

Resource Conservation & Development



OVERVIEW

Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) is a unique program that helps local people solve their own natural resource problems while improving the economy, protecting the environment and raising the standard of living. The program was created by the Food and Agriculture Act of 1962. It allows communities to form an RC&D Council so that local people lead the RC&D process. The council will identify problems and opportunities, gather information, develop strategies, secure funding and implement projects. As a result, RC&D affects the social, economic and environmental enrichment of the community.

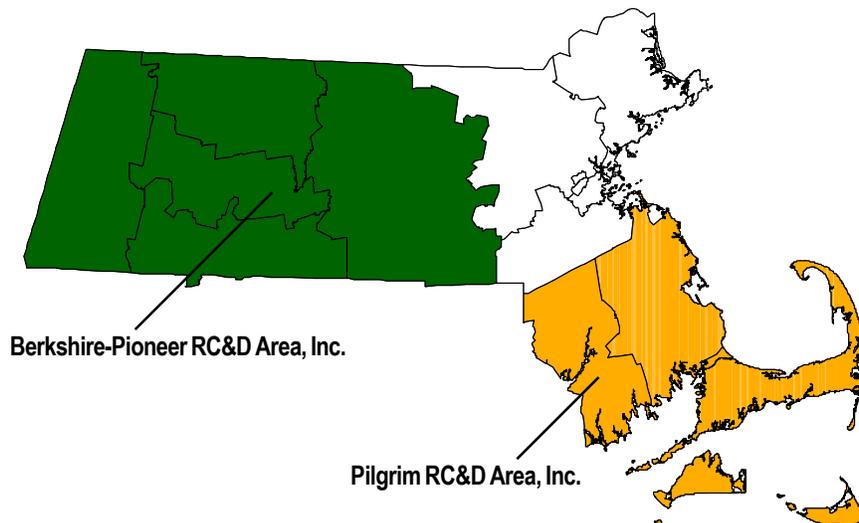
Massachusetts has two authorized RC&D programs: the Berkshire-Pioneer RC&D covering the central and western counties and the Pilgrim RC&D covering the southeastern counties. Each RC&D receives technical assistance from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the services of a full-time Coordinator.

UNIQUE ASPECTS

- RC&Ds provide valuable conservation services to the community.
- RC&Ds focus on results and people. They are locally driven by volunteers and are supported by the community.
- RC&D Councils expertly leverage and blend local, state and federal resources to solve local concerns.
- Conservation districts, political leaders, government organizations, concerned citizens, environmental groups and community organizations are represented on RC&D Councils or sponsor RC&D projects.
- The RC&D program supports local decision making and management as keys to healthy, sustainable communities.

LEVERAGING CAPACITY

For each federal dollar spent toward Resource Conservation and Development, 16 additional dollars are leveraged from other sources. RC&D projects are typically funded by local, state or federal grants and donations from private industries or outside sources.



Berkshire-Pioneer RC&D Area, Inc.

433 West Street, Suite 5
Amherst MA 01002-2927

Mike Whalen, Coordinator
Adrian Meyer, Council Chairperson
Phone: 413-256-1607

Pilgrim RC&D Area, Inc.

15 Cranberry Highway
West Wareham MA 02576-1504

Irene Winkler, Coordinator
Bill Napolitano, Council Chairperson
Phone: 508-295-1317

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Berkshire-Pioneer RC&D Area, Inc.

Stimulating the Agricultural Economy

Fruit Processing Industry Development

The RC&D helped a group of fruit growers in Franklin County organize and plan for the establishment of a processing plant for apple and blueberry products. The group has completed market research and has started several mini-businesses for market testing. They are presently forming a formal cooperative before progressing to business expansion.

Agroforestry Seminar for New England Landowners

A regional conference has been slated for September 1999 in Portland, Maine to explore alternative ways private forest landowners can generate income using agroforestry techniques. The conference will highlight income-producing ideas that fit forests and traditional methods of operation in New England.

GPS and Computer Technology for Local Growers

The RC&D office has worked on a number of high tech projects with fruit and vegetable growers to find new markets for their products and make agricultural production more efficient and of a higher quality. By helping farm groups secure grant funds, the RC&D gave growers access to new technologies such as Global Positioning Systems, Geographic Information Systems and custom computer software.

Improving Markets for Wood Industries

Massachusetts Wood Industries Council

A Massachusetts Wood Industries Council was established several years ago. It is comprised of saw millers, loggers, furniture makers and other secondary product manufacturers. The group has launched several projects to help boost the wood industries economy: designing a buyer/seller web site, setting up a statewide promotional campaign, linking export markets and forming of a marketing cooperative.

Labor Force Development for Massachusetts Wood Industries

An offshoot of the Wood Industries Council, this projects looks at the dwindling labor force in the forest products sector. By researching school curriculums, interviewing wood product businesses and analyzing future marketing trends; the project has unveiled a number of opportunities for wood industries in Massachusetts to improve the quality of their labor force and better compete in today's markets.

Managing Rural Lands and Water Resources

Southampton Rural Lands Management Project

Berkshire-Pioneer RC&D coordinated an interagency effort to develop state-of-the-art land use and planning methods and computerized mapping techniques to allow small towns to better manage new growth and conserve natural resources. The Town of Southampton was chosen for this pilot study. A number of innovative growth control and resource protection tools were developed through this process including cluster zoning; performance standards; site plan approval and special zoning for floodplains, farmland, woodland and water supplies. A workbook describing the techniques used to

assist Southampton was published for other rural communities who face similar pressure from urban areas.

Private Forest Management Plans for Watersheds

Due to new environmental/public health regulations, public water suppliers are required to either provide water treatment or adequately protect water quality through watershed land use control. To help protect water quality in the MDC owned Wachusett and Quabbin reservoirs, this project encourages private forestland owners to keep their land in forest cover. Funding provides management planning services from private forestry consultants and cost-sharing on water quality protection practices.

Pilgrim RC&D Area, Inc.

Achieving Sustainability and Smart Growth

Water Quality and Public Health

The Billington Sea 319 Project manages and leverages limited federal funds with private funds. It is a partnership between public and private institutions to improve surface and groundwater quality and public health by planning and installing a Demonstration Shared Alternative Septic System to replace substandard and failing cesspools.

Innovative GIS Application for the Urban User

The Urban Soils Project brings higher education institutions together with state environmental management agencies to develop a GIS tool for soil interpretations that helps locate sites for waste disposal systems.

Environmental Review Teams

Teams partner with local, state, federal and private organizations to review and provide recommendations to communities on development proposals, zone changes, open space preservation and sustainable land use management.

Protecting Rural Community Character

The Town of Dartmouth Agricultural Preservation Trust Council \$2.75 Million Agricultural Land Preservation Fund helps local communities plan and implement methods of farmland and open space protection. The project provides technical assistance with conservation restrictions and agricultural economic development and helps communities leverage funding sources.

Collaboration Among Sustainable Community Activities

The Henry A. Wallace Institute for Alternative Agriculture's Policy Project engages people at the local, regional and national level in the development of local and national food and agriculture policy based on visions of what the agriculture and food system might look like in the future. The project includes visioning, policy research and analysis by policy specialists from the institute, academia, government agencies and NGOs.

Technical, Financial and Business Assistance

By partnering with Farm Bureau, USDA, Massachusetts University System, Agricultural Cooperatives and the State Department of Agriculture; the Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership (SEMAP) is able to deliver technical, financial and business assistance to the agricultural industry in southeastern Massachusetts.

Waste Utilization

Coordinating composting services at the regional level results in waste management, waste reduction, resource utilization and job creation. It is also an effective way to utilize municipal and agricultural waste.