. Ridges have varying thickness of wind blown materials (loess) that thins to the northwest and as the width of the ridge narrows. Soils in the uplands can range from over 5 feet thick to less than an inch over rocky sediments derived from bedrock. Many ridges have fragipans/hardpans that restrict root growth and excavation. The side slopes are dominated by soils weathered from bedrock which range from clays in limestone/dolomite areas to sandy soils in sandstone areas. There is an abundance of flint/chert in the side slope soils which range from gravelly to extremely bouldery. The small creek bottoms are gravelly and well drained in the upper reaches. The larger floodplains become deeper, finer grained, less gravelly and poorly drained where they widen into the bootheel delta. The soils of the delta area in Butler and Ripley counties are well suited for crop production if properly drained. Land grading to improve drainage is common and has permanently changed many of the natural characteristics of these soils.

Mineral and Other Resources – The igneous rock of northern Reynolds County is on the southern end of the Viburnum Trend of Missouri. There are several mines that have produced large quantities of lead and zinc and smaller amounts of silver and copper since the 1960's. Limestone and dolomite quarries in the area also produce large amounts of crushed rock for building and lime for agricultural uses. Gravel and sand mining in the streams is used for building roads and in concrete mixtures. Mining activities can have a significant impact on the water resources of the area by uncontrolled runoff from tailing ponds from the lead and zinc mines and gravel mining in the streams. Gravel roads in the area can also directly impact the area's water resources by uncontrolled runoff and depositing gravel directly into streams.

G. Agriculture

Agriculture in the area is very diverse and important to the region's economy. Approximately 250,000 acres or about 11.5% of the area is used for producing annual crops in the southeast part of Butler and Ripley counties. Major crops produced include corn, wheat, soybeans, rice, and a limited amount of other specialty crops. There is sufficient groundwater available and the topography is suitable for irrigation. Agriculture in the delta area was made possible by extensive draining projects in the early 20th century. Drainage districts are important legal entities that maintain this system of ditches and flood control levees along with the Corps of Engineers.

Commodity	Year	County	Planted All Purposes	Harvested	Yield	Production
Wheat All	2007	Ripley	1,200 acres	800 acres	26.3 bushel	21,000 bushel
Wheat All	2007	Butler	13,500 acres	10,000 acres	40.6 bushel	406,000 bushel
Rice All	2007	Ripley	6,200 acres	6,200 acres	5,550 pounds	343,800 hundredweight
Rice All	2007	Butler	65,000 acres	64,200 acres	6,810 pounds	4,372,500 hundredweight
Corn For Grain	2007	Butler	31,100 acres	30,700 acres	154 bushel	4,713,000 bushel
Sorghum For Grain	2007	Butler	2,900 acres	2,900 acres	103 bushel	298,700 bushel
Soybeans	2007	Ripley	10,500 acres	10,200 acres	28 bushel	289,000 bushel
Soybeans	2007	Wayne	2,800 acres	2,000 acres	20 bushel	40,000 bushel
Soybeans	2007	Butler	104,000 acres	103,400 acres	39 bushel	4,000,000 bushel
Hay All (Dry)	2007	Carter		9,000 acres	1.44 tons	13,000 tons
Hay All (Dry)	2007	Reynolds		11,000 acres	1.36 tons	15,000 tons
Hay All (Dry)	2007	Ripley		17,000 acres	1.35 tons	23,000 tons
Hay All (Dry)	2007	Wayne		23,000 acres	1.22 tons	28,000 tons
Hay All (Dry)	2007	Butler		8,000 acres	1.13 tons	9,000 tons

The agricultural land in the remainder of the area is primarily used for livestock production. Hay and pasture land makes up approximately 20 percent of the area. Beef cattle are the primary livestock grown in the area. Fescue is the primary cool season grass grown for hay and pasture. There are limited amounts of native and introduced warm season grasses grown to cover the summer slump period.

Commodity	Year	County	Cattle All	Beef Cows	Milk Cows
Cattle & Calves	2008	Carter	10,300 head	4,800 head	
Cattle & Calves	2008	Reynolds	12,000 head	6,000 head	
Cattle & Calves	2008	Ripley	19,000 head	10,700 head	
Cattle & Calves	2008	Wayne	14,000 head	6,800 head	
Cattle & Calves	2008	Butler	8,000 head	5,500 head	100 head

H. Tourism

Tourism is an important part of the economy of the area. According to 2006 statistics from the Missouri Department of Revenue, tourism brings in nearly \$76 million dollars per year to local economies. According to the MO. Employment Security tourism provided approximately 2574 jobs in 2005.

County	2006 Tourism Spending	2005 Tourism Employment
Butler	55,070,005	1816
Carter	5,229,171	231
Reynolds	3,475,726	104
Ripley	5,456,995	231
Wayne	6,618,298	192
Totals	\$75,850,195	2574

A majority of the tourism is generated by attraction to the area's lakes, rivers, forests and parks located on public lands administered by the National Park Service, Forest Service, Corps of Engineers, Department of Natural Resources, and Missouri Department of Conservation. Together these public lands make up approximately 632,673 acres or about 29 percent of the area.

I. Socioeconomic Information

The Big Springs area plays a fairly small role in the overall Missouri economy. However, it is very important for Missouri's forest products industry, which is central to the economy of the area. Butler County is the leader in population, jobs and wages with a diverse economy compared to the rest of the area.

County	Employment 2007	Average Weekly Wage	2007 Percent Unemployment
Butler	19,747	\$529	6.6
Carter	2697	\$361	6.3
Reynolds	2440	\$409	6.9
Ripley	6173	\$391	6.7
Wayne	5260	\$407	7.0

Per capita income according to 2005 statistics averages \$24,154 which is well below the state average of \$31,231. Poverty rates remain high in all counties with an average of 20.2 percent of the population in 2004. Poverty rates have been over 20 percent for decades. Major sources of income are from wood products, agriculture, tourism, mining, and general manufacturing as well as service industries including education, hospitals, health care and government services and payments.

III. Resource Needs and Opportunities

A. Description of Public Participation Activities

A survey was developed using examples from other RC&D Council's efforts in determining important issues related to the required NRCS elements of land conservation and management, water conservation and management, and community development. There was also a section for individuals to list other important needs in the area as well as project ideas and fund raising. The survey was sent by mail and e-mail to all 20 council members and 15 Council Sponsors. Council members were also encouraged to distribute it among groups they work with as well.

It was also e-mailed and handed out to approximately 80 individuals from partnering agencies and organizations. It was also available on the RC&D Council website with articles in each of the 5 Counties newspapers informing the public of the survey.

The tabulated results were discussed at regular and annual council meetings with further input given by attendees and incorporated into the final document.

B. Summary of Findings by Required Element

i. Land Conservation and Management (in order of priority)

- 1) Energy Conservation
- 2) Protect and Improve Fish and Wildlife Habitat
- 3) Forest Management Practices
- 4) Invasive Species Control Management
- 5) Crop and Forest Diseases and Pests
- 6) Streambank Erosion Control
- 7) Pasture Management
- 8) Bio-Fuels Development
- 9) Sedimentation in Lakes and Streams
- 10) Loss of Farmland/Preserve Agriculture
- 11) Land Use-Unregulated Development

ii. Water Conservation and Management (in order of priority)

- 1) Groundwater Protection
- 2) Riparian Corridor Protection and Management
- 3) Flood Protection
- 4) Water Conservation (tied for 3rd)
- 5) Watershed Planning
- 6) Storm Water Management
- 7) Wetland Protection & Restoration (tied for 6th)

iii. Community Development (in order of priority)

- 1) Access to Health Care
- 2) Natural Resource Based Tourism Promotion
- 3) Energy Conservation
- 4) Small & Home Based Business Assistance
- 5) Development of Resource Based Industries
- 6) Recycling & Hazardous Waste Management
- 7) Forest Economy
- 8) Fire Protection
- 9) Green Space Development
- 10) Improvement of Recreational Facilities
- 11) Historical Preservation
- 12) Natural Disaster Planning
- 13) Community Beautification
- 14) Development of Farmers Markets

iv. Areas of concern that are not being met in the Big Springs RC&D Area and are potential projects for the Council to consider according to the surveys submitted and input from the RC&D annual meeting on November 20, 2008.

Natural Resource Education

Business Promotion & Development

Walkways for biking and hiking around communities

Signing & Advertising Assistance for the area & region

Health Services

Improved livestock markets

Grant Writing Assistance

Tourism Promotion

County Road House Numbers

County Fair Grounds

Lack of pride and absence of community involvement

Better use of existing facilities

Outreach to farmers & landowners

Mass Transit

Exploitation of forests for various uses

Water runoff from livestock areas

Watershed Planning

Green building projects

Promoting low input cost livestock production

Use of sawmill waste products for biofuels

Logger Education

Higher incentives for livestock exclusion from streams

Business Plan Development Assistance

Organic Farming Development

Hazards with aerial application of chemicals in crop production

Additional hiking trails in the region

IV. Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Land Conservation and Management Elements

Sub-Element: Energy Conservation

Goal: Decrease the amount of energy used in the area to produce agricultural and forest products by 5 % on 500 acres by 2013.

Objective: Develop informational materials to help local landowners and businesses save money by implementing energy conservation measures.

Strategies:

1. Coordinate and fund an energy audit project in 2010 for crop producers in Butler and Stoddard Counties in cooperation with Bootheel RC&D.
2. Assist with informing the public of the harvesting efficiency study on private forest land in Carter, Reynolds, and Cape Girardeau Counties being done by Eastern Ozarks Forestry Council in 2009.
3. Work with the SWCD and NRCS staffs on promoting low input cost livestock production techniques by 2013.
4. Work with the SWCD and NRCS staffs on promoting no-till and minimum till planting techniques for crops and grasses.

Sub-Element: Protect and Improve Wildlife Habitat

Goal: Assist at least 2 local sponsors with their efforts to protect and/or improve fish and wildlife habitat by 2013.

Objective: Protect or improve 100 acres of wildlife habitat by 2013.

Strategies:

1. Assist the Current River Conservation Opportunity Area (COA) group with identifying and funding wildlife habitat improvement projects in Carter & Ripley counties.
2. Assist the City of Doniphan with wildlife habitat improvements on 10 acres in Quick Creek Park in 2010.
3. Locate and assist additional sponsors to improve wildlife habitat by 2013.

Sub-Element: Forest Management & Economy

Goal: Increase the amount of private forestland acreage under management plans by 5000 acres by 2013.

Objective: Increase the knowledge of forest landowners on management techniques, forestry programs available and the value of forest products.

Strategies:

1. Develop additional educational activities in cooperation with groups like the Eastern Ozarks Forestry Council and agencies like the MO. Department of Conservation, Forest Service, and University Extension.
2. Investigate and publicize the economics of different timber harvesting and timber stand improvement methods.
3. Investigate and promote additional uses for wood products and waste.
4. Work with industry representatives on development of additional value added products and using small diameter wood products.
5. Encourage more landowners to grow alternative forest products like ginseng, goldenseal, etc. that can be used for niche markets and increase incomes.
6. Assist the Eastern Ozarks Forestry Council with maintaining their website to inform the public of activities and issues related to forestry.

Sub-Element: Invasive Species Control Management

Goal: Promote the control of invasive/exotic species and reestablishment of native species on at least 10 acres in the area by 2013.

Objective: Encourage the control/management of 2 invasive/exotic species across the area by 2013.

Strategies:

1. Work with at least 2 sponsoring agencies or organizations to identify and plan treatments for locations that need invasive/exotic species control by 2011.

Sub-Element: Erosion Control

Goal: Control streambank erosion on 0.5 mile of streams in the 5 counties of the RC&D Area by 2013.

Objective: Inform the public about the problems of streambank erosion, its potential impacts to the environment and its potential solutions.

Strategies:

1. Assist with identifying and quantifying the extent of streambank erosion problems in the 5 county area by 2010.
2. Work with the SWCD and NRCS staffs in the area to select potential sites and landowners that have significant stream bank erosion problems that would be interested in correcting them by 2013.
3. Seek funding and implement 2 streambank erosion control plans in the area by 2013.

Goal: Control soil erosion on at least 5 acres of critical areas by 2013.

Objective: Reduce soil erosion and sedimentation in the area.

Strategies:

1. Assist the NRCS Plant Materials Center and MoDOT with the HWY 60 erosion control study in 2009 & 2010 and publicize the results.
2. Identify other critical areas needing erosion control and develop plans to control it.

Sub-Element: Pasture Management

Goal: Improve pasture management practices on 500 acres of pasture in the 5 county area by 2013.

Objective: Inform the grassland producers in the area about the problems of poor pasture management and demonstrate techniques for better management.

Strategies:

1. Assist the SWCD's or other sponsoring organizations in the area with 5 grassland demonstration field days by 2013.
2. Assist Butler SWCD with annual grassland evaluation contest to prepare FFA students for regional grassland contest events.

Sub-Element: Bio-Fuels Development

Goal: Promote the development of at least one alternative form of bio-energy by 2013.

Objective: Establish partnerships that will expand the use of alternative forms of energy by 2013.

Strategies:

1. Develop and distribute a survey of schools and industry in the area to gauge interest in adopting biomass as an energy source by 2010.
2. Investigate and conduct tours to facilities that have adopted bio-energy fuels to provide information to interested parties by 2010.
3. Investigate and fund a feasibility study for a woody biomass/crop residue cellulosic energy plant by 2011.

Water Conservation and Management Elements

Sub-Elements: Groundwater Protection & Water Conservation

Goal: Protect the groundwater resource base by implementing 1 water quality and/or water conservation programs by 2013.

Objective: Educate local landowners, communities, and organizations on how to protect and conserve groundwater resources by 2013.

Strategies:

1. Work with the SWCD's and NRCS field offices to promote and implement any groundwater conservation and protection programs available by 2013.
2. Assist the Current River Conservation Area Opportunity (COA) group in identifying, funding and educating the public on any groundwater protection projects in Carter & Ripley counties.
3. Assist the Bootheel Regional Water District with annual water sampling program to monitor pesticide levels in Butler County.
4. Assist local fire departments on installing dry hydrants to access surface water resources in rural areas to conserve groundwater resources.
5. Research additional funding sources to implement water conservation and protection projects.

Sub-Element: Riparian Corridor Protection & Management

Goal: Protect and improve the riparian corridors of 2 miles of streams in the area by 2013.

Objective: Educate the public about the water quality & wildlife benefits of riparian corridor management by 2013.

Strategies:

1. Work with the SWCD's and NRCS field offices to promote and implement riparian corridor habitat management programs through demonstrations and field day events by 2013.

2. Assist the Current River Conservation Area Opportunity (COA) group in identifying and funding and educating the public on any riparian corridor management projects in Carter & Ripley counties by 2013.

Sub-Element: Flood Protection/Storm Water Management

Goal: Reduce flood damages in 1 community of the area by 2013.

Objective: Educate the community leaders in the area of assistance available from NRCS to control storm water and reduce flood damages by 2013.

Strategies:

1. Identify and work with communities that have persistent flooding problems by 2013.

2. Assist the City of Doniphan with development of a rain garden in Quick Creek Park in 2010.

2. Develop a conservation plan to address storm water management for communities that request it by 2013.

Sub-Element: Watershed Planning

Goal: Develop one watershed plan in the area by 2013.

Objective: Educate community leaders about benefits of developing watershed type plans by 2013.

Strategies:

1. Identify and work with organizations and agencies interested in developing watershed type plans by 2012.

Community Development Element

Sub-Element: Access to Healthier Life Styles

Goal: Develop facilities in 2 area communities that encourage a healthier lifestyle by 2013.

Objective: Reduce the amount of obesity, heart disease, and diabetes in the area by encouraging healthier lifestyles by 2013.

Strategies:

1. Identify and work with communities interested in developing facilities that promote a physically active lifestyle by 2010.
2. Work with the City of Doniphan on funding and developing the Quick Creek Park Project in 2009.

Sub-Element: Natural Resource Based Tourism Promotion

Goal: Develop 3 new items to assist with marketing the natural resources and associated businesses in the area by 2013.

Objective: Encourage more people to visit the area and increase tourism spending by 5 % by 2013 by promoting the natural resource attractions in the area.

Strategies:

1. Develop and fund a new brochure highlighting the 'Geologic Wonders of South Central Missouri' in cooperation with the MO. Ozarks Regional Explorers and Top of the Ozarks RC&D Council by 2009.
2. Update and maintain the MO. Ozarks Regional Explorers website to encourage more visitors to the area by 2009.
3. Develop and fund a new driving tour brochure featuring interesting locations on public land around Van Buren in cooperation with the Van Buren Chamber of Commerce by 2009.
4. Assist the MU EXCEED 'All Natural Region' group with development of a website to encourage more tourism and business promotion in Carter, Reynolds, Iron, Wayne, and Madison counties by 2009.
5. Identify and work with additional organizations to promote more tourism in the region by 2013.

Sub-Elements: Small & Home Based Business Assistance & Energy Conservation

Goal: Assist 10 businesses in the area with technical assistance on business planning, marketing assistance and energy conservation by 2013.

Objective: Assist small & home based businesses in the area to be competitive and provide more jobs.

Strategies:

1. Work with the University Of Missouri Extension-Small Business Development Center to develop workshops for small and home based businesses in the area on business plan development, marketing, and energy conservation practices in 2010.

Sub-Element: Development of Natural Resource Based Industries

Goal: Assist with the development of a least one natural resource based industry in the area to provide additional employment by 2013.

Objective: Assist community and business leaders in the area to develop and market the natural resources of the area in a sustainable manner.

Strategies:

1. Work with the area's Chambers of Commerce and the MO. Ozarks Regional Explorers to develop and market the natural resources of the area for tourism by 2013.

2. Work with forest industry leaders to develop markets for small diameter trees to improve forest health and provide additional jobs by 2013.

3. Assist interested groups with development of farmers markets to provide additional income sources by 2013.

Sub-Element: Fire Protection

Goal: Install 3 dry hydrants in the area by 2013.

Objective: Improve the fire fighting capabilities in rural areas by providing greater access to water

Strategies:

1. Work with area fire departments to identify 3 locations for installing dry hydrants for better access to surface water in rural areas by 2013.

Sub-Elements: Green Space Development, Recreation Facilities Improvement and Community Beautification

Goal: Assist 3 communities and/or organizations in the area with green space development, improvement of existing recreational facilities and/or community beautification by 2013.

Objective: Improve community and area recreational facilities to make the area more attractive for residents and visitors.

Strategies:

1. Work with the City of Doniphan on developing Quick Creek Park by 2013.
2. Work with the Ozark Trail Association and Forest Service in recruiting and coordinating volunteers to maintain the Ozark Trail in Carter and Shannon counties.
3. Assist other communities in the area that request it with green developments by 2013.

Sub-Element: Historical Preservation

Goal: Assist at least one organization in the area with historical preservation and/or interpretation projects in 2009.

Objective: Preserve and interpret the history of the area.

Strategies:

1. Assist the Carter Co. Historical Commission with historical calendar projects in 2009 - 2013 to educate the public on historical events of Carter Co.
2. Assist the Carter Co. Historical Commission with preserving the log cabin to be used in community events on the courthouse lawn in Van Buren in 2009.
3. Assist other organizations in the area with historical projects if they request it by 2013.

Council Growth and Development Element

Goal: Build Council capacity and organizational strength with training at 1 regular meeting per year.

Objectives: Develop the council's ability to independently manage the organization.

Strategies:

1. Support training efforts to increase organizational capacity of the RC&D Council and other partnering organizations in leadership development and non profit management by 2013.
2. Support efforts to diversify the council membership and its fiscal sponsors by 2010.
3. Develop and maintain handbooks that provide organizational information for members about the Council and its activities.
4. Research alternative funding sources to fund council projects and operations.
5. Increase council diversity by encouraging at large membership of under represented groups

Goal: Market the RC&D and its goals to the public annually through various media's.

Objective: Increase public awareness about the Council and its projects by 2013.

Strategies

1. Maintain Council website and brochures that informs public about RC&D and its activities as information changes.
2. Keep sponsors and council members informed of project activities through annual reports and meetings
3. Staff RC&D exhibits at state and regional events when opportunities arise to inform the public.
4. Inform the public about council projects annually in area newspapers during National RC&D Week and other appropriate times.

V. Current and Potential Partnerships with the USDA and Others

- Conservation Districts of Butler, Carter, Reynolds, Ripley, and Wayne
- County Commissions of Butler, Carter, Reynolds, Ripley, and Wayne
- Communities of Butler, Carter, Reynolds, Ripley, and Wayne counties
- Chambers of Commerce in Butler, Carter, Reynolds, Ripley, and Wayne counties
- USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service
- USDA-Forest Service
- USDA-Rural Development
- USDI-National Park Service
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- US FWS – Mingo National Wildlife Refuge
- University of Missouri Extension
- University of Missouri Extension Telecenter
- University of Missouri-University Forest
- MO. Department of Conservation
- MO. Department of Natural Resources
- MO. Department of Transportation
- MO. Association of RC&D Councils
- Top of the Ozarks RC&D Council
- Bootheel RC&D Council
- Bootheel Regional Water District
- Ozark Foothills Regional Planning Commission
- Ozark Trail Association
- The Nature Conservancy
- Eastern Ozarks Forestry Council
- Current River Conservation Opportunity Area
- Scenic Rivers Watershed Partnership
- Three Rivers Community College
- MO. Ozarks Regional Explorers
- Carter Co. Historical Commission
- 4H Clubs
- National Forest Foundation
- National Fish & Wildlife Foundation
- National Wildlife Federation
- National Turkey Federation
- Delta Regional Authority

VI. Linkages to the NRCS Strategic Plan (2005-2010) and NRCS Mission Goals

For more information, access the NRCS Strategic Plan online at:
http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/strategicplan/StratPlan_read.pdf

VII. Compliance Statements

The Big Springs RC&D Council agrees that the RC&D 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(Public 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 (7CFR-15, Subparts A and B) that 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 U.S. Department of Agriculture or any agency thereof.

The Big Springs 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 non-procurement, suspension, and debarment, and State review.

The Big Springs RC&D Council hereby adopts this RC&D Area Plan and agrees to use effectively the assistance provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to realize the goals and objectives outlined herein.

Big Springs RC&D Council, Missouri

VIII. Signatures

Virgil Wagner
Chairman

Date: 2/26/09

Attest: Greg Silliman
Secretary/Treasurer

Date: 2/26/09

This action authorized at an official meeting of the Big Springs RC&D Council on February 26, 2009.

The State Conservationist hereby acknowledges the attached Area Plan of the Big Springs RC&D Council as meeting the requirements under Public Law 97-98 to receive assistance from USDA.

Acknowledged By:

Roger Hansen
State Conservationist

Date: 3/5/09

IX. Appendix

Documented Public Input – A survey was developed using examples from other RC&D Councils to provide the major issues to be considered as needs and opportunities across the region. The respondents were asked to prioritize these needs and opportunities. There was also a part of the survey where individuals were asked to list other needs and concerns in the area. These needs and opportunities were summarized earlier in this document. The following is a timeline of public input.

- 5-1-08 - RC&D Council meeting in Van Buren discussed need for Area Plan to be updated. Marie Obourn and Greg Silliman volunteered to be on Area Plan committee. Kurt Homeyer volunteered to assist later.
- 5-22-08 - Public Input Questionnaire Developed by Area Plan Committee & RC&D Coordinator
- 6-6-08 - Area Plan Questionnaire published on Big Springs RC&D Council website and sent to 17 RC&D Council members by e-mail and hard copy and 4 NRCS District Conservationists & 1 Area Conservationist by e-mail.
- 6-9-08 - Area Plan Public Input Questionnaire News Release sent to 5 County Newspapers in the RC&D Area for publication.
- 6-10 & 11-08 - Sent e-mail to 67 agency and partnering organizations personnel to solicit filling out questionnaires from website.
- 6-27-08 - Handed out questionnaires to 8 attendees of the Eastern Ozarks Forestry Council meeting.
- 7-1-08 - Handed out questionnaires to 9 attendees of the Van Buren Area Chamber of Commerce.
- 8-21-08 - RC&D Council Meeting – Discussed public input questionnaire summary of 17 questionnaires returned and reviewed partial draft of Area Plan.
- 10-30-08 - Mailed out 82 Area Plan Questionnaires along with RC&D Council Invitations to Annual Meeting to be held on November 20, 2008 in Van Buren.
- 11-20-08 – RC&D Council Annual Meeting. Focused on area plan with Jerry Wade & Floyd Clark facilitating the meeting. 24 community leaders attended. Reviewed results from 26 questionnaires returned by mail.
- 12-11-08 – Sent out notes on annual meeting to RC&D Council Annual meeting attendees and asked for further input.
- 1-22-09 – Final draft of Area Plan circulated to RC&D Council members and Sponsors for final comment
- 2-26-09 – Final draft reviewed by RC&D Council and signed.