

**Clinch-Powell
Resource Conservation & Development
Council, Inc.**

TENNESSEE

**Area Plan
2009-2014**

Mission

*“Building strong communities, caring for people and
protecting natural resources.”*

**P.O. Box 379
7995 Rutledge Pike
Rutledge, Tennessee 37861**

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Organization Overview	4
Overview of the Area	4
Demographics	5
Natural Resources	7
Agriculture	8
Socioeconomic Information	8
Resource Needs and Opportunities	9
Summary by RC&D Elements	10
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	11
Current and Potential Partnerships with USDA and Others	13
Linkages to the NRCS Strategic Plan	14
Compliance Statements and Signatures	15
Appendix	
Public Input Survey	
Five Year Budget	
Five Year Staffing Needs	

Introduction

This document is the long-range plan for the Clinch-Powell Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc. a 501C3 not-for-profit organization chartered in the State of Tennessee. Clinch-Powell RC&D Council, Inc. enjoys a unique private/public partnership with the USDA primarily through the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Clinch-Powell RC&D encompasses the entire political boundaries of the following five counties in Tennessee: Claiborne, Grainger, Hancock, Hawkins and Union. The RC&D was originally authorized by the USDA Secretary of Agriculture in 1990.

Public input was solicited and considered in the development of this plan. The plan considers a five year planning horizon of 2009-2014. The format and content follow the guidance as outlined in Part 513 of the NRCS RC&D Manual.

The purpose of this plan is to provide a strong, strategic direction for the organization by outlining vision and mission and articulating goals, objectives and strategies. This plan provides a roadmap of Council direction and suggests activities for the next five years. An annual work plan or Plan of Work will provide the yearly schedule of activities to carry out the plan.

The RC&D Federal Program is administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which provides technical assistance in the form of a full-time coordinator to help implement the Council's Area (5-year) Plan and its Annual Plan of Work. The Council leverages this assistance and money with local donations, sponsorships and grants to plan and implement projects and activities to meet their mission.

Congress passed the Food and Agricultural Act of 1962, which authorized Resource Conservation and Development Areas. This document serves as an agreement between the Clinch-Powell Resource Conservation Development Council Inc. and the USDA, NRCS.

Organization Overview

Vision – The vision of the Clinch-Powell Resource Conservation & Development Council as revisited in October 2008 is:

“Every person deserves to live in a healthy and vital community where families are valued, youth are celebrated, education is a priority, the environment is clean, jobs are plentiful and leadership is not only visionary, but shared.”

Mission – The mission statement as revisited in September 2008 is:

“Building strong communities, caring for people and protecting natural resources.”

Background and Structure of the Council

The original sponsors of the Clinch-Powell RC&D were the county governments and soil conservation districts in the region. Application for assistance was developed by a steering committee and made to the Secretary of Agriculture in 1988 and the official authorization for assistance came in February 1990.

The steering committee recognized the opportunities available to not-for-profit organizations and became a nonprofit corporation chartered in the State of Tennessee in 1989 followed by 501C3 tax exempt status from IRS in 1990.

The governing body is the Board of Directors. The bylaws allow for a board of directors of 15 members. Directors are all considered “at-large”. An Executive Committee is authorized to conduct business between board meetings.

NRCS provides the services of a full-time RC&D Coordinator in a partnership arrangement to assist the Council to carry out its Area Plan and Plan of Work and to provide oversight and guidance. The Council has several employees who help administer and carry out programs and affairs of the Council.

Overview of the Area

The Clinch-Powell RC&D area is located in northeast Tennessee and includes five counties and 1,041,000 acres. The area is bordered on the east by Sullivan County, the south by Greene, Hamblen and Jefferson Counties, the west by Knox, Anderson and Campbell Counties and the north by Bell County, Kentucky and Lee County, Virginia.

The majority of the RC&D area is in the Southern Appalachian Ridges and Valleys MLRA, however a very small portion is in the Cumberland Plateau and Mountains MLRA. The entire area is characterized by a wide variety of topography and soils and very complex geology.



The RC&D was named for the Clinch and Powell rivers that flow through and define the area. They are two of the last free flowing rivers in the Tennessee Valley system. They are unique rivers with an abundant array of important aquatic life. The rivers were once the site of an important pearl button industry before the introduction of plastic buttons, indeed the Clinch River is home to more species of mussels than all other U.S. rivers combined. The protection of these rivers is a major focus of the RC&D effort.

The Holston River borders the area on the south and feeds Cherokee Reservoir in Grainger and Hawkins counties.

Major U.S. Highways in the RC&D area are Highway 11W and 25E. The RC&D area has no interstate highways. The area is served by three weekly papers, one bi-weekly paper and one twice weekly paper within the area.

The area covers portions of two congressional districts. Grainger, Claiborne and Union are in the 3rd District and Hancock and Hawkins are in the 1st District.

The entire RC&D area is rural and meets the rural definition of USDA Rural Development. Hawkins and Hancock counties are considered to be part of the Tri-Cities MRA, Grainger County is part of the Morristown MRA and Union County is part of the Knoxville MRA. Both farm and non-farm residents compose the population of our rural communities and small towns. This has increased the demand and need for rural development in each of the area counties. Although agriculture has declined in importance, it is still a major source of income and a large number of acres are used for agricultural and forestry enterprises.

There is significant population growth in some areas placing increasing burden on the natural resources of the region and the loss of farmland to development.

Demographics

The Clinch-Powell RC&D Council is 100% rural. The total population of the region is 137,347. Church Hill is the largest city with a population of 6,765.

The population of the region is predominantly white making up 97.8% of the population. The largest minority population is Hispanic which makes up <1% of the population.

RC&D Area Population Trends and Distribution

Location	Farm Land %	Land Nonfarm %	Total Population #	Percent Change Since 2000	% White	% African American	% Hispanic
Claiborne	44.9	55.1	31,461	4.67	97.4	1.0	0.8
Grainger	51.2	48.8	22,708	8.68	98.4	0.7	1.6
Hancock	42.6	57.4	6693	-1.3	98.2	0.5	0.4
Hawkins	48.5	51.5	57,477	6.59	97.2	1.6	1.0
Union	32.1	67.9	19,008	6.04	98.2	0.6	1.0
RC&D Area	45.0	55.0	137,347	6.03	97.9	0.6	1.0
Tennessee	41.6	58.4	6,214,888	8.46	80.4	16.9	3.5
USA	40.7	59.3	304,059,724	7.45	74.1	12.4	14.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, 2008 Estimates, 2000 Census, American Community Survey 2005-2007, USDA 2007 Census of Agriculture County Profile

Population Growth by City

City	2000	2008	% Change	Projected 2020 population*
Rogersville	4,240	4,346	2.44	4,501
Church Hill	5,941	6,765	12.18	7,204
Mount Carmel	4,824	5,462	11.68	6,033
Surgoinsville	1,646	1,811	9.11	1,903
Bulls Gap	713	749	4.81	776
Sneedville	1,350	1,312	-2.81	1,288
Tazewell	2,239	2,223	-0.71	2,256
New Tazewell	2,871	2,882	-0.38	3,180
Harrogate	4,069	4,026	-1.06	4,344
Cumberland Gap	204	208	1.92	229
Rutledge	1,190	1,284	7.32	1,448
Bean Station	2,821	3,046	7.39	3,590
Blaine	1,591	1,751	9.14	2,098
Maynardville	1,786	1,909	6.44	2,223
Luttrell	917	933	1.71	1,082
Plainview	1,877	2,038	7.9	2,533

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

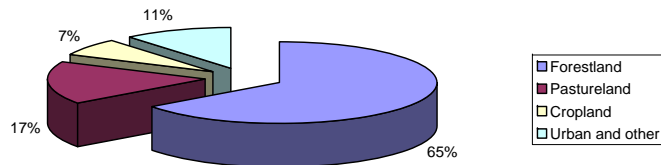
*Data this column from Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations and the UT Center for Business and Economic Research 2009

Natural Resources

The natural resources of the region are defined by the mountains, rivers and valleys of the Tennessee River system. The area is blessed with abundant fish and wildlife habitat. The Clinch and Powell Rivers come together to form Norris Reservoir which flows through Union, Claiborne and Grainger counties. Norris Reservoir was the first reservoir constructed by the Tennessee Valley Authority. The Cherokee Reservoir forms a portion of the southern border of the region and is fed by the Holston River. The Cumberland Mountains and the Clinch Mountains run northeast to southwest through the region.

The area is blessed with a long growing season, an abundance of precipitation, scenic farmland and forests with many streams and manmade lakes. This makes the region well suited for agriculture, timber production, industrial development, recreation, and a pleasing environment.

Land Use



More than 65% of the area is covered with forests making the region highly desirable for outdoor recreational activities like hiking, camping, fishing and hunting. Streams and rivers provide a wide variety of outdoor experiences. The region has very high potential for agri- and eco-tourism enterprises.

Agriculture

While manufacturing is the largest provider of jobs in the region, agriculture is still very important to the economy. The agricultural industry is diversified with cow/calf, vegetables, and fruits growing in importance. The area is blessed with a long growing season, an abundance of precipitation, scenic farm land and forests with many streams and man-made lakes. The average size farm in the region is 60 acres. Development pressures and rising energy and input costs are causing more and more farms to sell to developers.

Socioeconomic Information

The median household income in the region in 2007 was \$31,504 which is only 74.32% of the Tennessee average (\$42,389) and 52.18% of the average in the USA (\$60,374). Hancock County has the lowest median household income at \$24,375 and Hawkins County has the highest at \$37,398.

Approximately 21.68% of the area's families are living below the federal poverty level which compares to 15.6% in Tennessee. Poverty is a major concern. One in three people in Hancock lives in poverty while only one in six live in poverty in Tennessee and eight in the USA.

Education attainment varies widely throughout the region with only 55.9% of residents having a high school education in Hancock while 70.4% of residents in Hawkins have a high school education. Grainger has the lowest attainment percentage of a Bachelors Degree at 5.7%. Claiborne has the highest level of Bachelors attainment at 11%.

Location	% HS Ed	% B.S. Degree	2007 Median Household Income \$	% Below Poverty
Claiborne	60.3	8.9	29,822	22.3
Grainger	63.2	7.8	34,148	19.4
Hancock	55.9	10.2	24,375	32.2
Hawkins	70.4	10	37,398	16.4
Union	56.3	5.8	31,779	19.6
RC&D Area	61.2	8.5	31,504	21.68
TN	75.9	19.6	42,389	15.6
USA	84	27	60,374	13.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2007 American Community Survey 3-year estimates

Like the rest of the nation, the Clinch-Powell region is suffering from an economy in crisis in 2009. Several key industries have shut down and many others have cut back. Unemployment and underemployment have reached a ten year high.

Unemployment Rates

County	Current Unemployment	Last 12 months
Claiborne	11.2	7.3
Grainger	12.9	7.8
Hancock	13.4	8.3
Hawkins	11.0	6.6
Union	10.0	6.1
Region average	11.7	7.2
Tennessee	10.8	6.5
USA	9.5	5.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2007 American Community Survey June 2009 Estimates, U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Estimates Summary 2008

In 2002, the RC&D became a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) in order to address affordable housing issues in the region as a result of the Area Planning process. Safe, sanitary and affordable housing is a key component of community development. Families who own homes are more stable families and stable families build stable communities.

The RC&D has been providing home ownership counseling and moving low income families into quality homes and developing affordable homes since 2002. When the housing crisis hit in 2008 the RC&D began providing foreclosure mitigation counseling as the only rural HUD approved counseling agency in Tennessee to meet the needs of Tennesseans. Housing services are offered throughout east Tennessee.

Resource Needs and Opportunities

Public Participation Activities – A concerted effort was made to be certain this plan addresses the concerns of the public. Surveys were prepared and conducted throughout the region using Survey Monkey, newspaper articles, email, direct mail and interviews. Input was also sought from county leaders.

The RC&D Board of Directors and Staff met on retreat in October 2008 to review the Area Plan 2003-2008 and discussed accomplishments and goals. Following that conversation they asked themselves questions. Where do we want to go in the next five years? If we look at our strengths in programming what does it tell us? The group was

clear that they wanted to continue strengths in housing, conservation, sustainable economic development and our Appalachia CARES AmeriCorps program.

The group discussed the results of the public input and whether or not to change tactics or course of attack. Surveys showed not surprisingly that jobs and the economy were the main interests of the public followed by alternative energy, water and pollution issues.

So where do we go from here in the next five years? The group discussed the capabilities, the political and economic climate and the changes in staffing that might be possible in the next five years. The group agreed that we need to focus on institutionalizing and strengthening our gains in new initiatives started in the last five years and not take on any new large initiatives. In other words, we need to focus on what we do well. We will continue to work in the following areas of focus: Sustainable Economic Development, Affordable Housing, Conservation and Community Services through AmeriCorps.

Summary of Findings by RC&D Program Elements

The respondents to the Area Plan Survey ranked Community Development #1, Land Management #2, Water Management #3 and Land Conservation #4. The Council has decided to address concerns in the Community Development and Land Management Elements during the planning horizon covered by this Area Plan.

Under Community Development, respondents were most concerned about affordable housing, better jobs, farmland preservation and greener lifestyles.

Under Land Management, respondents were most concerned about water pollution, farmland protection, land use and energy conservation.

Under Land Conservation, respondents were most concerned about land disruption associated with urban development.

Under Water Management, respondents were most concerned about diminishing wells and springs and the need to expand public water to homes and farms.

The Council has decided to focus in the two elements of Land Management and Community Development.

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Element: Land Management

- **Goal: *Create Significant Conservation Gains on 225 Farms by 2014***
 - Objective: Expand established conservation efforts with 200 landowners by 2014
 - Strategy: Educate 100 landowners, 10 community groups and 5,000 students by 2014
 - Strategy: Complete 60 BMP projects protecting 25 miles of streams by 2014
 - Provide prescription grazing land planning and technical assistance to 50 landowners by 2014
 - Objective: Attain \$3 million in new funding to support conservation efforts by 2014
 - Strategy: Apply for funding for Middle and Upper Clinch and Powell rivers funding for BMP funding by 2014

Element: Community Development

- **Goal: *Sustainable Economic Development Grows by \$10 million by 2014***
 - Objective: Facilitate access to affordable capital using four public/private sources by 2014
 - Strategy: Provide counseling to five businesses per year
 - Strategy: Close 15 affordable small business loans creating a minimum of 45 jobs by 2013
 - Strategy: Actively support local business through a minimum of 50 subcontracts per year
- **Goal: *Educational and Capacity Building Services Reach 18,000 citizens and 60 Community-Based Organizations by 2014***
 - Objective: Appalachia CARES AmeriCorps program supports 40 community based organizations and schools in 2009
 - Strategy: Engage 3,000 students in experiential service-learning each year
 - Strategy: Provide academic enrichment services for 500 elementary students each year
 - Strategy: Complete 150 student-led community service projects with students each year
 - Strategy: Create 34 FTE AmeriCorps positions annually
 - Strategy: Partner with 12 CBO each year to grow their capacity to meet community needs

- Objective: Enhance science education through hands-on enrichment in schools for 1,050 students in 2009
 - Strategy: Hold Conservation Camp education field days for 1,000 students every year
 - Strategy: Hold Envirothon for 50 high school students annually
- Objective: Train and educate 25 not-for-profits annually
 - Strategy: Conduct board development training annually for nonprofit leaders in RC&D and other nonprofits
 - Strategy: Conduct one Nonprofit Management for RC&D Councils each year
- **Goal: *Invest \$5 Million to Meet Basic Needs of People and Build Affordable Housing by 2014***
 - Objective: Expand Emergency Services Capacity of four Volunteer Fire Departments in Grainger County
 - Strategy: Make contributions to four VFD's annually
 - Objective: Help 1,100 modest income families with safe, sanitary and affordable housing through Community Housing Development Organization by 2014
 - Strategy: Work with 500 low-income families to move toward home ownership through one-on-one counseling and homebuyer education by 2014
 - Strategy: Build 5 affordable homes per year
 - Strategy: Provide foreclosure mitigation counseling to 600 families by 2014
 - Objective: Provide property management and rental operations and maintain 24 rental units by 2014
 - Strategy: Recruit tenants and provide homeowner relations and property maintenance of Gilley's Annex annually
 - Strategy: Acquire or build 12 rental properties for low income families by 2014
 - Objective: Provide affordable mortgage financing for 50 low income families by 2014
 - Strategy: Make eight very low interest home repair loans for very low income families by 2014
 - Strategy: Make 30 New Start mortgage loans by 2014
 - Strategy: Make 60 forgivable second mortgage loans for affordable housing by 2014

■ **Goal: Increase Sustainable Tourism Visitation by 2% Annually**

- Objective: Expand operations at River Place on the Clinch by 30% by 2014
 - Strategy: Promote and operate River Place Market, Café, Cabins and Outfitters annually
 - Strategy: Expand use and increase sales of local goods and produce by 10% annually.

- Objective: Appalachian Quilt Trail Vendors Grow by 10% annually
 - Grow AQT to 500 locations by 2014 including 25 new agritourism locations
 - Produce and distribute AQT Visitors Guide annually
 - Promote, market and exhibit in three venues annually

Current and Potential Partnerships with USDA and Others

The success of this Area Plan will depend on building partnership within USDA, other federal, state, local and private groups. The partnership with NRCS is of special import with an existing Memorandum of Understanding outlining this formal partnership. This Area Plan and accompanying annual Plans of Work will serve as the working documents for the assistance of a full time Coordinator.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA Rural Housing Service and the USDA Rural Business and Cooperative Service have been identified as agencies that will be important potential funders for this plan. Other partnerships to be developed in carrying out this plan are the TN Dept of Ag, TN Dept of Tourism, TN Dept of Econ. and Development, Appalachian Regional Commission and the TN Housing Development Agency, HUD, TN Wildlife Resources Agency, Federation of Appalachian Housing Enterprises, Citizens Bank & Trust of Grainger County, First Century Bank, Citizens Bank of East TN, East TN Foundation, TN Department of Tourism, Corporation for National Service, Volunteer Tennessee, Environmental Protection Agency, The Nature Conservancy and US Fish and Wildlife Service..

Local partners include the county governments, soil conservation districts, development district, chambers of commerce, tourism councils and numerous others.

Linkages to the NRCS Strategic Plan

This Area Plan links to these NRCS Strategic Plan Strategies, Goals and Objectives.

NRCS Strategies

- Market Based Approach
- Cooperative Conservation
- Watershed Approach

NRCS Goals

- Clean Abundant Water
- Healthy Plan and Animal Communities
- Adequate Energy Supplies
- Working Farm and Ranch Lands

NRCS Objectives

- Water Management
- Grassland and Forestland Ecosystems
- Energy Conservation
- Connected Landscapes

COMPLIANCE STATEMENTS AND SIGNATURES

“The Clinch-Powell RC&D Council’s program will be conducted in compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions as contained in Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (Public Law 100-259) and other nondiscrimination statutes; namely, Section 504, of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and in accordance with the regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture (7CFR-15, Subparts A & B) which provide that no person in the United States shall, on the ground 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 US. Department of Agriculture or any agency thereof.”

The Clinch-Powell RC&D Council agrees that the signing of this document constitutes agreement to comply with Federal laws concerning restrictions on lobbying, a drug-free workplace, and responsibilities for non-procurement, suspension, and disbarment review.

The Clinch-Powell RC&D Council has not submitted this plan for review by the State as Tennessee does not require a single point of contact review, however the plan has been submitted for information to the Commissioner of Agriculture, TN Dept. of Ag. An environmental impact statement or environmental assessment will not be prepared during the development of the area plan, but when applicable will be done with each project according to federal procedures.

Clinch-Powell RC&D Council, Inc. Tennessee

By: _____ Date _____
Chairperson

Attest: _____ Date _____
Secretary/Treasurer

This action authorized at an official meeting of the Clinch-Powell RC&D Council on October 18, 2008.

U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service

The State Conservationist hereby acknowledges the attached Area Plan of Clinch-Powell RC&D as meeting the requirements under Public Law 97-98 to receive assistance from USDA.

Acknowledged By: _____ Date _____
NRCS State Conservationist

Your Voice Counts!

We need your thoughtful opinion as we develop the Five Year Strategic Plan for the Clinch-Powell Resource Conservation & Development Council. Please take a few minutes and thoughtfully complete this form. Your input will be considered with many others to develop a plan for the future of our region.

While completing the questions, consider yourself, your family and your neighbors. Think about education, recreation, jobs, youth, health, safety, environment, business, leadership and all the other issues that make a healthy community. Please feel free to continue comments on another sheet or in the blank spaces of this page.

QUESTION #1: What do you think are the three biggest concerns facing your community/county in the next ten years?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

QUESTION #2: What do you like best about your community (strengths)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

QUESTION #3: What do you like least about your community (weaknesses)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

QUESTION #4: What should/could be done to protect the things you like in your community?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

QUESTION #5: What should/could be done to improve the things you don't like in your community?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Please complete and fax to: 865-828-5212 or mail to: RC&D, PO Box 379, Rutledge TN 37861

**Clinch-Powell Resource Conservation
and Development Council
Five Year Projected Budget
2009-2014**

REVENUES

Grant Income	<u>\$5,668,850.00</u>
Interest Income	\$40,000.00
Public Support	\$177,000.00
Reimbursed expenses	\$474,750.00
Service Income	\$5,323,875.00
Total Revenues	<u>\$11,684,475.00</u>

EXPENSES

General & Administrative Allocable Expenses	\$344,500.00
Total Allocable	\$344,500.00
Unallocable Expenses	<u>\$35,000.00</u>
Total General & Administration	<u>\$379,500.00</u>
Program Expenses	
Total Program Expense	<u>\$10,995,000.00</u>
Total Expenses	<u>\$11,374,500.00</u>
REVENUES OVER (UNDER) EXPENSES	<u>(\$309,975.00)</u>

**Clinch-Powell Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc.
Five Year Staffing Resources Plan**

Lindy Turner, NRCS, RC&D Coordinator
 Sara H. Knight, CPA, Financial Manager
 Trena Brown, Appalachia CARES Program Manager
 Ronald Lambert, TNC, Land Protections Specialist
 Chris Osborn, Housing Programs Manager
 Stephanie Wesson, Housing Counselor
 Kimberly Belcher, River Place on the Clinch Manager
 Gary Donehew, General Contractor, CP Construction Company
 Stephani Richardson, Program Assistant
 Gene Robinson, Grazing Conservationist
 Susan Eribarne, Housing Program Assistant
 Jordan Southern, Conservation Technician
 Kelly Caruso, AmeriCorps, Education/Tourism Assistant
 Jeffery Munden, AmeriCorps, Clinch River Conservation Center and Retreat Center
 Keesha MacFarland, River Place
 Brianna Seal, AmeriCorps, River Place
 Nakisha Johnson, River Place
 Deb Smith, River Place
 Elizabeth Moore, River Place
 Lucy Gilliam, River Place
 Abby Beck, River Place
 David Smith, River Place
 Ryan Belcher, River Place
 Shasta Cope, River Place
 Megan Hurd, AmeriCorps, River Place
 Keysha Johnson, AmeriCorps, River Place
 Teresa Hancock, AmeriCorps
 Andrea Richardson, AmeriCorps