



RHODE ISLAND STATE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT 2009-2010

The Rhode Island State Conservation Committee has been established within the Department of Environmental Management to serve as an agency of the State and to perform the functions conferred upon it by Chapter 2-4 of the Rhode Island General Laws. These functions include coordination of Conservation District activities with other federal, state and local entities regarding natural resources within the State of Rhode Island. The Committee consists of members that include: the Director of DEM or designee, four members of the public appointed by the Governor with the consent of the senate, and at least one appointee from each of the state's three conservation districts.

The RI State Conservation Committee consolidated administrative functions for all three Conservation Districts during the last fiscal year. The result is increased efficiency, uniform administration of programs statewide and reduction of overhead costs.

The RI State Conservation Committee continues to provide assistance and oversight to the three Conservation Districts in their efforts to assist local landowners and municipalities in the proper stewardship of our lands and waters. To this end, the Committee works with state and federal agencies to promote the districts' mission on both the state and national level, while still providing oversight and administrative support.

The Committee will continue to provide the districts with any assistance they need in the coming year.

Under the direction of the Committee, the Farm, Forest and Open Space Land Value Subcommittee (FFOS) is now into its eleventh year. The FFOS Program has been very successful with over 3,600 parcels (28,614 acres in farmland and 29,345 acres in forestry) statewide in the program. This program is one of the many that assist in preserving farmland, forested land and open space land throughout the State of Rhode Island. The majority of the towns continue to use the recommended values set by the Subcommittee.

2009-2010 Financial Statement

EXPENSES

Salary	
Administrative Manager	\$18,648.98
Operating Expenses	
Insurance	2958.00
Mileage	574.26
NRICD Expense	133.85
Postage	44.00
Supplies/Printing	1047.15
Rent	2000.00
RIACD Expense	26.00
Utilities	2069.40
Grant Expense	6000.00
Program Expenses	128.40

TOTAL EXPENSES

\$33,630.04

INCOME

Legislative Funding	\$3563.00
Program Income	1440.00
Grant Income	6500.00
CD's Overhead Contribution	16406.00
NRICD Income	5308.59
RIACD Income	982.90

TOTAL INCOME

\$34,200.49

On the next page you will find the report on the Farm Forest and Open Space Subcommittee. On subsequent pages, you will find brief summaries of the activities of the three RI Conservation Districts.

The 2009-2010 RI State Conservation Committee's meeting minutes are posted on the Secretary of State's Open Meetings website.

The Rhode Island State Conservation Committee
17 Smith Avenue, Greenville, RI 02828
Phone: (401) 949-1480



RHODE ISLAND STATE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Farm, Forest and Open Space Land Valuation Subcommittee

It is in the interest of the public to conserve the remaining farm, forest and open space in Rhode Island. Taxing this land at its value for development makes it difficult for landowners to retain it in its natural state. Rhode Island law (RIGL Chapter 44-27 and 44-5-12) creates the Farm, Forest and Open Space program to assess these properties at the current use so that owners can afford to keep their land in its natural state.

A Farm, Forest and Open Space Valuation subcommittee was established by state law (RIGL 44-27-B) in 1999 under the State Conservation Committee to determine the value of undeveloped land to be enrolled in the Program. The subcommittee developed the methodology and recommended values for assessment of the land for the property taxation on the basis of its current use for farm, forest and open space lands. These recommended values are updated every three years and new values are published and distributed to local tax assessors.

The 2010 Recommended Maximum Values for the FFOS Program are as following:

Farmland

Ornamental crops: including land devoted to floriculture, nursery and turf production, as well as land under green houses: \$1,955 per acre

Vegetable and Orchards: including small fruits, potatoes, cranberries, and Christmas trees: \$650 per acre.

Dairy and Livestock: including forage crops, hay, silage corn and grain, aquaculture: \$300 per acre.

Forest and Wasteland on a farm: \$115 per acre.

Forestland

Recommended value for all forest land: \$115 per acre.

Open Space

Recommended values for open space are 10, 20, or 30% of current assessment based on Fair Market Value (FMV), depending on which of the three categories of soil are present on the parcel.

- Soils with slight limitations for use will be assessed at 30% of current assessment based on FMV.
- Soils with moderate limitations for use will be assessed at 20% of current assessment based on FMV.
- Soils with severe limitations for use will be assessed at 10% of current assessment based on FMV.

In the absence of a soil survey map provided by the landowner, open space land will be assessed at 30% of current assessment based on FMV.



EASTERN RI CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2009-2010 REPORT

ERICD Mission:

The mission of the Eastern Rhode Island Conservation District is to provide information and technical assistance in order to encourage the people of Newport and Bristol Counties to conserve their natural resources and generate farm viability.

The Eastern RI Conservation District is governed by a five (5) member Board of Directors: Walter Elwell Chair, Emerson Wildes, Richard Hart, Suzanne Hourihan, and Ron Mucci. The District's Associate Directors are Norma Elwell, David Brown, and Skip Paul.

In partnership with NRCS and the other Conservation Districts, ERICD hosted a Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) Grant Applicant Workshop.

The District participated in NRCS' Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP) 2010 Rhode Island Forestry Initiative, helping landowners apply for \$500,000 in available funds. ERICD hosted an applicant workshop. 25 applications were funded statewide and over \$380,000.00 was allocated to local landowners.

As a response to unprecedented flooding caused by spring rain events, the District assisted NRCS in the identification of potential applicants for its Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP). This program funds emergency measures to relieve imminent hazards to life and property created by natural disasters.

The District continues to study damage being caused by Canada geese, a federally protected species. The geese graze so heavily that soil erosion can occur in heavily populated areas. Dick Hart has monitored a number of test plots where the geese have been excluded. The results show that vegetation will return without the presence of geese.

2009-2010 Financial Statement

EXPENSES:

Payroll	\$ 3707.02
Dues	70.00
Directors' Stipends	1200.00
Office Expenses	1745.46
Insurance	1686.00
Rent	4800.00
Utilities	1230.64
SRICD (District Mgr services)	630.00
Shared Overhead Expense	2500.00

TOTAL EXPENSES

\$17,569.12

INCOME:

FFOS Mapping Fees	\$ 20.00
SRICD	495.00
Legislative Funding	17813.00
Annual Dinner	174.42
Contracts	1600.00

TOTAL INCOME

\$20,102.42

Some of the areas of assistance provided to local landowners were: organic gardens, organic hayfields, irrigation, development rights, FFOS, animal heavy use areas, hay/pasture, invasive plants, natural resources/wildlife, wetlands, ag business, dairy, beef, free range poultry, pond maintenance, farm/animal trails, brush management, nutrient management, fences, composting, buffers, stream crossing, wells, farm design, vegetable gardens, and erosion.

The Eastern RI Conservation District is located at
2490 Main Road, Tiverton, RI 02878
Phone: (401) 830-5763 Fax: (401) 949-4436



NORTHERN RI CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2009-2010 REPORT

NRICD Mission:

To foster a community-based, locally-led approach for the stewardship of northern RI's natural resources through education and outreach into the communities, technical assistance and partnerships with other agencies.

The Northern RI Conservation District (NRICD) continues outreach through technical assistance and education programs throughout Providence County. The district is governed by a volunteer board of five voting directors: Paul Dolan, Chair, Eugene Pepper, Vice-Chair, Norman Hammond, Treasurer, Richard Went and Louis Vinagro III. We also have six associate directors: Marc Tremblay, Edward Baker, Jean Lynch, Keith Rogers, John Holscher and Joyce Holscher.

NRICD continues outreach to the residents of the Scituate Reservoir Watershed, which provides over 60% of the State's drinking water. This project is called the Scituate Reservoir Watershed Education Program. The program is funded by Providence Water and prioritizes the reduction of non-point sources of pollution in the watershed by means of education. Some of the components of this multi-faceted program, which uses a variety of approaches to promote the protection of groundwater, follow. A series of three bulletins, directly mailed to over 300 businesses, legislators and municipal officials in the watershed, focused on wetlands and the value of native species versus the potential negative impact of invasive species. The watershed wide poster contest, offered to approximately 1,500 students in grades 3 – 8, emphasized the value of wetlands and the steps individuals can take to conserve wetlands with "The Wonderful World of Wetlands" as a theme. Twelve winning posters will illustrate our annual calendar that is distributed to 750 community residents, businesses and schools. This year 260 third and fourth grade students were provided 1 ½ hour presentations using hands-on activities to teach watershed stewardship. 280 students from the Scituate Reservoir Watershed participated in a Drinking Water Week Celebration.

With funding provided by RI DEM and USDA/NRCS, NRICD conducted an outreach program to livestock owners in eight towns to inform livestock owners about opportunities available to them for free testing of their poultry and possible federal funding to enact conservation lands on their farms. Poultry owners were informed about the importance of practicing bio-security on the farms in order to prevent bird diseases such as Avian Influenza, better known as Bird Flu. This program was also used as a vehicle to inform landowners about the benefits of enrollment in the Farm, Forest and Open Space Act. Over 900 livestock operations have been identified to date in the fourteen towns surveyed to date and can now be contacted in case of a bio-security emergency.

2009-2010 Financial Statement

EXPENSES:

Salaries - District Personnel	\$156,652.64
Office Expenses:	
Administrative Expenses	239.08
Rent	2800.00
Oil	736.07
Utilities	1451.11
Insurance (bonding/liability)	1582.99
Workers Compensation	599.99
Postage	747.04
Stationary and supplies	774.84
Flyers/Outreach/Advertising	1159.17
Computer Expenses	1931.96
Copier Expense	3503.47
Grant Expenses (above salaries):	63873.58
Site Plan Review Expense	420.00
Mileage	418.64
RI Association of CD's Exp	229.05
State Conservation Committee Exp	374.62
Annual Dinner	49.37
SHS NEEDS	500.00
Envirothon Support	500.00
Ancillary Expenditures	50.00
Meeting and Conferences Attended	948.00
Meetings and Workshops Held	190.71
Staff Training	214.43
Directors' Stipends	1175.00
Shared Overhead Expenses	2500.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$161,055.22

INCOME:

Town Contributions	\$3450.00
State Contribution	17813.00
Interest	35.35
Seedling, bulb, map sales, membership	2879.91
Grant Income	222,473.66
State Committee Income	5252.36
RIACD Income	2639.48
Soil Mapping	550.00
Site Plan Review	500.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$255,593.76

The NRICD provided technical assistance to farmers seeking to enlist in the Farm portion of the Farm, Forest and Open Space Program.

The NRICD has partnered with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and ERICD and SRICD to provide **over \$15 million dollars** in technical assistance and funding to farmers, land owners and municipalities in the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

The Northern RI Conservation District is located at:
 17 Smith Avenue in Greenville, RI 02828
 Phone: (401) 949-1480 Fax: (401) 949-4436
www.nricd.org
 Office Hours: 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM



SOUTHERN RI CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2009-2010 REPORT

SRICD Mission:

To promote and achieve a healthy environment and sustainable use of natural resources for the people of Kent and Washington Counties and the state of Rhode Island, by providing technical, educational and financial resources in coordination with our partners.

The Southern RI Conservation District (SRICD) is governed by a volunteer board of directors, all of whom are residents of communities in Kent and Washington Counties. There are five voting members: Clarkson Collins, Chair; Rudi Hempt, Vice-Chair; Harriet Powell, Secretary; Carl Sawyer, Harvey Buford, and three associate members: Paul Boisvert, Richard Donnelly, and Marjorie Weeden. These directors provide leadership and guidance to the Southern District. Our directors serve on several other boards including RI Resource Conservation and Development, the RI Agricultural Council, the RI Rural Development Council, and the USDA EQIP State Technical Team.

Along with NRICD and ERICD, the Southern District saw major changes this fiscal year, with consolidation of many vital functions to one location. SRICD also hired Douglas McGovern in February to serve as District Manager, working out of a newly established District office at URI's East Farm in Kingston.

As part of this transition, the District hired Stormwater Management Consultant Kristine Stuart to clean up and organize SRICD's file system for greater efficiency.

In partnership with NRCS and Northern RI Conservation District, SRICD conducted Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) Grant Applicant Workshops in each of the three Conservation Districts.

As a response to unprecedented flooding caused by spring rain events, the District assisted NRCS in the identification of potential applicants for its Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP). This program funds emergency measures to relieve imminent hazards to life and property created by natural disasters.

The District participated in NRCS' Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP) 2010 Rhode Island Forestry Initiative, helping landowners apply for \$500,000 in available funds. SRICD hosted an applicant workshop and worked with six applicants in the Southern District, who received over \$30,000 in funding to implement sound land stewardship practices on their properties.

2009-2010 Financial Statement

EXPENSES:

Salaries	\$ 7319.93
Contract Labor	17812.00
Grant Expenses	23.00
Office Expenses	777.96
Accounting	18.25
Insurance	1065.50
SCC Shared Overhead	2500.00
Travel	45.00
Professional Development	40.00

TOTAL EXPENSES **\$ 29,601.64**

INCOME:

Legislative Funding	\$ 17813.00
Municipal Funding	863.00
Grants Income	10742.20
Contracts Income	13492.00
Other Income	200.22

TOTAL INCOME **\$ 43,110.42**

SRICD continued work with the Town of Narragansett, conducting a second round of dry weather outfall monitoring for illicit discharges, and working on a new edition of the Town's newsletter, *Stormwater Currents*, for a fall release.

The District worked with the Rhode Island Association of Conservation Districts to apply for a USDA Rural Development - Rural Business Opportunity Grant. Under this grant, the District would coordinate partners for an agricultural lands inventory in Rhode Island, Connecticut and Massachusetts, and develop a strategic plan for an agricultural equipment bank.

The Southern Rhode Island Conservation District
 PO Box 1636 Kingston RI 02881
 Phone: 349-0262