

BEARTOOTH RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT (RC&D) AREA, INC.

2011 ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK

January 1, 2011 - December 31, 2011



Submitted to:

*USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service,
RC&D Sponsors, Cooperative Organizations, Individuals
by the
Board of Directors
Beartooth RC&D Area, Inc.*

*Serving the Counties of
Big Horn, Carbon, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, and Yellowstone*

Montana Counties



Beartooth RC&D Area, Inc.

Beartooth RC&D Area, Inc. 2011 Plan of Work

This proposed plan of work was authorized at an official meeting of the Beartooth RC&D Area, Inc. Board of Directors on January 20, 2011.

Charles E. Egan 01-20-11
Charles E. Egan Date
Chairman
Beartooth RC&D Area, Inc.

Joyce Swartzendruber Acting 1-27-11
Joyce Swartzendruber, STC Date
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Prepared in compliance with Public Law 97-98, 1b U.S.G. 3451-3461.

BEARTOOTH RC&D AREA, INC.

Beartooth RC&D Area, Inc. is an independent, nonprofit, 501©(3), nonpartisan organization, whose primary concern is the conservation, development, and proper use of natural and human resources, which was established in 1970. the Beartooth RC&D Area Inc, provides service to a five county area, which includes: Big Horn, Carbon, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, and Yellowstone Counties.

The purpose of Beartooth RC&D Area, Inc. is to develop and carry out an Area Plan, which will improve the economic and social conditions through conservation, development, and proper use of natural and human resources. Beartooth RC&D Area, Inc. assists businesses and organizations throughout the area to secure technical, financial, educational, and other services needed to implement the area plan.

The organization consists of an Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, and a resource and revolving loan fund committee, as approved by the Board of Directors.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all of its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA's Target Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD)

Beartooth RC&D Area, Inc. 2011 Plan of Work

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal employment opportunity employer.

OFFICERS

| | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| Charles Egan | Chairman |
| Marvin Carter | Vice-Chairman |
| Penny Landon | Secretary/Treasurer |

COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| John Pretty on Top | Big Horn County |
| Doug Tucker | Carbon County |
| Dennis Hoyem | Stillwater County |
| Susie Mosness | Sweet Grass County |
| Jim Reno | Yellowstone County |

CITY REPRESENTATIVES

| | |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| Jeff McDowell | Hardin |
| Ed Ulledalen | Billings |
| Ken Gomer | Bridger |
| Page Dringman | Big Timber |
| Katie Callahan | Joliet |
| Marvin Carter | Laurel |
| Brian Roat | Red Lodge |
| Ada Iron | Crow Nation |
| Steve Arveschoug | Big Sky Economic Development |

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

| | |
|---------------|-------------|
| Dan Lowe | Big Horn |
| Penny Landon | Carbon |
| Bob VanOosten | Stillwater |
| Dick Rath | Sweet Grass |
| VACANT | Yellowstone |

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Melissa Kramer | Stillwater Economic Development |
| Kendall Hartman | MT Billings Job Service |
| Lisa Skriner | MT College of Technology |

VISION

The Beartooth Resource Conservation & Development Area, Inc. envisions a strong, healthy economy for the area, one that offers opportunities for growth, while protecting the unique resources of the region. Utilizing a unified effort to maintain and improve the quality of life for the residents of south central Montana, a regional organization that can address issues affecting south central Montana through consensus and collaboration, while maintaining a network of technical expertise capable of assisting with project design and implementation.

MISSION

The RC&D is sponsored and directed by local people as a regional vehicle to improve the economic and social conditions through the conservation, utilization and development of the natural and human resources of the area. Beartooth Resource Conservation and Development Area, Inc. provides a means to focus the resources of people with various backgrounds, expertise and points of view. People working together can develop and implement a plan which address problems or issues that affect their quality of life. The RC&D is essentially "Citizens Building Stronger Communities."

Beartooth RC&D Area, Inc. 2011 Plan of Work

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Charles Egan | Executive Committee |
| Kendall Hartman | Economic Development Committee |
| Bob VanOosten | Revolving Loan Fund Committee |

RESOURCE COMMITTEES

The three committees are organized under the Board of Directors to address the following issues: Executive, and Economic Development, Revolving Loan Fund

Executive Committee – encourages and guides the staff in office management pertaining to the salaries, hiring of personnel needed for program delivery and annual review of work performed.

Economic Development Committee – works to develop small business, tourism, employment and other economic and social opportunities in the area. This committee administers Beartooth Economic Development District (EDD), Beartooth Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) and the Certified Regional Development Corporation (CRDC).

Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Committee - encourage and accelerate economic development activities by providing gap financing to individuals and businesses who may find it difficult to meet conventional underwriting standards. The committee reviews and makes decisions regarding the applications. Job creation and retention is the primary goal, especially to providing employment to those in low and moderate income categories.

STAFF

Sponsors of Beartooth RC&D Area, Inc. have access to seven staff members with expertise in the areas of natural resources and conservation, grant writing, fund raising, business planning, financial assistance, outreach and education, marketing, communications, project development and housing education and assistance and hazardous fuel reduction.

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Carla Lawrence | NRCS - RC&D Coordinator |
| Chris Mehus | Economic Development Director/Office Manager |
| Jillann Knutson | Bookkeeper/RLF Manager |
| Paige Weber | Office Administrator |
| Joel Bertolino | AG Program Manager |
| Dick Rath | Forester-Hazardous Fuels Reduction Program |
| Diana Spint | Housing Coordinator |

Beartooth RC&D Area, Inc. 2011 Plan of Work

GOAL : Maintain the RC&D's regional forum for communication between communities and regional organizations.

Objective 1: Strengthen the Board of Directors and Committees.

Strategy A. Review the dues assessment structure for cities, towns, counties, and conservation districts on an annual basis and review methods/programs to strengthen the organization's long-term financial stability.

1. Develop an annual budget which takes into consideration the needs to finance existing programs and examine project needs.
2. Monitor budgets throughout the year.
3. Meet with sponsors at least once a year.
4. Investigate and develop plans/projects that will have a beneficial long-term financial effect on the organization while furthering its mission & goals.

Responsible Party: Carla Lawrence, Beartooth RC&D Staff

Completion Date: 12/31/2011

Strategy B. Strengthen the organizational structure and the capacity of Board Members.

1. Use the Board Guidebook and other educational materials as an orientation tool.
2. Work on Leadership Training and strengthening organizational structure.
3. Support attendance of Board Members at Regional and National meetings.
4. Ensure all board vacancies are filled in a timely manner.

Responsible Party: Carla Lawrence, Beartooth RC&D Staff, Executive Committee and Board of Directors

Completion Date: 12/31/2011

Strategy C. Work with State RC&D Association and other conservation related organizations on projects of special interest.

1. Support Board members involvement in State RC&D Association
2. Encourage attendance of Board Members at Regional and National meetings.
3. Stay current with RC&D activities at the Regional and National levels

Responsible Party: Carla Lawrence, Beartooth RC&D Executive Committee and Board

Completion Date: 12/31/2011

Beartooth RC&D Area, Inc. 2011 Plan of Work

Goal: Strengthen and solidify the regional economy by supporting local industries to improve the quality of life and provide employment opportunities.

Objective 1: Provide quality technical assistance for retention & expansion of business through RC&D staff technical assistance, and expand our revolving Loan Fund.

Strategy A: Work with Big Sky Economic Development (BSED), Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Crow Tribe, Montana Department of Commerce (MDOC), NeighborWorks® Montana, and other economic development agencies.

1. Promote and support Business Expansion And Retention (BEAR) program by attendance at meetings and visiting with local businesses in rural communities.
2. Support and work with local economic development groups in Billings, Red Lodge, Columbus and Hardin.
3. Provide First Time Homebuyer classes and technical assistance to 400 participants through homebuyer education, foreclosure counseling, and financial counseling. Provide FEMA information for HOME grant participants.

Responsible Party: Carla Lawrence, Beartooth RC&D staff
Completion Date: 12/31/2011

Objective 2: Support the development/creation of value-added industries to include and seek opportunities for agricultural business production and marketing.

Strategy A: Support the EnSave (on-farm energy audits) project funded through NRCS-Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) with other RC&D across the state, as well as other energy development.

Strategy B: Serve Ag-related businesses as one of four (4) Montana Food and Ag Centers, funded through MT Department of Ag and assist five (5) producers with value-added Ag project planning and development and help strengthen existing Gaining Assistance Through Employment (GATE) program in Eastern Montana (located in Glendive).

Strategy C: Explore value-added processing opportunities for locally grown crops by assisting four (4) businesses with business planning development, marketing etc. which included NRCS-CIG project for Goddard Manure compost and feedlot management and development.

Strategy D: Provide funding through RLF to five (5) new or existing businesses and expand the RLF by marketing services to and cooperating with commercial bankers through the region and establish relationships with three (3) new lenders.

Strategy E: Continue to assist Two Rivers Authority (TRA) to recruit and develop businesses in the Hardin Industrial Park, including the development of rail spur to serve the area.

Responsible Party: Carla Lawrence, Chris Mehus, Jillann Knutson, Joel Bertolino
Completion Date: 12/31/2010

Beartooth RC&D Area, Inc. 2011 Plan of Work

Goal : Assist local conservation districts, watershed groups and others in maintaining the natural resource base.

Objective: Assist local boards and Conservation Districts to reduce negative economic impact of noxious weed infestations and other issue related the conservation of natural resources.

Strategy A: Continue to support the development of a regional GIS operations board and service center which would serve as an educational, planning and emergency service for the five county area and neighboring counties.

Strategy B: Assist districts with watershed planning and provide support when requested through grant writing and management.

1. Work with Absoraka-Beartooth Wilderness Foundation (ABWF) to management funding provided by Forest Service and while they apply to become a non-profit.
2. Work with local weed supervisors and NRCS office to address noxious weeds in the area, especially as related to Russian Olive and Salt Cedar.
3. Pleasant Valley Canal Users—support the next step for this group with the Renewable Resource Grant and Loan (RRGL) application, as requested.

Responsible Party: Carla Lawrence, Chris Mehus, Joel Bertolino, Jillann Knutson
Completion Date: 12/31/2011

Objective: Maintain agricultural and tourism base by preserving open space and agricultural lands.

Strategy A: Establish a grazing reserve program that expands management opportunities for farmers and ranchers, while assisting owner of “idle” land with fire mitigation, weed/range management to enhance 5,000 acres. Continue to work with Lionhead Ranch on pilot.

Strategy B: Continue to assist landowners in rural communities with fuels reduction efforts in wild land/urban interface and complete twenty (20) fuels reduction projects on at least 150 acres.

Strategy C: Work with two (2) watershed groups to enhance natural resources in their area.

1. Stillwater Valley Watershed Group
2. Yellowstone River Conservation District Council (YRCDC)

Responsible Party: Carla Lawrence, Chris Mehus, Dick Rath, Joel Bertolino
Completion Date: 12/31/2011

Beartooth RC&D Area, Inc. 2011 Plan of Work

2011 Performance Measure Progress by Program for Service Center Goals in Montana

| <u>Measure ID</u> | <u>Performance Measure</u> | <u>FY11 Goal</u> |
|-------------------|--|------------------|
| 0.20 | Watershed or area-wide conservation Plans developed (No.) | 2 |
| 6.12 | Land and water resources benefitted By RC&D projects (Ac.) | 5,000 |
| 6.13 | Local businesses created or retained in Rural communities (No.) | 15 |

Fiscal Year 2011 Meeting Dates: meetings are held every other month on the third Thursday during odd numbered months: January, March, May, July, September and November.

- ~ Wednesday, January 20, 2011—Laurel
- ~ Thursday, March 17, 2011—Columbus
- ~ Thursday, May 19, 2011—Hardin
- ~ Thursday, July 21, 2011—Joliet
- ~ Thursday, September 15, 2011—Red Lodge
- ~ Thursday, November 10, 2011—Big Timber