

RC&D Area Planning Process Step Table

Purpose: Provide assistance to RC&D Councils as they each develop their respective Area Plan.

Scope: State-wide, all areas

Process Step	Responsibility	Inputs for that Step	Control	Resources	Output (Expected product)
1. Review date of current Area Plan.	Council Chair RC&D Coordinator	Current Area Plan.	Conservation Program Manual (CPM) 513.22(b) Public Law 107-171		Council has identified the date that last revision was approved. Date is discussed and documented in meeting minutes. If date on latest revision is approaching five years or older, discussion with Council on revision is scheduled. A revision could be needed sooner if conditions in the area change significantly since the last revision.
2. Appoint Planning Committee	Council Chair	Council member list. Recommendations of other potential participants by Council members (optional).	CPM 513.22(c)	RC&D Coordinator	Planning Committee is formed with charge to carry out plan revision activities, documented in meeting minutes.
3. Develop schedule of activities for the area planning process.	Planning Committee RC&D Coordinator	Committee charge. Committee members' calendars.	CPM 513.22(c)	Group calendar form.	Plan of Work that provides for who will do what when, access to needed information, and for information and education activities.

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4. Compile natural and community resource information.	RC&D Coordinator DCs	Census sources. Natural resource data from NRCS staff. Community and natural resource information from other agencies and sources. Required national elements (land conservation, water management, community development, and land management)	CPM 513.21(d)	GIS support NRCS Outreach Coordinator	A complete and concise summary of natural and community resource information that includes tabular and graphic information, and is suitable for use by Planning Committee and other council members.
5. A. Invite and receive input from other regional natural resource and community development organizations, and state and federal agencies.	Council Chair Planning Committee RC&D Coordinator DCs	Plan of Work from Step 3 Contact lists for organizations Current Area Plan	CPM 513.22(c&e)	Audio-visual (AV) equipment Travel Survey or other written input tool.	Information from organizations on current priorities and plans of action to help identify unmet needs and opportunities (gap analysis).
5. B. Invite and receive input from RC&D Council sponsoring organizations.	Council Chair Planning Committee RC&D Coordinator DCs	Schedule of activities. Contact lists. Current Area Plan	CPM 513.22(c&e)	AV equipment Travel Survey or other written input tool.	Information from sponsoring organizations on current priorities and plans of action to help identify unmet needs and opportunities (gap analysis).

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6. Develop and execute a public input plan that includes information and education components as needed.	Planning Committee RC&D Coordinator DCs	VIP lists from sponsors. Information on current RC&D council activities and projects. Current Area Plan Information on underserved and Tribal communities	CPM 513.22(c&e)	AV equipment Travel Other survey tools as appropriate. Outreach Coordinator	Summarized public input that includes input from under-served populations, tribal communities, and the general public, as well as from local community leaders to help identify unmet needs and opportunities (gap analysis).
7. Analyze natural and community resource information. Include a gap analysis that accounts for activities of other regional organizations.	Planning Committee RC&D Coordinator DCs	Community and natural resource summary from Step 4. Annual plans and reports from other selected major organizations in the RC&D area. Required national elements	CPM 513.21(d)	Board members and others with specialized knowledge about other major organizations in the RC&D area. GIS support. Area or State Office technical specialist support as appropriate.	A list, in the Planning File, of significant natural resource and community economic and social issues that are not currently being adequately addressed by other organizations or coalitions in the RC&D operating area.
8. Articulate Council values.	Council	Input from each Council member on what they think the core values of the RC&D Council should be.	CPM 513.22(a, c&d)	Trained facilitator (perhaps RC&D Coordinator).	A written listing of core values with which all Council members have consensus.

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9. Articulate Council vision statement (statement of desired future conditions).	Council	Values listing.	CPM 513.22(d)	Trained facilitator (perhaps RC&D Coordinator).	A written description of what conditions will be like in the RC&D area related to key parameters, if the new Plan is implemented successfully.
10. Articulate Council Mission Statement (Identify primary customers, products and services provided and methods of delivery)	Council	Values listing. Vision Statement	CPM 513.22(d)	Trained facilitator (perhaps RC&D Coordinator).	A written Mission Statement for the RC&D Council that reflects its vision and core values.
11. Write draft Needs and Opportunities section of revised Area Plan. Review with Council.	Planning Committee RC&D Coordinator	Community and natural resource summary from Step 4. A listing of significant natural and community resource issues that are not currently being adequately addressed by other organizations or coalitions in the RC&D operating area from Step 7.	CPM 513.23	Focused work time for the Planning Committee and RC&D Coordinator.	The “Needs and Opportunities” section describes the extent of impacts on the community. Only the needs and opportunities that the Council chooses to address should be described in detail; others may be acknowledged. Required national elements are addressed in this section.
12. Articulate draft goals that are informed by public and partner organization input, and analysis of resource information. Review with Council.	Planning Committee RC&D Coordinator	Council vision. Council mission statement. Input from the public. Input from partner organizations.	CPM 513.23	Focused work time for the Planning Committee and RC&D Coordinator.	A set of 3-5 overall goals which are consistent with the Council’s Vision and Mission. If any required national elements are not the subject of a goal, the Needs and Opportunities section will describe how that element is being addressed by others and/or why chosen goals are a higher priority for the Council.

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13. Develop draft objectives in support of the Council vision statement and goals. Review with Council.	Planning Committee RC&D Coordinator	Draft Council goals. Draft Needs and Opportunities section.	CPM 513.23	Focused work time for the Planning Committee and RC&D Coordinator.	A list of objectives that are tied to goals identified in Step 12. and are: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bound (SMART).
14. Develop draft strategies to achieve objectives in support of the Council vision statement and goals. Review with Council.	Planning Committee RC&D Coordinator	Draft Council goals. Draft Council Objectives. Draft Needs and Opportunities section.	CPM 513.23	Focused work time for the Planning Committee and RC&D Coordinator.	A list of strategies that are specific actions to support identified goals and objectives (and are potential projects or major project phases).
15. Estimate resource (human, financial, equipment, etc.) requirements for the draft strategies and identify potential sources, including other USDA agencies.	Planning Committee RC&D Coordinator	Strategies list.	Expected CPM Part 513 direction, per email communications with National RC&D Program Coordinator (12/6/05).	Focused work time for the Planning Committee and RC&D Coordinator.	Anticipated human, financial, equipment and other resource needs associated with draft strategies are documented in a table for review by the Council and inclusion in the Area Plan document. Potential providers of these resources are also included in the table. USDA agency sources will be included in the table or a footnote to the table will document that USDA sources were researched but found not to be likely sources for the draft strategies from Step 14.
16. Approve or disapprove draft goals, objectives and strategies. If disapproved, return to Step 12.	Council	Draft goals, objectives and strategies. Draft Needs and Opportunities section.	CPM 513.24	Council agenda time.	Approval of draft goals, objectives and strategies are recorded in Council minutes.
17. Review and edit anticipated human, financial, equipment and other resource needs associated with draft strategies.	Council	Table of anticipated resource needs and potential resource providers from Step 15.	Expected CPM Part 513 direction (see Step 15).	Council agenda time.	The edited table of anticipated resource needs and potential resource providers is noted in Council minutes and filed as a reference for use in developing Annual Plans of Work.

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18. Complete draft Area Plan document which incorporates signature page elements required by NRCS policy.	Planning Committee RC&D Coordinator	Planning Committee	CPM 513.23 (c&d) RC&D Area Plan Checklist	Focused work time for the Planning Committee and RC&D Coordinator.	Completed draft document that includes required elements
19. Review and tentatively approve draft Area Plan.	Council	Draft Area Plan document.	CPM 513.24(a)	Council agenda time.	Council's Approval of draft Area Plan is recorded in their meeting minutes.
20. Provide review copy to sponsor organizations. (If significant issues arise from that review, return to the appropriate step above based on the nature of the issue.)	Council member representatives from sponsor organizations. RC&D Coordinator	Draft Area Plan document Feedback from sponsor organizations.	CPM 513.22(c)	Sponsor organizations meeting and review time.	Sponsor organization written communication back to Council with feedback and/or statement of concurrence.
21. Provide review copy to ASTC-FO, and DCs. (If significant issues arise from that review, return to the appropriate step above based on the nature of the issue.)	RC&D Coordinator DCs ASTC-FO	Draft Area Plan document. Feedback from DCs	CPM 513.24(a)	ASTC-FO and RC&D Coordinator meeting time.	ASTC-FO written communication back to RC&D Coordinator with feedback and/or statement of concurrence.
22. Provide review copy for regional intergovernmental review.	Council Chair	Intergovernmental review contact information (if applicable) from IARCOG website www.iarcog.com Draft Area Plan document.	CPM 513.22(c)		Review of Area Plan is recorded in intergovernmental body minutes or acknowledged through correspondence.

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23. Provide copy for and seek approval from State Conservationist.	Council Chair STC	State Conservationist schedule. Draft Area Plan document.	CPM 513.24(a)		Area Plan is approved by State Conservationist.
24. Final adoption of Area Plan.	Council	Area Plan document.	CPM 513.24(b)	Council agenda time.	Area Plan is adopted by Council and signed by Council's authorized representative.
25. Provide copy for and seek endorsement from Governor's Office.	Council Chair Governor	Governor's Office contact and protocol information. Area Plan document.	CPM 513.22(c) and 513.24(d)		Endorsement letter from Governor.
26. Provide copy for National RC&D Program staff, Regional Assistant Chief, and state-level USDA agency heads.	ASTC-WR	Recipient addresses	CPM 513.24(c)		Area Plan copies are distributed and copies of transmittal correspondence are on file in the State Office, with copies of transmittal correspondence provided to the Council.

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27. Develop and execute a roll-out plan for educating the public about the revised Area Plan.	Council RC&D Coordinator	Revised Area Plan Summarized public input from Step 6. List of issues from Step 7. Contact information for under-served groups and tribal communities. Very Important Person (VIP) contact lists. Media contact lists.		Council agenda time. AV equipment NRCS Public Affairs staff support	Completed communications with the public including the general public, under-served populations, tribal communities, elected leaders and others as deemed appropriate by the Council. Communications are documented through media clippings and tapes, meeting attendance lists, and copies of communications materials as appropriate.

Planning Hierarchy Terminology

Values are principles or qualities that are considered most important by an individual or group.

Examples:

Social responsibility, entrepreneurship, natural resources stewardship, democracy, inclusiveness.

Vision: A statement which describes the desired future conditions for the organization.

Example:

“The area served by Iowa Land RC&D will be a place where people:

- are safe and respected,
- enjoy a good quality of life,
- can provide economically for themselves and their families, and
- conserve natural resources and protect the environment.”

Mission: A statement which identifies the organization’s primary customers, defines the products and/or services provided, and describes the methods used to deliver the products and/or services to the customer.

Example: “Helping communities define their future through partnerships and targeted technical assistance.”

Goal: The purpose toward which efforts are directed.

Example: “Improve the quality of life for economically or socially disadvantaged citizens in our region.”

Objective: A specific manifestation or indicator of progress towards reaching a stated goal. Objectives should be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**ime-bound (SMART).

Example: “State-certified pre-school daycare facilities will be established at least one community of each county in the RC&D area by the end of 2008.”

Strategy: Specific action to support identified objectives. Strategies are often potential projects or major project phases.

Example: “Provide technical assistance to complete a feasibility study and business plan for the proposed Stratford Community Childcare Center.”

Required National Elements for Needs and Opportunities Section (see Step 11)

Land Conservation is defined in statute as the control of erosion and sedimentation.

Water management is defined in statute as 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 is defined in statute as 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 is defined in statute as 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.

Field Tested: 12/27/2005

Approved: /s/Richard Van Klaveren
Richard Van Klaveren, STC

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