

Wisconsin RC&D Communications/Marketing Plan 2022

Situation Analysis

Overview & scope of this plan

RC&Ds seek to promote a healthy environment and a healthy economy created by decision-making and projects that are grounded in well-accepted principles of conservation while encouraging sustainable economic growth.

Primary competition for RC&Ds comes from public agencies charged with policymaking and administration of natural resources and the environment, as well as private-sector consultants specializing in various areas of resource management.

This plan limits its scope to the Wisconsin Association of RC&D, and not directly to the member organizations that comprise it. However, member organizations should consider the premises and insights of this plan as they develop and implement their own marketing communications strategies for 2022.

Competitive advantage

The RC&D tagline – “Conservation That Works!” – effectively expresses the RC&D competitive advantage. The biggest strengths of RC&Ds are in their flexibility to meet the specific needs of a given opportunity, technical expertise of their staff, their dual goals of providing sustainable economic growth and resource conservation, and their relative lack of bureaucratic constraints.

Weaknesses & threats

RC&Ds biggest weaknesses are rooted in the lack of a “guaranteed” financial base – there is very little money available for marketing promotions and other brand management activities, especially on a long-term basis. This is especially true at the state association level, where there is no project revenue or public funding. Also, while the name Wisconsin Association of RC&D suggests a statewide scope of activities, the three active members of the state association collectively operate in only about half of the state’s counties, and generally in areas of lower population density.

Threats include increased competition for public-sector grants, changes in grant-making processes, and loss of our identity to phony “conservation” groups that have deep pockets for engaging in their own promotion but do not adhere to real principles of conservation.

Target audiences & opportunities

RC&Ds have a fairly diverse range of target audience. While some of the target audiences identified below are of interest to all of the member organizations, the importance of each will vary widely from one RC&D to another. Therefore, in evaluating this list to identify marketing communication strategies carried out at the member organization level, the first step for each group should be to prioritize the list for their specific RC&D organization.

- County conservationists
- Industry/business that has environmental-service needs
- Area CISMAs (Cooperative invasive species management areas).
- U.S. Forest Service , NRCS, & DNR (Broadening those relationships. Turnover and retirements create steady need to nurture these relationships)
- Municipalities facing conservation and/or environmental issues. Mid-size communities likely offer the best opportunities. (Big cities have their own staff, while very small communities often aren’t knowledgeable enough to recognize needs/opportunities.)
- Organizations that promote managed grazing, and individuals interested in that.
- Lake groups
- Private forest landowners.

The ultimate goal for any of these target audiences is to increase awareness among key stakeholders of what we do and leverage those relationships to make our position stronger. We should strive to identify, recruit, and cultivate relationships with the best of the key stakeholders.

Marketing / Communication Goals

1. Expand cooperative efforts between local RC&Ds to reduce costs and leverage success to build awareness within the target audiences in our combined geographic service area.
2. Initiate/cultivate relationships with individuals and groups in the public and private sectors who are decision-makers on policies and funding for conservation-related projects.
3. Build a more recognized brand position as an advocate for cost-effective, science-based conservation practices among target audience groups by encouraging consistency in brand positioning and messaging.

Review/revise brand standards

Review and potentially revise the brand standards developed in 2017. Encourage all member organizations to align their communications/marketing efforts with the standards to promote consistent messaging and better brand awareness within individual service areas and across all service areas.

Promote collaboration between member RC&Ds

Create a systematic means for identifying and acting on opportunities for collaboration between member organizations, both on projects and on administrative functions.

Review/revise sales collateral material

Evaluate existing sales collateral materials (brochure, trade show display) that can be used to support personal selling, in-person presentation support or as stand-alone informational pieces distributed on a targeted basis on paper or via email. Revise as warranted.

Upgrade website URL and content

Upgrade the state association site to a “premium” URL. Refocus content on needs and interests of target markets. Update content no less than monthly, including a blog to be produced on a rotating basis by each member organization (each group will have to produce the blog once every three months). Increase content-sharing between member organizations. Initiate utilization tracking and report quarterly.

Support individual member company activities

Nothing in this plan is intended to prevent or discourage member organizations from pursuing additional marketing communication strategies to reach target audiences. In fact, such activities are encouraged, and successful ones can be “cloned” by other member groups for their respective organizations. Also, member organizations can leverage the name and support of the state association where it is useful to do so.

Grow state association membership

Seek to engage River Country RC&D into the state association network. Implementing the strategies above should be done first as a means of demonstrating the value of membership in the state association.

Implementation Schedule & Budget

Schedule

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Review/revise brand standards	Plan/Develop	Plan/Develop	Plan/Develop	Implement	Implement	Implement	Implement					
Promote collaboration	Plan/Develop	Plan/Develop	Plan/Develop	Implement	Implement	Implement	Implement	Implement	Implement	Implement	Implement	Implement
Review/revise collaterals		Plan/Develop	Plan/Develop	Implement	Implement							
Upgrade website		Plan/Develop	Plan/Develop	Implement	Implement	Implement	Implement	Implement	Implement	Implement	Implement	Implement
Support member companies			Implement	Implement	Implement	Implement	Implement	Implement	Implement	Implement	Implement	Implement
Grow state association									Plan/Develop	Plan/Develop	Implement	Implement

Plan/Develop Implement

Budget

Review/revise brand standards	Time
Promote collaboration	Time
Review/revise collaterals	\$300
Upgrade website	\$300
Support member companies	Time
Grow state association	Time
Total	\$600
Per Member Company	\$200