

Alabama Mountains, Rivers and Valleys Resource Conservation and Development Council



Area Plan 2012-2017

AMRV RC&D
5514 U. S. Highway 31 South
Hartselle, Alabama 35640

**Serving Morgan, Cullman, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Jackson,
DeKalb and Cullman Alabama**

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INTRODUCTION

This document is the long-range plan of the Alabama Mountains Rivers and Valleys (AMRV) Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council, of North Alabama. It was developed by soliciting public input through a survey of citizens, organizations and stakeholders in the eight county area served by AMRV- RC&D. In addition to the survey results, a web poll was conducted, and Council members provided guidance in the development of this plan. The counties served by this area plan include the following: Morgan, Cullman, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Jackson, DeKalb and Cullman.

The Resource Conservation and Development Program was developed based on the premise that local people, working together, can identify and solve problems and realize opportunities that will enhance the quality of life in their area. Plans are designed to direct Federal, State, and local resources toward accomplishing the purpose of the RC&D Program and are consistent with needs identified in the RC&D planning process.

The purpose of this plan is to provide strategic direction for the organization. The organization is stronger than ever before, yet more efforts are needed to ensure a strong sustainable organization that serves the communities in our area.

RC&D BACKGROUND

In 1962, Congress passed the Food and Agricultural Act, which authorized Resource Conservation and Development areas. The purpose of the act was to expand opportunities for conservation districts, local units of governments, and individuals to improve their communities in multi-county areas. This included assistance in enhancing the economic, environmental and social well-being of the RC&D Areas. The AMRV no longer is assisted by the USDA-NRCs but continues to be a locally led force in North Alabama.

The purpose, as stated in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 - Subtitle H, of the RC&D Program is:

- To develop and carry out area plans and projects in designated areas in order to conserve, develop, and improve the use of land.
- To develop natural resources.
- To improve and enhance the social, economic, and environmental conditions in primarily rural areas of the United States.
- To encourage and improve the capability of State and local units of government, Indian tribes, nonprofit organizations, and councils.

Mission

The Mission of the Alabama's Mountains, Rivers and Valleys (AMRV) Resource Conservation and Development Council is to improve the quality of life of the rural residents in its area by the reasonable and responsible protection and development of the natural and human resources of the Tennessee Valley Area.

To carry out activities that accelerate the development, conservation and wise use of human, financial and natural resources in order to improve the standard of living within the area.

AMRV-RC&D BACKGROUND 1973-2012

Since its inception in 1973 the Tennessee Valley RC&D Council, now The Alabama Mountains, Rivers and Valleys Resource Conservation and Development Council (AMRV-RC&D), has completed thousands of projects. Beginning with a Road Bank Stabilization project in Cullman County the Council has benefited its member counties by bringing millions of dollars of outside assistance: nearly one half of this has been applied since 1990. For the first part of this period much of this money was allocated directly from the NRCS-RC&D program funding. Since 1998 the AMRV-RC&D has received most of its financial support from other government and private funding sources in the form of grants and participatory assistance. In addition the council has filled niches by providing needed services like the lagoon pump-out and irrigation service, the geo-textile cloth distribution service, the geo-hay recycle products and other needs over time.

The Council has also sought to include community leaders outside the three traditional appointed members by developing new membership categories; towns, individuals and businesses. This allows the people involved with our projects to become members and has resulted in an increase in the program's outreach and efficiency.

The revision of the 1973 original plan in 1996 involved many of the valley's citizens and organizations and took more than two years. Each county was asked to have local meetings. At these meetings lists of local ideas about how RC&D could best serve those counties were developed. These ideas were collected and presented to the Council. The Council then met as a committee to select those ideas that were appropriate and do-able. The ideas were then incorporated into a plan. In 2002 The Board of Directors updated the 96 plan. The Council adopted the plan and its goals and objectives at its annual meeting in October of 2002. Due to the ever changing needs and opportunities the Board began a revision in 2006 by surveying its members and partners at a series of public meetings.

Today we continue the legacy of all the leaders of the past. We are standing on the shoulders of these leaders. Much has been accomplished.....much more lies ahead.

Today, the AMRV-RC&D plans and implements activities that increase conservation of natural resources, supports economic development, enhances the environment, and improves the standard of living in its Council area. Many of these projects develop into partnerships between local businesses, governmental agencies and citizen volunteers. Aggressive grant management has enabled the Council to do a wide array of projects, including:

- ~ Watershed Management
- ~ Education
- ~ Quality of Life Enhancements
- ~ Land Management
- ~ Historical Preservation
- ~ Environmental Protection
- ~ Economic Development
- ~ Infrastructure Development

Alabama RC&D Areas



AMRV-RC&D COUNCIL STRUCTURE

A 34 member citizen Council represents diversity of interest in communities. The Council represents Soil and Water Conservation Districts, County Commissions, Small towns, small businesses, American Indians and At-Large Members from the communities. Board members govern the policy, direction and activities of the RC&D Council.

To provide optimal input to the Staff regarding direction and goals of the Council, members of the Board of Directors serve on working committees, which include Finance, Personnel, and Executive Committee. Working Committees meet as necessary to conduct business. In addition Task Force groups are charged to address specific needs as they develop. The Board meets every other month and as needed to discuss the status of projects and programs and identify opportunities for cooperative projects.

AMRV-RC&D is part of the Alabama Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils. AMRV-RC&D Council members and staff attend mid-year and annual meetings of the Alabama Association of RC&D Councils, as well as meetings of the Southeastern Association of RC&D Councils and the National Association of RC&D Councils. AMRV-RC&D members and staff attend Special Meetings, Task Force meetings, County RC&D Committee meetings and others as the needs arise.

OVERVIEW OF THE AMRV-RC&D AREA

The Alabama's Mountain, Rivers and Valleys RC&D Council (AMRV-RC&D) include eight counties located along the Tennessee River in Northeastern Alabama. These counties are Cullman, DeKalb, Jackson, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Marshall, and Morgan. The area covers 5,810 square miles or 3,718,499 acres, which is a little more than eleven percent of the State's land area.

Counties in the Council are partners in the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments or the North Alabama Regional Council of Governments. The Council is also included in the Appalachian Regional Commission program area.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The current census bureau data states that the estimated population in Alabama as of, 2006, was 4,779,736, with 869,183 or 18% of the state population living within the AMRV- RC&D service area

The population of the Council area has risen from 520,655 in 1970 to 869,183 give or take, in 2010. Half of these people live in Madison and Morgan counties where our larger cities, Huntsville and Decatur are located. The population of the region is expected to increase in the next five years with most of the increases in Madison, Limestone and Morgan Counties. Non-white population ranges from a high of 34 percent in Madison County to a low of 7.3 percent in Cullman County. The Hispanic population has exploded due to the availability of poultry related, construction and service employment opportunities. Lawrence County has the highest

percentage of American Indian citizens at 5.7 percent. Since 1970 the Council's population has followed the national trend of growing older. In 1970 nine percent of the Council's population was over sixty-five and almost fourteen percent over sixty-five in 2009.

Table 1: Population Data of the Counties within the AMRV-RC&D Area for

County	Population 2000	Population 2009
Morgan	111,064	119,470
Marshall	82,231	93,019
Madison	276,952	334,811
Limestone	65,676	82,782
Lawrence	34,809	34,339
Jackson	53,926	53,227
DeKalb	64,454	71,109
Cullman	77,483	80,406

* Source: US Census Bureau.

Soils & Geology

The four major geologic regions in the council area are the Highland Rim and Pennyroyal, Southern Appalachian Ridges and Valleys, Sand Mountain and the Cumberland Plateau and Mountains. The eastern half of the area is mountainous, being the southern end of the Appalachian Mountain chain. The western part of the council is generally flat with low rolling hills.

The soils of the Tennessee Valley vary with the topography and parent material. In the northern half of Limestone County and the Northwestern parts of Madison County, which are in the Highland rim and Pennyroyal regions, we have limestone soils. These soils are well suited for crop production. In the Cumberland Plateau and mountain region of eastern Madison and western Jackson Counties the soils have a sandstone basis and are often steep and subject to erosion. The soils of the Southern Appalachian Ridges & Valleys, found in Madison, southern Limestone, the river valley parts of Jackson, Northern Marshall, Morgan & Lawrence Counties, are a mix of sandstone & limestone soils and support a productive agricultural economy. Finally the Sand Mountain region: consisting of Cullman, DeKalb, southern Lawrence, Marshall & Morgan Counties and the eastern part of Jackson County, has primarily shallow soils derived from the sandstone cap rock.

Water Resources

The Tennessee River provides a minimum 9-foot deep, 200 feet wide channel for 144 miles within the Council area, permitting economical transportation of heavy materials. Access to the Mississippi River system is provided to the north by the Ohio River. The region has convenient access to the Gulf of Mexico through the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway. The river's 104,962 surface acres also offers recreational opportunities to local people as well as visitors from throughout the world.

Public Lands

State and Federal lands provide the public with recreational opportunities from wilderness hiking to stream bank family picnics: Bankhead National Forest in Lawrence County, Russell Cave National Monument in Jackson County is the oldest discovered site of settlement in the southeast, Little River Canyon Preserve in DeKalb County is one of the most scenic natural gorges in America, and Wheeler Wildlife Refuge in Morgan, Limestone and Madison Counties provides remarkable opportunities to experience migratory waterfowl. In addition five state parks provide outdoor recreation for residents and tourists. They are: Cathedral Caverns, Lake Guntersville, Desoto, Buck's Pocket, and Monte Sano.

Climate

The region enjoys a temperate climate with hot summers and warm winters. An average of 54 inches of rain falls yearly. It is fairly evenly distributed throughout the year. The area has a growing season of 207 days in eastern mountains and 225 in the western counties. Some snowfall is common during most winters but rarely remains on the ground for more than a day or two. A 1-2 inch snowstorm usually occurs somewhere in the Council area each year. The Council area is subject to frequent damaging tornadoes.

Forest

There are four main forest types in the Tennessee Valley, Oak Hickory (56.4%), Pine (19.9%), Oak-Pine (5.4%) and finally Oak-Gum-Cypress (8.3%). The forests of the Valley are increasing in volume, that is, re-growth exceeds cutting, however, the majority of the re-growth is pine in some areas. In the last twenty years the overall forested area of the Valley has increased chiefly due to the reduction of land in production agriculture and as the result of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The increase in crop production for on farm energy production may reduce CRP and forested areas in the near future.

Wildlife

The Tennessee Valley abounds in plentiful wildlife. Large game species, deer and turkey, are common throughout the area. Small game such as squirrel, dove, and quail, are also available. Migratory duck and geese lure hunters to the area's eight wildlife and waterfowl management areas and two waterfowl refuges, from the entire southeastern region into the valley.

Minerals

Historically coal and stone were mined in the Valley; coal in Jackson and Cullman Counties and stone is mined throughout the region. Currently coal is mined in Cullman County and stone is still mined across the area. Older mining operations left scars over the countryside but legislation has led to the reclamation of much of this land.

Education

Education levels in the Council area remain low. In the Madison County area over 37.9 percent of the adults completed college, in Morgan County over 19.6 percent, and in Limestone County 18.2 percent. For the rural counties the average is approximately 11.9 percent that have degrees. Lawrence County has the lowest percentage of college graduates and the highest high school dropout rates. There are three community colleges in the area and five four year colleges.

Income and Poverty

The financial picture for the Council area has improved greatly since 1970. Then about twenty percent of the population had incomes below poverty level. In 1977 that was reduced to about 13.7 percent. In 2009 median household income in the area ranged from high of \$57,327 in Madison County to a low of \$ 33,919 in DeKalb County. there seems to be a relationship between education and income in comparing these figures. Only in Madison County does income level exceed the national average. Most of the counties have an income level below the national median household income. In recent years Lawrence County has been listed as an economically distressed county.

Public Health

The general increase in income is reflected in the improvement in sanitation and health in the area. In 1970 about a quarter of the houses did not have indoor plumbing; in 1990 less than two percent lacked plumbing facilities. Today only a very few lack plumbing facilities. However, human sewage is still a problem in the area. Failing septic tank and field line systems are health concerns. In 1970 an average of twenty-three percent of the rural county residences was on public sewer: in 1990 thirty percent were. However, in recent years the trend is urban residents moving into rural areas. There is no public sewage system in many of these areas. The impact of failing septic systems on water quality in the area is a challenge to government agencies. Public water has been provided to over eighty percent of the residences in rural counties and almost one hundred percent of those in the urban counties.

As the number of senior citizens increase the need for adequate health care, handicapped accessibility, low cost prescription drugs and other quality of life issues increase.

Agriculture

The eight counties of the AMRV-RC&D Council, with only 11 percent of the land, produce more than 50 percent of Alabama's income from farming. Five of the counties are in the top ten producers of soybeans and corn: four are in the top ten in wheat. Cullman, Jackson and DeKalb produce nearly three quarters of Alabama's Irish and sweet potatoes. Limestone, Madison and Lawrence Counties are the top cotton producing counties in the state. Cullman and DeKalb Counties are the state's top two cattle counties. Marshall is the 4th largest behind Montgomery for cattle. Jackson, Madison, Limestone and DeKalb are the state's top four corn producing counties. Poultry provides the largest component of Alabama's Agricultural Income. Cullman, DeKalb and Marshall are the three largest poultry producing counties and provide more than half of the state's Poultry Income. New EPA regulations related to confined animal farming operations present management challenges to farmers, the industry, agricultural agencies and RC&D. Maintaining water quality is essential. About a quarter of Alabama's hogs and cattle are raised in the Council's area. Morgan County is the states number one milk producing county.

Industry

The availability of water, rail and highway transportation has resulted in major industrial development along the corridors. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Decatur area where major industries like 3-M, BP Amoco, Nucor Steel and Boeing are located. Huntsville boasts the high tech military and NASA "spin off" industries. The Sand Mountain area is heavily vested in the poultry industry with the largest concentration of feed and processing plants in the state. Finally Cullman County is benefiting from the location of several auto plant suppliers in the state.

NATURAL RESOURCE AND LAND USE INFORMATION

The ratio of urban to rural land use varies dramatically depending upon the demographic area and county. Morgan, Limestone and Madison counties have the most rapidly developing urban areas where Lawrence and Jackson have the least pressure. Alabama, one of the largest timber producing states in the US, has experienced tremendous change in land use in the past 30 years due to population increases, urbanization, and economic development. Between 1972 and 2000, timberland increased by 7.5% in Alabama but agricultural land decreased by 27%. For the same period, urban area increased by 7.1%.

Concurrent with expanding populations are shifting demographics and increasing urbanization. Rapid land use change is usually at the expense of forest and agricultural lands. Throughout the AMRV-RC&D service area, metropolitan and suburban communities are being confronted with the challenge of urban sprawl. Residential and commercial developments such as Boeing & 3-M and associated suppliers are consuming primordial land at an unprecedented rate. Unplanned

urban expansion contributes to the degradation and loss of natural vegetation and open spaces. This results in a general decline in the spatial extent and connectivity of wetlands, wildlife habitat, and agricultural lands.

Timber is an abundant natural resource in the AMRV-RC&D service area. The mountainous regions are primarily hardwood forests and present challenges in harvesting due to the steep slopes. Most timber land is privately owned.

Rural Counties of Alabama

As per 2000 census data

Rural Counties of Alabama 2000



All counties within the AMRV- RC&D area are classified as rural with the exception of Madison and Morgan Counties

Alabama Highways and Railroads

Alabama Railroads



North Alabama has two major operating railroads

Source: Center for Business and Economic Research, The University of Alabama

Major transportation arteries exist in North Alabama primarily through I-65 north to south and state highway 72 east to west.

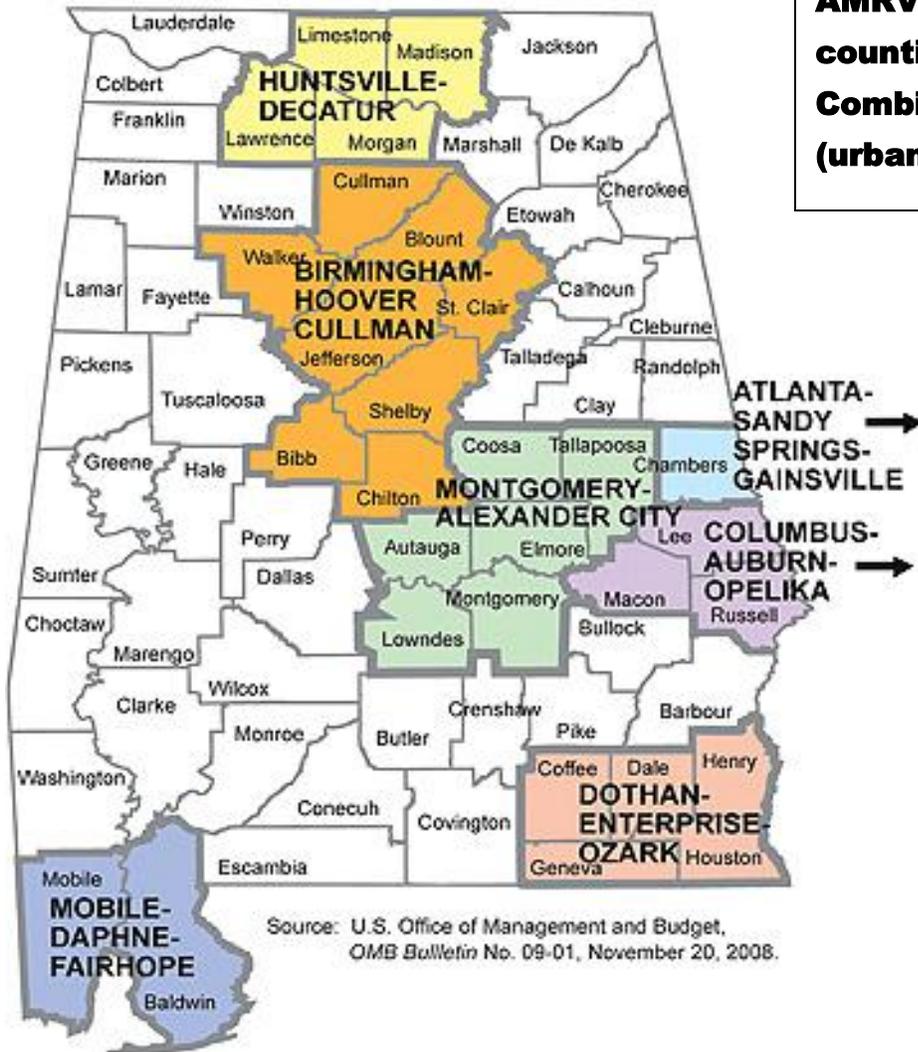
Alabama Highways



Source: Center for Business and Economic Research, The University of Alabama

Alabama Statistical Areas

Alabama Combined Areas, 2008



AMRV-RC&D has four counties included in a Combined Statistical Area (urban cluster).

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVES

U.S. Congressional Districts

Congressional District 4	Congressional District 5
Robert Aderholt	Mo Brooks
<i>DeKalb, Marshall, Morgan, Cullman Counties</i>	<i>Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Jackson Counties</i>

U.S. Senate

Jeff Sessions Richard Shelby

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES

CONDUCTED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PLAN

The AMRV-RC&D Council and staff began an outreach program in July 2010, which included public meetings, individual calls and contacts, mail surveys. The survey (Exhibit 1) was emailed and passed out at meetings of various agencies, as well as stakeholders within the AMRV-RC&D eight-county area. Also considered in the evaluation process were the 50+ grant applications that were submitted to the Council, which reflected the needs and concerns of the eight-county area.

The staff and RC&D Coordinator met within each county to present and promote the AMRV-RC&D Council Area Plan, and requested community feedback. A total of 8 public involvement meetings were held. More than 240 people were solicited for input. Varying ages and ethnicities were involved in the planning process.

Individuals participating in the survey were asked to respond to questions regarding priorities for Land Conservation, Water Management, Community Development and Land Management. Varying ages and ethnicities were involved in the planning process.

The survey was conducted and priorities ranked according to responses in regard to the following RC&D Program Element Categories: Land Conservation, Community development, Land Management, and Water Management.

Once the surveys were collected, along with input from public, the Council discussed the results and developed goals, objectives and strategies to address the identified needs and opportunities. (See Appendix 1 for Sample Survey)

IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS & OPPORTUNITIES

With open spaced areas declining due to rapid development, land conservation and management issues demand thoughtful attention. Both water quality and quantity have become concerns, due in part by recurring drought conditions throughout the state.

Education also ranked as a concern to AMRV-RC&D area citizens. The Alabama Policy Institute, a conservative think tank, says independent surveys by reputable organizations have ranked the dropout rate for the state of Alabama at between 38 and 41 percent. Consequently, environmental education, job skills training and adult education ranked as high priorities to the Council.

Other problems identified included urban sprawl, agricultural decline, population explosion, insufficient public services/utilities, lack of and/or insufficient recreational areas, lack of technical skill training, blight, litter, and leadership weakness.

AMRV-RC&D continues to develop and support partnerships that promote land and water conservation, community development and educational opportunities. AMRV RC&D encourages new affiliates to attend meetings and advocates working on the eight-county area's community issues collaboratively.

This section will provide insight into the environmental, ecological, and social conditions of the AMRV-RC&D area. The information contained below focuses on the results of the community identified concerns, with the 1 ranked as highest concern.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Land Conservation

1. Agricultural and environmental education
2. Conservation assistance on Ag. land
3. Protection of land from runoff and erosion
4. Stream bank stabilization
5. Air Quality
6. Preservation of open spaces
7. Recreational areas
8. Other – Construction Runoff; Education of Farmers and Developers

Community Development

1. Local business support/Development; local food production
2. Recreation (Trails, Parks, etc.); Green space
3. Recycling/Solid waste management
4. Job and trade skills development
5. Education of local leaders and area citizens
6. Tourism
7. Historic/Heritage/Cultural preservation
8. Outreach/Cultural diversity
9. Infrastructure development/upgrades; Community facilities development

Land Management

1. Alternative energy development/Energy conservation
2. Farmland protection

3. Agricultural sustainability/Alternative Ag. opportunities
4. Fish and wildlife protection
5. Land management/zoning education
6. Green Infrastructure/Open space preservation

Water Management

1. Conservation
2. Education
3. Non-point source pollution reduction
4. Watershed protection
5. Water quality improvement
6. Riparian-River corridor protection

GOALS & STRATEGIES

Based on information received during public participation meetings, the following goals and strategies have been developed:

AMRV-RC&D AREA PLANNING GOALS 2012- 2017

Land Conservation

(Identified Issues/Needs: Education, Conservation, Preservation)

Goal 1: Assist all eight counties in the AMRV-RC&D area in reducing the effects of soil erosion from agricultural and urban lands by 2017.

Objective 1: Educate citizens, professional and local government officials on best management practices (BMPs) to reduce erosion and sedimentation (E&S) by 2017

Strategy 1: Conduct two field days on proper design, installation, maintenance, and inspection of BMPs for construction sites by 2017.

Strategy 2: Support the installation of erosion control projects to prevent sedimentation from impacting water quality prior to 2017. Sponsor workshop / demonstration meeting to encourage use of erosion control to prevent water and stream degradation on cropland, forestland or recreation lands.

Objective 2: Provide agricultural conservation education opportunities for area farmers and other citizens for the next five (5) years

Strategy 1: Provide a minimum of seven agricultural conservation educational workshops, demonstrations, and field day activities in the RC&D area by 2017.

Strategy 2: Provide five outreach educational workshops to small, limited resource and/or organic farmers in the Council area by 2017.

Objective 3: Provide ten environmental education opportunities for area students and other citizens on the importance of natural resource preservation and conservation by 2017

Strategy 1: Assist seven public schools and communities with developing environmental education outdoor classrooms by 2017.

Strategy 2: Beginning in 2012, organize and or assist in the organization of) five celebrations (i.e. water festival, earth day, etc.) or receptions through 2017.

Strategy 3: Through monthly website data updates, provide documents, information and linkages to local resources.

Goal 2: Assist/develop five projects that preserve, enhance, and/or expand heritage and/or recreational/natural assets by the year 2017.

Objective 1: Beginning in 2012, assist a minimum of one community per year in the preservation of open space and/or natural/historical assets.

Strategy 1: By the year 2017, preserve a minimum of 500 acres of connected open spaces through affiliations with partners such as the Clean Water Partnership.

Strategy 2: Participate in five local initiatives that preserve, protect and/or enhance natural areas by the year 2017.

Strategy 3: Participate in a minimum of two initiatives that protect and/or enhance historically significant objects/ locations by 2017.

Strategy 4: Beginning in 2012, through 2017, facilitates a minimum of two educational meetings per year that promote preservation of open space, farmland and/or heritage.

Objective 2: Beginning in 2012, develop four educational initiatives that provide awareness to the general public in regard to natural resource conservation.

Strategy1: Through quarterly website data updates, provide documents, information and linkages to local resources.

Strategy 2: Beginning in 2012, develop educational brochures and print and distribute a minimum of one brochure per year, through 2017.

Strategy 3: Utilize one volunteer, volunteer group and/or intern to produce a finished product of historic or natural resource significance by the year 2017.

Community Development

(Identified Needs: Education; availability of locally grown goods; community programs and facilities for health, recreation, education; infrastructure improvement)

Goal 3: Assist with the development/improvement of public services and/or facilities in eight (8) counties by the year 2017.

Objective 1: Beginning in 2012, support and/or assist in improving public facilities and services in each of the eight council counties in the next five years.

Strategy 1: Establish trail projects in three communities to promote community health and welfare of residents by the year 2017.

Strategy 2: Develop two agricultural tourism events for the RC&D area by the year 2017.

Strategy 3: Work in five communities to create, preserve or upgrade existing public facilities for recreation, health or education by the year 2017.

Strategy 4: Provide assistance to two communities to develop, expand, or support markets for locally grown goods by the year 2017.

Strategy 5: Attain necessary funding to help equip four under-funded police/rescue/Volunteer Fire Departments with training and/or equipment to better serve the needs in their communities by the year 2017.

Strategy 6: Assist the Regional Planning Commissions other agencies in the development and/or improvement of two recreational facilities by the year 2017.

Objective 2: Beginning in 2013, assist a minimum of (1) one community per year in the preservation of open space, park and trail development, and/or natural/historical assets.

Strategy 1: Participate in three local initiatives that preserve, protect and/or enhance natural areas by the year 2017.

Strategy 2: Participate in a minimum of two initiatives that protect and/or enhance historically significant objects/ locations by 2017.

Objective 3: Develop and or expand two recycling efforts in the Council area by 2013.

Strategy 1: Participate in a minimum of two local recycling initiatives to educate citizens on recycling programs in their communities by 2012

Strategy 2: Expand anti-littering program in two counties by 2013

Strategy 3: Develop/expand a recycling effort in the Council area for disposal of small quantity of household hazardous waste and electronic equipment. Implement or sponsor two such recycling events in the area and utilize brochures and web page to promote the events. Complete implementation before 2014.

Goal 4: Provide educational and /or workforce development opportunities to participants by the year 2017.

Objective 1: Participate in two workshops in the next five years designed to educate youth and/or unskilled labor workers in the areas of agriculture, economics, or trade skills development.

Strategy 1: Work with one educational facility/organization to administer a minimum of one community development or job skills training programs by 2017.

Strategy 2: Provide technical assistance to two communities to develop, expand, or support local farmers markets by the year 2017.

Strategy 3: Support one program (through funding or technical assistance) that targets trade skills training by the year 2017.

Strategy 4: Design, fund, and/or install educational areas in a minimum of one public space by end of year 2017.

Strategy 5: Beginning in 2014, conduct and facilitate (1) one sustainable development concept per year through workshops, publications and other media venues.

Goal 5: Provide technical and/or financial assistance to all counties within the AMRV-RC&D Area with leadership development opportunities by the year 2017.

Objective 1: Participate/assist with four leadership development opportunities for area citizens by the year 2017.

Strategy 1: Beginning in 2012, organize/participate in area leadership development workshops in four locations selected to cover the council area.

Strategy 2: Develop/conduct training for all new council members within first year of becoming a board member.

Strategy 3: Conduct two council leadership development training events by 2013.

Water Management

(Identified Needs: Conservation, education, development of clean water, and promoting wise management)

Goal 6: Participate in two initiatives that protect and improve the area's air and water quality.

Objective 1: Assist in development and implementation of two water and air quality projects before 2014.

Strategy 1: Develop water management plan for one targeted impaired stream by 2015.

Strategy 2: Conduct a minimum of one workshop/meeting per year to address air quality or water conservation innovation, and/or educational opportunities to landowners/municipalities.

Strategy 3: Assist the Tennessee River Basin and Black Warrior River, Clean Water Partnership in identifying four impaired streams by the year 2017.

Strategy 4: Seek funds for stream restoration projects and/or monitoring of one impaired stream per year.

Strategy 6: Demonstrate alternative waste disposal systems for failed septic system replacement. Provide at least three demonstration/education projects before 2014.

Strategy 7: Conduct a minimum of one workshop/meeting per year to address water conservation innovation, and/or educational opportunities to landowners/municipalities.

Objective 2: By the year 2017, educate a minimum of two hundred fifty participants regarding water quality issues.

Strategy 1: Assist with organizing two workshops or celebrations by the year 2017.

Strategy 2: Promote water conservation through the production of a minimum of four educational initiatives by 2013.

Strategy 3: Implement a minimum of one rainwater harvesting system on a community property or school by 2017.

Land Management

(Identified Needs: Preservation of wildlife habitat, natural areas, farmland; alternative energy

Goal 7: Assist four communities in the development, protection and management of the area's natural resources by 2017.

Objective 1: 2012-2014 participate in one consistent initiative that educates/assists in building local capacity for alternative energy sources and/or conserves natural resources.

Strategy 1: Before 2014, attend/host at least one educational event that encourages and promotes the production and use of alternative fuels, biomass, and other alternative energy sources.

Strategy 2: Assist in providing five educational opportunities to participants through programs that promote energy conservation, alternative energy and natural resource conservation by 2015.

Strategy 3: Work with partners and other government and private organizations to expand or develop Biomass and other under-utilized alternative fuel materials. Help develop at least one producer to develop, demonstrate and/or expand biomass / alternative fuel usage by 2017.

Strategy 4: Conduct ten demonstrations on innovative storm water treatment systems by the year 2017.

Strategy 5: Assist in providing four educational opportunities to participants through programs such as NEMO, Water Festivals, and Earth Day events by 2017.

Objective 2: Establish and/or improve fifty acres of habitat or restoration and enhancement for fish and wildlife by 2017.

Strategy 1: Participate in one local initiative that links open spaces for the benefit of wildlife connectivity by 2015.

Strategy 2: Conduct a minimum of one hands-on educational opportunity for regarding habitat and stream health before 2014.

Strategy 3: Create wildlife habitat by installing native Alabama plants on ten project sites by the year 2017.

Strategy 4: Participate in demonstrations and educational seminars on controlling invasive species affecting the forest and recreation resources across the ARVV-RC&D Area. Provide a minimum of two demonstration projects by partnering with Alabama Invasive Species Councils, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, or Alabama Forestry Commission before 2014.

Strategy 5: Conduct two demonstrations or educational opportunities for forestland management practices by 2015.

Objective 3: Create and or enhance five local food project and market opportunities by 2015.

Strategy 1: Conduct a minimum of three education and outreach activities for sustainable agriculture and alternative agriculture and direct marketing opportunities by 2015.

Strategy 2: Continue through partnerships and sponsorships the locally grown initiative by promoting and sustaining the vegetable marketing opportunities by sponsorship of cooperatives, educational events, and new producers by assisting at least three events and six new producers by 2014.

Strategy 3: Provide assistance to twenty agriculture producers to develop or expand markets for locally and/or organically grown products by the year 2015.

Objective 4: Develop five educational initiatives that promote farmland protection and forestry awareness through community partnerships.

Strategy 1: Assist with organizing four educational events or celebrations by 2015.

Strategy 2: Host or facilitate three farm or forest tours to educate groups on the importance of farm and forestry.

CURRENT AND POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS:

AMRV-RC&D has worked in cooperation with the following federal, state, and local agencies in both planning and implementing its programs:

Federal

- USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service
- USDA- Farm Service Agency
- USDA-Forest Service
- USDA-Rural Development
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Dept of Energy
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- TVA..Tennessee Valley Authority

State

- Alabama Association of Conservation Districts
- Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries
- Alabama Dept. of Conservation & Natural Resources
- Alabama Department of Environmental Management
- Alabama Dept. of Economic and Community Affairs
- Alabama Dept. of Environmental Management
- Alabama Soil & Water Conservation Committee
- Alabama Department of Public Health
- Alabama Forestry Commission
- Auburn University

Local Governments

- Top of Alabama and the North Alabama Councils of Government.
- County Commissions of Cullman, Morgan, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Jackson, DeKalb and Marshall Counties
- Towns and Cities in the eight county area

Non-Profits / Associations / Volunteers

- Alabama Association of RC&D Councils
- Warrior River Clean Water Partnership
- Southeastern Association of RC&D Councils
- National Association of RC&D Councils
- Forestry Planning Committees
- Earth Team Volunteers
- Tennessee Basin Clean Water Partnership
- Boy Scouts of America
- Alabama On-Site Wastewater Association

Media

Local print and TV media

Educational Institutions

- Alabama A&M University
- Tuskegee University
- University of Alabama Huntsville
- Athens State College
- Calhoun College
- Alabama Cooperative Extension System
- Wallace State Community College

Business / Industry / Misc.

- Southern Solar
- Geo-Hay

Appendix I

AMRV- Resource Conservation and Development Council Survey for Input on Five Year Plan Revision

The AMRV-RC&D Council is in the process of revising its Area Plan. This plan is to provide guidance to the RC&D Council in the use of its resources in addressing problems, needs and opportunities in our eight county region in north Alabama. We are soliciting your input as to what you feel is the direction the Council should take over the next five years.

The mission of the AMRV-RC&D Council is to conserve and develop all resources to enhance the quality of life in the area. To learn more of how the AMRV-RC&D Council works, click on the Council's Home Page at www.amrvrcd.com. There you can see the kinds of projects we have employed to meet the goals of the current five year plan.

In order to comply with the requirements of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service Resource Conservation and Development Program, the Council

must work within one or more of the following areas:

1. Land Conservation – controlling erosion and sedimentation
2. Water Management – water conservation, use, water quality, flooding, reservoirs
3. Community Development – Improving, developing, and protecting all aspects of a community, including the economy
4. Land Management – conserving and developing energy, protecting agricultural lands and protecting fish and wildlife and habitat

SURVEY

Please complete the following survey as completely as possible. Your input will be kept confidential.

Date Completed: _____

I reside in the following county:

My age is: _____

Morgan

Lawrence

Limestone

Madison

Jackson

DeKalb

Marshall

Cullman

I am a:

County Official

SWCD Supervisor

Small Town Official

Individual

Agency Representative

Non-Profit or Community Organization

Business Owner or Representative

Other _____

I live in the following area:

Incorporated City or Town

Rural Area

I am interested in becoming a volunteer with AMRV-RC&D:

Male Contact me at (email address or phone) _____

Female (Optional)

I believe the greatest problem or need of my community/county/region is:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

The AMRV-RC&D Council should spend the following amount of time and energy on the following types of projects:

- More
- About the Same Environmental/Agricultural Education
- Less
- More General Education
- About the Same
- Less
- More Small Farmer/Alternative Agriculture
- About the Same
- Less
- More Community and Economic Development
- About the Same
- Less
- More Tourism Promotion for Economic Development
- About the Same
- Less
- More Recreational Facilities
- About the Same
- Less

I believe the AMRV-RC&D Council should look into these projects in the USDA/NRCS categories:

Land Conservation _____

Water Management _____

Community Development _____

Land Management _____

Please use the following space (and any additional pages needed) to record any comment, concern, or suggestion for the AMRV- RC&D Council to consider in its future plans:

The AMRV-RC&D Council requests your assistance and involvement in the implementation of this Area Plan. To become a volunteer, please contact the AMRV-RC&D office at:

AMRV-RC&D 5514 U. S. Highway 31 South Hartselle, Alabama 35640

Office – 256-773-8495 FAX – 256-773-8510

Nondiscrimination Statement

The AMRV-RC&D Council prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.

Compliance with the Civil Rights Act

The Alabama Mountains Rivers and Valleys RC & D program is conducted in compliance with the non-discrimination provisions as contained in Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and which provide that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, marital status, or handicap/disability be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial (or technical) assistance from the Department of Agriculture or any agency thereof.