

Panhandle Lakes

Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc.

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2007



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 broad 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.

In order to operate effectively, the Natural Resources Conservation Service provides a staff to assist the Council with implementation of it's 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 sponsor, 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, normally on the second Thursday of alternating months. 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.

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 northern Idaho.

Vision Statement

Community volunteers enhancing northern 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 Hauser
City of Post Falls
City of Tensed
Priest River Chamber of Commerce
Sandpoint Chamber of Commerce
Panhandle Area Council

Officers

Chairman	Dan Dinning
Vice-Chairman	Terry Doupé
Secretary	Herman Collins
Treasurer	Nina Eckberg

Forestry Committee

Forestry Chairman	Ed Schneider
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Office Staff

Coordinator	Kim Golden
Program Assistant	Kathy Dingman

Office Address

Panhandle Lakes RC&D
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Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83815

(208) 762-4939, ext. 193
(208) 762-9859 (FAX)
website: www.plrcd.org

Projects

Bonner Community Food Center:

This project involved helping the food bank identify alternative funding sources that were used to purchase equipment and to make building improvements.

Cocolalla Eurasian Water Milfoil Project:

Control of Eurasian Watermilfoil to preserve the health of the lake and beneficial and recreational uses is the goal of the Cocolalla Lake Association with this multi-year project. The Panhandle Lakes RC&D Council helped by administering a grant from the Idaho State Department of Agriculture.

Community Forestry Assistant (CFA):

Involving several partners, the Community Forestry Assistant project provides technical assistance, when requested to communities desiring to develop a sustainable 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 assistance in developing sustainable urban forestry programs. Northwest Management Incorporated is currently serving as the CFA.

Public Information Programs:

Increasingly, projects that the Panhandle Lakes RC&D program is involved with are expanding their information programs beyond the traditional methods of newsletters, news articles, public meetings and mass mailings and involve some component of information outreach that includes web-based technology. This makes the dissemination of information comprehensive and fast. To that end, the Council is sometimes asked to help design and host web pages.

Projects that have included webpage development include:

- ◆ Cocolalla Lake Association. <http://www.cocolallalakeidaho.com/>.
- ◆ Hauser Lake Watershed Coalition. <http://www.hauserwatershed.org>.
- ◆ Stormwater, Erosion and Education Program (SEEP) The RC&D program has been involved in several ways with creating this new program, including webpage development (<http://www.plrcd.org/SEEP/>)
- ◆ Protecting the Idaho Panhandle (5-County Wildfire Website) <http://www.plrcd.org/NOFIRE/>
- ◆ Soil & Water Conservation Districts' Information Program Outreach <http://www.icehouse.net/ksswcd/>

Fuels for Schools & Beyond:

The Fuels for Schools (FFS) program in Idaho is a partnership program between the State Forester (Idaho Department of Lands), the Regional Foresters in Regions 1 and 4 of the USDA Forest Service, and the Panhandle Lakes RC&D Council. The state-wide program has been renamed Fuels for Schools & Beyond as it has been expanded to include other public buildings.

The purpose is to expand the use of small-diameter trees and slash removed in fire hazard reduction projects to heat local public schools and demonstrate the practicality, economy, and positive environmental impact of heating using biomass fuels. Currently, one demonstration project is operational in Council and a second is under construction in Kellogg.

Hauser Lake Watercraft Rinse Station:

Hauser Lake is a 625 acre lake that is in on average 21 feet deep. Hauser is a TMDL listed impaired lake due to nutrient loading of phosphorous.

At present, Eurasian Water milfoil (EWM), an aquatic weed problem in several Idaho water bodies, has not been found in Hauser Lake. However, its close proximity to other regional lakes already infested with the weed, makes it a prime candidate for infestation. Taking a pro-active, precautionary approach, the Hauser Lake Watershed Coalition applied for and received a grant from the Idaho State Department of Agriculture that made construction of the first watercraft rinse station in Idaho possible. The facility looks and operates much like a manual car wash. The boat and trailer are pulled onto a concrete pad prior to entering the water. Any weedy material is rinsed off and collected.

The project was a true community effort, made successful by the hard work, support and contributions of many. The Panhandle Lakes RC&D Council's role in the project was administration of the grant.

Inland Empire Tree Improvement Cooperative (IETIC):

IETIC is a consortium consisting of land management agencies, Tribes, University of Idaho, private industrial forestry companies and private forest landowners that were formed for the purpose of advancing the science of seedling production.

The IETIC Board of Directors approved a request from the Panhandle Lakes RC&D Council to be an affiliate member. As an affiliate member, the RC&D will have access to scientific and technical information related to seed production and has become a member of the Western Larch Seed Orchard Group (WLSOG). The WLSOG is in the process of establishing a new Western Larch seed orchard.

Natural Resource Consultants' Directory:

Natural Resource Consultants offer an important service to landowners attempting to manage their forest. The consultants offer a wide range of independent natural resource management services a consultant is hired by a landowner on a fee basis and works directly for the individual landowner. Consultants can provide more in-depth and comprehensive services than natural resource professionals employed by public agencies.

Choosing a natural resource consultant is similar to choosing other professionals. To assist landowners with this process, the Panhandle Lakes RC&D partnered with the University of Idaho, Cooperative Extension to develop a directory of resource consultants. Currently being updated, the directory can be found on the web at the following address
<http://www.cnr.uidaho.edu/extforest/NRConsultants.htm>.

Non-profit Workshop:

"Starting a Non-Profit Organization" was the title of a workshop sponsored by University of Idaho Cooperative Extension in cooperation with Panhandle Lakes RC&D and the Coeur d'Alene Tribe. The workshop was designed to help individuals who are contemplating setting up a "non-profit" but had questions about developing Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, the 501 (c) 3 application process, establishing and sustaining a board of directors, IRS reporting requirements, etc.

Presenting the training was the Idaho Nonprofit Development Center, with real-life experience provided by Panhandle Area Council and Community Action Partnership. The workshop was held at the Coeur d'Alene Tribe's Wellness Center in Plummer. Over 20 people participated, representing programs and communities from several north and central Idaho Counties.

West Side Rendezvous Community Celebration:

As a follow-up to the Non-profit workshop, assistance was given to the “Westside Rendezvous-Horizon’s Community Group” in conducting a community celebration in Plummer and Worley.

Led by the University of Idaho Cooperative Extension, in cooperation with the Coeur d’Alene Tribe, the celebration was intended to revive a sense of community and pride while promoting understanding between the various cultures.

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 two CWMA Steering Committees. Projects include:

- ◆ Selkirk Cooperative Weed Management Area (SCWMA)
- ◆ Inland Empire Cooperative Weed Management Area (IECWMA)
- ◆ Hawkweed Biological Control Consortium
- ◆ Eurasian Milfoil Task Force
- ◆ Hoary Cress/Dyer’s Woad Biological Control Consortium
- ◆ Inland Empire Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) Control

Pend Oreille Lake*A*Syst (L*A*S) Project:

Lake*A*Syst or Lakeshore Assessment System is a voluntary educational program to assist shoreline property owners in making well informed decisions in the management of their lakefront properties. The overall purpose is to reduce impacts to water quality.

With the cooperation of several organizations and units of government, including Panhandle Lakes RC&D, the on-going program is sponsored by the Bonner Soil & Water Conservation District.

<http://www.plrcd.org/lakeasyst/index.htm>

Protecting the Idaho Panhandle (5-County Wildfire Website):

The Panhandle Lakes RC&D Council was asked to coordinate a multi-county effort to develop and link the 5 North Idaho Counties’ wildland fire web pages. The Coeur d’Alene Tribe’s Hazardous Fuel Treatment program has also joined in the cooperative effort. The web pages have been created (<http://www.plrcd.org/NOFIRE/>) and the Council is hosting the site.

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.

Stormwater and Erosion Education Program (SEEP):

At the request of local industry professionals, a committee was formed to evaluate and eventually implement a Panhandle Stormwater and Erosion Education Program (Panhandle SEEP) in the five North Idaho counties. The Panhandle SEEP provides a multi-day course that is available to anyone in the construction industry and related disciplines who desire to improve their skills,

understanding and marketability in the stormwater and erosion control field. The program also includes a voluntary testing and certification option.

The program is led by Panhandle Health District and developed under the guidance of a steering committee which included many individuals, businesses, units of government including Panhandle Lakes RC&D. <http://www.plrcd.org/SEEP/>

Virtual Farmers' Market:

A new project (and opportunity for businesses) that the Panhandle Lakes RC&D has become involved with is the *Inland Northwest Virtual Farmers Market*. Started by the Clearwater RC&D Council and a number of its partners, it gives people who grow things and/or make things a place to market their products via a classified website. There is no buying or selling from the website itself; rather, information on what kinds of products are available and how to contact the seller. The website is: www.inlandNWfarmersmarket.com with the actual classified section at: <http://classifieds.inlandnwfarmersmarket.com/>

Panhandle Lakes RC&D remains supportive of several additional projects that are ongoing or have entered new phases of their planning and implementation. Included are:

- Waterlife Discovery Center
- Rathdrum Mountain

Projects canceled:

- Post Falls "Green" City Hall
- North Idaho Weed Control/Education

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.