

**Lower Hudson – Long Island
Resource Conservation and Development Council Inc.
New York
2007 – 2012 Area Plan**



VISION STATEMENT:

“Connecting Urban and Rural Communities”

MISSION STATEMENT:

To facilitate economic growth that is both environmentally sound and socially equitable through the promotion of a partnership between rural and urban conservation initiatives.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Needs and opportunities

The Lower Hudson Valley and Long Island are rich in natural resources and human capital. There are many diverse groups within the metropolitan region and they have created a market demand for food that is locally produced harvested and delivered with fresh quality. Agricultural distribution is dominated by trucks which have negative impacts on our environment such as air and water quality contaminants. Quality of life is also impacted due to excessive commercial traffic, higher temperatures and noise pollutants that plague urban/city residents. The opportunity to improve our agricultural distribution system lies within concept to build a modern wholesale farm market that can meet the consumer needs both at a wholesale level and retail venue. The renaissance of waterborne and rail transportation will reduce the impacts of trucks and improve our soil, water and air quality.

Goal I:

Connect Consumers with Producers by improved agricultural product distribution

Objective:

Research and establish a proposal for transporting agricultural products on barges from upstate NY producers to Downstate Consumers.

Strategies:

- A. Host a discussion with significant partners to discuss the feasibility of an intermodal distribution facility for agricultural products 2007.
- B. Establish a Waterborne and Rail distribution Committee
 1. Identify deep water facilities along the Hudson River that can accommodate agriculture commodities. 2007
 2. Develop a network that will be in charge of initiating formal discussions between local NY State growers of agricultural products and the Department of Transportation and Port Authority officials to discuss a concept design for an intermodal farmers' market facility in New York City, incorporating the metropolitan waterfronts on the Hudson, and Long Island Sound. 2008
 3. Inventory Agri - businesses that have potential to use containers for shipping on barges 2007
 4. Evaluate New York needs and Potential for Hudson River Valley agricultural usage of container shipping.
 5. Seek alternative fuel sources for trains, tugboats and barges (refrigeration, machinery for loading etc.) 2008
 6. Identify an intermodal facility for waterborne transportation 2009
 7. Engage producers to begin alternative waterborne and rail distribution 2011
 8. Private sector shipping and receiving arrangements are made for distribution 2012.
- C. Expand on the buy local educational concept of *Fresh off the Barge*

1. Hold Farmers' Market event in Harlem New York, Hudson River Riverbank State Park 2007.
2. Develop a team of partners to pilot a project that delivers fresh apples from upstate farms in NY to deliver from port of Newburgh to NYC and donate to NYC Schools, Nutrition organizations or Hunger programs 2007.

Goal II

Farmers will increase their ability to market value added agriculture products

Objective

Facilitate partnerships with regional groups to assist farmers with diversifying their business strategies to increase profits.

Strategy

- A. Develop Regional Marketing Programs
 1. Assist the Dutchess and Columbia County Agricultural Marketing initiative *Hudson Valley Fresh*. Council members will provide regional updates on dairy initiatives within their respective county.
 2. Assist the Orange County Ag. and Farmland Protection Board with:
 - Phase I the assessment of dairy market business opportunities for the remaining 65 producers. 2007
 - 2007 host a panel discussion of regional successful dairy ventures.
 - Phase II Seek funding for a staff person that will establish new markets for milk and identify opportunities for a regional milk processing facility. 2010
 3. New York City Wholesale Farmers Market Study, Phase III
- B. Establish a database for sharing information on sustainable food networks
 1. RC&D Coordinator, staff, and Council project leader will develop spreadsheets for data collection. Work with agencies and NGO's that have similar data and interest in the content. 2007
 2. County Soil and Water Conservation Districts will assist in the collection of data from partnering county agencies and organizations to quantify farm products for the entire 13 County Region. 2008
 3. Exit Data. Survey farms that have gone out of business and identify factors resulting in their decision. 2008, 2009
 4. Provide information to local special interest groups through internet service. 2010 - 2012
- C. Farm to School
 1. Develop a list of current farm to school initiatives in the region 2007
 2. Partner with the New York Federation of RC&D Councils for develop a statewide initiative. 2007, 2008

Goal III.

Sustainable farming and healthy food education

Objective:

1. To develop a program that introduces children from urban communities to rural agricultural settings, increasing their knowledge of “where their food comes from”.
2. Enable children of rural communities to increase their knowledge of the urban sector and why it is important to preserve open space and natural resources.

Strategies

- Develop a list of schools and local farm programs 2007
- Identify a project team from the RC&D Council 2007
- Identify farms, agencies and school groups that would want to participate. 2008
- Upon successful planning a search for funding opportunities will take place. 2008

LAND MANAGEMENT

Needs and opportunities

The Hudson River Valley has been placed within the top ten most threatened regions in the nation for loss of viable farmland to conversion. Suffolk County, New York’s most economically viable agricultural county is also under harsh development pressure but has been suppressed by local action groups and municipalities that have pioneered some of the first farmland protection programs in the country. Long Island Agriculture continues to be a leader and guiding force for municipalities and entities to save the working landscape and to further protect our natural resources at the urban and rural interface. The Council will focus on local support for innovative energy practices that will improve farm economics while providing efficient and environmentally sound alternative energy sources to urban consumers.

Goal I

1. Air and water quality will be improved as consumers reduce their use of fossil fuel and increased use of Alternative Energy
2. Agriculture businesses will benefit financially from the demands for alternative energy

Objective:

To partner with regional and national efforts to identify researched based bio fuel initiatives. The Council will provide guidance to communities on alternative energy sources that will reduce environmental pollution and costs to consumers.

Strategies

- A. Facilitate quarterly meetings of the Hudson River Valley - Bio Fuels Working Group. 2007 - 2012

- B. Partner with the Hudson River – American Heritage Rivers Initiative and the Pace University Healthy Air Task Force to host 1 alternative fuels conference.
- C. Assist Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County with educating farmers about the potential for viable dense grass production and marketing it as a fuel source. 2008, 2009
- D. Assist the Environmental Resource Center at Hilltop Hanover:
 - 1. Develop a plan for biomass pelletization and development. 2008
 - 2. Identify and procure mobile pelletizer 2009
- E. Identify the quantity of used cooking oils for vegetable fuels in area cities.
 - 1. Organize efforts with Cornell Cooperative Extension of NYC to deliver their current study to local cities. 2007
 - 2. White Plains and Yonkers 2008, 2009

Goal II.

Land use planners and community preservation groups will utilize conservation planning tools to protect agricultural land from conversion to alternative uses and keep farms viable.

Objective:

Train conservation groups and municipal officials engaged in farm and ranchland protection programs to develop outreach and education programs for landowners

Strategies:

- A Hilltop Hanover Farm in Westchester County
 - 1. Assist the New York City Greenmarket with the development of *The New Farmer Development program*. 2007
 - One *meet the farmer* tour will be set up to introduce farmland owners to the new generation of farmers. 2007, 2008, 2009
 - Technical assistance will be provided annually to the new farmers for land conservation and product marketing and development. 2007, 2008, 2009
- B. Hudson Valley Agricultural Partnership
 - 1. Establish a method for administrative functions of the partnership
 - 2. Conduct two follow up programs in the region discussing the Proposed Community Preservation Act 2007
 - 3. Work with the Coordinator to seek funding for the Partnership for 2007
 - 4. Plan the 2007 Hudson Valley Agricultural Partnership Conference.

Goal III

Fish, wildlife and native plant habitats, will be protected so that at risk species will remain stable or increase in population.

Objective:

Grassroots organizations are successful in protecting and restoring wildlife habitats.

Strategy

A. Venison Donation

- Reach out to County Sportsman to participate in the program.
- Search for funding sources to support 1:1 match

B. Pollination Demonstration

- Develop an apiary, production demonstration at Hilltop Hanover Farm
- Provide pollination for the production of fruits and other crops dependent on honey bee pollination. 2008
- Develop information on Beekeeping as an income, based on forest resources and advocate for preserving forest resources. 2009

LAND CONSERVATION

Needs and opportunities

Stormwater management for the urban communities has been a high priority. Soil and Water Conservation districts have taken a lead to educate municipal officials about new EPA regulations and best management practices for implementing soil erosion practices. The LH-LI RC&D Council will disseminate information and work with districts to keep municipalities informed about soil loss programs.

Goal

Support Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Objective:

SWCD's are the basis for the makeup of the RC&D Board of Directors. The Council will support, sponsor and promote their activities.

Strategy

Assist NYACD Region VII and VIII through increased correspondence and combine meetings of the RC&D Council.

WATER MANAGEMENT

Needs and opportunities

The Lower Hudson River Valley and Long Island both have unique water quality characteristics. The New York City water supply is one of the most sophisticated systems in the world. Water quantity and quality is maintained by several agencies and citizens groups. The New York City Department of Environmental Protection provides services and funding opportunities to local water quality organizations and Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The Lower Hudson Coalition of Conservation Districts is a locally engaged in water quality activities and has a partnering mission to water management. Since the make-up of our Council is supported by SWCD's there will be opportunities for NRCS to support their projects and programs with the Councils regional partnership approach.

Goal

Support Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Objective:

SWCD's are the basis for the makeup of the RC&D Board of Directors. The Council will support, sponsor and promote their activities.

Strategy

Assist the Lower Hudson Coalition of Conservation Districts with project implementation and collaboration of resources for the protection of the Hudson River Basin.

COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT

Goal I.

Council Performance

Objective

The Council will carry out the four areas of influence as classified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service; Land Conservation, Water Management, Community Development and Land Management.

Strategy

A Finalize the Area Plan of Operations

B Information and Outreach

1. Report projects on the RC&D Web Site nyrcd.org
2. Compile detailed "RC&D Report" for partners, sponsors and the public.

Goal II

Non Profit Management

Objective

Through administrative functions the Council will take responsible actions to maintain, 501 c3, non profit status

Strategies

A. Financial Accountability

1. Elected treasurer will consult with outside accounting firm to continue annual audit
2. Executive Board will continue internal auditing functions
3. All appropriate reporting and filing will be executed

B. Training

1. Bring not-for-profit training to all RC&D Council members and sponsors.
2. Provide an opportunity for Council members to increase their knowledge about civil rights compliance and diversity.