



SEPA RC&D
2004-2008
AREA PLAN

Preface:

Federal Public Law 87-903 created the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program in 1962 with program management responsibilities assigned to the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service. The 2002 USDA Farm Bill granted permanent authorization to the RC&D Program. A requirement of the RC&D Program is the development or review of an Area Plan every three to five years. The Area Plan serves as the guidance document for future programs and services.

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Resource Conservation and Development Council has undertaken this planning process to more clearly define program priorities for 2004-2008. The SEPA RC&D Council began the process in November of 2002 with a special Board of Directors training session. Council members, government agencies, project partners, and underserved groups were invited to participate in a planning session at the March 2003 Annual Meeting. In June 2003, questionnaires were sent to local high schools requesting student input. The Board reviewed all comments and began efforts to finalize the Area Plan in July 2003. In September 2003, SEPA RC&D Directors and NRCS personnel reviewed a draft copy of the Area Plan and provided final comments.

The Board of Directors would like to thank all participants for their suggestions and comments. These recommendations helped the SEPA RC&D Board of Directors determine how and where to focus the Council's future efforts. The Board would also like to thank Ms. Kathleen L. Pereles and Ms. Patti Campbell of the LaSalle Nonprofit Management Development Center for their services in developing this document.

SEPA RC&D Council

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Resource Conservation and Development (SEPA RC&D) Council was created in 1992 and was formally incorporated in 1994. SEPA RC&D serves the counties of Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lehigh, Montgomery, and Northampton. The Council was granted designation by the USDA Secretary of Agriculture in 1998 and nonprofit status by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service in 1999.

The SEPA RC&D Council covers approximately 3,697 square miles (9% of Pennsylvania) and has a population of 3,284,891 people (27% of Pennsylvania's population). The area contains approximately 33 major streams that feed the Chesapeake Bay and Delaware Estuary. Approximately 65% of the land use is in agriculture. The remaining amount is in urban and suburban land uses. There are three Major Land Resource Areas in the SEPA RC&D Council: Northern Appalachian Ridge and Valley Province, Northern Piedmont Province, and Northern Coastal Plain Province. The area has a temperate climate and receives approximately 46 inches of precipitation per year.

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Resource Conservation and Development Council is to improve the quality of life for people in the region by promoting programs that conserve and enhance the area's natural and community resources.

Vision Statement:

We envision SEPA RC&D as an organization that others value for our ability to effectively bring people and organizations together to get things done.

**IDENTIFIED
NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES
IN
SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA**

Address water quantity/quality issues and needs
Public awareness of failing septic tanks/need for sewers.
Planning/coordination of resources (local/regional)
Urban forestry education
Relieve traffic congestion/improve
Renew urban centers/revitalization
Geese/deer management
Keep agriculture viable
Create a quality of life to retain youth in area
Educate politicians to region's needs
Protection of water resources
Manage development through better legislation
Stormwater management
Nutrient management
Redevelopment of urban areas and brownfields
Capitalize on natural/cultural resources (tourism, greenways, etc.)
Lack of knowledge about conservation & environmental issues
Preserve critical habitat/ open space/ farmland
Revitalize older communities
Green infrastructure/linkage
Secure floodplains & correct existing problems
Address water quantity & quality
Develop educational campaign on value of natural resources

Create forum for communication between varied stakeholders/interests
Legal aid for municipalities to support positive land use decisions
Planning for the future, local zoning, regional plans
Training/support of Planning Commissions and Environmental Advisory Council's
Recreation/leadership in smaller communities
Connect to land trust & conservancies
Land conservation through ordinance development & building codes
Environmental education
Gap/overlap analysis of Env. Ed. Centers
Gap/overlap analysis of sporting facilities
Wildlife management
Hiking trail connection
Dry fire hydrant funding/ EMS support
Historic redevelopment
Green space in older boroughs
Information coordination needed
Regional cooperation
Market based decision making
Baseline of water uses & needs
Watershed organizations
Coordinate multiple agencies & their resources
Create Greenways & open space linkages
Access to reliable/fresh food supply for everyone
Connection of health to conservation issues
Cooperate over "traditional" (social, agency political, economic, environ.) boundaries
Farm-city link

**SEPA RC&D COUNCIL
2004-2008 STRATEGIC PLAN**

Goal I-Land Conservation and Management- encourage sustainability of land resources

Objective 1. Increase the protection of sensitive and critical areas

Strategies:

1. Create Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) for the Delaware River Watershed.
2. Distribute educational material and sponsor workshops

Objective 2. Promote sound land use planning

Strategies:

1. Encourage redevelopment of brownfields and urban areas
2. Support land preservation efforts
3. Promote conservation design and transit oriented development
4. Support conservation and nutrient management plans

Objective 3. Support the use of Best Management Practices

Strategies:

1. Sponsor workshops and educational materials
2. Assist with the implementation of BMPs
3. Identify and demonstrate innovative BMPs

Goal II. Water Resources-promote sound management of surface and ground water

Objective 1. Support water resource protection

Strategies:

1. Increase water resource and watershed awareness
2. Sponsor and support water quality monitoring
3. Promote watershed based planning
4. Support watershed restoration projects

Objective 2. Support water resource management

Strategies:

1. Encourage responsible consumption of water
2. Support the efforts of water management agencies
3. Encourage flood plain management and flooding prevention
4. Highlight water quantity and quality concerns

Goal III. Community Enhancement- Support efforts to preserve the quality of life in the region.

Objective 1. Promote the use of new technologies

Strategies:

1. Sponsor alternative energy projects
2. Sponsor alternative transportation projects
3. Sponsor green technology projects

Objective 2. Support rural communities

Strategies:

1. Improve fire suppression and safety response
2. Encourage efforts to keep agriculture viable

Objective 3. Provide training, fundraising, and technical support to community leaders and organizations

Strategies:

1. Sponsor and support attendance at training sessions
2. Support environmental education programs
3. Serve as point of contact for technical information
4. Target limited resource, minority, and disabled individuals and their communities

Objective 4. Support efforts to revitalize urban communities

Strategies:

1. Encourage regreening
2. Assist with urban gardens
3. Support neighborhood preservation

Objective 5. Improve the understanding and the connectedness between the agricultural and urban populations

Strategies:

1. Coordinate hunger relief efforts using surplus agricultural products
2. Conduct awareness programs
3. Sponsor farm/city events
4. Work with schools to develop ag-related curriculum to meet new state education standards

Objective 6. Expand the use of cultural and natural resources by encouraging social and recreational activities at the resource location

Strategies:

1. Encourage local tourism
2. Support protection, restoration, and visitation of unique sites or areas
3. Promote the scenic beauty of the region

Goal IV. Administration-operate in efficient, effective, and accountable manner

Objective 1. Strengthen Board of Directors

Strategies:

1. Attain full Board Representation
2. Provide training opportunities
3. Ensure Board consists of diverse individuals with variety of skills and experiences.
4. Initiate Board tenure limitations
5. Identify “social capital” Board members possess

Objective 2. Expand Council Membership

Strategies:

1. Recruit a Philadelphia County organization/agency to become a sponsor
2. Increase memberships of organizations, businesses, government agencies, and individuals
3. Invite minority, limited resource, disabled, and other groups to join SEPA RC&D

Objective 3. Ensure operational needs are met

Strategies:

1. Acquire necessary equipment
2. Provide adequate office space
3. Raise unrestricted funds to meet financial needs
4. Secure and maintain adequate human resources

Objective 4. Evaluate the SEPA RC&D Council and its programs

Strategies:

1. Participate in USDA-NRCS 2002 Farm Bill Program Evaluation
2. Qualify for the Nat'l Assoc. “Circle of Diamonds Program”
3. Annually conduct a financial audit
4. Follow non-profit operational guidelines

Objective 5. Encourage partnerships that accomplish Council goals

Strategies:

1. Seek other organizations and government agencies to co-sponsor projects
2. Strengthen local, state, and national contacts
3. Utilize all relevant USDA Agencies' services and programs
4. Create opportunities for internships and volunteers
5. Participate in nonprofit and RC&D organizations

Objective 6. Increase awareness of SEPA RC&D Council existence

Strategies:

1. Create marketing campaign
2. Ensure recognition of its efforts
3. Broaden distribution of newsletter
4. Communicate with elected officials

Objective 7. Comply with USDA Civil Rights Guidelines

Strategies:

1. Ensure current statements are used on handouts and program literature
2. Ensure programs and facilities are accessible to all

AREA PLAN TIMELINE

September 2003	Area Plan Adoption
March 2005	Assess progress in implementing Area Plan and make adjustments to meet current needs and conditions.
July 2007	Assess accomplishments of the Area Plan
November 2007	Begin process of revising Area Plan by holding meetings and conducting community outreach
September 2008	Approve new Area Plan

“The Southeastern Pennsylvania Resource Conservation and Development Council agrees that the RC&D Program will be conducted in compliance with the non-discrimination 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 Southeastern Pennsylvania Resource Conservation and Development 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 nonprocurement, suspension, and debarment, and State review.

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Resource Conservation and Development 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.

Southeastern Pennsylvania Resource Conservation and Development Council,
Pennsylvania

By: John Rohr
John Rohr, Chairman

Date: September 30, 2003

Attest: Karen Holm
Karen Holm, Secretary

This action was authorized at the Board of Directors Meeting of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Resource Conservation and Development Council on September 16, 2003.

U. S. Department of Agriculture- Natural Resources Conservation Service
The State Conservationist hereby acknowledges the attached Area Plan of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Resource Conservation and Development Council as meeting the requirements under Public Law 97-98 to received assistance from USDA.

Acknowledged By:

_____ Date: _____
Robin E. Heard, State Conservationist