

## V.I. RC&D COUNCIL MEMBER DUTIES

The success of the V.I. RC&D program is directly related to the effectiveness and interest of the Council, its members, and its committees. V.I. RC&D operates through a set of Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation, filed with the Lieutenant Governor's Office.

V.I. RC&D Council members represent their sponsoring organizations or are interested individuals from the Virgin Islands community. V.I. RC&D membership usually consists of representatives from V.I. government agencies, planning boards or commissions, nonprofit organizations, and interested individuals. Active participation by local government officials and agencies, community leaders and organizations, and private citizens is what makes the RC&D Program work.

### V.I. RC&D Officers

The V.I. RC&D Board of Directors consists of five members representing the V.I. RC&D Area (St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. John and Water Island). The Officers (President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary) and At-Large member are elected from the general Council membership and serve a one-year term.

- ◆ **President** – The President is elected according to the Bylaws. This job entails periodic meetings with the RC&D Coordinator to plan agendas for upcoming meetings and other Council activities. The President presides over all V.I. RC&D Council and Board of Directors meetings. The President may also call special meetings, according to the Bylaws, to transact the business of the Council. **The President must have a good understanding of the RC&D program and must be able to think in terms of the entire area rather than his or her own specific island.**
- ◆ **Vice-President** – The Vice President is elected according to the Bylaws, and assumes the responsibilities of the President in his or her absence.
- ◆ **Secretary** – The Secretary is elected according to the Bylaws, and is responsible for preparing the minutes, agendas, official records and correspondence of the Council.
- ◆ **Treasurer** – The Treasurer is elected according to the Bylaws, and is responsible for financial reports and assisting the Council with budget and fiscal activities. **The Treasurer is responsible for disbursing funds as directed by the Board.**

## COUNCIL MEMBERS' ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Council members are responsible for all V.I. RC&D correspondence, employees, and financial and related business management. Council member duties include, but are not limited to:

- Developing an Area (strategic) Plan, adopting projects to achieve the stated goals and objectives, and carrying out an effective public education and outreach campaign to promote the Plan.
- Providing opportunities for the public to participate in establishing Council goals and objectives.
- Setting priorities and implementing them through an Annual Plan of Work.
- Supporting and/or establishing committees, resource teams, or task forces to accomplish work identified in the Annual Plan of Work.

- Coordinating planning and implementation activities with regional agencies and related groups having similar resource concerns in the Area.
- Monitoring Council operations and Area Plan implementation and effectiveness.
- Meeting all relevant laws and requirements for nonprofit organizations.
- Determining the organization's mission and purposes.
- Ensuring that Council members are actively committed and reflect the communities they represent.
- Managing the financial resources of the organization by adopting fiscal policies and procedures.
- Directing and monitoring the organization's programs and services.
- Establishing Council policies and procedures that may include, but are not limited to, personnel policies, code of ethics and conflict of interest policies, funds management and internal control procedures, employee evaluations, and Council evaluation process.

### **Traits of a Good Council Member**

1. The belief that he/she can make a difference working with others as part of V.I. RC&D.
2. Concern for the quality of life of all residents in the Virgin Islands.
3. The desire to freely give of their time to work towards a better area and community and the willingness to actively participate in meetings.
4. The ability to put aside personal concerns for their own particular community to think and act for the overall good of the entire Virgin Islands.
5. The willingness to recruit others to help *“make things happen.”*
6. A good understanding of the RC&D program and support of all levels of the Council.
7. The willingness to spend time annually learning how to improve personal leadership skills.

## **NRCS STAFF ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

USDA-NRCS provides the V.I. RC&D Council with support through technical assistance in the form of Federal staff, office space and supplies, and appropriate basic support to achieve the vision and mission of the RC&D Program.

### **RC&D Coordinator**

- The RC&D Coordinator is the designated USDA-NRCS representative and serves as the liaison between USDA and V.I. RC&D. The Coordinator supervises all USDA staff assigned to the V.I. RC&D Office and ensures that all federally-assisted activities are carried out in accordance with applicable statutes. The Coordinator maintains knowledge of and serves as the primary point of access to USDA programs that support the V.I. RC&D Area Plan.

**The RC&D Coordinator is PROHIBITED BY LAW from directly managing the human or financial resources of the V.I. RC&D Council, lobbying any form of government on behalf of V.I. RC&D, or in any other way committing V.I. RC&D to any action or agreement regardless of the intent by the V.I. RC&D Council. This means that the Coordinator cannot personally engage in fundraising on behalf of V.I. RC&D.**

The Coordinator can help develop an inventory of projects worthy of funding, help the Council

identify prospective funding sources, and work on the application documents. However, *the Coordinator cannot “market or pitch” the projects to potential funders*. Therefore, the Coordinator also cannot “represent” the Council before any Federal agency. (For example, a Coordinator cannot market a grant application for his or her Council to the U.S. EPA, but could find out how to apply for such a grant and help the Council compile the information needed for the grant application package.) The Coordinator can be a technical project coordinator and may provide day-to-day direction for the implementation of the Council’s Area Plan and Annual Plan of Work. Successful Coordinators also:

- Know members individually and get them involved in the process.
- Communicate the Council’s needs to the NRCS State Office and others as appropriate.
- Encourage the inclusion of all groups and individuals in the RC&D Program.
- Help the Council understand and implement its EEO, civil rights, outreach and environmental justice responsibilities.
- Report progress to USDA through NRCS reporting systems.

### **RC&D Secretary**

The RC&D Secretary plays a vital role and is a key to the success of the RC&D Program. In general, this staff person does the following:

- Provides clerical and administrative support for the V.I. RC&D office.
- Assists the Council and Coordinator in carrying out the vision, mission, objectives and goals of the Area Plan.
- Assists the Coordinator, Council and committees with project tasks.

The V.I. RC&D Secretary is a full-time USDA-NRCS employee.

## **COUNCIL CIVIL RIGHTS RESPONSIBILITIES**

The V.I. RC&D Council must meet the intent of federal Civil Rights laws and acts through:

- ◆ **Outreach Activities:** Area Plans will include proposed outreach activities and the USDA non-discrimination statement.
- ◆ **Public Meetings:** Council meetings must be open to the public with advance notice requesting that people with disabilities notify the Council that they will attend and will require specific assistance. Councils must provide assistance to disabled members of the public upon request.
- ◆ **Meeting Facilities:** Council meeting facilities must be accessible to people with disabilities.
- ◆ **Nondiscrimination Statement:** All Council documents must include the USDA non-discrimination statement (publications, news articles, newsletters, posters, annual reports, fact sheets, website and pages, job vacancy announcements, etc – If not sure, include the statement).
- ◆ **Participation on Councils:** The Council should have an aggressive outreach program to encourage eligible females and minorities to become Council members or to participate on Councils. The Council should document the process used.
- ◆ **Signed Agreement:** The Council should have on file a copy of a signed agreement between NRCS and the Council stating that the RC&D Program will be run in a nondiscriminatory way.

## CHALLENGE

As you can see, the role of a V.I. RC&D Council member is not a very easy one, but it is a very important one. You have agreed to serve as a representative to the V.I. RC&D Council because of your concern, enthusiasm and leadership ability in the areas of natural and human resource conservation and development. The success of V.I. RC&D depends on your commitment, and that of your fellow Council members, to the program and your ability to deal with resource problems on a multi-island basis. Ask yourself: ***“If every Council member is as active and contributes as much as I, what degree of success can be expected from our RC&D program?”***

Thank you for accepting this challenge and opportunity. We hope that you will find this experience fulfilling and rewarding. Together we can ***“Make Things Happen!”***