



Annual Report

2021



Rockingham County
Conservation District

The Rockingham County Conservation District



Our mission is to conserve and sustain the natural environment
for present and future generations.

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Brentwood NH 03833
603-679-2790
rccd@rockinghamccd.org
www.rockinghamccd.org

Board of Supervisors

Samantha Cyr, Chair – Londonderry
Cynthia Smith, Vice Chair – Greenland
Greg Balog, Secretary – South Hampton
Richard Lutz, Treasurer – Chester
Richard Sugatt - Exeter

Associate Supervisors

Lloyd Ziel - Greenland

Staff

Vicky Nelson - District Manager
Tracy Degnan - Senior Project Manager
Arianna Spear - Conservation & Stewardship Manager

RCCD As-Needed Staff and Contractors

Michael Cuomo - NH Soil Scientist, NH Wetland Scientist, NH Septic System
Designer (Reviewer)
Gerald Lang, PE - Hydraulic Engineer
Danna Truslow - Restoration Hydrologist
David Detour - Surveyor and AutoCAD Draftsman
Marc Jacobs - NH Soil Scientist, NH Wetland Scientist, Certified Professional in
Erosion and Sediment Control



Traditionally, the District has been tied to farms and farmers to assist with erosion prevention and farming practices. Our environmental priorities remain the same today as we continue to help farmers with these and other conservation practices. We now also help with innovative farming practices such as cover crop mixes or specialty equipment that we rent at a very low cost. The District aims to help improve soil health and provide opportunities for farmers to implement other Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques.

The District is increasingly working with municipalities on local habitat restoration projects. We assist many communities in their town forests and conservation properties to control invasive plants and restore native habitats. The District is actively working with several municipalities to promote habitat for New England Cottontail, pollinators, bats, and turtles and to assist with rare plants communities. All our conservation work continues to support the environmental priorities of the County and individual communities. The District also provides technical assistance to municipalities – and that remains an objective service that has been historically underutilized.

The District advances into 2022 with focus and dedication to local conservation programs and projects in Rockingham County. Please visit www.rockinghamccd.org. We continue to partner and work with many different groups, organizations, and communities to nurture the stewardship of our soils, water, food systems, and natural resources.



Services

Technical Municipal Services

- Review of wetland delineation boundaries and required setbacks, prime wetland reviews and other natural resource reviews
- Test pit witnessing and plan review for septic designs
- Restoration of wetland, shoreland, and native habitats
- Expert testimony at municipal board meetings
- Stormwater design and installation reviews
- Conservation easement monitoring for communities

RCCD offers unbiased, professional, and objective services relating to natural resources only to municipalities and cities in Rockingham County. RCCD does not perform private service work.

Other Services

- Soil health improvement equipment rental program
- Soil Potential Index Calculations for Current Use Tax Assessments
- Historic Aerial Photography back to 1943
- Amoozemeter rentals
- Annual trout sale
- Public workshops and educational events on various conservation topics

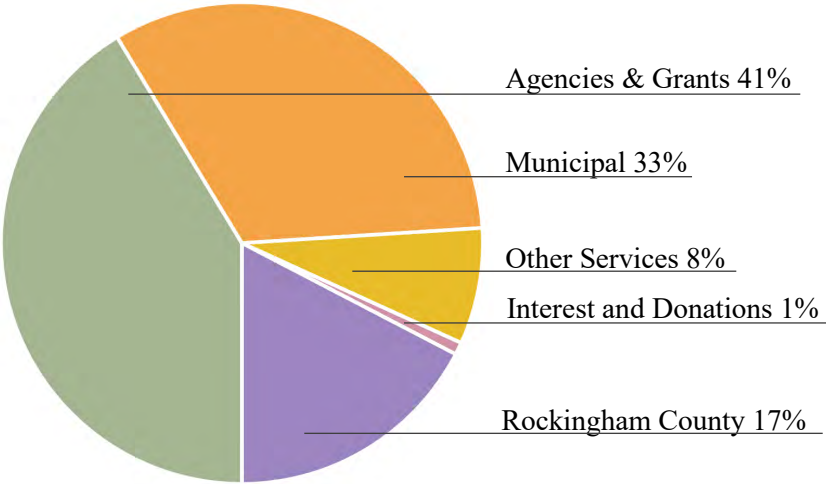
Conservation Districts Enabling Legislation: RSA 432

NEW HAMPSHIRE STATUE TITLE XL SOIL CONSERVATION AND
FARMLAND PRESERVATION

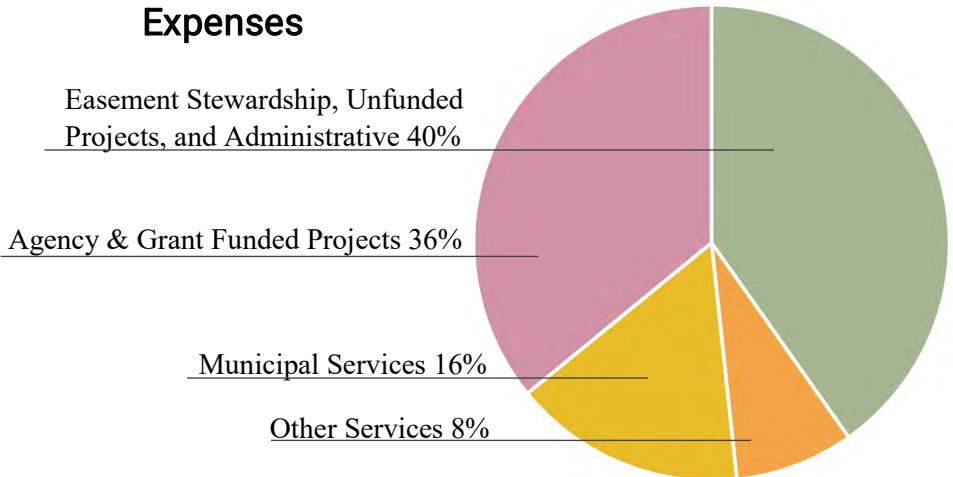
Financial Report

Fiscal Year 2021

Unrestricted Receipts



Expenses

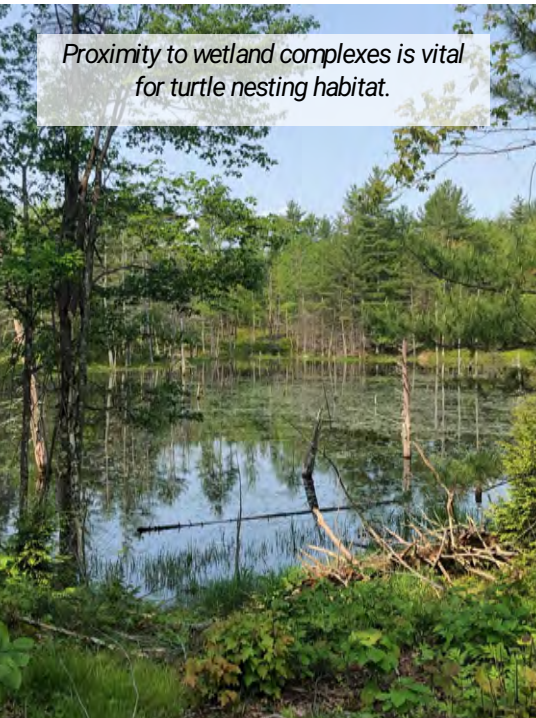


The RCCD Board of Supervisors appreciates the past support of our programs by the Rockingham County Commissioners and the County Delegation.

Turtle Nesting Demonstration

PROJECT UPDATE- Beginning in 2018, the RCCD initiated a turtle nesting project with the goal of demonstrating management practices that land managers could adopt for future management of forests, with the ability to create nesting habitat for turtle species in New Hampshire. The focus for this project was on forest openings such as log landings where logs would be deposited for transport *with* practices that might allow these landings/openings to become suitable turtle nesting.

Our state is home to seven native species of turtles, four of which are listed on the NH endangered or threatened species list and are considered in greatest need of conservation in the NH Wildlife Action Plan (Blanding's, Spotted, Wood, and Box turtle). Of the challenges they face, anthropogenic factors including habitat loss and forest fragmentation are the leading causes in species decline. As development pressure continues to rise in the state, these species are facing increased mortality rates as a direct result from the hazards of traveling (i.e., crossing roads) to find suitable habitat for breeding, nesting, and overwintering. Developing nesting habitat in a forested landscape away from development, allows the number of roadway crossings and distance traveled for these turtles to locate suitable habitat to be greatly reduced. Several new management practices were initiated with collaboration from NRCS, New Hampshire Fish and Game (NHFG), and the participating landowner. Over the



Proximity to wetland complexes is vital for turtle nesting habitat.



A painted turtle at one of the sites. Creating nesting habitat near existing nesting areas ensures turtles will find it.

last few years 14 nesting sites were created in forest openings using various site development techniques including: ground scarification to remove vegetation and discourage rapid vegetation regeneration; selective cutting to allow for six or more hours of direct sunlight; the removal of slash and other debris from areas; and the addition of sand mounds.

Several site visits were conducted and RCCD observed signs of snapping turtle and painted turtle nesting activity and identified a state endangered Blanding's turtle in proximity to one of the prepared nesting sites. Game cameras were set up by the RCCD and the NHFG in Spring 2021 to monitor for nesting activity. Camera data for 2021 was compiled and only snapping and painted turtles were observed nesting at the sites. Cameras are currently being deployed at several sites to monitor nesting activity for 2022.


This conservation practice is an effort to increase available nesting habitat for all turtle species in the state with a special focus on endangered Blanding's turtles. As we work to complete site monitoring over the next year, RCCD anticipates that we will meet the project goal that will show available practices that can develop or enhance turtle nesting sites, and can be incorporated into future land management activities in New Hampshire. This project was funded through an agreement between the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Districts (NHACD). The RCCD is appreciative of the generous assistance from the cooperating entities, and for the landowner who participated in this project.



Game cameras were used to monitor the sites.



A snapping turtle utilizing one of the newly completed nesting sites.



Coastal and Pollinator Habitat Enhancements at Odiorne State Park

In 2021, the Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD) began to remove debris and invasive plants found on approximately 2+/- acres, near the bike path and Route 1A, from the freshwater pond toward the boat ramp parking entrance. This reclamation effort began with the NH Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR), Division of Parks and Recreation hiring a forestry mower to mow woody debris and invasive plants that had infiltrated this area for years. This is part of a continued coastal habitat restoration project at Odiorne Point State Park in Rye that began over a decade ago.

The project goals here included the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques, as supported by the NH Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR), Division of Parks and Recreation, with additional funding support from the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food (NH DAMF), through the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program, the NH Department of Environmental Services, Coastal Program (NHCP), and the NH State Conservation Committee, through the Moose plate program. These habitat areas are adjacent to, and provide protection for, two rare damselflies and rare coastal communities that were invaded by state-listed invasive plant species particularly Oriental bittersweet and glossy buckthorn. Invasive plants and various debris thrown into these areas were overrunning and destroying native trees and shrubs. The RCCD used a multi-tiered approach to reduce and remove invasive vegetation and to enhance native plant and animal communities.

After mowing was completed, the RCCD targeted invasive regrowth with both low-volume foliar (LVF) applications with handheld backpack sprayers and cut-stump techniques with loppers to cut large Oriental bittersweet vines and other invasive species. Mowing allowed RCCD access to treat previously inaccessible areas in this location. RCCD used low-impact herbicides, as permitted by a Special Permit, administered by the NH DAMF,

Pesticide Bureau. Proper site conditions were established by raking the thick woody debris out of the new planting areas. This practice allows the pollinator friendly plants to establish and not be outcompeted by invasive re-sprouts and other nuisance species.

Over 650 plantings were installed in this area during the 2021 growing season including native coastal plants and common milkweed that the District grew. A couple of areas were seeded with pollinator seed mix in the early winter. Some of the species that were planted included Echinacea, Rudbeckia, beach plum, Virginia rose, New England Asters, and swamp and common milkweed. Reestablishment of native vegetation is important to reduce seed sources of invasive vegetation that threaten to reinvade almost two-thirds of the park where restoration has been initiated. It is also important to promote the rapid regeneration of native species in order to continue to outcompete invasive seedlings.

Additional species will be planted in 2022 to supplement what was planted in 2021 and will continue to promote diverse insect and bird populations.

Thanks to the NH Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, the NH State Conservation Committee, NH Coastal Program, and the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets and Foods for their long-term funding support and partnership on this habitat restoration project.



Volunteers preparing the site for pollinator plantings.



Mowing invasive plant species.



Volunteers planting pollinator-friendly plants.



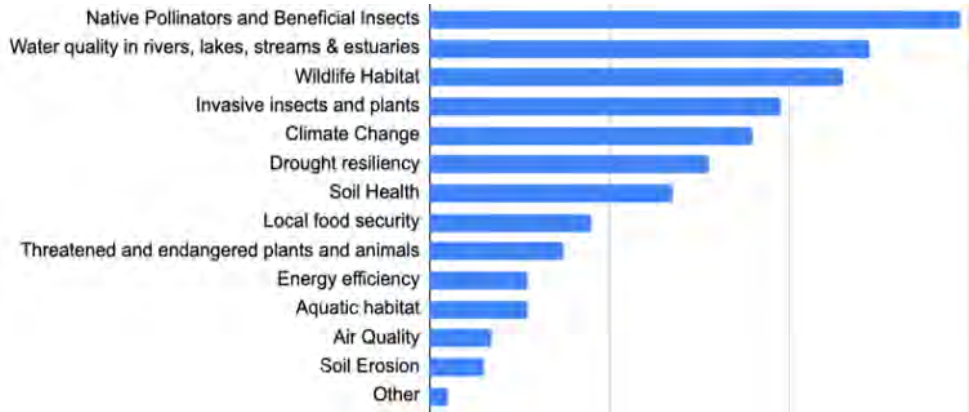
A friend stops by.



Local Workgroup Updates

Conservation Districts use a Local Workgroup process to incorporate the public’s priorities and values into conservation funding and policy decisions. We are always eager to hear what conservation issues are important to you in Rockingham County. Our last conservation priorities survey helped us to make decisions about District activities and USDA funding programs. Here’s what you said:

Which conservation issues are most important?



Partner Report: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

In 2021 The Epping NRCS Field Office (serving Rockingham and Strafford Counties) welcomed Sarah McGraw-Small as our first NHACD Partner Planner. Having a NHACD Partner Planner has helped strengthen the partnership between NRCS, Conservation Districts, and the producers we work with. Sarah is a graduate of the University of New Hampshire with a Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Conservation and hold a certificate in composting from the Maine Compost School. Sarah has a background in community planning, organic waste management and recycling, environmental education, and conservation. We are very excited to have her as part of our team!

- Matt Larkin, District Conservationist

Farm Bill Program Financial Assistance in Rockingham County in 2021:

Program	Contracts	Funding
Environmental Quality Incentives Program	19	\$596,693
Agricultural Management Assistance	3	\$41,824



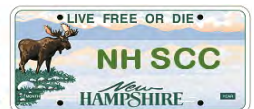
Equipment Rentals

Several pieces of conservation equipment are available to rent at a low cost to help farmers and other landowners with their soil health, nutrient management, and wildlife habitat goals.

Over the past two years, we have been focusing on expanding our rental program to include more equipment that can be used on small-scale operations. We are always seeking input on what equipment or services would be useful to residents of the County in practicing conservation on their land.

Please contact us to learn more about the rental process. The rental program is supported by several grants including the NH State Conservation Committee Moose Plate Grant, the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Conservation Innovation Grant, and the NH Charitable Foundation.

- Soil aerator
- Wood ash and lime spreader
- No-till seed drill
- No-till corn planter
- No-till vegetable transplanter *New!*
- Yeomans subsoil plow
- Walk-behind tractor with seeder, mowers, power harrow, roller crimper, and subsoil shank *New!*
- Small compost spreader *New!*



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Dedicated to the Wise Use of Our Natural Resources.
