

Annual Report 2011



ROCKINGHAM
COUNTY
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT



The mission of the Rockingham County Conservation District is to conserve and sustain the natural environment for present and future generations by working to make wise land-use decisions.

110 North Road - Brentwood, NH 03833 - 603.679.2790
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Rockingham County Conservation District

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Dedicated to the Wise Use of Our Natural Resources.



ROCKINGHAM
COUNTY
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT

Board of Supervisors and Staff

Supervisors

Cynthia Smith, Chair - Greenland
Heidi Seaverns, Vice Chair - Nottingham
Robert Goodrich, Treasurer - Stratham
Joanna Pellerin, Secretary - Exeter
Daniel Davis - Newfields

Associate Supervisors (Emeritus)

John Conner - Londonderry
Harold Bodwell - Kensington

RCCD Regular Staff

- Leonard A. Lord, PhD- District Manager/Ecologist, NH Soil Scientist, NH Wetland Scientist, NH Septic System Designer, NH Pesticide Applicator
- Tracy Degnan - Conservation Specialist
- Diane Knapp - Office Manager
- Brendan White - Intern

RCCD As-Needed Staff & Contractors

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

**NEW HAMPSHIRE STATUE
TITLE XL
SOIL CONSERVATION AND FARMLAND PRESERVATION
Conservation Districts
Section 432:8**

432:8 Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared to be the policy of the state to provide for the establishment of conservation districts under the supervision of a state conservation committee, said districts to be composed of landowners and land occupiers within the district, who may join together in the interest of the conservation and development of the soil, water, and related natural resources and preventing soil erosion, floodwater and sediment damages. It is the intent of this subdivision to facilitate the joint effort of landowners, land occupiers, and units of government in carrying out measures for the conservation and development of lands within the district, voluntarily and with such assistance as may be available for this purpose from local, state, or federal governmental agencies.

Financials (cont'd)

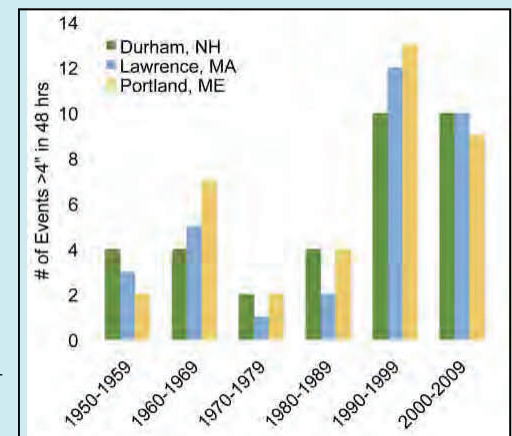
Over the past year RCCD has made a number of strides to reduce costs and increase revenues to help offset the 50% county funding cut of \$45,000 in 2011. To this end we have aggressively pursued grant funded projects, raised our fee-for-service rates, reduced our office hours, and reduced one administrative staff position from full-time to part-time. Despite these efforts, the District still operated at a net loss for the year. We hope to reverse this in 2012 .

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



Looking Ahead to 2012

- RCCD will continue to work on the grant projects that we worked on in 2011.
- RCCD will be educating municipalities regarding the **Technical Services** available through the District and how we can help them meet federal water quality requirements.
- RCCD receives a large number of requests to work with towns regarding **Ecological Restoration Projects**. We will continue to meet the demands of our towns by continuing this work, which is often associated with issues such as non-point source pollution.
- **Stormwater Quality & Quantity Issues** will continue to become more important in the County as demonstrated by the numbers of high energy storms that are on the increase while development also increases. In addition to our regular technical assistance, RCCD anticipates working with municipalities to assist with EPA regulations regarding stormwater . We will also be working with our towns and partners to help reduce nitrogen levels in Great Bay from stormwater, septic systems, and other non-point source pollution. In turn, this can help reduce the pressure to provide costly upgrades to municipal sewage treatment plants.
- **Local Agriculture** is expanding in Rockingham County and the District is gearing up to work with local farmers to increase local production while maintaining stewardship of the land. RCCD anticipates more involvement in projects such as assisting farmers groups in obtaining specialized equipment that works efficiently while also improving the protection of soil and water resources.

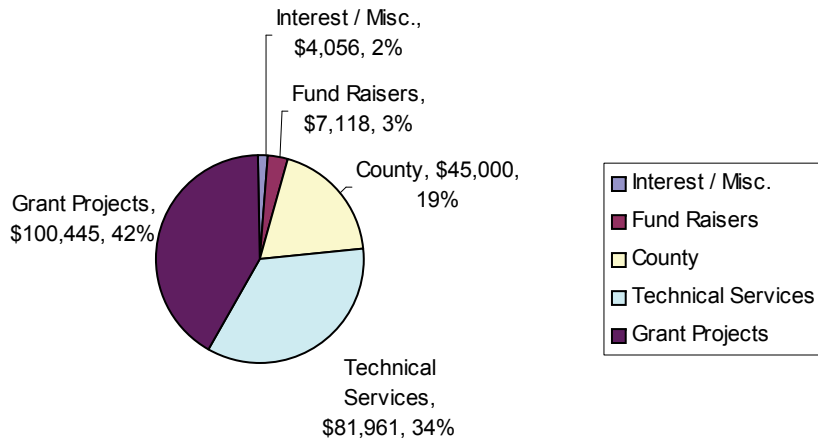


Numbers of Extreme Precipitation Events in the Great Bay Area by Decade

Climate Change in the Piscataqua / Great Bay Region: Past, Present, and Future
UNH Carbon Solutions New England, 2011

Financials

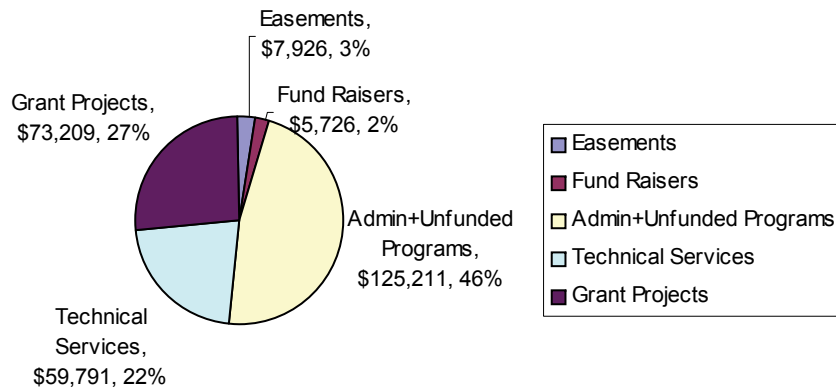
2011 UNRESTRICTED RECEIPTS



Receipts not include a conservation easement restricted fund deposit of \$5,564. The restricted fund principal is required to generate interest to support easement stewardship in-perpetuity

Total Unrestricted Receipts: \$238,581

2011 EXPENSES



Total Expenses: \$271,862

2011 Highlights

This year the RCCD struggled to meet the challenges of our County funding cut and we continue to work diligently to make headway in that regard. As in prior years, we are the organization that municipalities and landowners turn to as an objective source of technical expertise regarding the wise use of our natural resources. We provided assistance on 193 separate parcels in 17 towns this year. In 2011 RCCD also worked on five major grant funded environmental restoration projects and nine Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) restoration projects. Projects included farmland restoration, installation of buffers to tidal wetlands, water quality improvement, riverbank stabilization, riparian buffer improvement, invasive species control, town forest/recreation land improvement, wildlife habitat restoration, and rare species habitat restoration. RCCD also worked

Every dollar provided by the County in 2011 was matched by \$4.30 from other sources.

County funding is critical for leveraging grant funds as well as for upholding our partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, initiating new programs, covering operating costs, and covering unfunded programs such as landowner assistance.

with NRCS to determine how Farm Bill funds would be spent in the County, which was **\$6.7M less than in 2010**. The RCCD continues to promote responsible use of our natural resources through our conservation easement program, through working with our partners on broad scale planning projects, by educating landowners, and by promoting local agriculture. These projects provide a multitude of benefits to the County. In addition to the direct environmental benefits, they bring in outside dollars, provide education opportunities, and enhance the character of the County.

Lenny Lord—District Manager



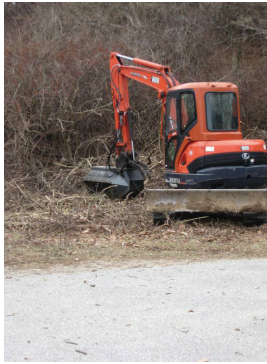
RCCD SERVICES

- Non-Point Source Pollution Control
- Ecological Restoration
- Sustainable Agriculture
- Conservation Easements
- Invasive Species Control
- Stormwater Management Reviews
- Septic System Design Reviews
- Natural Resource Impact Reviews
- Agricultural Wetland Impact Permits
- Soil Potential Index Calculation for Current Use
- Historic Aerial Photography back to 1943

Grant Funded Projects

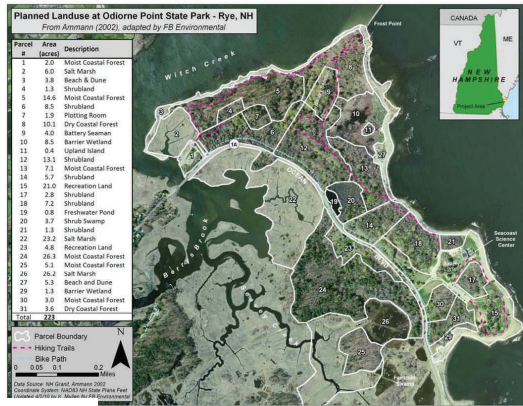
Odiorne Point State Park, Rye

Spearheaded by RCCD, this multi-partner and multi-year effort has incorporated hundreds of hours of voluntary community participation and workshops to restore natural habitats within and adjacent to Odiorne Point State Park in Rye. This effort will not only have environmental benefits, but is expected to improve the quality of the park for recreation, aesthetics, education, and safety. Odiorne Point State Park includes some of New Hampshire's rarest native ecosystems such as coastal pitch pine forest, dunes, salt marshes and barrier marshes; however, these habitats have become degraded over time due to historical disturbances and human impacts that have promoted infestation by invasive species. To date, RCCD has been approved for grants on 80 +/- acres within and adjacent to the park, including populations of at least three rare species.



Partners & Funders: NOAA/NHDES Coastal Program Grant, NHDRED Division of Parks and Recreation, NH Corporate Wetland Restoration Partnership, USDA Forest Service, University of New Hampshire, NHDES Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund, NH Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food, Integrated Pest Management Grant, NHDRED Natural Heritage Bureau, Seacoast Science Center, Coastal Wetland Invasive Plant Partnership, Natural Resources Conservation Service, United Way Day of Caring volunteers, Town of Rye Conservation Commission, Timberland Earth Day volunteers, and many local schools. This project is also supported by funds from the

sale of the Conservation License Plate (Moose Plate) through the NH State Conservation Committee Grant Program.

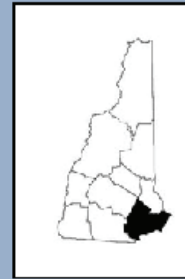


NRCS in Rockingham County

NRCS technical and financial assistance to landowners in Rockingham County is down almost seven million dollars from \$9,133,873 in 2010 to \$2,440,837 in 2011.



**NEW HAMPSHIRE 2011
ACCOMPLISHMENTS**



Funds for Rockingham County — Fiscal Year 2011

Technical Assistance	Amount	Description
	\$148,451	Field Office Personnel
	\$335,547	Share of Statewide Personnel
	\$118,355	Support Costs
Total	\$602,354	

Contracts and Agreements

Financial Assistance	# of Contracts	Amount	Conservation Program
	20	\$266,451	EQIP
	1	\$8,239	WHIP
	0	0	CSP
	0	0	AMA
	0	0	CSIP
	0	0	EWP
	0	\$1,000	GRP
	1	\$833,870	FRPP
	10	\$728,924	WRP
Total	32	\$1,838,483	

Total Technical and Financial Assistance: \$2,440,837



Natural Resources Conservation Service Partnering

The RCCD continues to partner with NRCS to identify and address natural resource concerns in local communities and to coordinate public and private resources to meet local needs on a grassroots level. The District worked with NRCS during 2011 to provide technical and financial assistance to landowners and producers benefiting from 2008 Farm Bill Funding.



In addition to landowner assistance, RCCD worked under contract with the NRCS to manage nine ecological restoration projects in Rockingham County as well as to conduct farmer surveys regarding the installation and success of "high tunnels" that were funded through NRCS programs.

NRCS PROJECTS MANAGED BY RCCD

- Rye Salt Marshes – Awcomin Salt Marsh, Marsh Road Marsh, Wallis Road Mars, and Fairhill Marsh: approximately 14 acres of tidal marsh restoration
- New Castle – Quarterdeck Lane: approximately 1 acre of tidal marsh restoration
- New Castle – Great Island Common: in prior years restoration was focused on a pitch pine restoration site and sand dune but in 2011 work was expanded to approximately 12 acres including forested areas throughout the park
- Hampton – Landing Road and Drakeside Road Salt Marshes: approximately 11 acres of tidal marsh restoration

The Natural Resources Conservation Service is a core partner of the Rockingham County Conservation District. The partnership between the NRCS and Conservation Districts is one that was carefully designed to foster a unique and productive relationship to get conservation implemented and to provide federal resources at a local level.

Grant Funded Projects

Exeter River, Brentwood



This project includes treatment of stormwater runoff, streambank stabilization, riparian buffer enhancement, and a conservation easement on 18 acres to protect over 5,600 feet of river frontage. Work conducted in 2011 included collection of site data, preliminary design review by regulatory agencies, and completion of a boundary survey. Environmental permits are expected to be obtained over the winter and

project construction will begin in the spring of 2012. This work is expected to improve water quality of the Exeter River, which feeds into Great Bay.

Partners & Funders: RCCD is managing this project in partnership with, and through funding provided to the Town of Brentwood. Funding for this project was provided in part by a Watershed Assistance Grant from the NH Department of Environ-



mental Services with Clean Water Act Section 319 funds from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This project is also supported by funds from the sale of the Conservation License Plate (Moose Plate) through the NH State Conservation Committee Grant Program. Additional project partners include NH Trout Unlimited, Exeter River Local Advisory Committee, and Project Landowners.



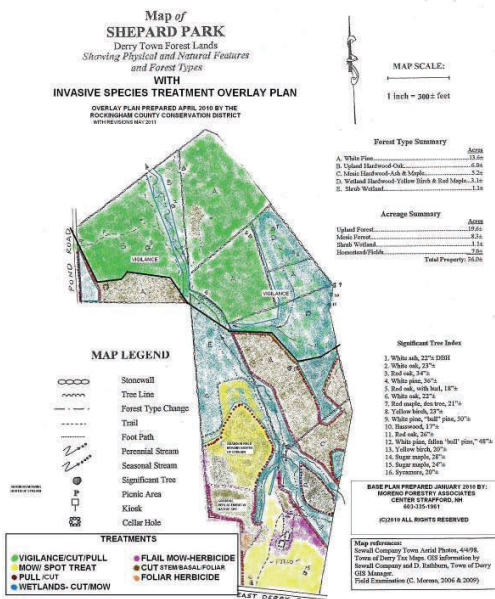
Grant Funded Projects *Shepard Park, Derry*

RCCD is partnering with the Town of Derry to restore Shepard Park. The Shepard Park Invasive Species Control Project began in 2010 and will enter its second phase in 2012. This project utilizes the principles of integrated pest management (IPM) for forest and shrub-land restoration, wildlife habitat enhancement, and invasive plant species control in the 30 acre park. The first phase of the project involved planning and an initial implementation to minimize impacts to sensitive wildlife species. The second phase of the project builds on the initial plan



and also includes data collection, analysis, and community outreach. Future phases of the project are expected to involve US Fish and Wildlife with additional technical support from NH Fish and Game.

Partners & Funders have included the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food, Integrated Pest Management Program Grant, the Town of Derry Conservation Commission, and many local volunteers.



Programs *Promoting Local Agriculture*

The RCCD is committed to supporting the resurgence of local agriculture in Rockingham County. NH currently only supplies 6% of its own food. If we can increase local agriculture, that means less money being sent outside the state, more jobs for NH, and greater food security in the event of a natural disaster or impact to our transportation system. Accomplishments in this area included:

- Hosting the NH Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting with the theme: **Local Foods: Local Food Security**. For the meeting we gathered leaders from agriculture throughout the state to review what the needs of the agricultural community are and how we can partner to meet those needs.
- Participating in field trials to look at how different cover crops may improve soil health
- Partnering with Strafford County to get grant approval for a wood ash spreader that can be used to increase soil fertility and reduce the need for nitrogen fertilizers that can lead to increased pollution to our waterways
- Hosting the local chapter of NH Small and Beginning Farmer monthly meetings
- Partnering with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to promote their Farm Bill programs



Other Accomplishments & Programs

- Continued landowner assistance related to wise land use and local regulations
- Great Bay Dialogue Participant- Working with local organizations to reduce nitrogen in Great Bay
- Coastal Watershed Invasive Plant Partnership Steering Committee Member
- NH DES Wetlands Bureau Agricultural Impact Permits—RCCD continues to be the only legal entity that can certify these permits in the county
- SPI Calculations for Current Use—RCCD continues to be the only legal entity that can conduct these calculations in the county
- Management of Historic Aerial Photography—RCCD holds and manages the historic USDA photography for public use, with flights going back to 1943

Programs

Conservation Easements

In addition to protecting open space, conservation easements protect communities from higher taxes, help keep government and government services small, protect town character and aesthetics, and protect natural resources for future generations.



RCCD is legally responsible for monitoring 99 conservation easements on approximately 4,500 acres of land throughout the county. As part of our new business model, RCCD has greatly reduced the number of new easements it is now able to accept due to our limited staff. RCCD staff spent 306 hours managing easements in 2011.

Outreach & Education



The RCCD provides outreach that is directly related to the work we do in the county—working with wise soils use, water quality protection, and the sustainable utilization of resources. Typically our

workshops are hands-on where volunteers contribute time to work on a project while they are learning. The other type of outreach we do is to distribute the results of our projects so that others can learn from our experience. RCCD presented 26 outreach workshops to



schools and volunteers during 2011 in addition to making presentations to the NH Association of Natural Resource Scientists, the NH Association of Conservation Commissions, the NH Association of Conservation Districts, and the NH High School Soil Judging Contest.



Grant Funded Projects

Goss Farm, Rye



In 2011 the RCCD and the Rye Conservation Commission completed its first year of work restoring the Goss Farm in Rye. In 2008 the 10 acre parcel was under consideration for development into a five lot subdivision and in 2009 the historic 1797 farmhouse on the property burned. In 2010 the RCCD assisted the Town of Rye in procuring a Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service that

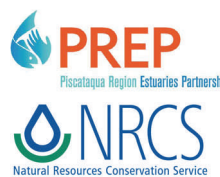
helped to fund a conservation easement on the property. One of the goals of preserving the farm was to return it to agriculture, which had not occurred on the land for approximately 40 years.

The RCCD, holder of the conservation easement and project manager for the restoration, secured grant funds to restore soil fertility, to facilitate invasive species management, to establish a 100 foot buffer of native vegetation along the adjacent Awcomin Salt Marsh, and to provide related educational outreach.



Partners & Funders

include the Town of Rye, Natural Resources Conservation Service, NH Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food, Integrated Pest Management Grant, UNH Cooperative Extension, and many community volunteers. This project was funded in part by a grant from the Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership. This project is also supported by funds from the sale of the Conservation License Plate (Moose Plate) through the NH State Conservation Committee Grant Program.



Grant Funded Projects

River Road Salt Marsh, New Castle

RCCD is managing this project in partnership with, and through funding provided to the Town of New Castle. The River Road salt marsh restoration project is expected to serve as a flagship project to build community support for salt marsh restoration throughout New Castle. Degraded salt marshes have less wildlife value, reduced species diversity, greater mosquito production, and have detrimental effects on landscape aesthetics. The River Road salt marsh was impacted during the early 1970's by the placement of a sewer line along approximately half of its perimeter. This led to the filling in of a stream through sedimentation that ultimately has led to an expanding population of invasive *Phragmites*. The goal of this project is to remove the *Phragmites* and restore the stream channel, which is also expected to reduce mosquito production in the marsh. A path connecting the restored marsh to the nearby elementary school will make this marsh a prime outdoor educational laboratory in which to study the salt marsh ecosystem. This project was initiated in 2010. In 2011 the final restoration design was completed and the project has been permitted through the NH DES Wetlands Bureau. The project will be implemented in 2012.



Partners & Funders include: New Castle Conservation Commission, NHDES Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund, NH Department of Agriculture, Markets, and Food, Integrated Pest Management Grant Program, and Project landowners. The feasibility portion of this project was funded in part by a grant from the Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership in 2010.



New Hampshire
Department of Agriculture,
Markets & Food



Programs

Municipal Technical Assistance

RCCD continues to be relied upon as an objective provider of technical expertise to municipalities and landowners. RCCD provides technical assistance to municipalities for services related to stormwater management and related site engineering design reviews, erosion & sediment control reviews, test pit witnessing for subdivision and septic system designs, septic system design reviews, septic system installation reviews, wetland and other natural resource impact reviews, as well as monitoring of town held conservation easements. In 2011 RCCD staff spent 2,032 hours on 193 technical assistance projects in 17 of Rockingham County's 37 towns. Many of these projects involved multiple phases.



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All programs are offered on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, disability or political beliefs.