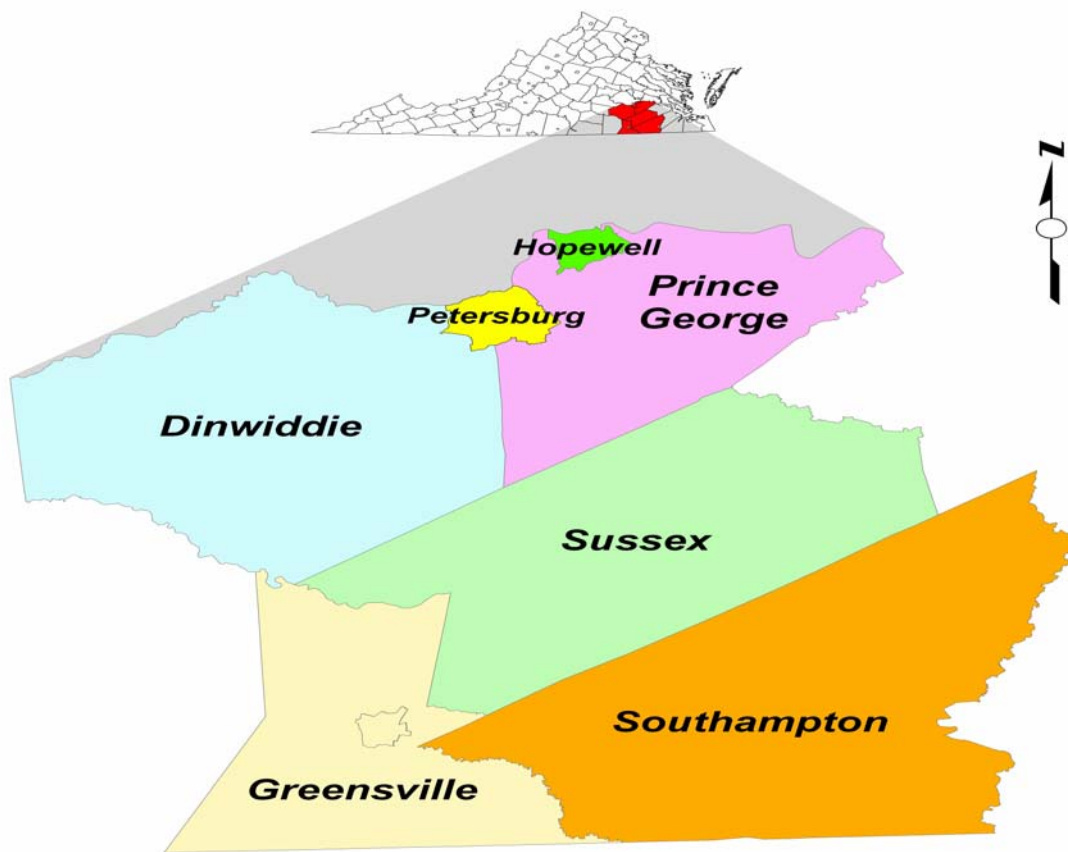


South Centré Corridors

Resource Conservation and Development
(RC&D) Council



5-Year Area Plan
2005-2009

PREFACE

The South Centré Corridors Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council is located in the southeastern portion of Virginia. It includes the counties of Dinwiddie, Greensville, Prince George, Southampton, and Sussex, and the cities of Hopewell and Petersburg. South Centré Corridors RC&D is a 501(c) (3) Non-Profit Corporation. Members of the corporation include the governing bodies of the counties and cities mentioned above, the Appomattox River, James River, and Chowan Basin Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and the Crater Planning District Commission. Each of these corporate members appoints two individuals to our governing Council.

South Centré Corridors RC&D was formed in January of 2002. It was created to identify and address Natural Resource concerns and issues that have potential to be developed and utilized in a manner that both protects the resources and provides economic stimulus. This five-year “Area Plan” is somewhat of a contract between the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the RC&D Council. This Council operates pursuant to U.S. Code Section 102 of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1962 (P.-L. 87-703) and Section 1528-1538 of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1981. The RC&D program was given permanent authority in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill). All powers and authorities required to plan and initiate project measures will be provided by the sponsoring agencies or cooperating agencies and individuals.

South Centré Corridors RC&D Council wishes to thank the NRCS and Ms. Denise Doetzer for their continued support of the RC&D program. The Council also would like to thank the Virginia Department of Forestry for its generous financial support for the development of this Area Plan. The Council also wishes to thank all the volunteer Council members and citizens that provided the valuable input and time required to develop this Plan.

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Council Membership and Staff

<http://southcentrecorridorsrcd.org>

City of Hopewell	Brenda S. Pelham Robyn Thompson
City of Petersburg	Ron Reekes Dama Rice, Treasurer
Dinwiddie County	Daniel Lee Susan A. Watkins
Greensville County	Linda Clements Vacant
Prince George County	Jerry Skalsky Paul Douglas Holc
Southampton County	M. L. Everett, Jr. Walter L. Young III
Sussex County	Mary E. Jones Crockett Morris
Appomattox River Soil and Water Conservation District	Granville Maitland Bonnie Thompson
Chowan Basin Soil and Water Conservation District	Gary Cross Stacey Bradshaw
James River Soil and Water Conservation District	Donald A. Bagshaw W. D. Kreider
Crater Planning District Commission	F. Woodrow Harris Victor Liu
At Large	Tim Smith Linda McAllister
Coordinator: Mr. Keith Boyd, Natural Resources Conservation Service, P.O. Box 1237, Prince George, VA 23875; Phone 804-732-4375; Fax 804-732-4713 Keith.boyd@va.usda.gov	
Administrative Assistant: Meredith J. Wilson meredithe.wilson@va.usda.gov	

MISSION

“The Mission of South Centré Corridors RC&D is to develop partnerships to advocate and promote the conservation, preservation, and development of our resources to enhance the quality of life in the region.”

VISION

“Our Vision for our area is a place where our children and grandchildren are proud to call home because of the abundant recreational opportunities, a sustained agriculture economy, preservation of the Rural Character, enhanced environmental quality, and the existence of vibrant, safe urban areas.”

NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

South Centré Corridors RC&D Council covers an area first settled in the 1600's and is located in the South central section of the Commonwealth of Virginia, an area with typical rural and urban localities each with unique historical value. Running through the area are a number of rivers, lakes, and streams offering many opportunities including but not limited to farming and recreation. Plantations and historically significant homes are found throughout, along with farming operations, urban centers, commercial and industrial areas, and typical residential areas, all served by major interstate roads and railroads. These highway, rail, and river corridors are the source of our name.

Our rural areas are seeing the encroachment of suburban residential and commercial development reducing useable farm and timber land along with the scenic rural countryside. Inflation and increasing operational costs for the farmer is making it difficult for the farmer to survive putting more pressure for the development of farm land. The urban centers are seeing decay from within due to age and economic pressures causing the shifting of businesses and residential uses to the outlying areas. These pressures, among others, are found to be adversely affecting the quality of life throughout the region.

As a result the formation of the Council determined that a regional approach, as indicated earlier in this document, would be of benefit to the entire region. During 2004 the Council initiated a series of public focus groups to identify and address the concerns, both positive and negative, and make recommendations. Paid for by grant funds from the Virginia Department of Forestry we hosted a series of meetings with topics such as "Alternative Forest Products", "Farmland Preservation", "Downtown Revitalization", and "Horse Industry Development". Through these meetings many opportunities presented themselves showing how the Council could partner with individuals, organizations, state and federal agencies, and the regional organizations to assist in addressing regional concerns for land issues, water and water quality issues, urban sustainability, community development, farming and timber issues, as well as recreational uses. This was a labor intensive process that involved many people not only from our RC&D area but from other parts of the state as well.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) stipulates that each RC&D Council must address and consider four issues during its planning processes. These topics are very broad and capture our needs as well. The four topics are:

1. Land Conservation – This is defined as the control of erosion and sedimentation.

2. Water Management – Defined as the conservation, use, and quality of water, including irrigation and rural water supplies; the mitigation of floods and high water tables; the repair and improvement of reservoirs; the improvement of agricultural water management; and the improvement of water quality.
3. Community Development – Defined as the development of resource-based industries; the protection of rural industries from natural resource hazards; the development of adequate rural water and waste disposal systems; improvement of recreation facilities; improvement of rural housing; provision of adequate health and education facilities; the satisfaction of essential transportation and communication needs; and the promotion of food security, economic development and education.
4. Land Management – Defined as energy conservation that includes the production of energy crops; the protection of agricultural land as the appropriate from conversion to other uses; farmland protection; and the protection of fish and wildlife habitats.

The five strategic goals that this council has agreed upon create strategies to address three out of the four mandated topics. These are Water Management, Community Development, and Land Management. By focusing on these three issues the Council has a real opportunity to achieve our Vision. There are many needs that are important to address that are receiving very little attention at the present time. Examples include recreational development of our rivers and increased farmland income potential utilizing alternative rural and agricultural enterprises. We have many opportunities with vast amounts of very productive cropland and a population of talented farmers that need to learn different ways to extract an income utilizing their natural resources. The South Centre Corridors RC&D Council looks forward to this challenge.

STRATEGIC GOALS

- **Goal I** Improve Downtown Re-Development and Revitalization
- **Goal II** Increase Agricultural Opportunities
- **Goal III** Increase and Improve Recreational Opportunities
- **Goal IV** Protect and Ensure Groundwater Quality
- **Goal V** Improve and Increase Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Council

GOALS, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

GOAL I

Improve Downtown Re-Development and Revitalization

Objective #1

Increased utilization of vacant buildings

- ▣ **Strategy 1:** Identify buildings that are currently unused and rank in priority.
Partners Needed: Local Chambers of Commerce, local offices of Planning, Virginia Department of Housing and Development, USDA Rural Development, property owners
Timeline: Spring 2006

- ▣ **Strategy 2:** Explore possible new enterprises that have potential to occupy vacant buildings and publicize results.
Partners Needed: Local Chambers of Commerce, Local offices of Economic Development, property owners, business owners, Virginia Department of Business Assistance.
Timeline: Fall 2006

- ▣ **Strategy 3:** Adopt vacant buildings as RC&D projects if potential exists to rehabilitate the building. Example is “Burrowsville School Project”.
Partners Needed: Private foundations, “Friends of” groups, USDA Rural Development, US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
Timeline: Ongoing as they arise. Target: Spring 2007.

Objective #2

Increase awareness of the problems associated with downtown decay

- ▣ **Strategy 1:** Publicized and highlight the environmental problems associated with downtown decay.
Partners Needed: USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF), Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD).
Timeline: Fall 2005

- ▣ **Strategy 2:** Document and create photo essays of downtowns and publicize the relationship between “Downtown Decay, urban sprawl, and the loss of valuable farmland.”
Partners Needed: USDA NRCS, EPA, Virginia DEQ, Virginia DCR, local SWCD’s, Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, American Farmland Trust, Virginia Farm Bureau, and other Farm preservation groups.
Timeline: Fall 2005

- ▣ **Strategy 3:** Create an awards program that provides praise to individuals and organizations that do an outstanding job of rehabilitating old structures.

Partners Needed: None

Timeline: Spring 2008

Objective #3

Improve water-based transportation throughout the RC&D area

- ▣ **Strategy 1:** Continue to partner with and endorse the efforts of the City of Petersburg to have the Appomattox River dredged up to Petersburg, provide assistance as needed to any of the partners currently involved, and actively seek new potential funders for this effort.

Partners Needed: Local governments, HUD, Virginia Department of Housing and Urban Development, Virginia DEQ, US Army Corps of Engineers (ACE), Virginia Port Authority, Vulcan Materials, and USDA Rural Development

Timeline: Ongoing

GOAL II

Increase Agricultural Opportunities

Objective #1

Increase income potential on farmland throughout the RC&D area

- ▣ **Strategy 1:** Identify, highlight, and provide praise for farmers that have created new and innovative ways to provide farm income. Promote these new ideas.
Partners Needed: USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, Farm Bureau, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Virginia DOF.
Timeline: Fall 2006

- ▣ **Strategy 2:** Offer educational opportunities concerning agriculture and woodland management.
Partners Needed: Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, USDA NRCS, Virginia (DOF), Virginia Tech, Virginia State University (VSU), Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumers Services.
Timeline: Fall 2005 and throughout the coming years

Objective #2

Increase the level of awareness about alternative income producing enterprises

- ▣ **Strategy 1:** Develop a horse industry advisory panel for the Council. Assimilate ideas from this panel and develop proposals to seek funding for projects.
Partners Needed: Virginia Horse Industry Board, Virginia Horse Council, Horse Industry leaders
Timeline: Fall 2005

- ▣ **Strategy 2:** Educate local governments, citizens, and organizations about government programs and agricultural easements and how they can offer financial opportunities to local farmers and landowners.
Partners Needed: USDA FSA, USDA NRCS, American Farmland Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Virginia DCR, Virginia Outdoors Foundation, Virginia DOF
Timeline: Spring 2007

- ▣ **Strategy 3:** Educate landowners on other income producing ventures such as trail development, agro-tourism, and wildlife management.
Partners Needed: US Park Service, Virginia DCR, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, USDA Rural Development, Virginia DOF
Timeline: Fall 2006

- ▣ **Strategy 4:** Promote the utilization of Bio-fuels and explore possible public/private partnerships to increase the utilization of Bio-fuels throughout the region.

Partners Needed: US Department of Energy (DOE) US Department of Defense (DOD),
USDA Rural Development, private landowners, Virginia DOF, private businesses.

Timeline: Winter 2005

GOAL III

Increase and Improve Recreational Opportunities

Objective #1

Increase recreational use of the Nottoway River

- ▣ **Strategy 1:** Develop a Recreation Plan for the Nottoway that identifies specific needs and opportunities for this waterway.

Partners Needed: Adjoining landowners, Virginia DCR, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, county governments, canoe clubs, US Park Service, USDA Rural Development, Virginia Department of Transportation, Nottoway/Blackwater Riverkeepers Association, Virginia DOF.

Timeline: Spring 2006

- ▣ **Strategy 2:** Organize a “Friends of the Nottoway” group to oversee and implement the Recreational Plan for the Nottoway River.

Partners Needed: Nottoway/Blackwater Riverkeepers Association, Virginia DCR, concerned citizens, canoe and paddle clubs

Timeline: Spring 2007

Objective #2

Increase the number of horse-riding trails throughout the RC&D area

- ▣ **Strategy 1:** Host an Eco-tourism trail development conference within the Council area.

Partners Needed: Virginia DCR, US Park Service, private outfitters, tourism agencies

Timeline: Fall 2007

- ▣ **Strategy 2:** Seek out and identify possible landowners that have potential to develop trails on their property. Work closely with those identified to develop proposals and business plans to assist in the completion of these trails.

Partners Needed: Chambers of Commerce, Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, USDA Rural Development

Timeline: ongoing

GOAL IV

Protect and Ensure Groundwater Quality

Objective #1

Reduce safety hazards and contamination potential associated with open and abandoned wells

- ▣ **Strategy 1:** Expand the current “well-capping program”

Partners Needed: USDA NRCS, EPA, Virginia DEQ, Virginia Department of Health (VDH), and SWCD’s

Timeline: Fall 2005

Objective #2

Improve the level of management of private wells throughout the RC&D area

- ▣ **Strategy 1:** Conduct an education effort designed for property owners that have a private well and septic systems.

Partners Needed: VDH, Virginia DEQ, and SWCD’s

Timeline: Winter 2005

Objective #3

Increase the knowledge and understanding of Groundwater Resources throughout the area

- ▣ **Strategy 1:** Contact various groups and continue to make presentations where possible to present information concerning groundwater issues.

Partners Needed: Local civic groups, local units of governments, schools

Timeline: Ongoing

GOAL V

Improve and Enhance Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Council

Objective #1

Increase attendance to Council meetings

- ▣ **Strategy 1:** Invite special guests to meetings and promote their involvement
Partners Needed: None
Timeline: All Council meetings beginning August 2005
- ▣ **Strategy 2:** Provide light dinner at each Council meeting
Partners Needed: None
Timeline: Each meeting
- ▣ **Strategy 3:** Rotate locations of Council meetings
Partners Needed: Local governments
Timeline: Each meeting

Objective #2

Increase involvement in State, Regional, and National RC&D Associations

- ▣ **Strategy 1:** Encourage attendance to all Association meetings
Partners Needed: None
Timeline: Each event
- ▣ **Strategy 2:** Seek opportunities to make presentations at state, regional, and national meetings
Partners Needed: USDA NRCS
Timeline: Each event
- ▣ **Strategy 3:** Publicize local involvement at these meetings in local media
Partners Needed: Local media
Timeline: each event

Objective #3

Insure the soundness and integrity of Council finances

- ▣ **Strategy 1:** Adhere closely to By-Laws and have a financial audit at the end of each fiscal year
Partners Needed: None
Timeline: Annually
- ▣ **Strategy 2:** Utilize bookkeeping software such as “QuickBooks”
Partners Needed: None
Timeline: Fall 2005

Objective #4

Increase knowledge of the RC&D Program and requirements of Council members

- ▣ **Strategy 1:** Distribute educational materials specific to RC&D and Non-Profits to Council members.

Partners Needed: RC&D Associations, Non-Profit groups

Timeline: Ongoing

- ▣ **Strategy 2:** Network with other Councils and learn new ideas to try and implement locally

Partners Needed: None

Timeline: Ongoing

Objective #5

Increase the number of volunteers in the RC&D Program

- ▣ **Strategy 1:** Identify specific tasks for volunteers

Partners Needed: None

Timeline: Ongoing

- ▣ **Strategy 2:** Recruit volunteers for RC&D projects

Partners Needed: Schools, AARP, Civic groups, etc.

Timeline: Ongoing

Objective #6

Ensure quality of RC&D efforts beyond this 5-year planning period

- ▣ **Strategy 1:** Conduct a comprehensive “Needs Assessment” for the entire RC&D area in preparation for our next 5-year plan.

Partners Needed: USDA NRCS, local RC&D sponsors, local media

Timeline: Spring 2008

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT:

“The South Centré Corridors Resource Conservation and Development Council certifies that the RC&D Programs will be conducted in compliance with the non-discrimination provisions as contained in Title VI of 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 and B) that 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 U.S. Department of Agriculture or any Agency thereof.”

The South Centré Corridors Resource Conservation and Development 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 nonprocurement, suspension, and debarment, and State review.

The South Centré Corridors Resource Conservation and Development Council this RC&D Area Plan and agrees to use effectively the assistance provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to realize the goals and objective outlined herein.

South Centré Corridors Resource Conservation and Development Council, Prince George, Virginia

By: _____ Date: _____
Chairperson

Attest: _____
Council Secretary

This action authorized at an official meeting of the South Centré Corridors Resource Conservation and Development Council on _____ (Date).

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

The State Conservationist hereby acknowledges the attached Area Plan of the South Centré Corridors Resource Conservation and Development Council as meeting the requirements under Public Law 97-98 to receive assistance from USDA.

Acknowledged by: _____ Date: _____
State Conservationist

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
between the
SOUTH CENTRÉ CORRIDORS RESOURCE CONSERVATION
AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
and the
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

This Memorandum of Understanding is between the South Centré Corridors Resource Conservation and Development Council in the State of Virginia, hereinafter called the Council, and the United

States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, hereinafter called the Service. Secretary of Agriculture Memorandum 1665 designates the Natural Resources Conservation Service as the departmental agency responsible for program administration of those activities under Section 102, Public Law 87-703, and also Subtitle H of Public Law 97-98, December 22, 1981 (The Agriculture and Food Act of 1982, P.L. 97-98), relating to the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program. (The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, P.L. 107-171, permanently authorized the RC&D program.)

The basic objectives of the Service in participating in this RC&D Area are:

1. The orderly development, improvement, conservation, and utilization of natural resources of the RC&D Area and thereby to provide employment and other economic opportunities to the people of the area.
2. To provide local leadership the opportunity to fully coordinate and utilize the facilities and techniques available with current program for the development and conservation of natural resources to meet local, state and national needs.

The overall objectives of the Council are:

1. To develop the area's natural and human resources and improve the quality of life for all people in the area.
2. To accomplish objective 1 through local leadership and a coordinated regional approach, that is outlined in the attached RC&D Area Plan.

The purpose of this memorandum of understanding is to establish working arrangements between the Council and the Service for carrying out their assigned responsibilities in support of the RC&D program.

A. WHAT THE NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE WILL *DO*

1. NRCS will make available to the Council the services of an RC&D staff, including the appointment and supervision of an RC&D coordinator who assists the Council. The NRCS will provide, in as far as the budget will allow, funds for a permanent part-time secretary at no expense to the Council. NRCS will also provide office space and related equipment and supplies. Staff and office and operational support are provided to implement the Area Plan and the Council's annual plan of work.

2. NRCS will monitor and evaluate progress in achieving program purposes.

3. NRCS will, after consultation with the Council, recommend continuance of RC&D program technical and/or financial assistance where warranted, or otherwise recommending termination through deauthorization of RC&D program assistance.

B. WHAT THE COUNCIL WILL *DO*

The Council will direct the program at the local level, by (a) developing, adopting, and operating by a constitution or articles of incorporation and bylaws; (b) obtain and maintain non-profit status; (b) providing opportunities for the public to participate in RC&D planning -- including setting objectives, goals, and strategies; (c) developing an area plan and working towards achieving the stated objectives and goals; (d) setting priorities, developing an annual plan of work, and following it throughout the year; (e) coordinating planning activities with regional planning agencies and related groups having similar resource concerns in the area; (f) using local, state, and federal agency personnel and coordinating their RC&D activities; (g) carrying out an effective information program that communicates the Council's objectives and goals to the State Conservationist and the public; (h) prepare an annual report following the close of the Council's fiscal of accomplishments in carrying out the area and annual plan of work.

C. IT IS FURTHER UNDERSTOOD

1. Either party, as mutually agreed upon, will provide or arrange for such additional services, facilities, equipment, materials, and arrangements as may be required to achieve common objectives.

2. NRCS personnel and office space will be under NRCS jurisdiction. NRCS retains the right to establish headquarters for its personnel at such places as it deems most appropriate in consultation with the Council.

3. The program or activities conducted under this agreement will be in compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions contained in the Titles 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 Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Educations Amendments of 1972, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. They

will also be in accordance with regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture (7 CFR 15, Subparts A & B), which provide that United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) 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. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

4. This memorandum of understanding will be effective when signed by both parties and will continue in effect except that it may be modified, as mutually agreed, or terminated by either party by giving 60 days notice in writing to the other party.

BY: _____

Chair
South Centré Corridors RC&D

DATE: _____

The signing of this memorandum of understanding on behalf of the Council was authorized by a resolution of the RC&D Executive Board adopted at a meeting held on the _____ day of _____, 20____.

BY: _____

Secretary
South Centré Corridors RC&D

DATE: _____

BY: _____

State Conservationist
Natural Resources Conservation Service

DATE: _____