

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

INFORMATIONAL ACTIVITIES

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RC&D meeting is scheduled

A public meeting to determine if there is enough interest locally in the formation of a Resource Conservation and Development Project (RC&D) has been scheduled for Tuesday night.

Verle Arnold, Soil Conservation Service (SCS) conservationist in Davis County, said the meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the ASCS office at which local conservation officials and the Davis County Board of Supervisors will meet with local people.

It is hoped to determine at the meeting if there is enough interest for Davis County to join with other area counties such as Van Buren, Jefferson, Wapello, Mahaska and Keokuk, in an RC&D district.

Arnold explained that RC&D projects are designed to help people take better care of their natural resources and, at the same time, improve their community's economy.

"These projects are locally initiated, sponsored and directed," he said. "They provide a base for people to come together to plan and carry out actions that will make their area a better place in which to live, work and play."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is authorized through the Food and Agriculture Act of 1962 and other authorities to provide local groups technical and financial help in conserving and developing natural resources.

USDA also helps those groups sponsoring RC&D projects seek funds and services from other federal, state and local sources.

Although RC&D projects have

locally developed goals, the general aim of the projects is as follows:

—Develop land and water resources for agricultural, municipal or industrial use.

—Provide soil and water information to other planning agencies on such resource uses as farming, ranching, recreation, wildlife habitat, housing, industry and transportation.

—Carry out conservation measures for watershed protection and flood prevention.

—Accelerate soil surveys and interpretations where they are needed to complement project plans.

—Reduce pollution of air and water.

—Speed up conservation work on individual farms, ranches and other private holdings and on public land.

—Make needed adjustments in land use by converting poorly suited cropland to more beneficial uses—grass, trees, wildlife habitat and recreation.

—Improve and expand recreation facilities, promote historical and scenic attractions.

—Encourage existing industries to expand and new ones to locate in the area and thus create jobs; encourage industries to process and use products of the area.

—Improve markets for farm crops, forest products and livestock.

—Improve, build or bring to the area needed community facilities such as hospitals, schools, sewage treatment plants and roads.

—Encourage training and retaining programs to improve job skills.

RC&D projects attempt to bring all

the interests of its area together—rural, suburban and urban.

RC&D works through a series of steps in applying, planning and operating a project.

The first step is notification by sponsors of their intent to submit an application for an RC&D project. They first notify the designated state and regional or metropolitan clearinghouses of their intent.

In the second stage, one or more legal sponsors prepare an application for projects. Sponsors may include conservation districts, county governing bodies, towns, local or state agencies. Other groups like civic clubs, churches and chamber of commerce can endorse an application.

In the application, the sponsors describe the resource problems, outline the project objectives, state the sponsored solutions, list the project objectives, state the proposed solutions, list the expected benefits and request assistance in carrying out the project. SCS and other federal and state agencies can help them prepare the application.

The sponsors submit the application to the SCS state conservationist. The comments of the clearinghouses or action taken as a result of carrying out the first step must accompany the application.

It then goes to the Governor or a designated state agency for approval. After state approval, it is submitted to the U.S. Department of

RC&D—

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Agriculture.

If the Secretary of Agriculture authorizes planning assistance, the SCS state conservationist names a project coordinator to help the sponsors and their committees develop a plan of action.

The coordinator works closely with other federal, state and local agencies that are also helping the sponsors. In the plan the sponsors describe the area and outline the needs and opportunities. They describe the measures proposed to improve the area, present a general schedule and give priorities for installing the measures and explain how each measure is to be carried out.

The plan is "open ended" and can be added to or modified to meet changing needs and to capitalize on new opportunities.

The sponsors submit the plan to the

Governor or the state agency. If approved, it is then reviewed by USDA and congressional committees.

If the review is favorable, the Secretary of Agriculture authorizes USDA agencies to give operations assistance to project sponsors. The project coordinator works with them to set priorities and to get the cooperation of all state and federal agencies, private groups and individuals that can help.

The sponsors usually appoint a steering or executive committee to advise them on project work and to screen requests to help from local interests. The sponsors arrange for the planned measures to be carried out.

In a project area, federal agencies are encouraged to speed up their programs including technical

assistance, small watershed projects, cost sharing, loans to farmers and nonprofit organizations, aid to farm cooperatives and development of public land.

Many measures are locally financed, but RC&D funds may be available for technical help and financial assistance in carrying out community type project measures for flood prevention, erosion or sediment control, agricultural water management and public water-based developments for fish and wildlife and for recreation.

RC&D loan funds may be available through the Farmers Home Administration to help local people meet their share of project measure costs.

Cost sharing through the Agricultural Conservation Program may be available for conservation work by individuals or groups.