



June 21, 2010

Mid Atlantic RC&D Councils,

The Conference Committee has planned a very informative program for the upcoming Mid Atlantic Conference that will be held September 15-17, 2010 at the DoubleTree Hotel in Annapolis, Maryland. Click on the link for more information and services at the hotel: [DoubleTree Hotel Annapolis](#).

Our theme this year is Energizing the Future of RC&D. We have trainings in non-profit management that will ensure a sustainable and successful future for your council as well as trainings in tools to help determine, evaluate and plan for the emerging capital markets in land conservation, renewable energy and ecosystem services.

Attached is information to share with Board Members. Deadline for early registration and hotel reservations is August 15<sup>th</sup>. (See attached Conference Registration Form for instructions).

We are asking councils to bring auction items for the silent auction. (See attached Silent Auction Memo and Donation Form for instructions). We will also be having a live auction during our Awards Banquet.

The National Association of RC&D Councils will be holding concurrent Circle of Diamonds workshops to help Councils become Circle of Diamonds members. One session, "Achieving Circle of Diamonds," will help councils begin the process of becoming a Circle of Diamonds Member. The other session, "Advancing in Circle of Diamonds," will help councils advance through the various stages of the program. We are asking council members to bring the necessary materials to complete their Circle of Diamonds application. (See attached Checklists for what to bring). You can also find the list of materials on the National Association of RC&D Councils website at <http://www.rcdnet.org/circle.php>

We look forward to seeing you in Annapolis, Maryland for the 2010 conference. If you need additional information please feel free to contact Denitra Brawner at the Southern MD RC&D office at 301-932-4638 or via email at [denitra.brawner@verizon.net](mailto:denitra.brawner@verizon.net).



Sincerely,

Maryland Eastern Shore RC&D  
Southern Maryland RC&D  
Western Maryland RC&D

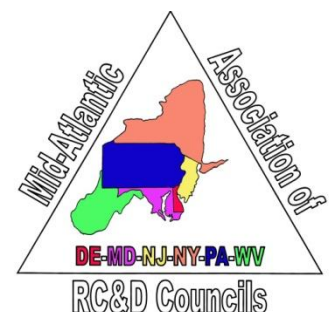


***ENERGIZING THE FUTURE OF RC&D***  
**Mid-Atlantic RC&D Conference**  
**&**  
**Annual Business Meeting**  
**Annapolis, Maryland**  
**September 15-17, 2010**

**Preliminary Agenda**

**Wednesday, September 15, 2010**

- 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Conference Registration Open
- 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM Welcome & Introduction – Patricia Pinnell, Southern MD RC&D Chair  
Maryland Governor Martin O’Malley– (Invited)  
Maryland Senator Thomas Mac Middleton  
Earl “Buddy” Hance, Maryland Secretary of Agriculture  
Heather Campbell, Representative to Maryland Senator Ben Cardin  
Gary Hodge, Charles County Maryland Commissioner
- 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM Lunch
- 1:00 PM Exhibits and Silent Auction Open
- 2:00 PM – 2:45 PM Keynote Speakers  
Jon Hall, Maryland NRCS State Conservationist (Invited)  
NRCS Chief Dave White (Invited)  
John Haugen, National RC&D Executive Director  
Jim Sipperly, National RC&D President  
Howard Coffield, Mid-Atlantic RC&D President
- 2:45 PM – 3:00 PM Break w/coffee, tea and water
- 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM LandServer & BayBank - Assessing and Implementing Land Conservation  
and Benefiting from Ecosystem Services  
**Craig Highfield – Coordinator, Forestry for the Bay**  
**Eric Sprague - Program Director, Pinchot Institute**
- 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM Non Profit Management - Two Cents Sense  
**National Association of RC&D Staff**
- 5:30 PM – 6:30 PM Concurrent Meetings  
1. Mid-Atlantic Business Meeting  
2. NRCS Coordinators Meeting
- 7:30 PM Exhibits & Silent Auction Close
- Dinner on your own



**Thursday, September 16, 2010**

- 7:00 AM – 9:00 AM Conference Registration Open
- 6:30 AM – 8:30 AM Breakfast Buffet
- 8:00 AM Exhibits Open  
Silent Auction Display Open
- 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM Concurrent Sessions – **National Association of RC&D Staff**
1. Achieving Circle of Diamonds
  2. Advancing in Circle of Diamonds
- 10:00 AM - 10:15 AM Break w/ coffee, tea and water
- 10:15AM Silent Auction Closes
- 10:15 AM – 11:15 AM Understanding and Anticipating the Legal Implications of Conservation Planning  
**Mark Davis – Davis, Upton, Palumbo & Keffler, LLC**
- 11:30 AM – 12:00 PM Designing and Implementing Agricultural Energy Efficiency Programs – EnSave, Maryland Energy Administration, Eastern Shore RC&D
- 12:00pm Lunch  
Announcement of Silent Auction Winners
- 1:00 PM On Your Own  
Some Suggestions:  
United States Naval Academy  
Website: <http://www.usna.edu///homepage.php>  
  
Downtown Annapolis  
Website: <http://www.downtownannapolis.org/>  
  
Dinner on your own
- 5:00 PM Exhibit Area Closes



**Friday, September 17, 2010**

6:30 AM – 8:00 AM Breakfast Buffet

8:15 – 8:30AM Load Buses

8:30 AM Buses depart for Windy Hill Farm

9:30 AM – 11:30AM Windy Hill Farm, Corsica River, Centreville, MD  
-Alternative Energy Production  
-Oyster Restoration  
-Living Shoreline Streambank Restoration

11:30 AM Buses depart for Queen Anne’s County 4-H Park

11:45 AM – 1:45 PM Buffet Lunch  
-Presentations by local vendors  
-Dry Fire Hydrant demonstration

1:45 PM Bus depart for Wye Research and Education Center

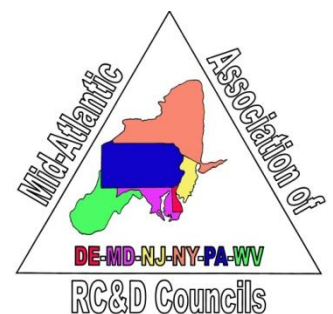
2:15 PM – 3:15 PM Wye Research and Education Center, Queenstown  
-Biofuels – Switchgrass Boiler  
-Waste Disposal – Willow Trees  
-High Tunnels – Vegetable Production

3:15 PM Buses depart for Hotel

4:00 PM Buses arrive at Hotel

6:00 PM Social Time with Cash Bar

6:30 PM Awards Banquet & Live Auction





MID ATLANTIC ASSOCIATION OF RC&D COUNCILS  
 REGIONAL CONFERENCE  
 DOUBLETREE HOTEL  
 ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND  
 SEPTEMBER 15-17, 2010

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse/Guest \_\_\_\_\_

Representing/Council \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) on Badge \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Room Rate \$129+ tax (single/double per night) Rooms blocked until August 15, 2010  
 For hotel reservations, contact the Doubletree (Booking Code: RCD)  
 210 Holiday Court, Annapolis, MD 21401 Phone: 410-224-3150

Registration includes: Wednesday Lunch, Thursday Buffet Breakfast and Lunch, Friday Buffet Breakfast, Tour & Lunch and Banquet.

**Registration on or before August 15, 2010** # \_\_\_\_\_ X \$250 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
**Registration after August 15, 2010** # \_\_\_\_\_ X \$285 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 \*Please pick meal choices below. Total Registration \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Guest Registration (To be able to attend training sessions)** # \_\_\_\_\_ X \$50 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Guest Meals</b>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	
Breakfast (#)	_____	_____	_____	X \$17 = \$ _____
Lunch* (#)	_____	_____	_____	X \$25 = \$ _____
Lunch & Tour (#)	_____	_____	_____	X \$25 = \$ _____
Banquet* (#)	_____	_____	_____	X \$40 = \$ _____

\*Please pick meal choices below. Total Guest Meals & Registration \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Meal Choices**

Wednesday – Lunch – Served with Caesar salad and Carrot Cake

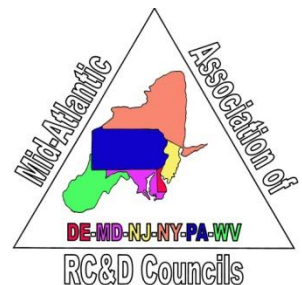
\_\_\_\_\_ Jumbo Lump Crab Cake \_\_\_\_\_ Chicken & Shrimp

Friday – Banquet – Served with Baby Greens with Mandarin oranges & walnuts and Apple Caramel Pie

\_\_\_\_\_ Chicken Chesapeake (stuffed w/ crab) \_\_\_\_\_ Grilled Salmon with Lemon Butter

Vegetarian or Special Dietary Needs \_\_\_\_\_

Accessibility needs or services \_\_\_\_\_



Make checks payable to **Southern Maryland RC&D Board, Inc.**

Mail to: **Southern Maryland RC&D Board, Inc., 303 Post Office Road, Suite B4A Waldorf, MD 20602**

Questions or special needs contact Southern Maryland RC&D at 301-932-4638 or [denitra.brawner@verizon.net](mailto:denitra.brawner@verizon.net)



## ***Mid-Atlantic RC&D Annual Conference 2010***

***Hosted by the Maryland RC&D Councils***

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**MEMO TO:** All RC&D Councils in the Mid-Atlantic Region

**PURPOSE:** Silent Auction Request

To help offset the expenses of the Mid-Atlantic Association of Resource Conservation and Development Council's Annual Conference, the host state conducts a silent auction of donated items. Auction proceeds go toward the 2011 conference expenses. Success of the auction depends on the number and quality of the items donated. Since we are in a time when funding for the conference is reliant on registration fees and donations, we encourage you to consider contributing by seeking items for auction above and beyond previous years.

Examples of items that have been donated in the past include:

- ❖ Local Specialty Foods (Wine, Cheese, Maple Products)
- ❖ Artwork, Clothing and jewelry
- ❖ Gift Certificates for regional attractions (Amusement Parks, Ski Resorts, B&B's)
- ❖ Furniture and hand crafted woodwork
- ❖ Books and memorabilia
- ❖ Golf and sports packages
- ❖ Hunting and outfitting packages

Many Chambers of Commerce have donation items to attract tourists and encourage tourism in a region. These are good places to contact for donations as are local businesses interested in expanding their client base. Since many of these places provide only a limited number of donation during the year, acting early is important. Please explain that recognition will be given in display areas on auction tables and donation contact list included in the welcome packet with all of the business information for items donated for the auction provided the information is received by September 1, 2010.

Each Resource Conservation and Development Council is asked to donate a minimum of three items for the auction.

Please complete the enclosed form and email to Sabrina Albright, Program Assistant, Western Maryland RC&D Council at [sabrina.albright@md.usda.gov](mailto:sabrina.albright@md.usda.gov) or fax to 301-733-7643.

Donated items should be brought to the Mid Atlantic RC&D Association registration table.

Thank you for helping to make the 2010 Mid-Atlantic Association Annual Meeting a success!!

Sincerely,

Craig Hartsock, Chair, Western Maryland RC&D  
Michael Koval, Chair, Maryland Eastern Shore RC&D  
Patricia Pinnell, Chair, Southern Maryland RC&D



# NARC&DC's Circle of Diamonds Information Kit

## **Introduction:**

The Circle of Diamonds program is designed for councils to highlight exemplary actions in their own community to give recognition to those councils for the good work they do in their local communities. The program also, recognizes good stewardship of the local non-profit council in "Making Things Happen." The program is set up to be proactive approach for Councils to simply demonstrate that they are complying with the basic requirements of the RC&D statute (Public Law 107-171, Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, Sections 1528-1537), the council responsibilities outlined in the NRCS manual (NRCS publication 440-V-CPM, Amended. 9, May 2002; See generally, [http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/M/M\\_440\\_513.htm](http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/M/M_440_513.htm)), and best non-profit management practices. This program is a three-tiered program.

Circle of Diamond councils exemplify positive impacts in the quality of life within their local areas. Circle members are publicly accountable and realize that their accountability directly relates to the councils structure, process, and outcomes each member of the Circle attains. The program will highlight Councils that have produced quality programs within their local community. Primarily, membership in NARC&DC's Circle of Diamonds will show the honesty, integrity and strong commitment of Councils to the RC&D mission.

## **Background:**

In June of 2003, the NARC&DC's Circle of Diamonds Program came into being with a single tier. Initially there was an \$85.00 application fee. Later that year the fee was abolished by unanimous consent by the Board of Directors to insure that the cost would not be a barrier to membership.

On June 9, 2007, The Board of Directors unanimously agreed to make the Circle of Diamonds a national priority. This was done to ensure the accountability of RC&D councils nationwide. As such, the Board set a goal of 100 percent of all Councils become members of the Circle of Diamonds.



## **BASIC PROGRAM:**

Requirements for Basic membership include all federal or state mandated good governance requirements, as well as the basic requirements of the RC&D statute (Public Law 107–171, Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, Sections 1528-1537), and the council responsibilities outlined in the NRCS manual (NRCS publication 440-V-CPM, Amended. 9, May 2002; See generally, [http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/M/M\\_440\\_513.htm](http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/M/M_440_513.htm)). In order to become a member of the Basic Program a council must certify that they have answered yes to all the questions contained on Form: NARC&DC-CD#2.

### **Membership Requirements.**

1. Council or Applicant Council is current on dues to NARC&DC.
2. All Members of the Diamond Circle must be an open neutral forum free from the control of any single individual, organization, agency, sector, political party or interest group.
3. Council must represent the diversity of its area (i.e. the make-up of its population including ethnic, gender, and community interests).
4. Council must have public input that sets the Council's overall direction and policy.
5. Council must have a President, or other official, who is capable and qualified to produce outcomes at the direction of the Council's Board.
6. Council must actively participate in the nationwide network of RC&D Councils.
7. Council is structured as a Federally recognized non-profit.
8. Councils must also have the ability to reach out to the local community and assist in the effectiveness of government, non-profit, and private sector programs impacting the Council's local area.
9. Each Council must ensure that the full Council meets regularly and the Council's Board of Directors meets quarterly and reviews its area plan and annual plan at least once per end of program year.
10. Additional Material Required:
  - a) Submit to NARC&DC
    1. Completed Forms NARC&DC-CD#1 and NARC&DC-CD#2.
    2. Set of by-laws (preferably in electronic format).
    3. IRS determination letter.
    4. Published outreach mechanisms of the past year. (e.g. Workshops, News Articles, Brochures, Pamphlets, etc.)
    5. Council's Annual report (preferably in electronic format).

6. Council's membership list, including members mailing address, phone number, E-mail addresses (preferably in electronic format).
  7. Five references, three of which have been served or benefited by the Councils programs five references, three of which have been served or benefited by the Councils programs (preferably in electronic format).
- b) Have on file at NRCS.
1. Current Area Plan
  2. Current Work Plan.
  3. Up-to-date information on project activities NRCS.

## ENHANCED PROGRAM:

The purpose of the Enhanced Program is to raise the bar above and beyond what is required of a good not-for-profit corporation. Membership into the Enhanced Program is contingent upon being a member of the Basic Program for at least one year. The Enhanced Program delves into more details of council operations than the Basic Program. By executing the Enhanced Program membership application, the applicant council certifies that each of the general requirements below has been met.

### General Requirements

By executing the Enhanced Program membership application, the applicant council certifies that each of the general requirements below has been met.

1. The council or applicant area council is current on dues to NARC&DC.
2. The council or applicant area council is complying with all requirements of the Basic Membership.
3. The council has a current Area Plan on file with NRCS. (If the Area Plan has been updated within the past calendar year the Area Plan must be submitted with this application.
4. The council has a current Annual Plan and that plan is submitted with this application.
5. At least one member of the Council is actively participating in the nationwide network of RC&D councils (e.g. Listserv).
6. Submit completed forms NACR&DC-CD#3 and NARC&DC-CD#4.

## **PREMIER PROGRAM:**

The purpose of the Premier Program is to raise the bar above and beyond what is required of a good not-for-profit corporation. The Premier Program will focus on risk management and additional financial accountability practices. The application package will be submitted to the board at the February board meeting. Membership into the Premier Program is contingent upon being a member of the Enhanced Program for at least consecutive two years.

### **General Requirements**

1. The council or applicant area council is current on dues to NARC&DC.
2. The council or applicant area council is complying with all requirements of the Enhanced Membership.
3. Submit a completed Form NARC&DC-CD#5 and NARC&DC-CD#6.

## **ANNUAL RECERTIFICATION:**

Membership will be based upon each calendar year (January 1 – December 31). On November 1 each year a letter will be sent to all current member councils (regardless of their level) reminding them that it is time to apply for recertification as a member of the Circle of Diamonds. To be recertified a Recertification Application (Form: NARC&DC-CD#7) must be submitted to certify that they are continuing with the requirements set forth in their initial application. In addition, members will be and asked to submit, with the signed Recertification Application, one example out their communication efforts and a copy of their Annual Plan of Work and Area Plan if updated within the past year.

Revised: 1/13/09

# Basic Membership Application for NARC&DC's Circle of Diamonds

Calendar Year 2009

Council's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Council's Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Council's City, State, and Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Council's Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Council's Web Address (If applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Council's President's Name (or other Authorized Official): \_\_\_\_\_

*By utilizing the information gathered from this application and accompanying documents, the staff of NARC&DC will review each application to ensure full compliance with the requirements established. By submitting this application to NARC&DC, the above named Council certifies that it meets all of the requirements, including the "Membership Requirements" set forth on page 2 of the "Circle of Diamonds Information Kit." Further, by submitting this application, the Council agrees to allow the staff of NARC&DC to contact the listed references and review any and all necessary material listed below, some of which may be located within or at USDA's NRCS.*

By signing below, the Council's President (or other Authorized Official) certifies that the above Council has complied with the criteria set forth in the Standards of Excellence Program a/k/a NARC&DC's Circle of Diamonds. Further, by signing below, I \_\_\_\_\_ agree that \_\_\_\_\_ RC&D Council hereby gives permission to the staff of NARC&DC to review the material listed above that is on file with NRCS. I further agree to hold harmless the National Office, its Members, Board of Directors, Employees, and Agents from liability from and associated with membership and failure of membership or continued membership and realize that this program is of a voluntary nature. In addition, I understand that all answers submitted in this application become the property of NARC&DC, and by submitting this application the Council agrees to allow NARC&DC to utilize this information in any way it sees fit. Further, I understand that the Standards of Excellence Program, a/k/a NARC&DC's Circle of Diamonds, may be changed at any time, without notice.

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Council President's Signature (or other Authorized Official)

**PLEASE SUBMIT COMPLETED APPLICATION TO:**

The National Association of RC&D Councils, 444 North Capitol Street, N.W., Suite 345, Washington, DC 20001

# Circle of Diamonds

## Additional Information for Basic Level

	Yes	No	Not Applicable	Must be submitted with application
<b>Governance:</b>				
Articles of Incorporation and Amendments				YES
Up-to-Date Bylaws				YES
Up-to-Date Annual Report and Listing of Registered Agent				YES
Council has Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedures				
<b>Human Resources:</b>				
Compliance with State and Federal Employment Laws				
Compensation Documentation (For board if funds are reimbursed and/or Employees if paid)				
Workers Compensation Insurance				
Compliance with Civil Rights Act of 1964 (If 15 or more Employees)				
Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1975 (If 15 or more Employees)				
<b>Financial Management:</b>				
Files IRS Form 990, IRS 990-EZ, or 990 PF				
Files IRS Form 990-T (For Unrelated Business Income)				
Supply IRS Form 1099-MISC (If annually paid a independent contractor \$600 or more)				
Prompt Acknowledgement and Thank You to all Donors (Including Compliance with Gift Substantiation Requirements – See IRS Pub 1771)				
IRS Determination Letter (On file and publicly available)				YES
Council has an Operating Budget and Reviews it at Every Meeting				
Council Conducts an Annual Audit or CPA Review of Financial Statements and Reports the Results to the Membership (CPA review if Council budget is under \$350,000.00)				

	Yes	No	Not Applicable	Must be submitted with application
<b>Diversity:</b>				
The Council Represents the Geographic Make-up of the RC&D Area (i.e. the make-up of its population including ethnic, gender, and community interests)				
The Council Has in Place Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action policies				
Services of the Council Are Available to all Constituents of the RC&D Area Including the Underserved				
The Council Has a Diversity Policy in Place				
<b>Other:</b>				
Current Area Plan on File with NRCS				YES
Current Annual Plan on File with NRCS				YES
Coordinator is Maintaining Information in the POINTS Database				
Council Publishes Outreach Materials at Least Quarterly (i.e. Workshops, News Articles, Brochures, Pamphlets, etc.)				YES (Submit at least two outreach items)
Council has a Current Council Membership/Mailing List				YES
Submit Names and Addresses of Five References (outside of current council sponsors) Who Have Been Served by the Council				YES
Council Undertakes a Needs Assessment for the RC&D Area at Least Every Five Years				
Council has at Least Two Partners Outside of the Current Council Sponsors				
Council Engages in Strategic Planning and Reviews Such Plans Regularly to Ensure they Meet the Needs of the Council Area				

# Enhanced Membership Application for NARC&DC's Circle of Diamonds

Calendar Year 2009

Council's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Council's Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Council's City, State, and Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Council's Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Council's Web Address (If applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Councils President's Name (or other Authorized Official): \_\_\_\_\_

*By utilizing the information gathered from this application and accompanying documents, the staff of NARC&DC will review each application to ensure full compliance with the requirements established. By submitting this application to NARC&DC, the above named Council certifies that it meets all of the requirements, including the "General Requirements" set forth on page 3 of the "Circle of Diamonds Information Kit." Further, by submitting this application, the Council agrees to allow the staff of NARC&DC to contact the listed references and review any and all necessary material listed below some of which may be located within or at USDA's NRCS.*

By signing below, the Council's President (or other Authorized Official) certifies that the above Council has complied with the criteria set forth in the Standards of Excellence Program, a/k/a NARC&DC's Circle of Diamonds. Further, by signing below, I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree that \_\_\_\_\_ RC&D Council hereby gives permission to the staff of NARC&DC to review the material listed above that is on file with NRCS. I further agree to hold harmless the National Office, its Members, Board of Directors, Employees, and Agents from liability from and associated with membership and failure of membership or continued membership and realize that this program is of a voluntary nature. In addition, I understand that all answers submitted in this application become the property of NARC&DC, and by submitting this application the Council agrees to allow NARC&DC to utilize this information in any way it sees fit. Further, I understand that the Standards of Excellence Program, a/k/a NARC&DC's Circle of Diamonds, may be changed at any time, without notice.

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Councils President's Signature (or other Authorized Official)

**PLEASE SUBMIT COMPLETED APPLICATION TO:** The National Association of RC&D Councils,  
444 North Capitol Street, N.W., Suite 345, Washington, DC 20001

# Circle of Diamonds

## Additional Information for Enhanced Level

	Yes	No	Not Applicable
<b>Governance: Are the following part of your operations/management?</b>			
Board Resolutions/Minutes Book			
Board and Committee Policy Handbooks			
Committee Descriptions (Purpose, structure, goals and activities)			
Board Member Orientation and Training Plans			
Liability Insurances (Directors and Officers, general, volunteer, etc.)			
Nondiscrimination, Diversity and Harassment Policy			
Organizational Policies (Including non-smoking and whistleblower)			
<b>Planning: Has your council drafted?</b>			
Mission & Vision Statements			
Position Descriptions (Written for each staff and/or volunteer)			
Benefits Documentation			
Standards and Policies for Working with Contractual Employees and Consultants			
<b>Personnel File: Does your council keep the following records?</b>			
Disciplinary (if any) and Performance Actions Signed by Employee			
Reference/Background Check Documentation			
Confidentiality Policies and Procedures			
Attendance/Leave/Time Sheets			
Conflict of Interest (Including annual disclosure form, outside employment, etc.)			
<b>Financial Management: Does your council have the following?</b>			
Budgets (Revenue and Expenses)			
Internal Control Procedures (For example: cash handling, deposits, check writing/disbursements, etc.)			
Audit Committee Policies and Procedures			
Signature Authority			
Fundraising Plan			
Donor Database			
Document Retention and Destruction Policy			
Paychecks/Expense Reimbursement Policy			



# Premier Membership Application for NARC&DC's Circle of Diamonds

Calendar Year 2009

Council's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Council's Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Council's City, State, and Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Council's Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Council's Web Address (If applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Councils President's Name (or other Authorized Official): \_\_\_\_\_

*By utilizing the information gathered from this application and accompanying documents, the staff of NARC&DC will review each application to ensure full compliance with the requirements established. By submitting this application to NARC&DC, the above named Council certifies that it meets all of the requirements, including the "General Requirements" set forth on page 3 of the "Circle of Diamonds Information Kit." Further, by submitting this application, the Council agrees to allow the staff of NARC&DC to contact the listed references and review any and all necessary material listed below some of which may be located within or at USDA's NRCS.*

By signing below, the Council's President (or other Authorized Official) certifies that the above Council has complied with the criteria set forth in the Standards of Excellence Program, a/k/a NARC&DC's Circle of Diamonds. Further, by signing below, I \_\_\_\_\_ agree that \_\_\_\_\_ RC&D Council hereby gives permission to the staff of NARC&DC to review the material listed above that is on file with NRCS. I further agree to hold harmless the National Office, its Members, Board of Directors, Employees, and Agents from liability from and associated with membership and failure of membership or continued membership and realize that this program is of a voluntary nature. In addition, I understand that all answers submitted in this application become the property of NARC&DC, and by submitting this application the Council agrees to allow NARC&DC to utilize this information in any way it sees fit. Further, I understand that the Standards of Excellence Program, a/k/a NARC&DC's Circle of Diamonds, may be changed at any time, without notice.

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Councils President's Signature (or other Authorized Official)

**PLEASE SUBMIT COMPLETED APPLICATION TO:** The National Association of RC&D Councils,  
444 North Capitol Street, N.W., Suite 345, Washington, DC 20001

# Circle of Diamonds

## Additional Information for Premier Level

		Yes	No	Not Applicable
<b>Governance: Does your Council?</b>				
Perform a board self assessment?				
Perform a risk evaluation?				
Have a communications and public relations plan?				
Perform a backup of all documents and keep a copy off-site?				
Keep a written agreement or documentation for each partnership?				
Have operating procedures for such actions as elections and removal of board members, notice of meetings and amendments to bylaws?				
Enumerate those individuals who are authorized to enter into contract as signing officers on behalf of the Council and are they clearly identified in their officer capacity instead of as individuals?				
Have a process to facilitate board members' disclosure of conflicts of interest, such as a conflict questionnaire that is circulated at least annually?				
Have quorums reached for meetings, and is the requirement of a quorum enforced?				
<b>Crisis Management: Does your Council?</b>				
Is your Council's funding sources "sufficiently diversified" (For example, do you rely on multiple organizations or grantors?)				
Have documented contingency plans in the event the Council suffers a temporary or permanent loss of a key individual?				
<b>Media Relations: Does your Council?</b>				
Have a policy regarding who is authorized to speak to the media on the Council's behalf?				
Have a media contact list?				
Utilize the media in your RC&D Area on a monthly basis?				
List types of media contacts utilized by the Council: _____ _____ _____ _____				

<b>Risk Management: Does your Council?</b>				
Perform a background check on all employees or volunteers that work with sensitive persons (i.e. children)?				
Have a confidentiality policy for all donors, members and friends of the Council?				
Have employment practice insurance?				
Review its Director's & Officer's and other insurance policies annually to ensure they meet the Council's needs?				
Provide a full written disclosure of all risks to its insurer to avoid denial of coverage?				
Regularly review the adequacy and extent of insurance (general liability coverage, property Insurance, D&O, etc.)?				
Have effective liability shields in the form of informed consents, disclaimers, releases, waivers and indemnities for program participants as necessary?				
Annually review the activities of your Council to identify the activities most likely to lead to legal claims and determine which of these activities you can eliminate, which you can make less risky, and which you can cover with insurance or transfer the risk via contract to other parties?				
<b>Financial Management: Does your council?</b>				
Does your Council change auditors (Partner or Firm) every five years?				
Does your Council use a separate firm to perform non-auditing services (For example; does your Council use one firm for its audit and another for the preparation for the Form 990)?				
Require regular, timely and complete financial reports (Such as balance sheets, income statements, cash flow statements, etc.) from internal finance staff or contract staff and expect the board to hold staff accountable for meeting the standards of timely reporting (for example, providing financial statements no later than three weeks after the close of the prior accounting period.)?				
Ask critical questions about the financial reports the board receives, including budgets, periodic financial statements, the annual Form 990 and audited financial statements?				

# Reauthorization Application for NARC&DC's Circle of Diamonds

Calendar Year 2009

Council's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Council's Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Council's City, State, and Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Council's Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Council's Web Address (If applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Council President's Name (or other Authorized Official): \_\_\_\_\_

Recertification Level: \_\_\_\_\_

*By utilizing the information gathered from this application and accompanying documents, the staff of NARC&DC will review each recertification application to ensure full compliance with the requirements established. By submitting this application to NARC&DC, the above named Council certifies that it meets all of the requirements, including the requirements set forth in the council's initial application. Further, by submitting this application, the Council agrees to allow the staff of NARC&DC to contact the listed references and review any and all necessary material listed below some of which may be located within or at USDA's NRCS.*

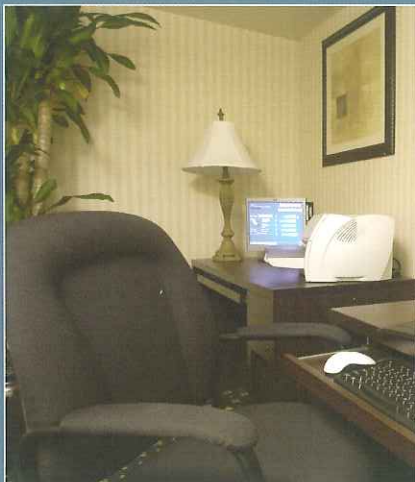

<b>Requirements</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>Must be submitted with recertification request</b>
All requirements and documents submitted with the previous years' application remain unchanged			
Submit two examples of the council's outreach material produced in the last calendar year			YES
Submit a copy of the council's Area Plan of Work if updated within the past calendar year			YES (if updated)
Submit a copy of the council's Annual Plan of Work			YES

By signing below, the Council's President (or other Authorized Official) certifies that the above Council has complied with the criteria set forth in the Standards of Excellence Program, a/k/a NARC&DC's Circle of Diamonds. Further, by signing below, I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree that \_\_\_\_\_ (Council's Name) hereby give permission to the staff of NARC&DC to review the material listed above that is on file with NRCS. I further agree to hold harmless the National Office, Its Members, Board of Directors, Employees, and Agents from liability from and associated with membership and failure of membership or continued membership and realize that this program is of a voluntary nature. In addition, I understand that all answers submitted in this application become the property of NARC&DC, and by submitting this application the Council agrees to allow NARC&DC to utilize this information in any way it sees fit. Further, I understand that the Standards of Excellence Program, a/k/a NARC&DC's Circle of Diamonds, may be changed at any time, without notice.

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Council President's Signature (or other Authorized Official)

**PLEASE SUBMIT COMPLETED APPLICATION TO:** The National Association of RC&D Councils, 444 North Capitol Street, N.W., Suite 345, Washington, DC 20001

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**HOTEL**  
ANNAPOLIS

**DOUBLETREE HOTEL ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND**



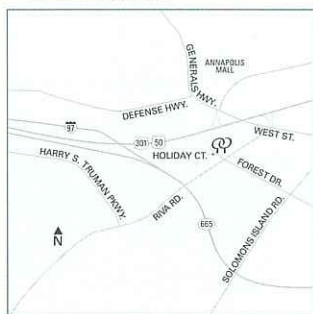
**LOCATION**

With a prime location directly off Route 50, the Doubletree Hotel Annapolis

is just minutes from all of Annapolis' major attractions including the U. S. Naval Academy, Historic Annapolis City Dock, Maryland State Capital, public golf courses, shopping and both Baltimore Washington International Airport and the Baltimore Amtrak Station. While visiting us, you can enjoy all the Chesapeake Bay area has to offer.

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- Audiovisual equipment rental available
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210 Holiday Court  
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Dial Direct: (410) 224-3150  
Fax: (410) 224-3413

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1-800-222-TREE

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- Complimentary parking
- Safe-deposit boxes
- Valet laundry service
- ATM
- Gift shop

**ALL ROOMS FEATURE**

- Sweet Dreams<sup>®</sup> by Doubletree sleep experience
- Complimentary high-speed Internet access
- Television with On-Demand movies, in-room movies and premium channels (HBO<sup>®</sup>, ESPN<sup>®</sup>, CNN<sup>®</sup>)
- Two telephones with voicemail and dataport
- Iron/ironing board; hair dryer
- Sweet Dreams alarm clock with MP3 connectivity
- Large work desk with adjustable lamp
- Coffeemaker with complimentary coffee and tea
- Neutrogena<sup>®</sup> toiletries
- USA Today<sup>®</sup> delivered each weekday morning

**DINING & ENTERTAINMENT**

- Ports of Call Restaurant and Lounge is a unique and casual upscale dining concept featuring the first "all by the glass" wine menu, the area's popular Chesapeake Bay cuisine and fresh fish and prime steak selections from port cities around the nation
- Chesapeake Bay Lobby Café, proudly brewing Starbucks<sup>®</sup> coffee
- Room service available

**RECREATION**

- On-site fitness center
- Olympic-size outdoor pool
- Golf courses nearby

**SURROUNDING ATTRACTIONS**

- Westfield Annapolis Mall – 1 mile
- Maryland State House – 3 miles
- Historic London Town & Gardens – 4 miles
- U. S. Naval Academy – 5 miles
- Historic Annapolis City Dock – 5 miles
- William Paca House – 5 miles
- Quiet Waters Park – 5 miles
- Thomas Point Lighthouse – 6 miles
- Renditions Golf Course – 12 miles
- Arundel Mills Mall – 15 miles
- Six Flags<sup>®</sup> America – 17 miles
- Baltimore/Washington International Airport – 18 miles
- Reagan National Airport – 30 miles
- Dulles Airport – 45 miles

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## **LandServer now online to assist landowners, managers**

Message from the Executive Director / By Lou Etgen

LandServer, a conservation assessment tool for landowners, producers and property managers, is now available online.

LandServer provides farmers and woodland owners with a quick and easy natural resource assessment report; an evaluation of their property's potential to receive payments for implementing conservation actions; and information on how to get started.

In the Chesapeake, users will have access to Bay Bank, where credits can be generated and listed for potential buyers. State and local governments and conservation organizations will also benefit through LandServer's ability to educate, update new GIS data easily and provide helpful contact information.

The tool was developed through a partnership of the Pinchot Institute for Conservation; Sustainable Solutions, LLC; and Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. LandServer was originally conceived through the Forestry for the Bay Program as an assessment and management tool for small landowners. It has developed into much more.

As landowners, producers, conservation organizations, and state and local governments in the mid-Atlantic region move forward in their participation with ecosystem markets and conservation programs, LandServer is the key online assessment tool that will aid them in the process.

Landowners are able to:

- quickly and easily generate a natural resources assessment report for their property;
- easily evaluate their potential to enroll in valuable state and federal cost-share programs;
- evaluate the potential to receive payments for implementing land practices that enhance ecosystem services; and
- save time by using Bay Bank to generate ecosystem service credits and list credits online for buyers.

LandServer also allows nonprofit, government and corporate organizations to better target their objectives by finding landowners and operators willing to implement conservation actions.

LandServer serves as an educational resource that raises the awareness of natural systems in providing valuable ecosystem services.

The LandServer database can be loaded with any state or local priority area GIS data that can then be included in the report to the user. This GIS data can include special resource areas, priority funding areas, wildlife action plan data, zoning, rural legacy and cost-share programs.

State and local governments with in-lieu fee responsibilities will have access to landowners interested in implementing practices through the Bay Bank marketplace.

To view the tool or to create a report, visit [www.LandServer.org](http://www.LandServer.org).

LandServer is being piloted in Maryland and Delaware and will be expanded to New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Virginia in late 2010. LandServer can also be expanded into other areas nationwide.

For information, please contact Eric Sprague at [esprague@pinchot.org](mailto:esprague@pinchot.org).

**Lou Etgen is program director of the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay.**

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