

# Rutland Natural Resources Conservation District (RNRCD)

## Annual Report FY 2019



*Tree Sales 2019*

*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.*



# Rutland Natural Resources Conservation District (RNRCD)

## FY 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019

### **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
Conservation Planner	Michelle Smith
Ag. Specialist	Stefano Pinna

### **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	David Cronin
Soil Conservation Technician	Sally Eugair
Soil Conservationist	Tim Brosnan
Soil Conservationist	Olivia Schrantz

### **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  
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  
Vt River Conservancy  
Many Local Businesses

## **District Activities Fiscal Year 2019**

### **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 2019 statewide competition (1) from Mill River High School and (2) from Stafford Technical Center. Stafford Technical Center took second place overall.

#### **Tactical Basin Planning (TBP)**

With funding provided by the Agency of Natural Resources, Conservation Districts were able 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.

Angie Allen, Basin Planner with the Agency of Natural Resources has provided a draft of the Otter Creek Tactical Basin Plan.

Link to the DRAFT TBP

[https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wsm/mapp/docs/TacticalBasinPlan\\_B3\\_DRAFT\\_2019-10-01.pdf](https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wsm/mapp/docs/TacticalBasinPlan_B3_DRAFT_2019-10-01.pdf)

### **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 our Annual Meeting on Monday, May 13, 2019 at the Clarendon Grange Hall in Clarendon.

Stefano Pinna, Agricultural Specialist with the District, provided a presentation regarding “Growing Hemp in Vermont”

### **Local Work Group**

District Supervisors participate in Local Work Group meetings to assist USDA in setting local priorities for Cost Share Programs administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

## **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.

### **Agricultural Outreach**

The District in cooperation with the Poultney Mettowee and Bennington Conservation Districts have 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.

### **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 2019 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 volunteer summer water quality monitoring program. During the Summer of 2019 volunteers collected samples at eleven sites (nine sites in the City of Rutland, one site in the Town of Pittsford and one site in the Town Chittenden). The District is interested in expanding this program for 2020 and is looking for additional volunteers to collect water samples.

### **Cold River Berm Removal**

The District continued to work with the VT River Conservancy, VT DEC, The Town of Clarendon and others to acquire easements on approximately 10 acres of forested floodplain located on two properties along the Cold River in the Town of Clarendon. Once the closings on these easements are completed 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.

### **Homer Stone Brook Berm Removal**

The District received an Alternatives Analysis Report completed by DuBois & King Inc that includes preliminary designs for restoring stream equilibrium and erosion reduction, in a historically altered reach of the Homer Stone Brook, a tributary to the Otter Creek in the Town of Wallingford.

This report is available upon request.

### **Stormwater Master Planning in the Town of Wallingford**

The District hired Watershed Consulting Associates (WCA) to complete Stormwater Master Planning for the Town of Wallingford. This plan is available by visiting the Districts website.

After meetings with WCA, the Town Board of Selectmen and the Town Road Crew, WCA completed eight preliminary designs for Best Management Practices (BMP), four stormwater retrofit sites and four road erosion sites.

### **Stormwater Master Planning in the Moon Brook in the City of Rutland**

The District hired Watershed Consulting Associates (WCA) to complete Stormwater Master Planning for the Moon Brook in the City of Rutland. This plan is available by visiting the Districts website.

Thirty projects were identified in this plan. After meetings with the City DPW projects were prioritized and WCA completed preliminary designs for three of the high priority projects.

### **Rotary Park**

The District received a final design for Green Stormwater Practices at Rotary Park in Rutland 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 design includes rehabilitating and expanding 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. A request for funding to implement this project has been submitted by the District.

### **Project Development**

The District will continue to work with the City of Rutland, Towns and landowners to develop and prepare projects for future design and implementation. These projects have been identified in Stormwater Master Plans or other reports.

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.