

Panhandle Lakes

Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc.

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2004



Assisted by:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

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Background Information

The Panhandle Lakes Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council, Inc. is an organization whose mission is to enhance the quality of life for the residents of north Idaho by maintaining and improving the economic, social and environmental conditions within this region.

The RC&D Program helps local people obtain and coordinate technical and financial assistance as needed from the private sector, corporations, foundations and all levels of government.

A provision of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1962 created the RC&D program. The Secretary of Agriculture delegated the responsibility for administering the program to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly known as the Soil Conservation Service). The Panhandle Lakes RC&D was originally established in 1964 as the Idaho-Washington RC&D, one of the first 10 areas in the United States authorized to receive assistance from USDA. The year 2004 marks the 40th anniversary of the RC&D program!

In order to operate effectively, the Natural Resources Conservation Service provides a staff to assist the Council with implementation of its Area Plan. The staff consists of a full-time coordinator and full-time program assistant. The Council develops an area-wide plan which includes long-range priorities, objectives and courses of action. Through the Area Plan, the Council acts to accomplish projects, which are carried out by sponsors with assistance from an RC&D coordinator.

Members of the Council are appointed annually by each sponsoring organization. Council members may serve so long as they remain duly chosen representatives of the organization they represent, and adhere to attendance policies. The Council consists of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and one representative from each sponsoring organization. In addition to the representation by each sponsoring unit, at-large members may be appointed. These members are chosen to broaden the scope of the Council and have voting privileges equal to those of the sponsoring representative.

The Panhandle Lakes RC&D Council is a non-profit organization, with Internal Revenue Code section 501 (c) 3 tax exemption. The Council is eligible to receive tax free donations, or grants, from individuals, corporations or foundations. These donations are tax deductible for the grantor.

The Council meets bi-monthly. Action taken at meetings may include adopting the annual plan of work, reviewing bylaws, adopting a budget and reviewing project action. An RC&D project is adopted by the Council as a means of accomplishing Council objectives. It requires a formal written plan.

Location

The Panhandle Lakes Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area is located in north Idaho. The authorized area is bordered on the north by Canada and on the east and west by the states of Montana and Washington respectively.

The 5,062,400 acres within the RC&D area includes five counties and 36 incorporated cities with a combined population of approximately 160,000 people. The counties include: Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai and Shoshone.

Panhandle Lakes RC&D Council

Mission Statement

To provide leadership, improve and conserve regional, economic and natural resources which will enhance the quality of life in north Idaho.

Vision Statement

Community volunteers enhancing north Idaho.

Sponsoring Organizations

Benewah Soil & Water Conservation District

Bonner Soil & Water Conservation District

Boundary Soil Conservation District

Kootenai-Shoshone Soil & Water Conservation District

Benewah County Commissioners

Bonner County Commissioners

Boundary County Commissioners

Kootenai County Commissioners

Shoshone County Commissioners

Coeur d'Alene Indian Tribe

Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

Bonner County Farm Bureau

City of Rathdrum

City of Post Falls

City of Sandpoint

City of Tensed

Priest River Chamber of Commerce

Panhandle Area Council

Officers

Chairman	Dan Dinning
Vice-Chairman	Linden Lampman
Secretary	George Bloomsburg
Treasurer	Colleen Allison

Forestry Committee

Forestry Chairman	Ed Schneider
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Office Staff

Coordinator	Kim Golden
Program Assistant	Kathy Dingman

Office Address

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Projects

West Bonner Library District:

The library, formerly located adjacent to the Priest River City Hall, has found a new home. The Library Board and a very active and determined “Friends of the West Bonner Library” have been successful in relocating the library to a new location downtown. Several phases of renovation and expansions has given the community an improved facility.

The RC&D role has been:

1. To help identify alternative sources of funding and equipment.
2. To conduct a grant workshop for the Grants and Facility Committee
3. Grants books were given to the Library on a long term loan for use by the community and library volunteers.

As a result of the assistance given to the Library, RC&D was asked to be a member of a panel discussion on fund raising at the Idaho Library Association Conference.

Rathdrum Mountain:

The Rathdrum Mountain project just completed a two year public input phase. Under the leadership of the Rathdrum “Gem Community” Committee and with assistance provided by the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Program, public input was gathered. Through public input, a preferred option was selected for how the City owned property should be managed.

Dog Beach Recreation Area:

The Sandpoint Lions’ Club has been striving to make improvements for the public benefit to this “landmark” recreation beach in Sandpoint. Included in the simple amenities desired were benches, tables and improvements to the overgrown vegetation.

RC&D has helped by identifying alternative funding sources, assisted with sorting through land ownership and right of way issues and helped coordinated erosion control recommendations provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Benches have been added to the site and a volunteer weed day resulted in improved vegetation.

Noxious Weed Management Projects:

The Panhandle Lakes RC&D Council is actively involved in the support of several noxious weed control efforts. Several of the individual projects extend beyond the five County boundary of the RC&D area. The current role for RC&D is primarily to act as fiscal agent, managing grant funds and other financial contributions. The RC&D is also represented on the CWMA Steering Committees. Projects include:

- Selkirk Cooperative weed Management Area (CWMA)
- Inland Empire Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA)
- Hawkweed Biological Control Consortium
- Eurasian Milfoil Task Force
- Hoary Cress/Dyer’s Woad Biological Control Consortium

Q'emiln Trails and Access Project:

Located along the Spokane River, Q'emiln Park is one of the oldest and most popular parks in the Post Falls' Park System. Although used by some outdoor enthusiasts, many people do not realize that immediately downstream from the developed park are many acres that offer trails and rock climbing.

The City of Post Falls' Parks & Recreation Commission, in an effort to properly manage all of Q'emiln Park, plan to develop a comprehensive Management Plan. The first step in developing that plan was to find out what the various user groups want the undeveloped portion of the park to look like, what type of experience they want the park to provide. RC&D was asked to help. Assistance included forming a steering committee of user groups, facilitating a series of meetings, then preparing a report to be used by a Parks and recreation Park's Commission Subcommittee to develop the Management Plan. The four month process accomplished the following:

1. Developed a consensus "vision statement."
2. Accomplished four specific tasks:
 - a. Identification of nature/recreation related uses and user groups.
 - b. Development of a connection between the City and user groups for an on-going system of maintenance & improvements.
 - c. Identification of issues and problems (constraints) and opportunities related to uses, including access & preservation.
 - d. Identification of resources available to address issues, problems (constraints) and opportunities.
3. Developed specific and detailed input including management plans from individuals and user groups.

Seedbank/Seedling Program:

The purpose and goal of this on-going RC&D project is to grow high quality seedlings whose seed source is north Idaho.

The project has several distinct phases. First, cones are collected from coniferous trees specific to elevation and geographic location. The cones are processed into tree seed which is then stored in a "seed bank" until needed. Each year the RC&D grows approximately 120,000 seedlings at a commercial nursery. Those seedlings are made available, through Soil & Water Conservation Districts, to private landowners for reforestation projects.

The Seedbank/Seedling program is one of several projects guided by a Forestry Committee.

Community Forestry Assistant:

Involving several partners, the Community Forestry Assistant project provides technical assistance, when requested to communities desiring to develop a community forestry program. Project partners include Idaho Department of Lands, the Clearwater RC&D Council and the Panhandle Lakes RC&D Council.

Communities in the ten north Idaho Counties are eligible for on-site assistance.

Growing Superior Tree Seed Workshop:

A Forest Stewardship project, this workshop is in its third year. Conducted by the University of Idaho, Kootenai County Cooperative Extension System, the workshop is designed to strengthen landowner's skills in the area of growing and collecting genetically superior tree cones for the purpose of reforestation needs.

The workshop complements the RC&D seedbank/seedling program. Also involved is Idaho Department of Lands and U.S. Forest Service.

Plummer Odd Fellows Hall:

Panhandle Lakes RC&D assisted in the renovation of this historic structure that was in danger of structurally collapsing. With leadership provided by members of the community, RC&D was able to facilitate on-site assistance from the Idaho Heritage Trust and assisted with a grant application, also to the Idaho Heritage Trust.

Forest Taxation & Estate Planning Conference:

The Panhandle Lakes RC&D Council provided administrative support and sponsorship to this biennial northwest workshop which is in its 9th year. Hosted by the Idaho Department of Lands and US Forest Service, the Forest Stewardship program provides the latest forest related tax and estate planning information to landowners, consultants and tax experts in Idaho and western Montana and eastern Washington.

Idaho-Washington Forest Owners Field Day:

Another Forest Stewardship Program that RC&D is involved with is this popular field day. Conducted in Washington or Idaho in alternating years, over 100 people strengthen their skills in forest stewardship.

Under the leadership of Idaho Department of Lands and U.S. Forest Service, Panhandle Lakes RC&D joins with several other organizations, programs and agencies in Idaho and Washington to sponsor the event.

Small Timber Products & Market Outlook Workshop:

This regional "technology in transition" workshop, held in Post Falls focused on energy. The workshop was presented by The Inland-Northwest Forest Products Research Consortium, Department of Forest Products, University of Idaho, Bureau of Business & Economic Research, University of Montana Wood and the Materials & Engineering Laboratory, Washington State University. As one of several sponsors, Panhandle Lakes RC&D helped publicize the workshop and provided a speaker.

Projects canceled:

- Friends of Priest River Theatre
- Worley Historic Building (Masonic Hall) renovation

Panhandle Lakes RC&D is also involved in several additional projects that are new or ongoing:

- Fuels for Schools
- Tensed Senior Center (heating system)
- Rainbow Acres Cheese Processing Facility
- Waterlife Discovery Center
- Conservation Districts' Public Information Program
- Iron Honey Stewardship Project

PROGRESS SUMMARY

Key Measures of 2004 Accomplishments

Public Facilities Improved: 1
 Recreation Areas Improved: 1
 Community Events organized: 1
 Acres Treated: 6,499
 Acres improved: >400
 Acres Planted: 480
 Educational Programs completed: 4/200 people in attendance
 Public Contacts: 8,566
 Public Input reports completed: 2
 Noxious Weed Management Plans Implemented: 2
 Acres Mapped/surveyed: 8975
 Biological Control Releases: 786
 Funding: (project partners): \$1, 492,000
 Volunteer hours (approximately): 760 hours

1965-2004

County	Projects Completed	On going
Benewah	80	1
Bonner	27	2
Boundary	22	0
Kootenai	131	1
Shoshone	15	1
Multi-County	102	3
TOTALS	352	8

All Panhandle Lakes RC&D services are offered on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap.