1972

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Cooperative Extension South Dakota State University

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Implementing Water Resources Planning through RC&D Projects as a part of The West River Sub-District Plan for Development

Cooperative Extension Service
South Dakota State University, Brookings
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Implementing Water Resources Planning through RC&D Projects
The West River Sub-District Plan for Development

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South Dakota State University, and Keith Hamer, manager, West River Conservancy Sub-District.

What RC&D Is

The letters RC&D mean Resource Conservation and Development.

RC&D is a federal assistance program established under the Food and Agricultural Act of 1962 and administered through the Soil Conservation Service.

Control is exercised through a steering committee of local people in each RC&D district.

An RC&D District is a block of counties that have mutual interests and problems and wish to band together to plan and construct improvements within their district.

Problems that can be attacked by RC&D districts are almost limitless although the tendency is for projects to be local and rather small as compared to most federal construction projects. A project proposal under RC&D could be anything from a retirement home to a small irrigation project, to sediment control in a critical area, to municipal water supplies.

Funding of a project under RC&D can come from many sources. Some will qualify for special funds available under the RC&D program, however, most of the money comes from the people who benefit from the project construction, such as individuals, cities, and counties. In cases where benefits would be quite widespread, a conservancy sub-district or state agency would be logical contributors.

Technical Assistance is arranged by a person called a coordinator who is an employee of the Soil Conservation Service. To oversimplify his job we might say that he is the "leg man" who gets the right people together to determine if a project proposed by the steering committee can be built and then follows it through to completion.

RC&D, A Popular Program

Application for RC&D project assistance by groups of counties in the United States now equals 151. Only 97 of these have been funded, however, and have a coordinator assigned.

The accompanying map shows the situation in South Dakota. We have two funded: the Randall and Black Hills RC&D districts. We also have six other areas that have made application but have not been funded. Two of the six unfunded areas are in the West River Sub-District: the West Central RC&D, south of the Cheyenne River, and the Northwestern RC&D, north of the Cheyenne River. Neither of these are funded.

How soon they are funded will depend on congressional appropriations. However, since South Dakota already has two funded districts and many states have none, it seems likely that additional funding in South Dakota may be several years away.

What Unfunded RC&D Districts Can Do

We can learn a great deal from the experiences of the Randall and Black Hills RC&D districts since they have now been in operation for 7 years and 3 years, respectively.

The following table shows the number of projects processed by each and gives an indication of how the projects were funded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RC&amp;D District</th>
<th>Total project proposals submitted (as of May, 1972)</th>
<th>Less those dropped (infeasible)</th>
<th>Less current proposals awaiting action</th>
<th>TOTAL PROCESSED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Randall</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Hills</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those processed that did not involve RC&D funds except for the coordinators time*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those processed that did involve RC&D funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL PROCESSED

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<td>106</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>155</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Some involved federal funds other than RC&D funds

The significant things to note in the table are the large number of projects processed, the relatively small number found infeasible and the large percentage (63% and 72%) that were accomplished without using RC&D funds.

The small use of RC&D funds indicates that "getting the right people together" is a very important...
part of the coordinator's job. It also indicates that an unfunded RC&D district could get about two-thirds of its projects built if it had someone to do the "leg work" and the "follow through."

The Sub-District's Plan

Under the proposed program for contracting authority, the West River Sub-District proposes to furnish this "leg work" and "follow through." The Sub-District would provide RC&D districts with services similar to those provided by a coordinator in funded districts until such time as the RC&D districts can be federally funded. Based on the experience of the Randall and Black Hills RC&D districts, about two-thirds of the projects proposed could be gotten under way by this means.

Project Proposals

Coming In Now

The steering committees of the unfunded West Central and Northwestern RC&D districts had received about 50 project proposals by July, 1972. Of these, 33% pertain to municipal problems, 39% to agricultural problems, 13% to industry or commerce, and 16% to recreation.
The South Dakota Water Plan is being prepared in accordance with the newly enacted South Dakota Water Resources Management Act. This publication is informational material being presented to inform the public of actions and authorities that are related to the South Dakota Conservancy District's role in the implementation of the State Water Plan.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. Duane Acker, Director of Extension, South Dakota State University, Brookings.

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