



The Resource Conservation and Development program was created so local citizens, especially in rural areas, could develop and carry out an action-oriented plan for the social, economic and environmental betterment of their communities.

Specifically RC&D is a local effort covering several counties in which residents work with cooperating agencies to improve their environment.

RC&D is a mix of conservation, economic development, environmental enhancement and community development.

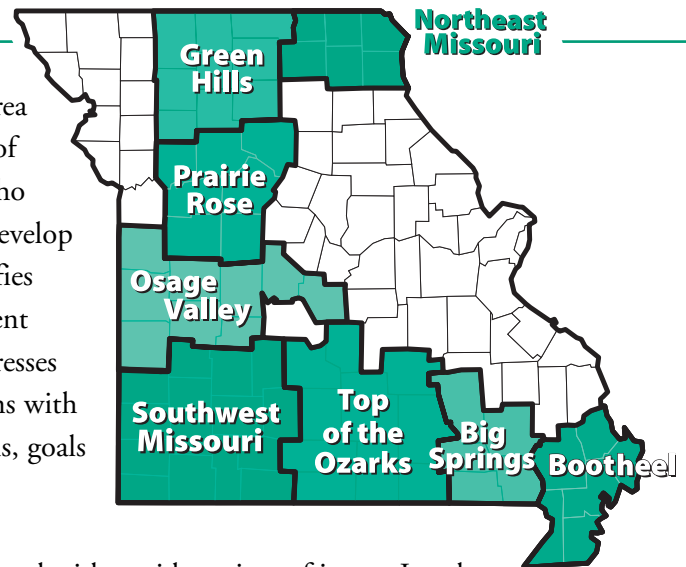
The key to success is local leadership. RC&D does place heavy emphasis on natural resources, but using the human resources at hand is the single most important factor to RC&D's success.

Goals

Each RC&D project has its own goals, but most aim to:

- Conserve and develop land and water resources for agricultural, municipal, industrial/commercial, recreational and wildlife use
- Provide information on better use of soil and water resources for farming, commercial forestry, recreation, housing, industry and transportation
- Improve and expand recreation facilities, and promote historic and scenic attractions
- Provide economic opportunities through the wise development, conservation and utilization of our natural resources
- Improve markets for crops, livestock and forest products
- Promote safe and healthy rural development

Every RC&D project area has a council made up of key volunteer leaders who provide direction and develop an area plan that identifies resource and development issues. The council addresses these issues and concerns with locally directed solutions, goals and objectives.



Each area plan is developed with a wide variety of input. Local concerns are balanced with realistic objectives to achieve goals. This plan then becomes the 'roadmap' for the council. The council uses it to prepare annual plans of work that list specific actions to make things happen supporting a wide range of interests and natural resource conditions.

What we do

All eight Missouri RC&Ds have a wide range of accomplishments, including:

- Assisted in establishment of rural fire protection plans in areas previously without adequate protection
- Developed an emerging forest products industry
- Established effective hay and pasture management, including rotational grazing, the promotion and marketing of warm-season grasses, and other needed practices
- Developed the wood pellet/wood stove revolution, which includes effective utilization of forest byproducts and resources
- Promoted irrigation water management



- Encouraged the efficient use of pesticides and fertilizers based upon specific crop and soil information
- Established the Southeast Missouri Regional Water District to monitor the quality and quantity of water in the district
- Worked with the Missouri poultry industry to plan more efficiently for nutrient and manure management
- Initiated a dry hydrant program. Dry hydrants make pond, stream or lake water available to fire departments for use in fighting rural fires
- Assisted local recycling efforts by locating grant money to help establish recycling centers
- Organized seminars to teach proper grant writing techniques
- Promoted alternative-crop agriculture by organizing and sponsoring workshops focused on topics such as nuts, florals, wood products and lease hunting
- Provide financial and technical assistance to establish agriculture science centers and outdoor classrooms used for environmental education
- Cooperated with state and local groups to improve delivery of services to home-based businesses
- Worked with county governments to develop earthen dam road structures with containment pools that include dry hydrants to replace traditional bridges and road culverts. Such dams remove load limits, improve farm-to-market transportation routes, and improve rural fire protection.
- Assisted local community groups secure funding to build fitness centers, farmers markets, public drinking water supply systems and other local facilities
- Organized Life-Line Screening services giving rural residents easy access and affordable prices to cardiovascular and bone density testing

Summary

RC&D depends on the leadership abilities and unique skills of community volunteers. Local leadership is why RC&D has been successful in Missouri. It is also why so many worthwhile projects have been undertaken and accomplished.

One of the most outstanding accomplishments of RC&D is the rekindling of the old-time feeling of community spirit and working together without worrying about who gets the credit for a job well done.

Though RC&D can be described in several ways, it is basically people seeking solutions for local problems. It is action that is planned and agreed to by local residents and leaders. Finally, it is working together to accomplish a common goal. Missouri is proud of its accomplishments.

RC&Ds in Missouri are moving forward to protect, enhance and develop the state's natural and human resources.

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The RC&D program is administered by the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service.

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