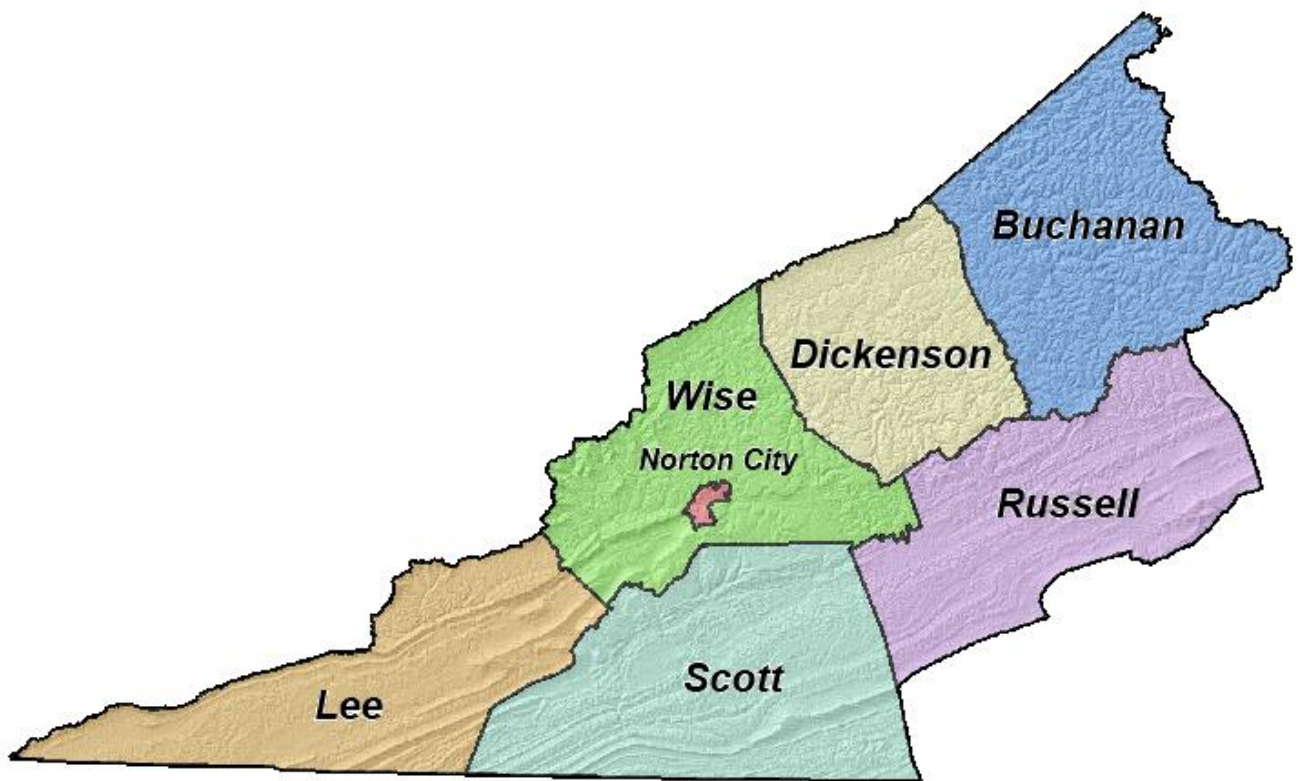


BLACK DIAMOND  
RESOURCE CONSERVATION  
AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INC.  
VIRGINIA  
2008 - 2013



**Black Diamond Resource Conservation & Development Council**

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A non-profit, 501.c.3 organization serving Virginia in Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Russell, Scott and Wise counties; and the independent City of Norton

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## LOCATION OF BLACK DIAMOND RC&D

Black Diamond RC&D lies in the western tip of Southwest Virginia along the borders of Tennessee (*to the south*), Kentucky (*to the west*) and West Virginia (*to the north*). The total acreage of this RC&D Area is **1,725,119 acres** with the following breakdown by locality: Buchanan County (322,483 acres), Dickenson County (212,294 acres), Lee County (279,763 acres), City of Norton (4,800 acres), Russell County (303,782 acres), Scott County (343,411 acres) and Wise County (258,586 acres).



## **INTRODUCTION**

The Eighty-seventh Congress of the United States passed enabling legislation (Public Law 87-703), which allowed local citizens to form and operate Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Areas. This legislation was adopted on the premise that local citizens, primarily in rural areas, could collectively develop and implement action-oriented plans for the (1) social, (2) economic, and (3) environmental betterment of their own communities, without interference from federal, state, or local government. The function of the RC&D is to develop plans and seek both financial and technical assistance from the best qualified sources available, whether it be federal, state, local, industry or private foundations, to implement their own locally developed plans.

One of USDA's primary requirements is for each RC&D to develop an Area Plan (*also called a Long-Range-Plan*) that is the basis of the local RC&D program. This plan addresses community-identified concerns and needs and presents the Council's 5-year goals, objectives and strategies to address these issues and needs, as well as address AT LEAST TWO of the following NRCS program elements:

- **Land Conservation:** *erosion & sediment control*
- **Water Management:** *water use, quality, supply, conservation, flood control*
- **Community Development:** *resource-based business promotion, rural water/waste disposal system development, recreation facility improvement, economic development, education promotion*
- **Land Management:** *energy conservation, bio-fuels, farmland preservation, fish & wildlife habitat protection*

Once these needs and issues are defined and developed into goals and objectives, broad-based support can be explored and recruited. Since RC&D is a hybrid private and public entity, it can receive both private and public financial support for Council projects.

## LOGO



## VISION

***We envision a vibrant, diversified economy in Southwest Virginia to include abundance of clean water, tourism, natural beauty, expansion of diversified agricultural, forestry, mining and manufacturing products, which take place within a healthy environment.***

## MISSION

*The mission of the Black Diamond RC&D is to initiate and coordinate projects that improve the quality and quantity of our water supplies; educate the public on environmental issues and to foster sustainable economic development of our natural resources.*

### **Background & Council Structure**

The governing body of the Black Diamond RC&D Council is the Council's membership. The Council consists of 14 members representing the following sponsoring organizations: Big Sandy Soil & Water Conservation District, Buchanan County, Clinch Valley Soil & Water Conservation District, Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission, Daniel Boone Soil & Water Conservation District, Dickenson County, Lee County, LENOWISCO Planning District Commission, Lonesome Pine Soil & Water Conservation District, City of Norton, Russell County, Scott County, Scott County Soil & Water Conservation District and Wise County. In addition, the Council may appoint up to six at-large-members to the RC&D Council for one-year appointments, bringing the possible maximum membership to 20 board members. Each July the members elect five officers of the Executive Board to carry on the day-to-day operations of the Council.

The Black Diamond Resource Conservation and Development program is:

- Sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA),
- Administered through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and
- Locally directed and managed by RC&D Council members.

The Black Diamond Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc. (BDRC&D) is an independent, nonprofit, non-partisan, community-based group whose primary concern is the prudent use of natural and human resources in Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Russell, Scott and Wise counties and the City of Norton of "far" Southwest Virginia. It was:

- Authorized by Congress in February 1994,
- Incorporated in April 1993, and
- Received its nonprofit status [501(c) (3)] in April 1994.

Black Diamond RC&D (BDRC&D) is an all-volunteer organization that accomplishes its goals and objectives by bringing together needed resources to get the job done! The strength of the RC&D program is in giving local people the opportunity to solve their own problems. BDRC&D effectively develops partnerships with dozens of public and private organizations. These alliances provide BDRC&D with the tools to accomplish its goals & objectives. BDRC&D programs and activities are directed by its Board of Directors and implemented by its members with the assistance of other partners and volunteers.

BDRC&D provides opportunities to mobilize human resources to accomplish projects that otherwise may not have been identified or implemented simply because competing interests could not unite in a positive, project-oriented and neutral forum. BDRC&D enjoys another advantage that is the envy of many nonprofits, which is the "base" technical support that USDA-NRCS provides through the services of a full-time USDA Coordinator along with providing an office, vehicle, computer and other essentials. With this "base support", BDRC&D is able to tackle some initiatives, like our regional "War on Litter", where raising funding for a regional staff position to initiate action might prove difficult. Many small nonprofits are forced to follow the money for deciding which programs they will tackle, which limits what they can do, not so for RC&D.

## Area Overview

### Geography

The geology of the area is related to the two Major Land Resource Areas (MLRA) or physiographic provinces that Black Diamond RC&D Area lies within. These two MLRAs are the ***Southern Appalachian Ridges and Valleys*** (primarily Lee, Scott and Russell counties, southern portion of Wise County and the City of Norton) and the ***Cumberland Plateau and Mountains*** (Buchanan and Dickenson counties and the northern part of Wise County and the western edge of Russell County). The ridge and valley province is characterized by rather broad, well-defined valleys interspersed with numerous elongated and prominent ridges trending in a regional northeast-southwest direction. The prominent ridges are generally sandstone, while the rolling hills and valleys are primarily limestone. In the limestone areas, which dominate the ridge and valley, karst topography produces sinkholes, depressions, caves, springs, sinking streams and underground rivers. (Note: you can observe the area's geology on the map on the cover page of this plan.)

### Natural Resources

Seventy-three percent of the RC&D Area is forested with 92% of the forestland in private ownership. Corporations, such as large coal companies, make up much of this private ownership, especially in Buchanan and Dickenson counties.

Two large river basins drain the RC&D Area: Big Sandy River Basin and the Upper Tennessee River Basin. The Levisa River, Russell Fork River, Pound River, Cranesnest River and the McClure River are some of the major tributaries within the Virginia portion of the Big Sandy Watershed that drains Buchanan and Dickenson counties and the northern third of Wise County. Lee, Norton, Scott and Russell along with the southern portion of Wise County drain to the Tennessee River: their major tributaries are the Clinch, Powell, Guest and North Fork of the Holston rivers.

“Imagine playing a game of environmental “Jeopardy”! The category is rare species. Answer: This unsung region has the highest number of globally imperiled and vulnerable freshwater species in the United States. Question: What is the Clinch River watershed? With its 29 rare mussel species and 19 rare fish species, the Clinch River above Tennessee’s Norris reservoir is home to a remarkable level of aquatic diversity. In fact, the **Clinch and Powell rivers harbor a collection of freshwater mussels unmatched anywhere in the world.**”<sup>1</sup>

Located in Virginia’s Coalfields, coal and natural gas resources are abundant.

### Agriculture

Agriculture plays a major role in the economies of the three counties located in the ridge and valley part of the RC&D Area; these three counties are Lee, Russell and Scott. Until the Tobacco Program ended with the federal government’s buy-out, tobacco was a major agricultural product in our area. It still is grown in 2008, but the acreage planted to tobacco has greatly diminished.

Beef cattle, sheep and goats are now the primary farm products, because of the steep slopes that are best planted to either grass for grazing or left in trees. Appalachian Sustainable Development is leading a regional initiative to increase the production of organically raised produce and meats to help farmers diversify and find new markets after the demise of tobacco.

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<sup>1</sup> The Nature Conservancy, *Rivers of Life: Critical Watersheds for Protecting Freshwater Biodiversity*. A NatureServe Publication, 1998, p.25.

Buchanan and Dickenson counties and a large chunk of Wise County do not provide suitable soils (*steep slopes are the primary deterrent*) for production agriculture, because of their mountainous terrain.

2002 Virginia Ag Census	Total Farms	Total Acres of Farmland*	Total Acres of Cropland**	Average Sales per farm	Total Farm Sales per county
Buchanan	94	9,156	2,883	***\$4,787	***\$449,978
Dickenson	117	11,761	4,312	\$6,294	\$736,398
Lee	1,103	128,042	56,955	\$10,986	<b>\$12,117,558</b>
Russell	1,128	168,903	72,048	\$18,615	<b>\$20,997,720</b>
Scott	1,490	157,689	61,638	\$8,518	<b>\$12,691,820</b>
Wise	140	19,033	9,283	\$6,728	\$941,920
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,072</b>	<b>494,584</b>	<b>207,119</b>	NA	<b>\$47,935,394</b>

\* Total acres of farmland include woodland, which covers more than 50% of the farm's acreage.

\*\* Total acres of cropland includes pastureland and hayland, which are the dominant farm land uses.

\*\*\* There was no 2002 data for Buchanan County's average sales per farm, so the 1997 data was used.

## **Demographics**

The Black Diamond Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area is comprised of the following six counties and one city in "far" Southwest Virginia: Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Russell, Scott and Wise counties and the City of Norton. According to the 2006 Census, the population of the RC&D Area is 161,859. This is a decline of 7,281 people since the 1990 census for a -4.3% loss. Fortunately, this negative rate of population growth is slowing significantly. Between 1980 and 1990 this area lost over 20,000 residents as they moved to America's urban centers in search of jobs. The RC&D Area's population in 1980 according to the 1980 U.S. Census was 189,200. Black Diamond RC&D covers six of the seven Virginia counties located in the coalfields. This area is in the "heart of Appalachia", which was settled by the Scotch-Irish migrations during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. They have a rich and vibrant mountain heritage. Like other parts of our nation, Appalachia's population is changing, though more slowly.

County or City	Total Population  <b>2006 Census</b>	White	Black	Asian	American Indian or Alaska Native	Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	Hispanic or Latino
Buchanan	24,409	96.0%	3.2%	0.3%	0.1%	Z	0.6%
Dickenson	16,182	98.7%	0.6%	0.1%	0.1%	Z	0.5%
Lee	23,787	98.1%	0.7%	0.3%	0.2%	Z	0.5%
Russell	28,790	98.4%	1.0%	0.1%	0.1%	Z	0.7%
Scott	22,882	98.4%	0.8%	0.1%	0.2%	Z	0.6%
Wise	41,905	93.3%	5.4%	0.2%	0.4%	Z	1.0%
City of Norton	3,904	91.6%	6.1%	1.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>161,859</b>	<b>156,248</b>	<b>4,017</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>1,139</b>
<b>TOTAL %</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>96.5%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>0.6%</b>

Z = Value greater than zero but less than half unit of measure shown

## Socioeconomic Information

When Black Diamond RC&D began organizing in 1992, unemployment rates ranged from a low of 7.7% (*Scott County*) to a high of 20.4% (*Dickenson County*), with five of the six counties within the RC&D in double digits, as the nation was beginning to pull out of a severe recession. Virginia's unemployment figure was very high at 7.0% in May 1992, as the nation came out of a recession. Fortunately, through the fine work of the two planning district commissions, local governments, Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority and the local industrial development authorities, the RC&D Area has made major gains in providing employment opportunities for its population. All seven localities' current unemployment rates hover near the national rate of 6.0% (July 2008 data). This is remarkable progress in the past two decades!!!

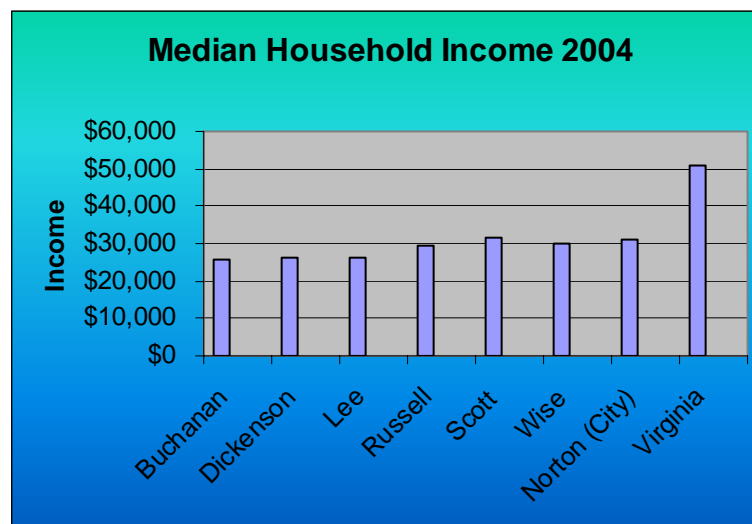
Locality	% Unemployed* (July 2008)	Median Household Income** (2004)	% People Below Poverty Level (2004)
Buchanan	6.12%	\$25,549	21.1%
Dickenson	6.33%	\$26,490	18.3%
Lee	5.74%	\$26,106	21.1%
Russell	6.14%	\$29,645	16.5%
Scott	6.03%	\$31,450	14.9%
Wise	5.74%	\$30,203	19.2%
Norton (City)	5.60%	\$30,889	19.1%

\* Virginia Unemployment Rate – 4.4%; U.S. Unemployment Rate – 6.0% (July 2008 data)

\*\* Virginia Median Household Income – \$51,103 (2004 data)

Median household income of the RC&D Area lags considerably behind the Virginia median household income level of \$51,103. Top wages are harder to come by in our part of Appalachia, except, for example, those working for the coal corporations, public schools, healthcare and with local, state and federal government.

The Virginia and national rates of poverty in 2004 were 9.5% and 12.7% respectively. Scott County, which lies closest to the affluent Tri-Cities of Northeast Tennessee, has the lowest percentage of residents below the poverty level at 14.9%. The rest of the RC&D's localities ranged from 16.5% to 21.1%.



# Resource Needs and Opportunities

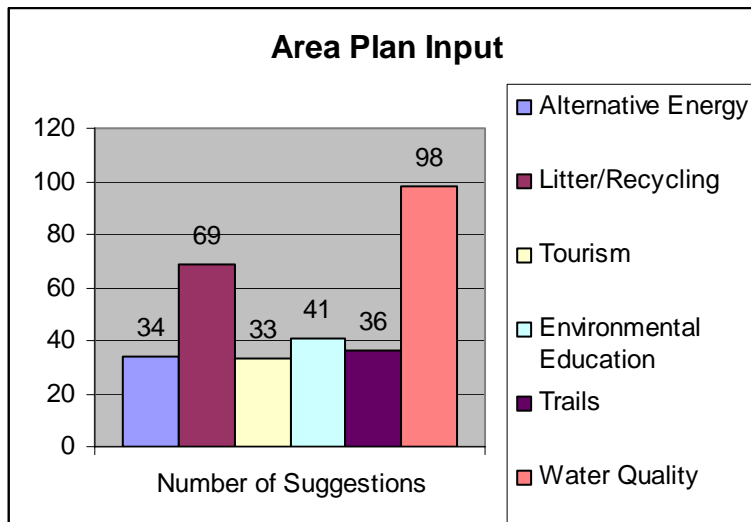
## Public Participation Activities

Black Diamond RC&D Council members initiated the public input process for the Area Plan revision in February 2008. The Council developed a survey (*see page 10*) to solicit public input about community issues for projects, initiatives and/or activities that citizens and partners would like to see Black Diamond RC&D address in the next five years (*October 1, 2008 – September 30, 2013*). This survey was made available on the Council’s website (*www.blackdiamondrcd.org*); distributed to our project sponsors and partners; and advertised in all of the county papers (*six weeklies*); a total of 123 responses were received from this survey.

Rather than “guide” people to select certain resource concerns over others, such as “circle” from the choices listed that some survey techniques employ, Black Diamond RC&D preferred to leave it “open-ended” by asking individuals to come up with their own ideas. For example, we received a lot of input to work on “Alternative Energy” issues, which is something our Council would not have suggested, since it hadn’t ever been discussed as a possible arena to move into one day. We received a total of 396 suggestions that filled 15 pages of input that the Council members reviewed prior to selecting which issues they would tackle in this five-year plan. Results of this survey are shown below. Input was sorted into 18 broad categories. People responding to this survey were asked to rank their input. Suggestions that received a #1 ranking were tallied and placed in parentheses behind the number of suggestions received. For example, there were 41 suggestions under the Environmental Education category, while 17 of those received a #1 ranking from 17 individuals.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Alternative Energy – 34 suggestions</b> (19) | Beautification/Improvements – 3 suggestions (0)      |
| Capacity Building – 10 suggestions (5)          | Civil Rights – 3 suggestions (0)                     |
| Economic Development – 14 suggestions (2)       | <b>Environmental Education – 41 suggestions</b> (17) |
| Farmers’ Market – 5 suggestions (1)             | Forestry – 15 suggestions (4)                        |
| Health/Wellness – 5 suggestions (1)             | Legislation – 4 suggestions (1)                      |
| <b>Litter/Recycling – 69 suggestions</b> (22)   | Spill Response Teams – 2 suggestions (1)             |
| Natural Resources – 19 suggestions (2)          | Reclaimed Mined Land – 3 suggestions (0)             |
| <b>Tourism – 33 suggestions</b> (8)             | <b>Trails – 36 suggestions</b> (12)                  |
| Training – 2 suggestions (0)                    | <b>Water Quality – 98 suggestions</b> (26)           |

The **top six categories** listed above accounted for 79% of the total input received (311 out of 396).



# **RESPONSE FORM – Black Diamond RC&D Area Plan Input**

Please list suggested **projects, initiatives** or **activities** that you would like to see Black Diamond RC&D address in the next five years (October 1, 2008 – September 30, 2013). Rank them according to your priorities of importance. The RC&D Council will review all input by September 30, 2008 to aid them in developing their next AREA PLAN. *If you need additional sheets please attach them to this form.* Thank you!!!

Suggested projects, initiatives and/or activities:

#1 -

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#2 -

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#3 -

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**The mission of the Black Diamond RC&D is to initiate and coordinate projects that improve the quality and quantity of our water supplies; educate the public on environmental issues and to foster sustainable economic development of our natural resources.**

Yes, I/we feel that your mission is still on target for our region.

No, I/we would like to see the RC&D make some changes in their mission statement to enable them to move in new directions.

If you answered “NO” then please list some suggested new directions for the RC&D to consider *that will not duplicate existing services.*

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Your name

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Organization

PLEASE FAX THIS FORM TO BLACK DIAMOND RC&D AT **276.889.4246** or mail it to them at Black Diamond RC&D, 140 Highland Drive, Lebanon, VA 24266.

**Please RSVP by August 30<sup>th</sup>!!!**

## **Summary of Findings by Required Element**

This AREA PLAN must have goals for AT LEAST TWO of the following statutory program elements:

***Land Conservation*** – The control of erosion and sedimentation.

***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.

***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.

***Land Management*** – Energy conservation that includes the 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.

Black Diamond RC&D's revised AREA PLAN (10.1.08 – 9.30.13) will address all four elements! Each of the 18 broad categories of public input received will be listed under the appropriate element of the four elements listed above. Some categories will be listed under more than one element.

NOTE: We feel this is a good time to remind the reader that Black Diamond RC&D has enjoyed much success during the past 16 years (1992-2008). Though our “small” nonprofit only has two staff members (*two USDA employees: one full-time and one part-time*), we MAKE GOOD THINGS HAPPEN through two ways: (1) - by always seeking to ADD VALUE and not duplicating the efforts of others; and (2) - by working alongside our numerous, excellent partners! During the next five years, we will continue to serve our region in a similar fashion through always seeking the advice of the RC&D's sponsors and partners. As for any region of our nation, there are more resource needs than can be addressed with existing resources, so we must prioritize where our RC&D can make a difference. Obviously, we do not have the resources to address every suggestion from the public, our partners and our sponsors. Some of our goals, we believe, are very ambitious and will take years of work and much effort, such as forming the Virginia Litter Control Association and developing legislation for the Virginia General Assembly to consider to increase protection of western Virginia's groundwater supplies by improving the protection of our precious karst terrain.

## **Land Conservation**

Public input categories that pertain to the Land Conservation element are: Forestry, Natural Resources and Water Quality, since protecting our water quality, forests and natural resources are inextricably linked to preventing soil erosion and sedimentation.

One goal in this plan addresses this element specifically. We will seek guidance from USDA agencies; five soil and water conservation districts; various watershed groups; and other regional nonprofits to determine how we can best add value through promotion of the various USDA Farm Bill Programs that address reducing soil erosion and sedimentation. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service has five full-time employees working on erosion control programs for

farmland within the RC&D Area (*they are stationed in Gate City (1); Jonesville (2) and Lebanon (2)*). Other state and federal agencies within the area also have people working full-time to address soil erosion and sedimentation on all land uses.

## **Water Management**

Public input categories that pertain to the Water Management element are: **Forestry, Spill Response Teams**, Natural Resources, Reclaimed Mined Land and **Water Quality**.

**Forestry – Resource Needs:** The Virginia Department of Forestry and the U.S. Forest Service have dozens of full-time employees working within the RC&D Area. Black Diamond RC&D has chosen to work closely with the Virginia Department of Forestry’s RC&D Forester to follow his/her guidance on how best to add value to the contributions of these two large agencies. Seventy-three percent of the RC&D Area is forested, with 92 percent of this acreage in private ownership (*corporations and individuals*). Educating forest landowners about the importance of following good forest management techniques (*forest harvesting using best management practices and forest stewardship*) is what the RC&D Forester has asked our RC&D to tackle in this plan.

**Hazardous Waste Spills – Resource Needs:** Occasionally, a tanker truck accident near a stream or river has released hundreds or even thousands of gallons of hazardous waste that seeped into the water body killing aquatic life for miles downstream. Local spill response teams usually don’t have the proper spill response equipment available locally, so valuable hours are lost as the proper equipment is driven to the spill site from a location often hours away. Threatened and endangered aquatic species, especially freshwater mussels that cannot flee the encroaching spill, are often eradicated for miles downstream of these spills, which severely impair recovery efforts. The RC&D will work with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management to find the necessary grant funds to provide spill response equipped trailers in each of the nine counties within the two river basins that our RC&D works hard to protect.

**Water Quality – Resource Needs:** Black Diamond RC&D is well known for working on regional water quality initiatives over the years. This probably explains why we received far more public input for this category than any other, with 98 suggestions totaling 25% of the total input. Good progress has been made in the region over the past two decades to improve water quality, but plenty of challenges still remain in an effort that will take many more decades of hard work by all. Six additional goals have been outlined in the Water Management section that follows to address water quality concerns within the Big Sandy and Upper Tennessee river basins. For example, a huge water quality problem is the discharge of human sewage directly into our streams, creeks and rivers from people’s homes and businesses; this problem is called straight piping where raw sewage is flushed directly into the adjacent water body through a PVC pipe, since there are no septic systems or sewer hookups for these sites. The extent of this problem is unknown; a region-wide inventory of the existing straight pipes has never been conducted. Some rough estimates by planning officials of what it will take to fix this problem one day run between \$1-2 billion.

Black Diamond RC&D felt that we did not have to address any concerns under the Reclaimed Mined Land category given our own resource constraints and the excellent work being done by the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals & Energy and the U.S. Office of Surface Mining.

The input placed under the Natural Resources category was fairly general with some of it leaning towards improving water quality, which was addressed above.

## **Community Development**

Public input categories that pertain to the Community Development element are: Beautification/Improvements, **Capacity Building**, **Civil Rights**, Economic Development, **Environmental Education**, Farmers' Markets, Health/Wellness, **Legislation**, **Litter/Recycling**, **Tourism**, **Trails** and Training.

**Capacity Building – Resource Needs:** Five of the ten suggestions for this category will be addressed by the RC&D under various goals. The one major task that required its own separate goal under Water Management (*Water Quality*) was to organize the Southern Rivers Region of Virginia, which includes all of the watersheds outside of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed from the Atlantic Ocean side of the Eastern Shore all the way to Lee County following the North Carolina/Virginia border; the Southern Rivers Region makes up about 40% of Virginia. The Chesapeake Bay Watershed gets most of the attention and most of the water quality funding to address non-point source problems as well as the more expensive point source problems, such as wastewater treatment facilities. The RC&D believes that by organizing the soil and water conservation districts and other interested organizations within this large region that, over time, they, which includes all of “far” Southwest Virginia, will get a bigger share of the water quality funding pie.

**Civil Rights – Resource Needs:** Though there were only three suggestions (*less than 1%*) under the Civil Rights category, they captured the attention of the RC&D Council. According to the 2006 U.S. Census, Caucasians make up 96.5% of the RC&D's population, but this percentage is slowly shrinking. Council members expressed that it would be a worthy effort on their part to stimulate a regional discussion to examine how things are going regionally for our minority populations and to formulate recommendations for future improvements. This item has its own goal.

**Environmental Education – Resource Needs:** Promoting environmental education is another strength that our nonprofit is known for regionally. In 2006, we began hosting the Southwest Virginia Environmental Education Task Force. This initiative to engage 11 school districts to provide more environmental education opportunities for their students will be continued into the next five-year plan. Environmental education was also the 3<sup>rd</sup> top “vote-getter” from the public input.

**Legislation – Resource Needs:** Proposing new Virginia legislation is a “means to an end”. Our nonprofit feels strongly that our karst terrain within Lee, Norton, Russell, Scott and Wise is not adequately understood and protected, which jeopardizes the quality and safety of our underground water supplies. We feel additional state laws are necessary to afford adequate protection. However, to accomplish this we will need to build a broad-based coalition from our region all across western Virginia to the Shenandoah Valley where Virginia's karst terrain is found.

**Litter/Recycling – Resource Needs:** In 2004, Black Diamond RC&D hosted the 1<sup>st</sup> Talking Trash: A Southwest Virginia Litter Summit that 150 people attended on Earth Day. The RC&D's “ad hoc” Southwest Virginia Litter Task Force (2004-2005) that grew out of that summit representing nine counties and two cities went on to become the nationally recognized Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful (KSVB); the largest affiliate of Keep America Beautiful by land area; KSVB has won several national awards recently. We are proud that we helped to pull our region together to declare “War on Litter”. Though many of the task force's recommendations have been adopted by local governments, such as hiring full-time litter control officers, the RC&D feels that we still need to promote increased litter enforcement of Virginia's litter laws before we back away

from this multi-year initiative. This issue received the second highest number of suggestions for future RC&D activities.

**Tourism & Trails – Resource Needs:** Economic development partners continue to advise our RC&D that our assistance is not needed to recruit traditional industry and small businesses to our region; this is not our expertise. But they do feel that one way we can help to bring jobs and create small businesses is through the promotion of more trails, motorized and non-motorized, to our mountains. In this spirit, Black Diamond RC&D has agreed to support the efforts of the Southern Appalachian Greenways Alliance (SAGA), which envisions a network of interconnected trails for walking, cycling and horseback riding. We also plan to support the efforts of the newly created Southwest Virginia Regional Recreation Authority, which envisions hundreds of miles of ATV and motorcycle trails on coal company properties, which eventually link to the successful Hatfield & McCoy Trails in southern West Virginia.

Black Diamond RC&D felt that we did not have to address any concerns under the Beautification/Improvements category, since the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable is leading a regional effort to encourage counties, cities and towns to undertake more beautification projects.

Economic Development is an area that the two planning district commissions, local governments, Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority and industrial development authorities do an excellent job in addressing.

Virginia Cooperative Extension Service and Appalachian Sustainable Development are the regional leaders in establishing new Farmers' Markets.

The RC&D will address the health/wellness category through working to stimulate the development of more trails for walking, cycling and horseback riding.

Only two suggestions fell under the Training category. We will leave future training in the hands of the local universities, community colleges and the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service.

## **Land Management**

Public input categories that pertain to the Land Management element are: **Alternative Energy**.

**Alternative Energy – Resource Needs:** It is easy to see why this issue was the #1 resource issue for those members of the public that responded via the RC&D's website. It came in 5<sup>th</sup> place overall among the 18 categories with 34 suggestions. With gas skyrocketing past \$4.00 per gallon during 2008 and with electricity, home heating oil and propane costs jumping strongly too, many Southwest Virginians, who already have low household incomes compared to the rest of Virginia and the nation, are feeling their budgets severely stretched. Public interest primarily fell into two categories: (1) – conservation of energy for heating/cooling their homes and businesses; and (2) – finding alternative energy sources locally, such as solar. The RC&D will seek guidance from the players involved in this work first to make sure from them there is an appropriate role, if any, for the RC&D to pursue.

## GOALS, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Black Diamond RC&D works on many regional, multi-year projects, such as creating a new statewide organization called the Virginia Litter Control Association, which probably will need our assistance into 2010; this project was adopted by the Council in 2007. The Council decided to “carry over” eighteen existing projects (strategies) that are actively being pursued in this revised Area Plan (2008-2013). Due to concerns about financial and human resource availability, objectives were kept at pragmatic levels, with the understanding that this Area Plan is a “living document” that can be regularly updated. The following Goals, Objectives and Strategies will serve as the Council’s guide for accepting and implementing projects and evaluating project and program success during the October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2013 time frame.

### **LAND CONSERVATION**

**Goal 1: To reduce soil loss on agricultural and forest land by cooperating with USDA agencies, soil and water conservation districts and watershed groups to develop annual promotional programs to generate a 10% increase in sign-up for at least five targeted watersheds by 2013.**

*Objective 1: Partner with local and USDA agencies to promote Farm Bill programs to at least one targeted watershed annually by 2013.*

#### **Strategies:**

- 1 Coordinate annual regional meeting involving USDA and local partners to devise how best the RC&D can aid their efforts in promoting various Farm Bill programs, such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) by January of each year.
- 2 Select one or more targeted watersheds within the RC&D Area based on the recommendations of the USDA and local partners by January of each year.
- 3 Host workshops, deliver presentations and/or conduct direct mailings annually depending on the guidance from USDA and local partners by 2013.

### **WATER MANAGEMENT**

**Goal 1: Support organizational efforts of two large river basin coalitions by 2013.**

*Objective 1: Secure “permanent” state funding for the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable by 2013.*

#### **Strategies:**

- 1 Coordinate tri-state efforts (NC, TN & VA) to develop an Upper Tennessee River Interstate “Water Quality” Agreement by 2010.

*Objective 2: Secure “permanent” state funding for the Big Sandy River Basin Coalition by 2013.*

**Strategies:**

- 1 Assist in the development of the 1<sup>st</sup> Big Sandy River Basin Implementation Plan based on the 2007 Big Sandy River Interstate Agreement by 2010.

**Goal 2: Collaborate with planning district commissions, state agencies, soil & water conservation districts, public service authorities and other organizations in the development of innovative management strategies and funding sources for decentralized wastewater treatment systems by 2013.**

*Objective 1: Reduce straight pipe impacts by 5% in the RC&D area by 2013.*

**Strategies:**

- 1 Host a Southwest Virginia Straight Pipes Task Force for 13 counties (*Planning District Commissions 1, 2 & 3*) by 2010.
- 2 Assist this Southwest Virginia Straight Pipes Task Force to develop and distribute a set of regional recommendations to their respective local governments to accelerate the adoption of recommended strategies by 2011.

**Goal 3: Increase state funding for cost-share programs (best management practices) and water quality improvement funds for wastewater treatment projects to local soil and water conservation districts and local governments of the RC&D Area by 10% by 2013.**

*Objective 1: Organize the Southern Rivers Region into a formal organization by 2010.*

**Strategies:**

1. Work closely with soil and water conservation district (SWCD) leaders within the Southern Rivers Region (*non-Chesapeake Bay Watershed area of Virginia*) as they prepare for their 2<sup>nd</sup> “Southern Rivers” meeting at the Annual Meeting of the Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD) in December 2008.
2. Encourage SWCD leaders within the Southern Rivers Region by 2009 to hold their own “separate” meeting between VASWCD annual meetings to allow ample time to debate whether or not to form a Southern Rivers Association.
3. If strategy #2 receives enough support then the RC&D would coordinate the 1<sup>st</sup> Southern Rivers Conference by 2010.
4. Encourage the new Southern Rivers Association to strive for their “fair share” of state resources dedicated to water quality improvement by 2010.

**Goal 4: Reduce the amount of hazardous materials entering “far” Southwest Virginia streams by 25% during spills and accidents by 2013.**

*Objective 1: Properly equip spill response teams for nine “far” Southwest Virginia counties (Big Sandy & Upper Tennessee river basins) by 2013.*

**Strategies:**

- 1 Obtain grant funds to purchase at least nine spill response equipped trailers by 2013.
- 2 Obtain grant funds to purchase other spill response-related equipment as deemed necessary by 2013.
- 3 Meet with each of the nine county governments to seek their support of their local spill response teams by 2013.

**Goal 5: Increase protection of water quality within the RC&D Area by promoting the development of TMDLs in all of the major river basins within the six-county area by 2013.**

*Objective 1: Assist the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality with the development of at least six Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) implementation plans by 2013.*

**Strategies:**

- 1 Promote and help coordinate TMDL public meetings for development of TMDLs for the Levisa, Powell & North Fork of the Holston rivers by 2010.
- 2 Educate the public through the media regarding the need for their participation, input and their role and responsibilities for their respective watershed in each of the six TMDL watersheds by 2013.
- 3 Educate each of the seven localities within the RC&D Area through presentations about their role in working with their citizens to restore those impaired streams identified within their respective boundaries that have approved TMDL implementation plans by 2013.
- 4 Promote and help coordinate TMDL public meetings for development of at least three future TMDLs for streams within the RC&D Area by 2013.

**Goal 6: Facilitate the development of legislation through the Virginia General Assembly to increase protection of western Virginia's karst terrain by 2013.**

*Objective 1: Assemble a Virginia Sinkhole Task Force by 2011.*

**Strategies:**

- 1 Encourage interested organizations within western Virginia (*from Winchester to Cumberland Gap*) to join a Virginia Sinkhole Task Force by 2010.
- 2 Assist partners, such as the Virginia Cave Board and the Virginia Division of Natural Heritage, to review existing legislation pertaining to the protection of karst lands and to make recommendations for improvements by 2010.
- 3 Host the first meeting of the Virginia Sinkhole Task Force by 2011.

*Objective 2: Develop proposed karst legislation by 2013.*

**Strategies:**

- 1 Work with the Virginia Sinkhole Task Force to develop proposed legislation by 2012.

- 2 Host a Virginia Karst Summit in the spring (May-June) of 2013 to galvanize support for the proposed legislation to appear before the Virginia General Assembly by their 2014 session.

**Goal 7: Improve water quality by 5% within at least three targeted watersheds within the Clinch-Powell River Basin by 2013.**

*Objective 1: Assist the Tennessee Valley Authority to utilize TVA funding to implement water quality improvement projects within at least three targeted watersheds within the Clinch-Powell River Basin by 2013.*

**Strategies:**

- 1 Provide input for the targeting of these TVA funds where they will provide the greatest water quality benefits for targeted watersheds, such as providing staff (*Office of Surface Mining/VISTAs*), annually.

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**Goal 1: Increase enforcement of Virginia's litter laws within the RC&D Area through an additional 100% increase in civil and criminal convictions by 2012.**

*Objective 1: Promote the adoption of the Model Litter Ordinance and/or the Civil Damages Ordinance to five local governments by 2010.*

**Strategies:**

- 1 Give presentations to the boards of supervisors of Lee, Russell and Scott counties and to Norton's City Council on the merits of adopting the Model Litter Ordinance and/or the Civil Damages Ordinance by 2009.
- 2 Work with the Dickenson County Model Litter Ordinance Committee to get the Model Litter Ordinance adopted by their board of supervisors by 2009.
- 3 Work with any committees and/or local government staff that are appointed to revise their local litter ordinances for Lee, Russell and Scott counties and the City of Norton by 2010.

*Objective 2: Provide technical assistance to Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful to help their organization create a "new" statewide Virginia Litter Control Association by 2011.*

**Strategies:**

- 1 Coordinate the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Virginia Litter Control Association (VLCA) by 2009.
- 2 Assist VLCA form a Corporate Advisory Board by 2010.
- 3 Cultivate statewide interest in establishing the 1<sup>st</sup> Governor's Litter Summit by 2011.

*Objective 3: Help seven local governments secure at least seven groundhog cameras to use for surveillance to "catch" litterers and illegal dumpers in the act of illegally disposing waste materials by 2012.*

**Strategies:**

- 1 Host a Groundhog camera workshop by 2010.

- 2 Seek funding to secure at least seven groundhog cameras (\$7,500 each) by 2012.

**Goal 2: Assist in the creation of 100 jobs and five new businesses through the development of a network of motorized and non-motorized trails in the RC&D Area by 2013.**

*Objective 1: Support efforts of the Southwest Virginia Regional Recreation Authority to create Spearhead Trails for ATV and motorcycle users by 2013.*

**Strategies:**

- 1 Deliver at least ten presentations to local governments and other organizations promoting Spearhead Trails by 2010.
- 2 Assist the Southwest Virginia Regional Recreation Authority with the coordination of at least three workshops by 2013.

*Objective 2: Support efforts of the Southern Appalachian Greenways Alliance (SAGA) to create a network of interconnected trails for walking, cycling and horseback riding by 2013.*

**Strategies:**

- 1 Assist SAGA coordinate a conference by October 2008.
- 2 Assist SAGA with the development of a bi-state technical advisory committee and a corporate advisory board by 2009.
- 3 Support Growth Readiness efforts by the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation and demonstrate to local governments through at least six presentations the connection with SAGA's efforts to turn our region's "green infrastructure" into an economic engine by 2013.

**Goal 3: Engage eleven school districts across a nine-county/two-city region to actively support environmental education programs in their districts by 2011.**

*Objective 1: Host the Southwest Virginia Environmental Education Task Force through 2011.*

**Strategies:**

- 1 Work closely with the Southwest Virginia Environmental Education Team (SWEET) to avoid duplication of services through 2011.
- 2 Promote the Southwest Virginia Environmental Education Task Force's Recommendations to all eleven school boards by 2010.
- 3 Coordinate a regional grantwriting team to seek at least three large grants (totaling more than \$300,000 together) to conduct Phase I of the Implementation of the Task Force's Recommendations by 2011.
- 4 Host at least one environmental education teacher workshop by 2011.
- 5 Engage the Lee County and Wise County school boards in a dialogue to explore "joint funding" for a Powell River Environmental Educator position by 2009.

**Goal 4: Facilitate the organization of a Southwest Virginia Cultural Diversity Task Force by 2013 to help our region address the needs of our growing minority populations.**

*Objective 1: Contact 100 percent of the community development organizations; local governments; chambers of commerce; nonprofits that provide social services; and the universities and community colleges across the six-county region to build the critical mass necessary for this regional task force by 2012.*

**Strategies:**

- 1 Host a Cultural Diversity meeting to assess regional interest by 2012.
- 2 Form the Southwest Virginia Cultural Diversity Task Force ensuring a broad representation from the region by 2012.
- 3 Work with this task force to develop a set of regional recommendations to alleviate any critical issues facing the minority populations by 2013.

**Goal 5: Engage local governments across the six-county area to explore the most feasible solutions for handling their recyclable materials by 2011.**

*Objective 1: Promote the establishment of one or more regional recycling facilities by 2011.*

**Strategies:**

- 1 Work with Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful to develop a strategy to approach the local governments by 2010 to raise their awareness about the need for a regional recycling facility.
- 2 Form the Southwest Virginia Regional Recycling Task Force by 2011.
- 3 Work with this task force to develop a set of regional recommendations to present to the local governments by 2011.

**LAND MANAGEMENT**

**Goal 1: Determine if there is a regional role for Black Diamond RC&D in promoting alternative energy initiatives and energy conservation programs by 2010.**

*Objective 1: Host a regional meeting of the alternative energy players within “far” Southwest Virginia by 2010.*

**Strategies:**

- 1 Develop a database of organizations involved in developing alternative energy projects within our region by 2009.
- 2 Meet with at least three key players within the alternative energy arena to seek their advice on a role for the RC&D by 2009.
- 3 If strategy #2 encourages the RC&D to push forward then invite all known organizations involved in alternative energy and energy conservation programs in Southwest Virginia to a meeting by 2010 to accelerate efforts to reduce dependence on foreign oil and reduce local heating and cooling costs.
- 4 If there is an appropriate regional role for the RC&D then the group will tell us by 2010 what we should do next to “add value” to their joint efforts.

**Goal 2: Improve at least 500 acres of aquatic habitat through at least twenty stream restoration projects by 2013.**

*Objective 1: Assist the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in utilizing federal funding to implement stream restoration and habitat improvement projects in the Upper Tennessee River Watershed of Virginia by 2013.*

**Strategies:**

- 1 Facilitate the targeting of these funds where they will provide the greatest habitat improvement benefits for endangered and threatened species annually.
- 2 Develop a recognition program to encourage landowners along area rivers and creeks to take pride in restoring their streambanks by 2011.

*Objective 2: Explore developing a partnership with the New River-Highlands RC&D to receive “In Lieu Fees” from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality for compensatory mitigation projects by 2010.*

**Strategies:**

- 1 Conduct a joint meeting with representatives from both RC&Ds to discuss the merits of a “partnership” to administer “In Lieu Fees” by 2009.
- 2 Develop a business plan to move forward on this partnership if both RC&Ds agree to the terms of a joint agreement by 2009.
- 3 Begin utilizing “In Lieu Fees” to implement stream restoration projects within the Big Sandy, Upper Tennessee and New River basins by 2010.

**Goal 3: Promote Forest Management concepts to at least 100 forest landowners representing at least 200,000 acres of forestland by 2013.**

*Objective 1: Host forest landowner education workshops in all six RC&D counties by 2013.*

**Strategies:**

- 1 Develop a database of large forest landowners for the entire RC&D Area by 2010.
- 2 Host two forest landowner workshops in 2009: one in Lee County and one in Buchanan County.
- 3 Host at least four additional forest landowner workshops by 2013 for the remaining four RC&D counties: Dickenson, Russell, Scott and Wise.
- 4 Promote a Forestry Conservation Strategies Short Course for the region by 2010.
- 5 Utilize RC&D Forester to promote Farm Bill programs to forest landowners annually.
- 6 Educate public about the value of conservation easements for stewardship of the region’s forests and agricultural land through the forest landowner workshops by 2013.

## **Current and Potential Partnerships with USDA and Others**

### **SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS**

The following fourteen organizations and **local governments** sponsor the Black Diamond RC&D Council. Each sponsor appoints someone to represent them on the RC&D Council, which meets four times per year. The seven local governments also provide financial assistance to help cover non-project council expenses. The sponsors are Big Sandy Soil & Water Conservation District, **Buchanan County**, Clinch Valley Soil & Water Conservation District, Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission, Daniel Boone Soil & Water Conservation District, **Dickenson County**, **Lee County**, LENOWISCO Planning District Commission, Lonesome Pine Soil & Water Conservation District, **City of Norton**, **Russell County**, **Scott County**, Scott County Soil & Water Conservation District and **Wise County**.

Partnering organizations that Black Diamond RC&D has worked with in the past and/or might work with in the future on the goals outlined in this five-year plan are, but not limited to:

Appalachian RC&D  
Appalachian Sustainable Development  
Big Sandy RC&D  
Big Sandy River Basin Coalition, Inc.  
Canaan Valley Institute  
Chambers of Commerce  
Clinch-Powell RC&D  
Cumberland Plateau Regional Waste Management Authority  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful, Inc.  
MapTech, Inc.  
Mountain Empire Community College  
Mountain RC&D  
Mount Rogers Planning District Commission  
New River-Highlands RC&D  
Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (*ORSANCO*)  
Powell River Project  
Public Service Authorities (*each county has at least one PSA*)  
School Districts (*eleven of them for nine counties & two cities*)  
Shenandoah RC&D  
Soil & Water Conservation Districts (*other SWCDs throughout the Southern Rivers Region*)  
Southwest Virginia Community College  
Southwest Virginia Environmental Education Team (*SWEET*)  
Southwest Virginia Regional Recreation Authority  
Southern Appalachian Greenways Alliance  
Team Estonsa  
Tennessee Valley Authority  
The Nature Conservancy  
University of Virginia's College at Wise  
Upper James RC&D  
Upper Tennessee River Roundtable  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
U.S. Department of Energy  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
U.S. Forest Service

U.S. Office of Surface Mining  
USDA – Farm Service Agency  
USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service  
USDA – Rural Development  
Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts  
Virginia Cave Board  
Virginia Cooperative Extension Service (*Virginia Tech*)  
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Virginia Department of Emergency Management  
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality  
Virginia Department of Forestry  
Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries  
Virginia Department of Health  
Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy  
Virginia Department of Transportation  
Virginia Division of Natural Heritage  
Virginia Litter Control Association  
Volunteer Fire Departments

The following USDA employees provided input to the RC&D for this Area Plan:

- USDA – Farm Service Agency - **1**
- USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service - **5**
- USDA – Rural Development - **2**

## **Linkages to the NRCS Strategic Plan**

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) developed a strategic plan for 2005-2010 titled “***Productive Lands, Healthy Environment***” that contains six mission goals and outcomes and three overarching strategies. The goals and outcomes of the NRCS strategic plan are:

- **High Quality, Productive Soils** - The quality of intensively used soils is maintained or enhanced to enable sustained production of a safe, healthy and abundant food supply.  
*Linkage with RC&D Area Plan (2008 – 2013): Land Conservation – Goal 1*
- **Clean and Abundant Water** - The quality of surface waters and groundwater is improved and maintained to protect human health, support a healthy environment, and encourage a productive landscape. Water is conserved and protected to ensure an abundant and reliable supply for the Nation.  
*Linkage with RC&D Area Plan (2008 – 2013): Water Management – Goals 1-7*
- **Healthy Plant and Animal Communities** - Grassland, rangeland and forest ecosystems are productive, diverse and resilient. Working lands and waters provide habitat for diverse and healthy wildlife, aquatic species, and plant communities. Wetlands provide quality habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife, protect water quality, and reduce flood damage.  
*Linkage with RC&D Area Plan (2008 – 2013): Land Management – Goals 2-3*
- **Clean Air** - Agriculture makes a positive contribution to local air quality and the Nation’s efforts to sequester carbon.
- **An Adequate Energy Supply** - Agricultural activities conserve energy and agricultural lands are a source of environmentally sustainable biofuels and renewable energy.  
*Linkage with RC&D Area Plan (2008 – 2013): Land Management – Goal 1*
- **Working Farm and Ranch Lands** - Connected landscapes sustain a viable agriculture and natural resource quality.  
*Linkage with RC&D Area Plan (2008 – 2013): Community Development – Goal 2*

Black Diamond RC&D Council’s Area Plan addresses many of the same issues of the national NRCS Strategic Plan on a local level, addressing productive soils, improved water quality, healthy forests and landscapes, improved wildlife habitat and renewable energy.

The three strategies found in the NRCS Strategic Plan are:

- **Cooperative Conservation** - seeking and promoting cooperative efforts to achieve natural resource goals.
- **Watershed Approach** - providing information and assistance to encourage and enable locally led, watershed-scale conservation efforts.
- **Market-based Approach** - facilitating growth or market-based opportunities that encourage the private sector to invest in conservation on private lands.

All three of these approaches will also be utilized in the implementation of the Black Diamond RC&D Area Plan.

## References

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Virginia Economic Development Partnership. "*Virginia Economic Development Partnership: Community Profiles*". Retrieved September 23, 2008, from <http://virginiascan.yesvirginia.org/communityprofiles/CountyProfiles.aspx>

## **Required Clauses and Signatures**

The Black Diamond RC&D Council agrees that the RC&D Program will be conducted in compliance with the nondiscrimination 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 grounds 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 Black Diamond RC&D 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 procurement, suspension, and debarment.

The Black Diamond RC&D 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.

Black Diamond RC&D Council, Virginia

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Council Secretary

This action authorized at an official meeting of the Black Diamond RC&D Council on September 18, 2008.

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

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

Acknowledged By:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
State Conservationist