

Upper Peninsula Resource Conservation & Development Council Celebrates National RC&D Week – September 23-29, 2007

The Upper Peninsula RC&D Council joins the 375 RC&D Councils across the country in celebrating “RC&D Week”. RC&D week was declared in recognition of the anniversary of the designation of the first 10 RC&D areas. In the past 43 years the program has grown from 10 designated areas to 375 designated areas that cover over 85% of the United States and its territories.

Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Councils are the leadership entity associated with RC&D areas. The Councils help plan and carry out activities that increase conservation of natural resources, support economic development and enhance the environment and standard of living in local communities.

RC&D Council members are volunteers and include local, civic, appointed, and elected officials. RC&D Councils are non-profit entities that work in partnership with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service through a federal coordinator. Because RC&D areas are locally organized, sponsored, and led, the program provides an ideal way for residents to join together to decide what is best for their community. RC&D Councils identify and address unmet needs in local communities. Currently, 375 RC&D Councils serve 180 million people in 2,666 counties in all 50 states, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Basin.

A few of the many national RC&D accomplishments in FY06:

- 968 new businesses were created with RC&D Council assistance.
- 2,654 businesses were expanded or retained by RC&D Councils.
- 397 businesses were financially assisted.
- 8,256 jobs were created.
- Councils helped improve 14,000,000 acres of wildlife habitat, 815,000 acres of lakes, and 6,225 miles of streams.
- Councils helped 1,000,000 people learn new skills.
- RC&D projects have helped nearly 5,200,000 economic or socially disadvantaged people nationwide.

Federal funds are provided to RC&D for technical assistance and to support one federal coordinator per Council. In turn, Council members seek outside funding to address local needs identified in Council area plans for conservation and economic development. RC&D Councils have successfully brought a return of \$7.50 for every dollar the federal government provides. Michigan councils have had even greater success than the national average by securing \$15 in outside funding for every \$1 of federal money invested locally.

There are six RC&D areas in the state of Michigan. The UP RC&D Council was authorized in July of 1973 and became a non-profit organization in 1985. We serve all 15 counties and 13 conservation districts in the Upper Peninsula and each of them appoint a representative to serve on three Regional UP RC&D Councils. The three regional councils are aligned with the three Regional Planning and Development Districts in the UP and they also appoint a representative to their respective regional council. The Eastern UP RC&D Council includes the counties of Chippewa, Luce and Mackinac. The Central UP RC&D Council is made up of Alger, Delta, Dickinson, Marquette, Menominee and Schoolcraft counties. The Western UP RC&D Council contains Baraga, Gogebic, Ontonagon, Houghton, Iron and Keweenaw counties. Representatives from the Michigan DNR, US Forest Service, National Park Service, Rural Development, municipal government, conservation organizations, local engineering firms, and MSU Extension, as well as many interested citizens have partnered with us at our regional meetings on a regular basis.

From the regional councils, representatives are drawn to serve on the full Upper Peninsula RC&D Council. It consists of up to three representatives selected from each of the regional councils. New projects are considered and approved by the regional councils at their quarterly meetings. The full council also meets

quarterly and makes decisions on the administration and operation of the organization as well as the final decision on which projects to accept for implementation.

We thank all the partners that participate in our regional and UP councils for the many hours they dedicate to helping promote both the conservation and development of the Upper Peninsula's natural resources. The leadership of those councils is:

Eastern UP RC&D Council

Chairperson Dick Timmer, Chippewa County
Vice-chair Sharon Brown, Luce West Mackinac Conservation District

Central UP RC&D Council

Chairperson Ernie Hoholik, Schoolcraft County
Vice-chair Judy Pomeroy, Menominee County
Secretary/Treasurer Dave Andersen, Schoolcraft County

Western UP RC&D Council

Chairperson Bob Larson, Baraga Conservation District
Vice-chair Paul Luoma, Houghton County
Secretary/Treasurer Frank Wardynski, Ontonagon Conservation District

Upper Peninsula RC&D Council Board Members			
Chairman	Bob Larson, <i>Baraga County</i>	Member	Steve Albee, <i>Houghton County</i>
Vice-Chair	Ernie Hoholik, <i>Schoolcraft County</i>	Member	Aaron Hopper, <i>Chippewa County</i>
Member	Sandy Lahtinen, <i>Gogebic County</i>	Member	Dick Timmer, <i>Chippewa County</i>
	Secretary/Treasurer		Judy Pomeroy, <i>Menominee County</i>
	Forestry Committee Chair		Dave Andersen, <i>Schoolcraft County</i>

Information on the activities and accomplishments of the UP RC&D Council can be found in this newsletter and previous newsletters on our website at: www.uprcd.org

We wish to thank our newsletter sponsor:



Upper Peninsula Power Company

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FALL 2007 NEWSLETTER

UP RC&D Council Receives Grant for Woody Biomass Project



New woody biomass harvesting technologies such as this slash bundler are helping make wood fired heating systems cost effective for schools and other facilities.

The Upper Peninsula Resource Conservation and Development Council (UP RC&D) was one of 13 projects funded across the country as part of the U.S. Forest Service's Restoration Partnership Program. "Our goal is to provide financial assistance to working partnerships among State Foresters, Conservation Districts, Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Councils, and local governments that have demonstrated the collective capacity to advance landscape-scale forest restoration projects," said Steve Yaddof, coordinator for this grant initiative with the US Forest Service.

The concept of landscape-scale work means a geographic area that supports the balance of biological systems and economic activities. A working landscape of sufficient size and productive ability will support actions that fit the resource capacity of the land and the people. The UP RC&D Council and the Marquette County Conservation District, together with the State Forester in Michigan,

and a number of other partners, will be working jointly on a multi-faceted woody biomass utilization project for Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The project will highlight and promote biomass utilization opportunities to facilitate the development of an active and commercially viable woody biomass industry. Four major activities will be conducted: 1) Provide technical assistance to schools, hospitals and other institutions that are interested in converting their heating system to utilize woody biomass as a fuel source. 2) Set up demonstration sites on different forest types to provide education on sustainable methods of biomass oriented harvest. 3) Assemble a technical team of experts who will work with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Forest Management Advisory Committee, to refine and promote sustainable forest management for harvesting woody biomass. 4) Create an on-line woody biomass information clearinghouse linked to the UP RC&D web-site.

By working with the State Forester's office and other agencies and organizations, the UP RC&D will capitalize on current and previous efforts that promote economic stability and healthy forests through natural resources management. The UP RC&D Council has been awarded a \$99,450 grant from the Forest Service and in conjunction with our partners we will provide \$20,098 in cash and in-kind services for the project.

Community Forums Prove Helpful

In our Spring Newsletter we highlighted a project funded by People and Land (PAL) and the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) which looked at the change in large-tract corporate forestland ownership in the UP and the implications of this change on wildlife, public access, recreation and the economy. In June, the UP RC&D Council conducted three public forums in partnership with the Luce/West Mackinac, Marquette and Houghton/Keweenaw Conservation Districts to help inform citizens and policy-makers across the UP of

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the research findings in this project. Approximately 150 people attended the forums including county commissioners, township planning and zoning officials, business owners, DNR and USFS employees, as well as representatives of the recreation and tourism industries, economic development organizations, conservation groups, foresters and members of the forest products industry. Also in attendance were representatives for Governor Granholm, Senator Levin, and Representative Stupak. In addition to hearing the researchers from MTU, MSU and Michigan Environmental Council summarize their research findings, those in attendance also got an overview of the Commercial Forest Act and Conservation Easements and had the opportunity to hear several of the corporate landowners give their perspective regarding the ownership changes that have taken place. Those in attendance had the opportunity to comment on the strategies and recommendations for a sustainable timber-based economy that were part of the draft report. Their input will be incorporated into the final project report. The forums provided a great opportunity for an exchange of ideas among representatives of groups that sometimes have diverse viewpoints regarding land use across the Upper Peninsula. We will notify you when the final report is available on the project website at <http://forestlands.mtu.edu>.

The Les Cheneaux Watershed Project

Old timers used to say, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!” This theory still holds true for protecting water quality in the Les Cheneaux Islands in Michigan’s Eastern Upper Peninsula. The Les Cheneaux Watershed Project began in 2001, when a community partnership including the Chippewa/East Mackinac Conservation District (CEMCD), the Nature Conservancy (Michigan Chapter), Les Cheneaux Islands Wildlife Association, and the Eastern Upper Peninsula Resource Conservation and Development Council (EUPRCD) developed a project proposal and secured a watershed management planning grant for the Les Cheneaux Islands area from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. The grant funds were authorized in November 2002 and were used to develop the Les Cheneaux Watershed Management Plan. The goals of the project are to prevent future degradation of water quality and cure some problems that have existed for years in the area known as “the snows”.

Prevention of water quality degradation is being accomplished through educational literature and events (hazardous and pharmaceutical waste collections, septic system handbook, Frogfest) to raise awareness of how we can all protect water quality for future generations. Project managers are providing technical assistance to Clark Township officials to better prepare for future protection of their precious water resources as they improve their Master Plan and Zoning Ordinances. Partners are also trying to “cure” several water quality problems in area creeks. Grant money is earmarked for restoring water quality in both Pearson and McKay Creeks through culvert replacements at road/stream crossings and streambank stabilization. Sand, gravel, and silt that falls from these poorly designed crossings and streambanks have destroyed fisheries habitat. Much of that sediment eventually settles in Cedarville and McKay Bay. The structural improvements are very expensive, because heavy equipment is involved, and earth moving is expensive! It would have been better to have prevented the problem long ago!

The UPRC&D Council assisted CEMCD in the early stages of this project by facilitating planning meetings, mentoring the project manager in grant writing, and committing in-kind match to help secure the grant. RC&D’s engineering and grant writing assistance were also very helpful in the development of the management plan. With additional help from RC&D, several other projects have evolved from the Les Cheneaux project, including the Clark Township Recreation Park, Water Guardians Program, and the St. Mary’s River Rapid Watershed Assessment.

Now, the Les Cheneaux Watershed project continues in the implementation phase, where partners are implementing aforementioned tasks from the watershed plan. RC&D will continue working with CEMCD to help them realize environmental protection for the Les Cheneaux Community and their water quality.

UP RC&D thanks Les Cheneaux Watershed Manager Pat Carr for his help with this article.

Ford River Project Finally Underway



View downstream of streambank restoration, approximately .8 miles from Lake Michigan.



Contractors working to construct black locust crib.

After many years of planning, engineering, and fundraising, work on the Ford River Streambank Stabilization Project has finally begun! The project, when completed, will reduce soil erosion into the Ford River and Lake Michigan, and will protect and stabilize an historical Native American burial site, as well as two homesites. Members of the Central UP RC&D Council toured the project after their meeting on August 8th. The work site is impressive. The total project length, including major and minor stabilization areas, is 1,375 feet, with a large crib wall made up of black locust timbers being constructed at the base of the slope.

The Ford River Cemetery has been determined to be culturally significant due to its history as a Native American Indian burial ground. The cemetery contains grave sites that are adjacent to the top of the bank and actively eroding into the river. Due to the grave site locations, careful consideration was made to earth excavation and vehicle traffic during construction. The cemetery contains 10 foot high vertical eroded face areas at the top of the bank, creating an unstable slope, causing trees to uproot and soil to erode into the river. The completed project will result in a reduction of soil loss of 1,100 tons annually into the Ford River and ultimately, into Lake Michigan.

Cost of the project is just over \$750,000, with funding coming from a variety of sources including: Hannahville Indian Community; The Nature Conservancy; Delta Conservation District; USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service; Ford River Township; Michigan Department of Natural Resources; Wildlife Unlimited; Great Lakes Commission; Great Lakes Watershed Restoration Program; and Joan Martin, one of the landowners involved in the project.



Joan Martin's "Round House" located in close proximity to the eroding streambank.



Central UP RC&D Council members tour the Ford River site, standing near the burial ground atop eroding streambank.