

SOME RC&D ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS (2004-2008)

REGIONAL WAR ON LITTER – We are very proud to have united “far” Southwest Virginia to work together to fight littering and illegal dumping. This great idea came through this input process, and we responded. One hundred thirty-five people attended our *Talking Trash: A Southwest Virginia Litter Summit* on April 22, 2004. After that summit, we formed the “ad hoc” Southwest Virginia Litter Task Force representing Bristol, *Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Norton, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington and Wise*. This task force later became *Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful, Inc.* Our region is receiving national attention for our litter fighters because we worked together!!! For example, the *Assign-A-Highway Program*, which originated in Buchanan County, is spreading across Virginia and to other states, such as Alabama.

BIG SANDY RIVER INTERSTATE AGREEMENT – We concluded a long journey to bring *Kentucky, Virginia and West Virginia* together to sign a historic interstate water quality agreement for the Big Sandy River Basin on October 25, 2007 at the Breaks Interstate Park. Virginia was represented by Secretary L. Preston Bryant, Jr, Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources. This agreement will bring additional resources to this basin in the coming years. All of Buchanan and Dickenson counties drain to the Big Sandy along with the northern third of Wise County and a smidgeon of Tazewell County, the Amonate area. If there is enough interest then we would consider facilitating a similar agreement for the Upper Tennessee River Basin that drains the rest of our RC&D Area.

COUNCIL FOR RURAL VIRGINIA – We jumped on an opportunity to take the lead in creating Virginia’s first state rural development council (SRDC). We strongly believe that this statewide organization will strengthen Virginia’s rural voice in Richmond as well as in Washington, DC as they work together with other SRDCs. The **Council for Rural Virginia** (*represents the “grassroots”*) works closely with the **Center for Rural Virginia** (*appointments from the Virginia General Assembly*). These two organizations share an Executive Director (*Glen Sink – 804.371.7141*).

SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN GREENWAYS ALLIANCE

(SAGA) – Appalachian RC&D (*Northeast Tennessee*) asked our RC&D in 2003 to help them bring “far” Southwest Virginia into SAGA in a bi-state partnership to turn **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE** into an economic engine for the Tri-Cities Region (*Northeast Tennessee & Southwest Virginia*). By the fall of 2008, our nonprofit expects to complete our role in assisting SAGA to develop a bi-state board of directors, a technical advisory committee and a corporate advisory board, which would unite local governments, agencies, industries and citizens in this exciting initiative to create a network of trails and greenways/open space for recreational uses by hikers, walkers, cyclists, horses, ATVs and canoeists/kayakers (*blueways*). Our region is unfortunately known for its “poor health” as cited recently by TIME Magazine, The Washington Post and the New York Times. Lack of exercise is listed as a contributing factor. SAGA believes that making **WELLNESS** a regional goal will not only raise the quality-of-life of our current residents, but it will help us attract retirees, entrepreneurs and large corporations as we successfully compete against other regions of America. SAGA is exploring ways to work with the “new” *Southwest Virginia Trails Authority*. Fortunately, Jack McClanahan, SAGA Board member representing Wise County, was just named as the “interim chairman” of this new authority, which begins July 1, 2008.