

The Next Five Years—An Area Plan

Clinch-Powell is always planning, evaluating, and making adjustments to improve our operations and our services. But periodically we take a harder look and make projections. This plan is built on the input of 2,000 residents, an in-depth assessment from partners, board members and staff and is an update of our 1998 Area Plan.

Organization Profile and History

Clinch-Powell RC&D Council, Inc. is a nonprofit 501C3 entity blending rural community development with environmental protection while meeting the needs of people in Claiborne, Grainger, Hancock, Hawkins and Union counties in Tennessee. Authorized in February 1990, Clinch-Powell grew out of a two state effort to protect the Clinch and Powell rivers as a means to seek solutions to common problems. In our first dozen years of operation, many significant milestones marked our progress including creation of the Clinch Powell Community Project in 1993, designation of one of twenty Enterprise Communities in 1999 and becoming a Community Development Housing Organization in 2001.

As we have grown and expanded, we have maintained a commitment to excellence and integrity and received four prestigious national awards for our positive impacts in rural communities. As the new century unfolds, we are tackling even tougher issues like low income housing and economic diversification. We are a partner that our communities depend on. And we in turn depend on the generosity of our partners, grantors, donors and volunteers as we work toward our mission together.

Governance

A 15 member citizen Board of Directors serve as trustees representing the diversity of interests in the communities. No less than one-third represent low-income and no more than one-third may be public officials. Board members serve six years and govern the policy, direction and activities of the RC&D Council.

Vision

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 of the Clinch-Powell RC&D Council, Inc. is to demonstrate regional leadership, secure resources and deliver programs and services that build strong, vibrant communities where conservation and development are in balance with the needs of people.

Opportunities and Needs

Hidden deep amid the mist-shrouded Southern Appalachian mountains, this region is defined by the Clinch and Cumberland mountains and the beautiful Clinch and Powell Rivers. Famed worldwide for their unprecedented biodiversity, the rivers have been designated as one of the "Last Great Places" by The Nature Conservancy. This region is rich in tradition, natural heritage, history and a spirit of independence. Daniel Boone cut out his wilderness trail to the West through the Cumberland Gap and brothers fought brothers here during the Civil War. Hardy settlers farmed the fertile but narrow bottom lands, logged the vast timber supplies and mined its hidden resources.

As times changed, however, this region of Appalachia became one of our nation's most socially and economically distressed areas. Prosperity waned as economic opportunities moved elsewhere. Farms went untended, mining jobs evaporated, and entire communities vanished. The brightest, young people left for bigger cities and better economic opportunities, leaving an aging citizenry and unskilled, poorly educated workers behind.

In this region agriculture is dominated by small fields of burley tobacco and small herds of beef cattle grazing on steep hillsides. Our factories use primarily unskilled labor and pay low wages. The per capita income is only 64% of the rest of the nation. Our roads are rough and our school buses are old, and 21% of our citizens have less than a 9th grade education. We travel many miles for health care and work, and worry about having plentiful, clean water to drink and a good roof over our heads.

The Clinch-Powell region is an area united by a commitment to help itself by helping each other. We are determined to improve our social and economic conditions while preserving our special environment, rural character, and rich Appalachian heritage.

The cornerstone of the Clinch-Powell RC&D is our commitment to take our lead from the voice of the people. Every program and every initiative is developed in response to the needs and concerns expressed by our citizens through open and comprehensive public input processes that were conducted in 1990, 1998 and 2003. We work to respond with programs, services, resources and partners to bring relief in meaningful ways.

Our dream is becoming a reality as citizens are speaking out and communities are working together to make a difference. Since the creation of the Clinch-Powell RC&D in 1990, the region has realized real economic progress, tangible improvements to a sensitive environment, and an overall improvement in the quality of lives.

There is still so much to do, and yet we want to pause to celebrate our successes.

\$86.9 Million in New Investments 2000-2004

- 8 miles of streams protected
- 108 businesses assisted
- 1,306 jobs created
- 368 jobs saved
- 2,000 additional homes with potable water
- 7 video-conference training centers
- 15,000 students tutored and/or trained
- 17 volunteer fire departments equipped
- 11 public facilities built and/or improved
- 124 homes rehabilitated
- 3,237 new library books

Guiding Principles

- Think and act regionally
- Complement, don't duplicate
- Community development and environmental quality don't have to be in conflict
- Meet unmet needs
- Work through existing systems to make lasting change
- Advocates not activists
- Programs responsive to citizen concerns and based on proven research
- Organizational excellence, integrity, and accountability

Goals

We will continue to provide programs and services that have an impact on human lives within a framework of community development and land management.

Goal Areas

- Sustainable Economic Development
- Basic Needs of People and Communities
- Infrastructure Improvements
- Land and Water Conservation
- Education and Arts
- Quality Communities
- Tourism

Partners in Programs, Partners in Progress

The Clinch-Powell RC&D Council, Inc. enjoys a unique partnering relationship with the United States Department of Agriculture. Funding for a coordinator, secretary and some basic support is provided through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Generous gifts, grants, volunteers and other partnering relationships provide funding and resources for all programs, projects, additional staff and operations of the RC&D.

The Clinch-Powell RC&D Council agrees that the RC&D Program will be conducted in compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions as contained in the 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 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.

Clinch-Powell RC&D Programs

Our programs encompass the body of works that move us toward our mission. Each program addresses one or more of the Goals we have defined and involves multiple projects, activities and tasks that must be accomplished to produce positive community impacts. Our annual Plan of Work is a separate document that details specific objectives, tasks, responsibilities, staffing needs and costs.

Internal Programs

Ag Diversification Initiative – Agri-tourism and value-added initiative
Appalachia CARES/AmeriCorps – Service Learning and Tutoring
Clinch River Community Project – Land and water conservation and protection
Education and Community Outreach – Conservation Camp, Envirothon, home buyer education and counseling
Home Team - Affordable Housing for modest to moderate income families
Revolving Loan Fund – Small business loans
Training, Technology, Technical Assistance – Website, video-conferencing, public access computers

External/Partnership Programs

Emergency Services – Grantwriting, funding and technical assistance to volunteer fire departments and rescue squads
Enterprise Community – Economic and community development
First Wheels – Car loans for low-income workers
Leadership Development – Adult and youth programs
Project Success – Monitoring and evaluation of Teen Drug and Alcohol Abuse

Management Assessment

As we grow and evolve programmatically, we will continue to pay close attention to our corresponding organizational development and management needs. From a single \$50 donation in 1990, we expect to manage in excess of \$3 million in 2008.

- Conduct annual risk management review
- Fund management and integrity
- Review bylaws and organizing documents
- Review and update organizational policies and procedures annually
- Review and improve staff salaries and benefit packages
- Contract for annual independent single governmental audit
- Monitor investments, cash reserves and cash flow needs
- Cultivate new revenue streams
- Seek solutions to growing space needs
- Evaluate progress and programs
- Annual board training
- Recruit and develop board members and volunteers
- Grow agency endowment fund

Critical Issues and Five-Year Strategies

As the new century settles in, we are making sure that we don't.

The world and our region in 2003 is vastly different than it was in 1990 when we formed. Review of current demographic, social, economic and housing data (on file in RC&D office) along with the community input of more than 2,000 citizens is the basis for our five-year strategies. The business climate is more fearful, job markets are weak, family debt is high, agriculture is declining, safe affordable homes are unavailable, safety and security are unsure, water quality concerns are real, teen drug and alcohol use is rising, individual giving is down and government grants are disappearing. As we look to the next five years, we recognize these as critical issues and realities in the current business environment. Determining who we are as an organization and how we will prosper in light of these current realities leads us in our strategic thinking, planning and management.

The Clinch-Powell RC&D Council is poised to take on the challenges ahead. Thanks to strong organizational leadership and teamwork, the organization's management, financial, and staffing capacity are healthy but not excessive.

More importantly, we remain committed to our vision, our mission and our guiding principles. The coming five years will be characterized by continuation of cornerstone programs, solidification and growth in newer initiatives, and diversification into new business and service arenas. As an organization, we will continue to fully support existing programs but anticipate that extra organizational energy will be required for the following new endeavors.:

- Growing our affordable housing initiative
- Creating or expanding our financing programs such as home loans, business loans and individual development accounts
- Exploring and analyzing the possibility of becoming a CDFI
- Growing the community fund to increase philanthropic giving available to the region
- Seeking intelligent business and/or service opportunities to increase and diversify revenue streams
- Becoming more actively engaged in appropriate efforts to create better jobs and economic growth



Clinch Powell RC&D encompasses Claiborne, Grainger, Hancock, Hawkins and Union Counties of Northeast Tennessee

Five Year Plan

Clinch-Powell Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc.



5 Counties,
The Next 5 Years ...

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