



**FIRST STATE RESOURCE CONSERVATION
AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INC.**

AREA PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The US Secretary of Agriculture authorized the First State Resource Conservation and Development Area under the Food and Agriculture Act of 1962 (PL 87-703). The purpose of the Area is to promote rural development in Delaware.

To facilitate implement of RC&D activities in Delaware, the First State RC&D Council, Inc. provides guidance to the program. ***The Council's mission is to provide leadership, initiative, technical support, and direction in developing and carrying out a plan to assist individuals and communities in the conservation and enhancement of their human and natural resources.***

This will be accomplished through a program that focuses on:

- Promoting the conservation, development and wise use of the state's natural resources
- Increasing the level of economic activity in the state
- Promoting opportunities for human development

To reach these objectives and to encourage greater citizen participation in the program, the Council will establish various subcommittees to expedite Council projects. Below is the policy for Council operation:

1. All project proposals will be referred to the appropriate RC&D subcommittee for recommended action before being adopted by the Council.
2. The local district conservationist will be the principal county level technical support person.
3. The coordinator will be the principal technical support person for the Council.
4. The Council and its subcommittees will seek technical guidance from the appropriate USDA agency, such as the Forest Service, Rural Development, the Cooperative Extension Service, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service to complete approved projects. Reports on RC&D activities will be provided to the FAC Chair.
5. The Council and its subcommittees will encourage land use that will preserve agricultural lands, decrease pollution, and protect environmentally sensitive areas.
6. The Council will prepare an annual report of activities for distribution to sponsors and the public.
7. The Council and its subcommittees will work in cooperation with federal, state, county, and municipal agencies to promote the objectives of the RC&D program.

8. The Council's program will allow all citizens of the state an opportunity to contribute information, express opinions, participate in project installation, and discuss alternative proposals concerning RC&D activities.
9. The Council will review the Area Plan annually and revise it as needed to meet changing conditions, needs, concerns, opportunities, and objectives.
10. The Council will maintain an information program to keep the general public informed about RC&D activities.
11. The Council's program will be in compliance with all provisions as contained in Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (PL 100-259); the Americans with Disabilities Act; and other nondiscrimination statutes: namely Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. It will also be in accordance with the regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture (7 CFR 15.1-15.12), which provide that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs and marital or familial status, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance from the Department of Agriculture or any agency thereof.

ECONOMIC INFORMATION

Delaware's cost of living is close to the national average and considerably less than other urban northeast cities.

Cost of Living Index (average for all urban areas = 100.0)

Dover	DE	104.2
Wilmington	DE	110.7
Boston	MA	133.1
New Haven	CT	123.8
Philadelphia	PA	120.9
New York (Manhattan)	NY	235.2
Los Angeles-Long Beach	CA	144.7
Washington	DC-MD-VA-WV	112.9

Source ACCRA Cost of Living Index, Fourth Quarter 2000

Delaware total personal income (TPI) includes earned income (wages and salaries, other labor income, and proprietors' and business owners' income), dividends, interest, rent, and transfer payments received by Delaware residents. Delaware TPI totaled \$25,853,206,000 or **\$32,472** per capita. Delaware's per capita personal income ranked 12th in the nation and was 6.6% above the national average. (Bureau of Economic Analysis)

The top ten employers in Delaware are:

1. State of Delaware
2. MBNA Corp.
3. The DuPont Company
4. Christiana Care Health System
5. County and City Governments
6. U.S. Government (Civilian Employment)
7. Dover Air Force Base
8. J.P. Morgan Chase & Co.
9. Acme Markets/Albertson's Inc.
10. University of Delaware

Major agricultural employers (and their rankings) are:

12. Mountaire Farms, Inc.
18. Perdue Farms, Inc.
46. Allen's Hatchery Inc.

(source: Delaware State Data Center)

DELAWARE FARMLAND OVERVIEW

According to the 1997 Census of Agriculture, there were 2,460 farms in Delaware, a decrease of 6.6% from 1992. Land in farms decreased from 589,189 acres in 1992 to 579,545 acres in 1997, while the average farm size increased from 224 acres to 236 acres. Land in farms decreased by 12,653 acres in Kent and New Castle Counties between 1992 and 1997. The largest acreage decrease and percentage decrease occurred in New Castle County with 9,832 acres being taken out of farming or a percentage decrease of 11.3% in farmland. Sussex County saw an increase of 3,009 acres in land in farms (from 304,680 acres to 307,689 acres) between 1992 and 1997. Land use issues, farmland conversion, and preservation of the state's open space are issues concerning many residents.

RECREATION

Beginning in 1993, the Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation held a series of 20 Public Outdoor Recreation Needs Workshops. Over 300 Delawareans participated in the workshops. The participants developed the following list of outdoor recreation needs and issues that were most important in their communities.

- Playgrounds & Tot lots
- Trails (Hiking, Biking, Nature, Walking, Jogging)
- Picnic areas
- Open space for passive recreation
- Municipal parks
- Environmental education
- Improved shoreline access
- Public swimming pools

Delaware maintains a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). This plan is a summary of issues of future recreational needs and issues concerned with outdoor recreation, conservation, and environmental practices.

The 1996 SCORP contained a list of outdoor recreation needs and issues facing Delaware. The list was developed by the Division of Parks and recreation working with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). First State RC&D is a member of the TAC. Below is the current list of needs as published in the 1996 SCORP.

- Protect open space and provide public access where appropriate
- Environmental education
- Revitalize existing parks and recreation facilities
- Improve shoreline access
- Public swimming pools
- Provide financial and technical assistance to small communities
- Hiking and walking trails, bike paths and paved walkways
- Camping facilities
- Programs for under-served segments of the population
- Playgrounds

Delaware's freshwater and tidal wetlands and the Delaware Bay and Coastal Atlantic areas of the state are essential components of the state's open space recreational system. Situated midway on the Atlantic flyway, Delaware hosts large concentrations of waterfowl, specially snow and Canada geese, swans, mallards, black and wood ducks, bluewing and greenwing teal, redheads, canvasback, and pintails. Delaware's coastal wetlands offer excellent hunting, bird watching, and nature observation opportunities. Some of the game common to the upland portions of the state includes quail, squirrels, cottontails, woodcock, white-tailed deer, and raccoon. The Delaware Bay and Atlantic Ocean offer a variety of saltwater game fish. Sport fishing attracts anglers from Delaware and surrounding states.

HOUSING

Housing issues were previously identified by the Council as a concern within the Area. To address the issue of severely substandard owner occupied housing, the Council initiated the Emergency Home Repair Project. The project addresses only owner occupied units. The most current statistics available from the Delaware State Housing Authority are from 1995. (The gross numbers include both rental and owner occupied housing units.) More than 12,000 substandard homes in need of substantial rehabilitation (requiring at least \$30,000 per unit, \$20,000 for a mobile home) exist throughout the state. Approximately 24,000 additional homes are in need of moderate rehabilitation. In the City of Wilmington, there are 2,434 substandard housing units or 8.4% of the cities housing units. This rate is the highest in the state. In New Castle County (excluding the City of Wilmington) there are 3,804 substandard units or 2.5% of the housing units. The rate in New Castle County is the lowest in the state. Kent County's substandard rate is 5.0% or 2,311 housing units. This rate is 15% above the state average. The greatest number of substandard housing units in the county are in the Dover (1,077), Harrington (299), and Smyrna

(224) submarkets. Sussex County has an estimated 3,504 substandard units or a rate of 6.6%. This is 50% higher than the state average with the largest concentration in the Laurel-Delmar (523), Millsboro (507), and Selbyville-Frankford (490) submarkets. Statewide, 45.8% of the substandard units are owner occupied. That ranges from a low of 22.9% owner occupancy in the City of Wilmington to a high of 64.4% in Sussex County. The Council will continue to focus its efforts to assist only owner occupied housing units.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COUNCIL

The Council adopts the following goals and objectives. These objectives will be the framework of the Council's rural development effort in Delaware for the next five to ten years.

Goal A: Plan for the wise use of natural resources to improve their quality and value.

- Objective 01. Provide assistance to the NRCS and Conservation Districts in the implementation of Locally Led Conservation.
- Objective 02. Work with local agricultural groups to protect and improve agricultural lands and assure a strong agricultural sector in the state.
- Objective 03. Seek ways to improve statewide planning activities and promote sound land use decisions.
- Objective 04. Seek ways to improve forestry productivity and income potential through better forestry management.
- Objective 05. Work with local governments and groups to reduce flooding, stop water pollution, reduce soil erosion, and improve water quality.
- Objective 06. Work with the Cooperative Extension Service to develop a strategy to implement the Home*A*Syst program in Delaware.
- Objective 07. Develop an educational program to stimulate public awareness of the condition and needs of the state's natural resources.
- Objective 08. Promote conservation education activities such as the Delaware Envirothon and educational activities in schools.
- Objective 09. Assist the Federal Emergency Management Agency and local communities in the implementation of Project Impact.
- Objective 10. Assist in the development of weather information for irrigation planning and water management.
- Objective 11. Assist in the completion of the State Soil Survey Update.
- Objective 12. Promote Civil Rights Outreach activities as they relate to agriculture and natural resources management.
- Objective 13. Promote conservation partnership activities through conservation tours, workshops, conferences, etc.

Goal B: Increase the quantity and quality of recreation opportunities.

- Objective 01. Assist local groups in promoting and enhancing saltwater fisheries and recreational boating in Delaware while seeking to educate boaters in ways to protect the environment.
- Objective 02. Work with state and local governmental agencies to develop four water-based recreational plans.
- Objective 03. Plan the development and/or improvement of ten local parks or recreational facilities in the RC&D area.

Goal C: Increase opportunities for development of human potential.

- Objective 01. Providing training to develop leadership skills through annual workshops and other training opportunities.
- Objective 02. Continue to assist homeowners in making repairs on their substandard housing in Delaware. Work to expand the Emergency Home Repair Project to a statewide activity.
- Objective 03. Assist the Delaware State Housing Authority in the Targeted Community effort.
- Objective 04. Improve measurement of social and economic indicators for limited income citizens.

Goal D: Improve communities by seeking political, institutional and financial support.

- Objective 01. Diversify employment in the RC&D area by developing small businesses.
- Objective 02. Improve living conditions by upgrading public service and public works.
- Objective 03. Identify and protect ecologically sensitive areas.

Goal E: Strengthen the overall operations of the RC&D program.

- Objective 01. Conduct recognition events for community volunteers and sponsors of RC&D projects.
- Objective 02. Plan appropriate recognition function for the 35th anniversary of the Area’s designation (09/15/2006).
- Objective 03. Develop an intermediate and long-range strategic (financial) plan to fund Council projects.
- Objective 04. Publish and distribute an annual report on RC&D accomplishments.
- Objective 05. Publish a newsletter about RC&D community activities.
- Objective 06. Submit nominations for regional and national RC&D awards as appropriate.
- Objective 07. Seek ways to improve and strengthen the RC&D program.

STRATEGIES

The RC&D Council's Annual Plan of Work will contain the strategies to obtain the Council's goals and objectives. This plan adopted by the First State RC&D Council, Inc. at a regular meeting held on May 21, 2002.

Approved:

Concurred:

Gary Smith, President

Elesa K. Cottrell, State Conservationist

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