

**Forest Service Manual
National Headquarters - Washington Office
Washington, DC**

**Forest Service Manual 3600 – Rural Resource Conservation and Development
Chapter 3620 - Resource Conservation And Development Program**

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Duration: This amendment is effective until superseded or removed.

Approved by: Mike Dombeck, Chief

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Responsible Staff:

Last Change:

Superseded Document(s): 3600 Table of Contents, Amendment 3600-90-1; 3600 Zero Code, Amendment 3600-90-1; 3610, Amendment 3600-90-1; 3620, Amendment 3600-90-1

Posting Instructions: This is a technical amendment that converts the format and style of this FSM title from Applixware to the current corporate word processing application. Since this amendment replaces all text except Interim Directives (ID's), do not check for the last transmittal received for this title; instead place this transmittal sheet at the front of the title. DO NOT remove ID's when posting this amendment. ID's are not being reformatted at this time.

Digest: Following is an explanation of the changes throughout the directive by section.

Please read the new posting instructions (above) carefully.

3600: The entire amendment text has been reformatted and replaced, so that the amendment text on the Service-wide Directives Home Page in the Forest Service Web/Intranet (<http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/directives/index.html>) corresponds with the amendment text on the Forest Service Directives Home Page in the Forest Service World Wide Web/Internet (<http://www.fs.fed.us/im/directives>).

Although some minor typographical and technical errors have been corrected, substantive direction has not been changed.

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The Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) program is administered through RC&D areas directed by local councils with the assistance of the Department of Agriculture agencies. Program assistance is intended to improve the capability of State and local units of government and local nonprofit organizations to plan, develop, and carry out programs for resource conservation and development in rural areas.

3620.1 - Authority

The RC&D program operates mainly under the authority of the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (Public Law 97-98). Complementary authorities and direction are contained in legislation, executive orders, administrative regulations, interagency agreements, and in manuals, handbooks, and national bulletins of the Soil Conservation Service (SCS).

3620.2 - Objectives

The basic objectives of Forest Service participation in RC&D areas are:

1. To help provide the people of the area with employment and other economic opportunities through the orderly development, improvement, conservation, and utilization of forest land and related resources in the RC&D areas.
2. To provide State and local leadership with the opportunity to coordinate and use the facilities and techniques available under current agricultural programs and any applicable new programs as may be instituted to aid in planning and carrying out a balanced program of development, conservation, and protection of natural resources to meet local, State, and national needs.
3. To develop a level of State and local leadership that can assume independent programs in forest and related resource management and achieve State and local forestry and related resource goals and objectives.

3620.3 - Policy

Departmental Regulation 1042-76 and the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), National Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Manual describe basic RC&D policy.

The Forest Service policy is to participate in the RC&D program and help provide technical and financial assistance to local RC&D area sponsors in cooperation with State forestry agencies or other acceptable organizations to develop action-oriented area plans and forestry plans of work and to implement area measures relating to forestry needed to help conserve and improve the use of land, develop natural resources, and improve and enhance the social, economic, and environmental conditions in approved RC&D areas.

3620.4 - Responsibilities

1. Department. The Secretary's Office has overall administrative responsibility for the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) program. The Secretary has delegated certain functions to agencies of the Department.

The Secretary seeks the advice of an RC&D Policy Board (see Departmental Regulation 1042-76) on administration of the RC&D program.

The Secretary's Office also retains the responsibility for authorizing and terminating assistance to designated RC&D areas.

2. Soil Conservation Service. Most administrative functions have been delegated to the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in 7 CFR 2.62(a) (6). Further responsibilities are detailed in the SCS National Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Manual.

3. Forest Service

a. Chief. The Chief or the Chief's designee shall serve on the Department of Agriculture RC&D Policy Board. The Chief shall provide a report of funding obligations to the Soil Conservation Service.

b. Area Planning and Development. The Director of Area Planning and Development, Washington Office is responsible for:

(1) Recommending policy.

(2) Developing annually an RC&D National Forestry Plan of Work.

(3) Maintaining liaison with its Department of Agriculture counterparts.

(4) Providing national level Forest Service representation on the working group of the RC&D policy board.

c. Regional Foresters and Area Director. The Area Director shall seek active participation of the Regional Forester of Region 9 when the program involves Region 9, National Forest System lands.

The Regional Foresters or Area Director and the Station Directors shall work out cooperative arrangements as appropriate opportunities develop for research involvement.

The Regional Foresters and Area Director shall arrange for assignment of a Forest Service representative to each State with RC&D areas to handle the forestry-related responsibilities and represent the Forest Service on the forestry technical committee within each RC&D area.

The RC&D Forest Service representative is responsible for the overall forestry coordination within each of the RC&D areas involving State governments, State Foresters, Soil Conservation Service, State and Private Forestry, National Forest System, Research, and private forestry interests.

Regional Foresters and Area Director shall encourage State Foresters to participate in all aspects of the RC&D program. When feasible, the State Forester shall carry out the forestry technical assistance and installation of forestry measures. When it is not possible to establish this arrangement and when mutually agreed upon by the State Forester and the Regional Forester or Area Director, consultant foresters or other qualified personnel also may provide technical assistance through cooperative arrangements where such personnel are available and it is cost effective.

Where necessary to assure understanding and coordination of forestry roles and services, Regional Foresters and Area Director shall develop agreements with RC&D councils and other participating agencies at the State and local levels.

Using annual forestry plans of work as a basis, Regional Foresters and Area Director shall recommend to the Director, Area Planning and Development, Washington Office the funding allotments for accelerated services by RC&D areas prior to the preparation of the national annual forestry plan of work.

d. Forest Supervisors. Where the RC&D program involves National Forests or National Grasslands, the Forest Supervisor, or designated representative, working through the RC&D Forest Service representative shall conduct the planning and operational phases for measures that apply to these lands.

3621 - Planning

Through the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) program, the Department of Agriculture, including the Forest Service, provides technical assistance to RC&D councils to develop and implement an area plan for each authorized RC&D area. The RC&D area plan is the guide and authorizing document for the achievement of the RC&D council's goals, objectives, and priorities for the area.

Procedures and standards for area plans are in the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) National RC&D Manual and the Forest Service Guidelines for Forestry Activities in RC&D Areas.

The RC&D council appoints the RC&D forestry committee to prepare the forestry inputs for inclusion in the RC&D area plan. The Forest Service, in cooperation with the State Forester, shall ensure that the best forestry technical assistance is available for that purpose.

3622 - Operations

1. Annual Forestry Plan of Work. The Forest Service shall coordinate the following actions related to the development of an annual forestry plan of work:

- a. Preparation of an annual forestry plan of work for each Rural Conservation and Development (RC&D) area requesting funding for the next 3 fiscal years. The RC&D forestry committee, Forest Service, State forestry agency, and Soil Conservation Service jointly prepare this plan.
- b. Arrangement of a meeting by RC&D forestry committee to discuss this plan.
- c. Signing of an annual forestry plan of work by RC&D council chairperson, the State Forester, State Conservationist, and Regional Forester or Area Director.
- d. Sending copy of annual forestry plan of work to Chief, Forest Service, and to the State Conservationist. The State Conservationist then sends a copy to the Chief, Soil Conservation Service.
- e. Preparation of a national annual forestry plan of work prepared by Forest Service and Soil Conservation Service at the Washington Office for transmission by joint letter to the Regional Foresters, Area Director, and State Conservationists.

See the Forest Service Guidelines for Forestry Activities in RC&D Areas for more detailed procedures.

2. Area Plan Supplements and Revisions. When conditions warrant, and on the advice and guidance of the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) and the Forest Service, the sponsors may request a change in the area plans. The procedures for supplements and revisions are defined in the SCS National Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Manual.

3. Program Monitoring and Evaluation. The Forest Service shall participate with SCS in evaluating the effectiveness of activities undertaken by each RC&D area as well as the effectiveness of the total national program. The Forest Service shall participate in the RC&D program assistance termination process whenever activated.

4. Annual Accomplishment Report. The Forest Service, in cooperation with the State Forester, shall prepare Report FS-3000-F, Resource Conservation and Development Accomplishment Report, for each RC&D area receiving funds to accelerate forestry work. The report shall include both a narrative and a statistical section (Form FS-3600-2, Resource Conservation and Development Accomplishment Report). Present the report to the RC&D forestry committee, SCS, and other interested organizations at a meeting arranged by the RC&D forestry committee, in cooperation with the RC&D council. Send a copy of each report and a brief summary of the Region's or Area's program accomplishments in each RC&D area to the

Director, Area Planning and Development, Washington Office. The Forest Service Guidelines for Forestry Activities in RC&D Areas has more procedural details concerning the report.

5. Budgeting and Financing. Prepare annual forestry budget requests in accordance with the timetable and instructions developed by the SCS for their budgeting process. Coordinate budget requests fully with the State Conservationist. Provide the State Conservationist with a copy of the budget request when requested. Submit the forestry budget request through the Regional Forester or Area Director to the Director of Planning and Development, Washington Office.

Annually compile Forest Service budget obligations and costs by RC&D areas and submit this compilation through the Regional Forester or the Area Director to the Director, Area Planning and Development, Washington Office.

Consistent with overall appropriations for RC&D areas, use RC&D funds appropriated to the SCS and transferred to the Forest Service to cover its expenses and those of the State Foresters or other cooperators described in the national forestry annual plan of work. Use RC&D funds to accelerate forestry activities relative to RC&D area sponsor objectives as described in the forestry plans of work, and not to supplant ongoing cooperative forestry activities operated by State forestry organizations through other programs administered and cost-shared by the Forest Service.