

Annual Report

2022



Rockingham County
Conservation District

The Rockingham County Conservation District



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

110 North Road
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, Treasurer – South Hampton
Richard Sugatt, Secretary - Exeter
Lloyd Ziel - Greenland

Associate Supervisors

Richard Lutz – Chester

Staff

Vicky Nelson - District Manager
Tracy Degan - Senior Project Manager
Arianna Spear - Conservation & Stewardship Manager
Grace McEachern, Conservation Technician
Lorraine Lord, Office Assistant

RCCD As-Needed Staff and Contractors

Michael Cuomo - NH Soil Scientist, NH Wetland Scientist,
NH Septic System Designer (Reviewer)
Lenny Lord, Licensed Pesticide Applicator, NH Wetland Scientist,
NH Soil Scientist
Gerald Lang, PE - Hydraulic Engineer
Danna Truslow - Restoration Hydrologist



2022

The initiation of the District in 1946 directed us to assist farmers in our county with erosion prevention and farming practices. Our environmental priorities remain consistent, as we continue to help farmers with these practices and embark on new conservation journeys. The District's expertise has evolved to include innovative practices for improvements in soil health and climate resilience techniques, to include cover crop mixes and specialty equipment that we rent at a very low cost. The District also aims to provide opportunities for farmers to implement additional Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques. These IPM techniques have expanded to a variety of habitat restoration projects, including several conservation properties found in the county.

The District continues to work with municipalities on local habitat restoration projects. We assist communities in their town forests and conservation properties through controlling invasive plants, restoring native habitats, and even the updating of trails to combat negative natural resource impacts. All of our conservation work continues to support the environmental priorities of the county and individual communities. The District continues to provide technical assistance to municipalities – which is an independent and objective service that has been historically underutilized by municipalities in the county.

The District continues to partner and work with many different groups, organizations, and communities to nurture the stewardship of our soils, water, food systems, and natural resources. The District advances into 2023 with focus and dedication to conservation programs that balance the stewardship rights of our generation with the rights of future generations in Rockingham County. Please visit www.rockinghamccd.org, and watch for updates this upcoming year.



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 and/or baseline documentation for communities
- Invasive plant control on conservation properties

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

Other Services

- Equipment rental program for soil health improvement
- 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 STATUTE TITLE XL SOIL CONSERVATION AND
FARMLAND PRESERVATION

Financial Report

Fiscal Year 2022

Unrestricted Receipts

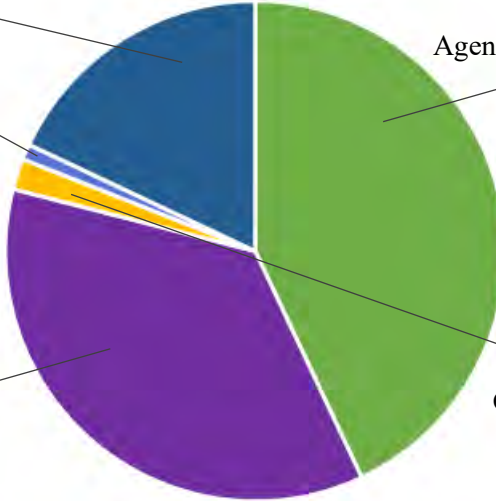
Rockingham County 18%

Interest and
Donations
1%

Municipal 36%

Agencies & Grants 43%

Other Services 2%



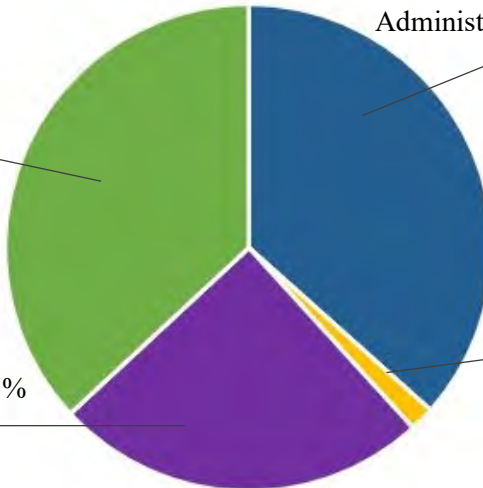
Expenses

Easement Stewardship,
Unfunded Projects, and
Administrative 36%

Agency &
Grant Funded
Projects 37%

Municipal Services 25%

Other
Services
2%



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



Conservation Easements in Rockingham County

The Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD) is one of several organizations that hold conservation easements in NH. The District currently manages over 100 easements making up 4,741 permanently protected acres throughout Rockingham County. While landowners retain ownership, it is RCCD's responsibility to ensure that the natural resources on these easements are not degraded or lost due to onsite or neighboring activities. Many of our easement landowners take great pride in appropriately managing their land, knowing that they will forever be protecting open spaces, wildlife corridors and critical natural resources including wetlands, riparian flood zones, prime farmland soils, and rare or sensitive habitats.

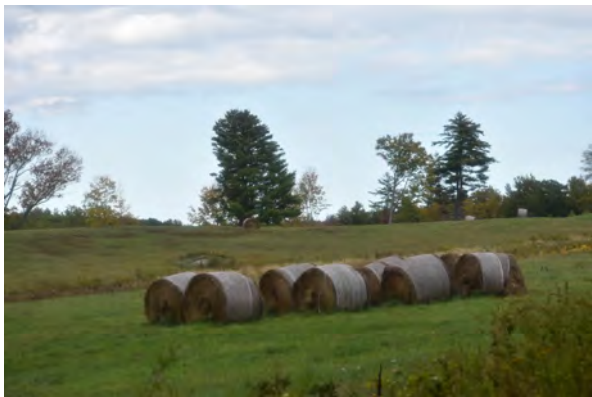
RCCD is not currently taking on new conservation easements in order to focus on the stewardship of our existing easements. We do however offer services for contracted annual monitoring and baseline monitoring to communities. For more information on monitoring services and land conservation visit our website: www.rockinghamccd.org/land-conservation or contact our Conservation and Stewardship Manager, Arianna Spear.



Climate Change Resilience Grant for Farmers

Extreme weather events, frequent and prolonged droughts, and increased pest pressures are growing challenges for NH farms. The continued viability of these farms depends on innovation to overcome these challenges. The mission of the NH Conservation Districts Climate Resilience Grant Program is to support and empower local farmers to build climate resilience in ways that meet their individual needs. This is a statewide effort offered to farmers via their local Conservation District. The Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD) is thrilled to bring this program to Rockingham County. The second round of cost share grants to farmers are currently in progress. The goal of these grants are to help reduce the impact of agriculture on climate change (mitigation) through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and carbon increased sequestration, and to increase the resiliency of New Hampshire farms in a

changing climate (adaptation), while meeting farms' conservation goals and needs. The most recent round will bring \$30,000 to Rockingham farmers, empowering them to make farmer-led improvements to their operation.



Odiorne Point State Park— Rye, NH

During 2022, Rockingham County Conservation District (the District), with the help of volunteers, planted over 1000 native plants in 4+/- acres to facilitate the re-establishment of native coastal shrub and forested habitats. Native species planted include Northern bayberry, black cherry, Eastern red cedar, beach plum, Virginia rose, shagbark hickory, and shadbush. An additional 1000 native plants specifically chosen for pollinator habitat enhancement were planted within a two-acre coastal shrubland located along the bike path and Route 1A. For the past two years the District has also been working to collect, grow, and plant



common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) seedlings within this developing pollinator habitat in an effort to increase the milkweed population which is vital for the migrating North American monarch butterfly (*Danaus pleippus*).

If you visit the park you will see that the majority of our 2022 plantings were supplemented with biodegradable covers and bamboo stakes for protection against wildlife browse which has been an ongoing challenge for native plantings.

These covers along with flagging will also help

to facilitate future volunteer planting and watering efforts. This year, approximately 900 volunteer hours were provided to complete active restoration efforts to improve these coastal habitats, which significantly enhances our collective habitat restoration efforts. Partner collaboration and significant volunteer assistance (the majority comes from the Seacoast Science Center) really makes this coastal habitat restoration project at Odiorne a successful model.



In December 2022, the District mowed another 6+/- acres at Odiorne Point State Park that had been completely overtaken by invasive plant species, particularly Oriental bittersweet. Combating this invasive plant species as well as others over time, allows us to see the dramatic effects these species had on the native vegetation. Although mechanical equipment was used, native trees and shrubs, and even snags were saved to the greatest extent

possible. Areas in the park that were once a monoculture of Oriental bittersweet are slowly transitioning to habitats with a more diverse native species composition.

The District has been restoring habitats with its partners and hundreds of volunteers at Odiorne Point State Park since 2009. This phase of restoration was funded

in part by NOAA's Office for Coastal Management under the Coastal Zone Management Act in conjunction with the NH Department of Environmental Services Coastal Program, the NH Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Division of Parks and Recreation, the New Hampshire Department of Agriculture Markets and Foods Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program and the New Hampshire State Conservation Committee through the sale of Conservation License Plates.



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. Look for additional information on that for 2023, at www.rockinghamccd.org likely during the summer months!

Partner Report: USDA Natural Resources

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) continues to provide technical and financial assistance to farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners to voluntarily help to implement conservation practices which improve environmental and agriculture quality.

The District recently completed a 5-year cooperative agreement with NRCS to implement restoration practices for NRCS, Wetland Reserve Easement Program (WRE). RCCD completed over \$270,000 worth of restoration objectives over that time on many WRE lands—some of those included forest regeneration projects, invasive plant control projects, New England cottontail habitat creation, and early successional habitat restorations.

Updates from the NRCS Epping Field Office

Tabitha Edwards, our Resource Conservationist, was hired as the NH NRCS Outreach Coordinator out of the Dover state office. Danel Stadig, our Program Assistant was selected to serve on a one-year detail on The Onboarding Team with the Business Operations Branch Information Solutions Division at the USDA Farm Production and Conservation-Business Center. Our summer intern Joshua Jimmerson will be returning this summer and converted to a full time Soil Conservationist. We recently welcomed Jim Fortin as our new Program Assistant. Jim comes with a strong administrative background and passion for agriculture. Bill Hoey was recently selected as the Resource Conservationist to fill in behind Tabitha. Bill comes with over 30 years of service with NRCS. Tim Tucker, Soil Conservationist and Sarah McGraw-Small, NHACD Partner Planner continues to serve our customer needs in conservation planning in Rockingham County.

2022 Farm Bill Program Financial Assistance in Rockingham County:

Program	Contracts	Funding
Environmental Quality Incentives Program	20	\$ \$365,000.
Conservation Stewardship Program	1	\$ 24,341
Agricultural Conservation Program	1	\$ 2.1 million



Equipment Rentals

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

Over the past two years, the District has focused 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.

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. Please contact us to learn more about the rental process.

- 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.