

Rutland Natural Resources Conservation District (RNRCD)

Annual Report FY 2018



Bioretention at Giorgetti Park

The Rutland Natural Resources Conservation District is committed to fostering an awareness of the link between stewardship of the natural environment and the agricultural community as well as other landowners, and encouraging and supporting efforts with partners, in meeting the need for natural resource conservation.



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FY 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018

Working With Our Community to Conserve & Manage Natural Resources

A Conservation District is a political subdivision of the State of Vermont, as designated by legislation in 1939, to cooperate with farmers, other landowners, organizations and state and federal agencies to encourage and assist in the development and use as well as conservation of natural resources throughout the State.

The Rutland District was established in 1968 and is one of fourteen in the State. It includes the sixteen towns in the eastern part of Rutland County and Rutland City.

The District is partially funded (approximately 6% of annual expenditures) with State funds allocated by the State of Vermont through the Natural Resources Conservation Council.

Fundraising/sales, workshops, support from towns and local businesses, and grants secure the remaining funding allowing the District to make progress on its mission.



The District functions under the direction of five locally elected Supervisors and a District Manager. The District holds monthly meetings (which are open to the public) to oversee and administer all programs and finances.

Board of Supervisors

Co-Chair	Bridget Bowen	Wallingford
Co-Chair	Ted Grembowicz	Clarendon
Supervisor	Alan Shelvey	Shrewsbury
Supervisor	Bob Smith	Clarendon
Supervisor	Michael Pedone	Clarendon
Assoc. Supervisor	Russell Reay	Cuttingsville

Staff

District Manager	Nanci McGuire
Land Treatment Planner	Michelle Smith

The District shares an office and partners with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The Rutland staff of NRCS is composed of:

District Conservationist	Marion Jordan
Civil Engineer	Les Wright
Program Assistant	Joe Roberts
Soil Conservation Technician	Sally Eugair
Soil Conservationist	Philip Rivara
Soil Conservation Technician	Mary Beth Poli
Soil Conservationist	Rico Balzano
Soil Conservation Technician	Alexis Clune

Cooperating Agencies/Partners

ANR, Dept. of Environmental Conservation
City of Rutland DPW
City of Rutland Parks and Recreation
Community College of Vermont
Farm Service Agency
Lake Champlain Basin Program
Rural Development
Rutland Regional Planning Commission
Rutland County Solid Waste District
Rutland Area Food & Farm Link
Stafford Technical Center, Forestry & Natural Resources
Towns in the District (see map on page 2)
U.S. Forest Service (Green Mountain National Forest)
U.S. Fish & Wildlife
UVM Extension System
UVM Lake Champlain Sea Grant Program
VT Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets
VT Association of Conservation Districts
VT Dept. of Forests, Parks & Recreation
VT Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
VT Natural Resources Conservation Council
VT Land Trust
Many Local Businesses

District Activities Fiscal Year 2018

Education:

Vermont Envirothon

The District participates in promoting the Vermont Envirothon program. The Envirothon works to strengthen environmental curriculum at the high school level. Teams of high school student's focus on Vermont's environmental issues related to aquatics, forestry, soils and wildlife resources through real-world learning in a teamwork environment and are also challenged to research an assigned environmental issue and answer questions about that issue at a statewide competition. Scores are then calculated to determine the winning team. The District sponsored (3) teams in the 2018 statewide competition (1) from Rutland High School and (2) from Stafford Technical Center. Stafford Technical Center took second place overall.

Tactical Basin Planning

Through a grant provided by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, the District will be providing broader services to landowners and the public in support of the Vermont Clean Water Act (VCWA). The grant provides support for Conservation Districts to conduct targeted outreach, coordinate monitoring programs to support science-based water quality investments, organize local workgroups, and develop priority water quality projects among other services. As part of this work, Conservation Districts and Regional Planning Commissions will be closely coordinating activities to provide complementary support for the State's Tactical Basin Planning process.

Tactical Basin Plans help identify and focus efforts needed to protect or restore specific watersheds through the state. The Rutland District will be focused primarily on the Upper Otter Creek Basin Plan working to identify priorities, document progress, and conduct outreach necessary to develop priority projects and garner greater local support and awareness of the Basin Plan's goals. Local identified water quality priorities in Tactical Basin Plans are well positioned for development and funding from the State's Clean Water Initiative. Basin Plans help provide the umbrella for other various planning initiatives, including Stormwater Master Planning and River Corridor Planning, and ultimately provide a vehicle to strategically address regional water quality priorities.

Conservation Field Day/Science at the Hatchery

The District organized this event which was held at the Dwight D. Eisenhower National Fish Hatchery in Chittenden on September 20, 2017. More than 100 students from six elementary schools in Rutland County participated. Some of the topics that students learned about were: fish & stream ecology, forests and tree identification, soils, rivers and streams. Each group also participated in a tour of the Hatchery. This is a hands-on activity that is always very well received. Funding for this year's event was provided by the Rutland County Solid Waste District.

Outreach:

RNRCD Website and Facebook - The District continues to maintain a website to supply information regarding agriculture and natural resource conservation to the public. <https://www.vacd.org/conservation-districts/rutland/> Search for us on Facebook.

Products & Services:

Seedling Sale

In an effort to encourage landowners to increase plantings for wildlife habitat, conservation and aesthetics, bulk purchases of evergreen and hardwood trees, wildlife/songbird trees, shrubs, apple trees and blueberry, raspberry and strawberry plants are made available to the general public. This year over 100 customers participated in the seedling program which is a source of revenue that helps to fund our programs.

Trout Sales

The District also sponsors a Spring Trout Sale that provides pond owners with trout for stocking.

Organization:

RNRCD Annual Meeting

The District held its Annual Meeting on Monday, May 14, 2018 at the Clarendon Grange Hall in Clarendon. Kathy Beland, Consulting Forester and Kathleen Wanner, Executive Director of Vermont Tree Farm Program and Vermont Woodlands Association provided a talk on the Woods, Wildlife and Warblers program, and Habitat for Heat. This presentation featured the benefits to wildlife of a timber harvest, and the community connections when you improve wildlife habitat by harvesting timber.

Programs:

Land Treatment Planning (LTP)

The District works with a Land Treatment Planner who provides technical assistance to farms in writing their land treatment plans and nutrient management plans (NMPs). The land treatment plan is a farm-specific resources assessment and the base for NMPs. One of the goals of having a NMP is to develop field-specific nutrient application recommendations. This can help the farm more efficiently apply manure and fertilizer based on crop needs, and reduce off-farm soil and nutrient movement.

Portable Skidder Bridges

The District has two portable skidder bridges available for rent to loggers and consulting foresters. Portable skidder bridges when properly installed and used as a temporary stream crossing structure, will reduce streambank and streambed disturbance as compared to other alternatives, thus minimizing the potential for sedimentation. Both bridges were funded through a statewide Ecosystem Restoration Program Grant and were built by the Stafford Technical Center, Forestry and Natural Resources Class.

Watershed Planning

Activities for FY 2018 include:

Water Quality Monitoring

The District continued to assist Rutland City in complying with certain minimum measures for stormwater management relating to the City's "Plan for Implementation of the Six Minimum Measures by coordinating a summer volunteer water quality monitoring program. If you are interested in seeing the results of the summer water quality monitoring program for 2018 contact Nanci at nanci.mcguire@vt.nacdnet.net

Watershed Planning Projects

Rutland Town School

With funding through a Natural Resources Conservation Council Block grant the District implemented Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) at Rutland Town School. The Town DPW crew installed two rain gardens, and an infiltration trench. Plants were planted by Master Gardeners.

These practices are designed to capture, detain and/or treat a portion of the water quality storm volume from existing impervious surfaces on the south side of the school.

Not only is this project highly functional for improving water quality, it is also an attractive community asset that beautifies the area and is a demonstration site for green infrastructure. Construction of these practices were completed in August 2018.



Rutland Town School Rain Garden

Other watershed planning projects:

Cold River Berm Removal

With funding through an Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP) grant the District subcontracted with the Vermont River Conservancy to acquire River Corridor Easements on approximately 10 acres of forested floodplain located on two properties along the Cold River in the Town of Clarendon.

A berm that was created after the floods of the 70's will be removed. This berm was a contributing factor to property flooding and damage during Tropical Storm Irene. Removal of the berm will also address sediment and nutrient loading in the Cold River by allowing the stream to access the floodplain, thus reducing flood heights, velocities and providing ample storage of sediment within the river corridor. Purchase and Sales Agreements have been signed and surveys of the properties have been completed. Closings on the easements will take place this summer and the berm will be removed before October 1, 2019.

NRCC Block Grant (VAAF)

The District in cooperation with the Poultney Mettowee and Bennington Conservation Districts has an Agricultural Outreach Specialist (Stefano Pinna). Stefano assists small farm owners by assessing on-farm water quality concerns, providing technical assistance, and supporting implementation of Best Management Practices, Stefano also assists farmers in writing and maintaining Nutrient Management Plans and to meet the Required Agricultural Practices.

Homer Stone Brook Berm Removal

With funding through an Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP) grant the District hired a consultant to identify a preliminary design for restoring stream equilibrium and reducing erosion in a historically straightened and bermed reach of Homer Stone Brook, a tributary to the Otter Creek. This project was completed in January of 2019 and a full report was completed by DuBois & King Inc and is available upon request.

Stormwater Master Planning for the Town of Wallingford

With funding through an Ecosystem Restoration grant the District hired a consultant to complete a Stormwater Master Plan for the Town of Wallingford. After meetings with the Town Board of Selectmen and the Town Road Crew the Consultant completed eight 30% designs for Best Management Practices (BMP), four stormwater retrofit sites and four road erosion sites.

Stormwater Master Planning for the Moon Brook in the City of Rutland

With funding through an Ecosystem Restoration grant the District hired a consultant to complete a Stormwater Master Plan for the Moon Brook in the City of Rutland.

Thirty projects were identified and after meeting with the City DPW projects have been prioritized. We are currently working on outreach to the landowners. 30% conceptual designs will be completed for three of the projects.

Rotary Park

The District received funding through the Natural Resources Conservation Council Block grant to hire a consultant to design projects for Rotary park in the City.

There is currently an infiltration trench on the property that was installed in 2013 which is undersized and has deteriorated to the point where runoff frequently overflows the trench and flows directly to Tenney Brook. The project proposed will rehabilitate and expand the existing trench to provide extra capacity for runoff. The perforated pipe in the stone trench will be extended so that overflow from the trench system will be directed into a new bioretention facility to provide additional water quality treatment, and an enhancement of the aesthetic value of the park.

The District appreciates the cooperation that we receive and is looking forward to continuing to work with our partners to meet the need for natural resource conservation.