

Rockingham County Conservation District

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Dedicated to the Wise Use of Our Natural Resources.

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*Conserving and sustaining the natural
environment for present and future generations*



Rockingham County Conservation District

2018 Annual Report

110 North Road, Brentwood, NH 03833 603-679-2790
www.rockinghamccd.org or email rccd@rockinghamccd.org

Board of Supervisors

Richard Lutz, Chair – Chester
Cynthia Smith, Supervisor – Greenland
Joanna Pellerin, Secretary – Exeter
Samantha Cyr, Supervisor – Londonderry
Robert Goodrich, Vice Chair & Treasurer – Stratham

Associate Supervisors

Lenny Lord – Epping

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

RCCD Services for Rockingham County

- 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 for wetland, shoreland, and native habitats
- Expert testimony at municipal board meetings
- Stormwater Design and installation reviews
- Conservation Easement Monitoring for Communities
- Soil health improvement equipment rental program
- Soil Potential Index for Current Use Tax Assessments

Natural Resources Conservation Service Partnering

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 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service provides technical and financial assistance to farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners to voluntarily put conservation on the ground. This helps them to implement practices which improve environmental and agricultural quality.

NRCS Contracts and Agreements in Rockingham County in 2018

Type of Assistance	# of Contracts	Amount	Conservation Program
Financial	21	\$454,097	Environmental Quality Incentive Program

District led Local Work Groups establish spending priorities for NRCS that are based on local resource concerns.

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 on a VOLUNTARY BASIS and to provide federal resources at a local level.

In 2018 RCCD entered into another cooperative agreement with the NRCS, Wetland Reserve Easement program (WRE) and initiated management practices for 10+/- new wetland restoration projects, that once completed will be valued at over \$100,000. This program gives landowners the ability to permanently protect land while improving wetland habitat for wildlife, water quality, flood storage, groundwater recharge, open space, aesthetic values and environmental education.

Picture from an NRCS/WRE easement in Rye, NH with a culvert likely needing to be replaced, and with documented vernal pool indicator species.



Demonstrating Restoration

Pollinator Habitat

Through an agreement with the NRCS and the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Districts, RCCD has been actively enhancing pollinator habitat with management techniques to help expand existing milkweed stands at several sites in Rockingham County. Due to additional restoration and management concerns, RCCD will now partner with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) located in Newmarket to complete a combined pollinator and grassland habitat enhancement project. Other partners include the Strafford CCD, NH Fish and Game, and The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. RCCD will enhance the habitat diversity and quality within a 16-acre open field for the benefit of declining species of both grassland nesting birds and insect pollinators. Over the next two years RCCD will assist in creating a 2.5 acre pollinator meadow and will improve a 13.5 acre grassland, and will be shared and promoted through volunteer engagement and workshops. The TNC site is part of the 282-acre Lubberland Creek Preserve that contains a mowed footpath through the field as part of a trail network at the Preserve. Planting milkweed and carefully timed mowing are two strategies promoted to help the Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) species recover across its migratory pathway as they migrate south to Mexico. Milkweed is one of the main hosts for Monarch butterflies as it provides them with nectar sources to help lay eggs and make their migration south. RCCD will collect on-site milkweed seeds for greenhouse growth and will plant those seedlings as well as plant other native companion nectar plants for many species of beneficial native insects. The project will include workshops and opportunities for volunteer engagement.



Changing Times at the District

The Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD) was established in 1946 and has been assisting farmers and landowners in Rockingham County since that time. During the past 10+ years RCCD has been led by an amazing District Manager and advocate for preserving biodiversity in our



natural systems, Lenny Lord. He was able to identify needed conservation programs that efficiently and effectively addressed natural resource concerns in Rockingham County, including a large restoration project at Odiorne Point State Park in Rye. Largely, due to his perseverance since 2009 to obtain funding, RCCD has continued critical coastal habitat restoration at this site as one of our longest term habitat restoration projects. We wish him luck in his new role



in the private sector, and are looking forward to his leadership as an associate supervisor on our Board of Supervisors. Meanwhile the job of conservation must continue! The existing staff recently has seen other exciting changes. Vicky Nelson, has now taken on two new roles 1) motherhood having welcomed her first son into the world in November, 2018 and 2) stepping up to the District Manager position on a part-time level. RCCD staff will continue with restoration and conservation projects under the direction of Tracy Degan, Senior Project Manager and Arianna Spear, Conservation and Stewardship Manager. RCCD will also utilize our as-needed staff to ensure our conservation programs and services to communities continue to run smoothly. We are in transition but our environmental priorities remain consistent.

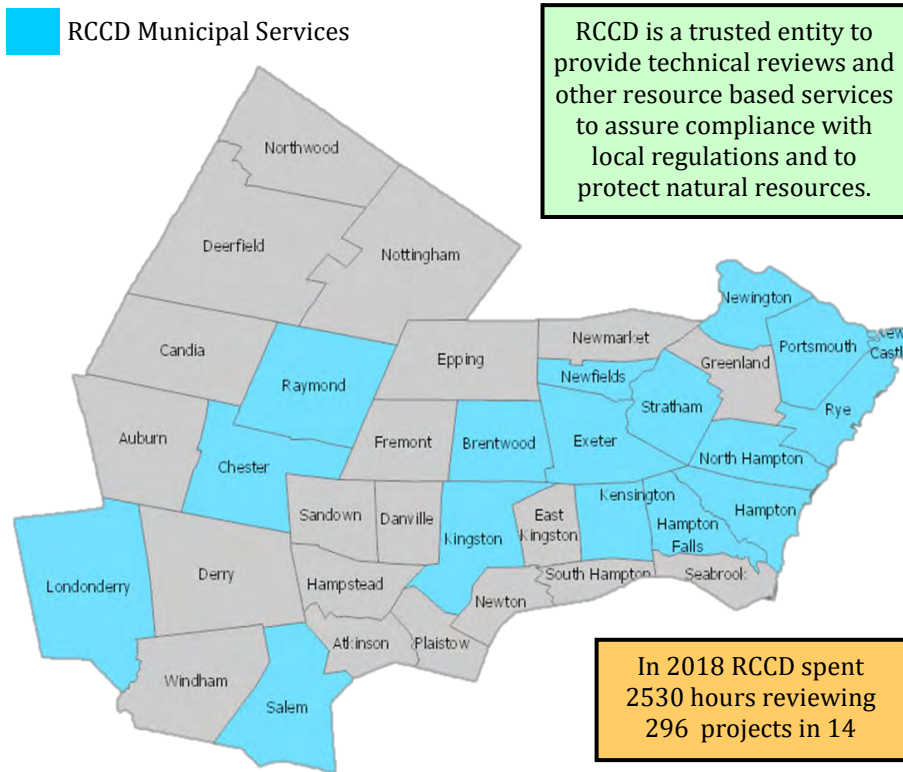
The RCCD will continue to explore new ways to work with farmers, timber owners, conservation groups, municipalities, and others to help foster stewardship of our soil, water, and natural resources.

Check out the RCCD's radio hour on Portsmouth's community station WSCA 106.1 the 2nd Friday of every month at noon.

ROCKINGHAM COUNTY SERVICES

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

Towns Currently Utilizing RCCD's Services



RCCD assisted with or presented at several workshops closely related to program objectives for 2018 including:

Program Directed Outreach

- ◆ UNH Extension Invasive Species Academy
- ◆ Grazing Workshop
- ◆ NH Soils Judging Day
- ◆ Amoozemeter Workshop
- ◆ Grazing Training Course

Alder Freshwater Shrub Swamp Restoration

The Student Conservation Association (SCA) spent two weeks with RCCD in June combating invasive species, predominantly glossy buckthorn, along a freshwater pond at Odiorne Point State Park. Armed with brush saws and loppers, 17 SCA members took on the task of eliminating buckthorn from approximately 3 acres of an alder shrub swamp with the goal of restoring it to its native glory. These wetlands provide a source of food and cover to a multitude of species including woodcock, deer, beaver, gold finches, alder fly catchers, spotted turtles and many more. Nitrogen fixing roots of the alder enrich the wetland soils increasing overall plant biomass. On the other hand, the glossy buckthorn releases chemicals to suppress plant growth and has even been found to inhibit development of amphibian larvae. Plantings will include already present native species. We would like to extend a thank you to the members of the SCA that worked diligently to assist with our habitat restoration efforts even in sometimes harsh conditions.



Contact the District if you interested in volunteering during the 2019 field season!

RCCD Participates in UNH Invasive Academy

RCCD led a group of 40 engaged volunteers on a tour of restoration efforts of coastal habitats located at Odiorne Point State Park—September 2018



Restoration at Odiorne Continues

RCCD Goes to Bat for Bats at Odiorne

In May 2018, RCCD began tackling the invasive plants on a historic WWII bunker as part of a continued habitat restoration project at Odiorne Point State Park in Rye that began in 2009. Vegetation directly over the bunker acts as a source of insulation that may have a direct influence on the humidity and moisture levels within the

This is a multi-tiered approach to restore native vegetation while also positively influencing historic elements of the bunker. It is expected that restoring native vegetation will provide better flight/travel corridors, roosting sites, and will benefit native insect populations that bats rely on as a source of food.



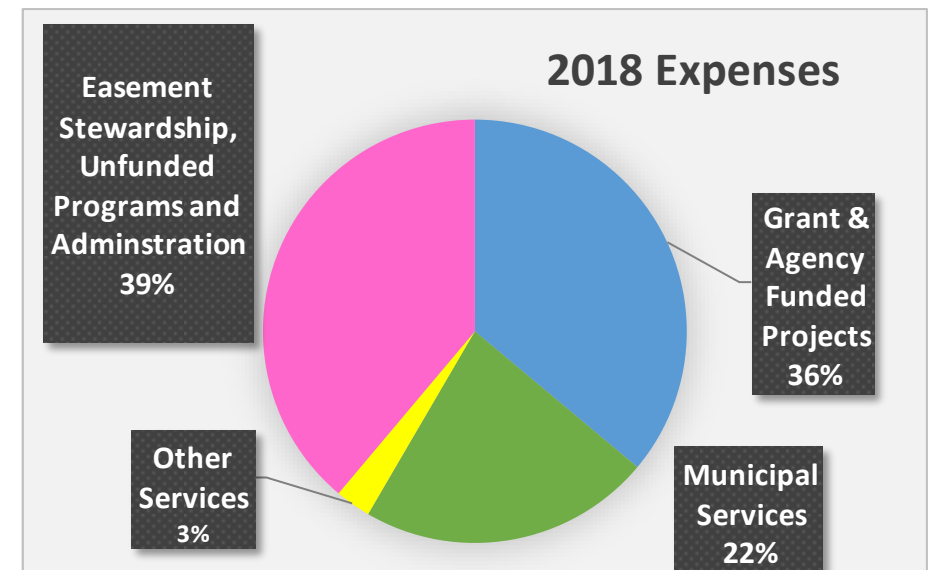
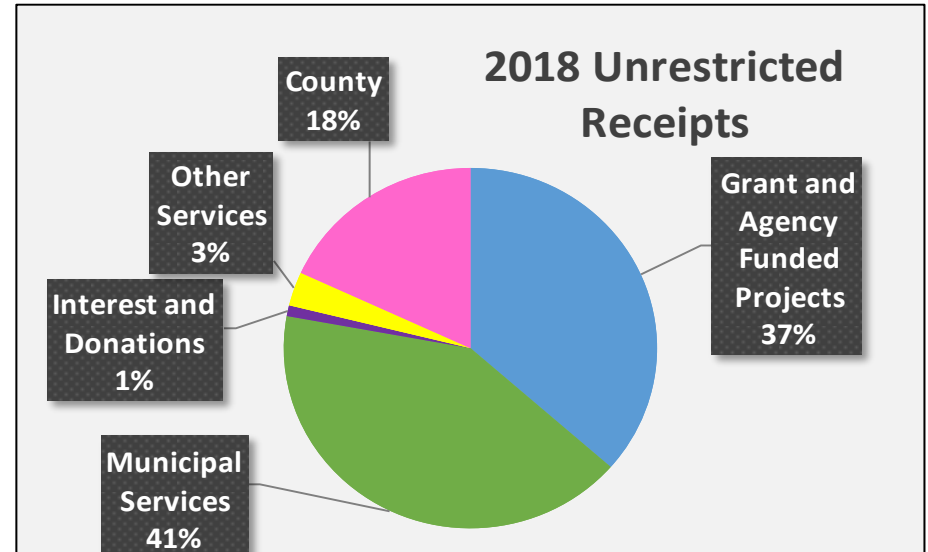
bunker that are critical to the hibernacula for the bats. In addition, more native vegetation added in this location will assist to reduce seed sources of invasive plants that threaten to reinvade 120 acres of nearby restored areas. The lower slopes with the densest patches of invasive species were mowed which allowed RCCD access through a

portion of the impenetrable entanglement of Oriental bittersweet vines and multiflora rose to treat the surrounding invasive plants. During the summer, the invasive re-sprouts in the mowed areas were treated. Future planting efforts on the bunker are expected to include "bat friendly" native species to promote a diverse insect

population. This ongoing effort has been supported by a strong partnership with the NH Department of Natural and Cultural Resources and the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets and Foods through their IPM program.

In 2018 volunteers seeded bare areas of the bunker slopes with conservation grass seed, blackberry, and staghorn sumac to promote rapid regeneration of native species.

Financials



Conservation Districts Enabling Legislation: RSA 432
NEW HAMPSHIRE STATUE TITLE XL SOIL CONSERVATION AND FARMLAND PRESERVATION

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

Low Cost Equipment Rentals!



Wood Ash/ Lime Spreader:
Assists in changing the pH of your soil to increase availability of nutrients.



Yeoman's plow: Assists in deep subsoil compaction with minimal impacts on soil structure—and improves water infiltration.



No-till Drill and Seeder:
Assists with seeding without disturbing the soil.



Soil Aerator: Assists with soil de-compaction, especially helpful with compaction issues and rejuvenating old hay fields.



NEW!
Amoozometer: Measures the in-field flow of water into a saturated soil and can be used to find actual K_{sat} values for NHDES Alteration of Terrain permits in place of book values.

Contact the District to find out more about equipment rentals



Town level assistance: Invasive Species Control at Municipal Town Lands

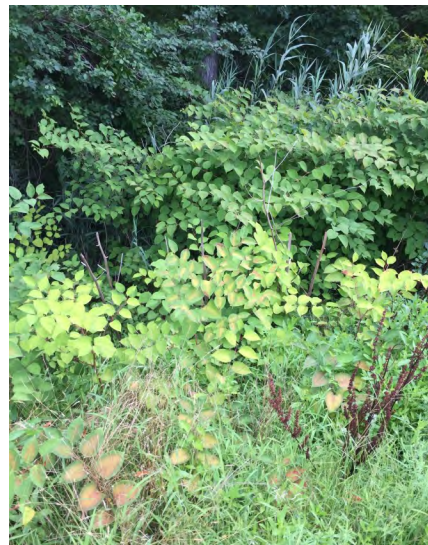
Municipal working lands, such as stump dumps, fill stockpiles, transfer stations and town sheds are often habitats favorable to the growth of invasive vegetation. These invasives are likely to spread to nearby habitats via natural dispersal or may be spread more widely through human activities such as the transfer of fill.

Through a grant funded by the NH Department of Agriculture Markets and Food, IPM program, RCCD reached out to all the towns in Rockingham County and nine agreed to an evaluation of their working lands. Four towns were selected to have an invasive species

management plan completed to provide recommendations on the control and prevention of invasive plants. As part of the grant, RCCD completed herbicide applications on two acres.

RCCD expects additional funding to offer similar services to other interested towns. The goal was for the District to engage

Reducing the spread of invasive species can reduce municipal maintenance costs, such as roadside mowing, and culvert maintenance, can provide better safety by not compromising sight distance, and helps preserve biodiversity of our natural systems.



communities, and provide them with the tools and resources they need to make informed decisions about invasive plant management.

