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Bear River Resource Conservation and Development Council Area Plan

United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Conservation Service

Bear River Resource Conservation and Development Council

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Bear River Resource Conservation and Development Council Area Plan

October 1, 2006 – September 30, 2011
(Fiscal years 2007 – 2011)



With Assistance From:

UNITED STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service
1860 North 100 East
North Logan, Utah 84341

And cooperating Federal, state and local governments and other groups
Prepared under the authority of the secretary of the Secretary of the Department of
Agriculture under the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981, Public Law 97-98, 16 U.S.C.
3451-3461 as amended by Public Law 101-624, section 1452

Introduction

This five-year Area Plan is the guiding document for the Bear River RC&D Council, Inc. It identifies needs and opportunities and goals and objectives which lead the RC&D Council in its work.

Designated October 15, 1966, the Bear River RC&D Council, Inc., is a 501©(3) not for profit organization that addresses natural resource conservation and development issues in Oneida, Caribou, Franklin and Bear Lake counties in Southeastern Idaho and Box Elder, Cache, and Rich counties in Northern Utah. The RC&D area represents most of the Bear River Basin – 12,519 square miles or 8,012,160 acres.

Public participation in development of this Area Plan was obtained through public meetings held by each of the seven RC&D County Committees (see **Attachment A** and **B** following this page).

Input was obtained from each of the RC&D area's nine Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) through the NRCS District Conservationist who co-chairs the RC&D County Committee for his or her county. The Committees are chaired by the RC&D Council member (who is also a County Commissioner) from that county. Membership on each of the seven Committees is representative of local government, agency, educational and other interest within the county (as indicated on the organizational chart) and is in accordance with the Constitution and By Laws of the Bear River RC&D Council. Committee membership is reviewed and updated annually.

These meetings began in August of 2001 and concluded in the spring of 2006 with the writing and approval of this plan by the Bear River Council on September 6, 2006.

Please refer to the following two pages outlining current RC&D County Committee membership, public meeting dates and results.

Budget and staffing required to implement this Area Plan are reflective of the current funding available from the Bear River Council itself. This funding comes from a 5% administrative fee charged by the Council for the financial services required in administering the grants obtained by the Council with assistance of the NRCS RC&D Coordinator. The 5% funding is sufficient to allow for the half time employment of one Financial Assistant at this time.

Since the Bear River RC&D Council members are also serving as County Commissioners, time they can devote to actual project implementation is limited primarily to review of current/ongoing projects and the approval/rejection of new projects (two counties are full time commission positions, the other five are part to nearly full time – as a second job).

Therefore, all project activities listed in this Area Plan and ensuing Annual Plans of Work are to be performed with the assistance of the NRCS RC&D Coordinator and the Bear River RC&D Financial Assistant with oversight provided by the Council. Projects that are dependent upon grant funding for implementation state that stipulation: funding may or may not be awarded. Beyond this limitation, there is adequate staff and funding via NRCS for the RC&D Coordinator/office/vehicle and the Council for the services for the Financial Assistant. All subsequent Annual Plans of Work will provide staffing and budget detail.

Demographics

The 2005 population census of the area was 170,433 (140,546 in Utah and 29,887 in the Idaho portion). Approximately half or more of the area would be considered rural and remote from cities and towns with a population of 10,000 or more.

Excellent demographic information on the Bear River RC&D area cities and counties can be found at:

<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html>.

Mission: *The mission of the Bear River RC&D Council, Inc., is to develop local solutions to sustain and improve communities through partnership building and conservation of natural and human resources.*

Vision: *The Bear River RC&D Council, Inc., will be a recognized leader in the promotion of conservation, development and utilization of natural and human resources to improve the local economy and to enhance the quality of life in all the communities of the Bear River RC&D area.*

Plan Process

The process to revise the area plan began in 2004 with the decision to mail survey questionnaires to all members of the seven RC&D County Committees. In addition, input was obtained from all nine SWCDs in the RC&D area.

It is thought that the format of this plan will more easily facilitate revisions than past versions.

The plan includes the following two sections:

1) **NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES** section

This section describes *some* of the current conditions in the Bear River RC&D Area and is not intended to be a comprehensive discussion of *all* the area's issues but rather a discussion of issues that the Bear River RC&D will concentrate its resources on for the next five years.

2) **GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES** section

This section identifies the goals, objectives and strategies that the Bear River RC&D will employ during the next five years in order to address some of the issues identified in the **NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES** section.

NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

RC&D Program Element 1 (mandatory): LAND CONSERVATION – *“The control of erosion and sedimentation.”*

Soil erosion on irrigated pasture and hay lands, and on dry croplands, rangelands and woodlands is mostly near background, or natural levels. Accelerated erosion occurs when the land has been disturbed in some manner.

Grazing land health continues to be a resource concern due to the impacts on accelerated soil erosion throughout the RC&D area.

Stream bank restoration is currently the best opportunity for the RC&D to reduce soil erosion: restoration of 305,246 feet of eroding stream banks are needed in Cache County alone. Stream bank restoration is an opportunity for the RC&D program throughout the area by way of obtaining grant funding, which is available at this time in order to restore wildlife habitat (which will also reduce soil erosion and improve water quality - threats to Bonneville Cutthroat Trout habitat have resulted in opportunities to restore stream bank health as well at higher elevations throughout the area).

Maintain and make available the RC&D's Waterjet Stinger cutting planter (for stream bank restoration).

Soil erosion educational opportunities are part of this section.

RC&D Program Element 2 (mandatory): WATER MANAGEMENT – *“The conservation, use, and quality of water, including irrigation and rural water supplies; the mitigation of floods and high water tables; the repair and improvement of reservoirs; the improvement of agricultural water management; and the improvement of water quality.”*

All large tributaries of the Bear River are 303(d) listed waters – this includes the entire Bear River RC&D Area: impairment is due to nutrient in most cases and sediment in every case. The primary opportunity for the RC&D is in the area of stream bank restoration to reduce sediment delivery and to improve wildlife habitat.

There is an opportunity for the RC&D to assist in the implementation of flood disaster programs such as EWP, as needed.

There is an occasional need for grant funding assistance for irrigated lands outside the agricultural realm, such as cemeteries and parks. Culinary and secondary water implementation assistance may also be addressed by the RC&D for grant funding searches and other technical assistance.

Support the District V Cloudseeding Consortium.

Support the development and use of water conservative plants for urban landscape use.

Water Management educational opportunities are part of this section.

RC&D Program Element 3 (mandatory): COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – *“The development of resource-based industries; the protection of rural industries from natural resource hazards; the development of adequate rural water and waste disposal systems; the improvement of recreation facilities; the improvement of rural housing; the provision of adequate health and education facilities; the satisfaction of essential transportation and communication needs; and the promotion of food security, economic development, and education.”*

Seek funding to improve the resources available at the RC&D Youth Camp.

Seek opportunities to improve the capacity of the RC&D Council.

Provide support to the Urban Forestry and Tree Cities USA programs.

Seek out and participate in applicable training opportunities for the RC&D Coordinator, Financial Assistant and Council members.

Provide support to the Bear River Heritage Executive Committee.

Provide support to the other RC&D Councils within Utah and Idaho by participating in Coordinator, Association and other meetings.

Provide Technical Service Provider services to NRCS.

Provide support to the enhancement and enjoyment of the natural environment through conservation education initiatives, establishment of parks and trails, etc.

Participate in economic development activities that can potentially benefit Northern Utah-Southeastern Idaho.

Support by way of paying dues, cooperating with and providing technical assistance to other RC&D's and RC&D organizations in order to better provide the program to the public.

Provide RC&D program information to the Northern Band of the Shoshone Tribe headquarters in Brigham City on a regular basis and as needed basis, and to the rural and remote communities of Grouse Creek, Park Valley, Snowville and other areas.

Participation in conservation education and other community development opportunities are part of this section.

RC&D Program Element 4 (mandatory): LAND MANAGEMENT – *“Energy conservation that includes production of energy crops; the protection of agricultural land as appropriate from conversion to other uses; farmland protection; and the protection of fish and wildlife habitats.”*

Opportunities in energy conservation for the RC&D include support for wind energy projects and production and marketing of bio-diesel through support to individuals and small businesses. Grant funding is available at the present time to support alternatives to fossil fuel consumption.

Opportunities to implement real farmland protection initiatives exist for the RC&D: working with NRCS Farm and Ranchland Preservation Program as a grant writer in order to help the applicant landowners raise their share of the program funds.

Opportunities to improve wildlife habitat agricultural lands exist for the RC&D through its support of the Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMA's) throughout the state of Utah through the Utah Weed Supervisors Association and through the Utah-Idaho CWMA

Opportunities exist for the RC&D to obtain currently available funding to eliminate hazardous fuels from lands on the wildland-urban interface.

Land Management educational opportunities are part of this section.

RC&D Program Element 5 (optional): CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT – *Enhance the capacity of the Bear River RC&D Council.*

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

RC&D Program Element 1 (mandatory): LAND CONSERVATION

Goal 1: Reduce soil erosion to background levels or more on agricultural (irrigated and dryland cropland, range and forest lands), recreational lands and streambanks.

Objective 1: Utilize funding from the Waterjet Stinger account to advertise its availability and use to the general public, SWCDs, NRCS and other partners. .Make the

Council's Waterjet Stinger available for streambank restoration throughout the RC&D area by advertising its use.

Strategy 1: Develop an informational flyer in 2007, and update as needed for distribution in 08, 09, 10 and 2011. Reportable units are number of flyers distributed.*

Time Frame: Develop flyer in 2007, update and distribute 2007 through 2011.

Strategy 2: Restore 1,000 feet (.23 acre) of streambanks each year up to and including year 2011. Reportable units are acres.

Time Frame: 2007 through 2011.

Goal 2: Assist partners in the development and distribution of plant materials and seeding/planting projects in order to reduce soil erosion to background levels or less.

Objective 1: Participate in and support NRCS's Plant Materials Program.

Strategy 1: Obtain at least one plant materials collection for the Plant Materials Center (PMC) at Aberdeen, Idaho (over the next five years). Reportable units are number of species collected for the PMC.

Time Frame: 2007 through 2011.

Objective 2: Insure that soil erosion levels are maintained at background levels or less at the RC&D Youth Camp by working with Franklin County, Cooperative Extension and other partners.

Strategy 1: Upgrade and maintain the access road as needed, partnering with Franklin County Road Dept. Reportable units are acres of reduced soil erosion.

Time Frame: 2007 through 2011.

RC&D Program Element 2 (mandatory): WATER MANAGEMENT

Goal 3: Improve water quality within the Bear River and its tributaries.

Objective 1: Assist partners in presenting informational activities concerning water quality within the Bear River Basin.

Strategy 1: Participate with NRCS and other partners in annual "Bear River Celebration" and other events designed to educate the public about water quality in the Bear River Basin. Reportable units are number of individuals receiving water quality information.

Time Frame: 2007 through 2011.

Strategy 2: Participate with and support the Bear River/ Cutler Reservoir group. Includes other technical groups concerned with water quality/quantity issues within the Bear River Basin. Reportable units are number of meetings attended.

Time Frame: Monthly 2007 through 2011.

Goal 4: Conserve and more efficiently distribute limited water supplies within the Bear River Basin.

Objective 1: Assist partners in the development and distribution of xeric, water efficient plant materials and irrigating techniques for urban landscape use.

Strategy 1: Assist Utah State University in production and distribution of water efficient dwarf conifer plants for urban landscape use, by assisting in grant writing activities and acting as fiscal agent. Reportable units are number of grants obtained and dollar amounts of each.

Time Frame: 2007 through 2011.

Strategy 2: Develop and distribute “Cottam’s Oaks” to urban gardeners and others. Reportable units are number of tree sales held and dollar amounts raised from each.

Time Frame: 2007 through 2011.

Strategy 3: Develop informational material regarding “Cottam’s Oaks” in order to help conserve the original orchard at University of Utah campus and to foster the use and knowledge of these trees (partnering with the Great Salt Lake RC&D). Reportable units are informational materials developed and distributed and individuals assisted..

Time Frame: Develop material in 2008 and distribute 2008 through 2011.

Goal 5: Reduce the affects of flooding on all Bear River Basin residents. Assist NRCS and other partners in reducing the affects of flooding.

Objective 1: Assist partners in providing flood assistance programs to the public.

Strategy 1: Assist NRCS in providing flood assistance programs to affected area residents as needed. Reportable units are number of individuals receiving assistance.

Time Frame: As needed.

Strategy 2: Assist UACD and other partners in providing urban storm water management alternatives to residents, as needed. Reportable units are number of individuals receiving assistance.

Time Frame: 2008 and other times as needed..

Goal 6: Increase the quantity of water within the Bear River Basin.

Objective 1: Work with the District V (Idaho) SWCDs in harvesting more precipitation through cloudseeding.

Strategy 1: Seek funds to support the purchase of chemicals for cloudseeding by the Franklin County SWCD. Reportable units are grant funds obtained and acres successfully seeded, or benefited from cloudseeding.

Time Frame: 2007 through 2011.

RC&D Program Element 3 (mandatory): COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Goal 7: Seek funding to improve/maintain the resources available at the RC&D Youth Camp.

Objective 1: Reduce the hazardous fuels load at the Youth Camp.

Strategy 1: Seek funding in order to reduce hazardous fuels. Reportable units are number of grants received, dollar amounts of each plus number of acres and structures protected.

Time Frame: 2007 through 2011.

Goal 8: Support the conservation work of NRCS, Cooperative Extension, UACD and other partners.

Objective 1: Provide technical assistance to NRCS and other partners in order to facilitate program delivery to the public.

Strategy 1: By acting as fiscal agent, provide Technical Service Provider (TSP) assistance to NRCS. Reportable units are number of jobs created, and dollar amounts received from NRCS.

Time Frame: 2007 through 2011 or as needed by NRCS.

Strategy 2: Facilitate the Funder’s Fair (in Idaho) every other year. Reportable units are number of individuals receiving assistance.

Time Frame: 2007, 2009, 2011.

Strategy 3: Provide support to BRAG and other partners in establishment of a Bear River Heritage Area.

RC&D Program Element 4 (mandatory): LAND MANAGEMENT

Goal 12: Seek grant funding to protect wild lands against wildfire damage.

Objective 1: Reduce hazardous fuels loads at the wild land-urban interface throughout the RC&D area.

Strategy 1: Seek funding in order to reduce potential wild fire damage throughout the RC&D area by contracting removal and disposal of hazardous fuels. Reportable units are number of grants received, dollar amounts of each and the number of acres and structures protected.

Time Frame: 2007 through 2011.

Goal 13: Control/eradicate weeds throughout the RC&D area.

Objective 1: Act as fiscal agent for all weed eradication/control groups throughout the RC&D area, as requested.

Strategy 1: Act as fiscal agent for the Utah-Idaho CWMA. Reportable units are the dollar amounts received, and wildlife acres improved.

Time Frame: 2007 through 2011.

Strategy 2: Act as fiscal agent for the Utah Weed Supervisors Association. Reportable units are the dollar amounts received plus and wildlife acres improved, etc.

Time Frame: 2007 through 2011.

Strategy 3: Seek grant funding for special weed control initiatives throughout the RC&D area. Reportable items are number of grants and dollars received plus number of participants assisted and acres of control, if applicable.

Time Frame: 2007 through 2011.

Goal 14: Support energy conservation initiatives and development alternatives throughout the RC&D area.

Objective 1: Work with partners and clients to obtain finding for wind energy, energy crop development and bio-diesel projects throughout the RC&D area.

Strategy 1: Apply for grant funding to support one wind energy, energy crop development or bio-diesel project. Reportable units are number of grants received and dollar amounts of each, and jobs or businesses created, if applicable.

Time Frame: As needed.

Goal 15: Support open space and farm land protection initiatives.

Objective 1: Assist NRCS and other partners in delivering the open space initiatives and programs to the public.

Strategy 1: Seek funding with NRCS and other partners to support open space/farm/ranch land preservation projects. Reportable units are numbers of grants received, dollar amounts of each, and acres protected.

Time Frame: As requested by NRCS or land users.

RC&D Program Element 5 (optional): CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT:

Goal 9: Seek opportunities to improve the capacity of the RC&D Council.

Objective 1: Increase Council capacity through training.

Strategy 1: Provide applicable training to the Coordinator and Financial Assistant. Reportable units are units of training completed, and certification obtained.

Time Frame: 2007 through 2011.

Strategy 2: Provide the RC&D Council with duties and responsibilities training. Reportable units are units of training completed, certification obtained and number of Council members receiving it.

Time Frame: 2007 through 2011.

Goal 10: Support RC&D Councils and Associations in order to better provide the program to the public plus increase the capacity of RC&D Councils/Associations.

Objective 1: Support the Idaho and Utah RC&D Associations.

Strategy 1: Support (pay dues) and participate in the regularly scheduled Idaho and Utah RC&D Association meetings. Reportable units are meetings attended and training received or given.

Time Frame: 2007 through 2011.

Strategy 2: Pay membership dues to all RC&D organizations deemed important by the Bear River RC&D Council. .

Time Frame: 2007 through 2011.

Goal 11: Maintain a viable and fully functional RC&D program.

Objective 1: Follow all applicable local, State and Federal rules in operating the RC&D program.

Strategy 1: Review at least annually the Council's Constitution and By-Laws, Annual Work Plan, Area Plan and Civil Rights responsibilities. Revise these operating documents as necessary.

Time Frame: 2007 through 2011 or more often as needed by the Council.

Strategy 2: File all applicable documents in a timely manner with local, State and Federal units of government.

Time Frame: 2007 through 2011.

Strategy 3: Hold regularly scheduled (public) meetings, special meetings if necessary and Annual Meeting. No reportable units.

Time Frame: As deemed needed by the Bear River RC&D Council.

**Reportable units* are used for NRCS program and Bear River RC&D Council accountability and quality control purposes.

The **Bear River RC&D Council, Inc.**, agrees that the RC&D Program will be conducted in compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions as contained in Title VI and VIII 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 **Bear River RC&D Council, Inc.**, 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 nonprocurement, suspension, and debarment, and State review.

The **Bear River RC&D Council, Inc.**, 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.

Bear River RC&D Council, Inc., Utah/Idaho

By: _____ Date: _____
Chairman

Attest: _____
Secretary/Treasurer

This action authorized at an official meeting of the **Bear River RC&D Council, Inc.**, on _____ .
Date

U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service

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

Acknowledged By:
_____ Date: _____
State Conservationist