



**CHESHIRE COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**



Annual Report 2019

Promoting the conservation and responsible use of natural and agricultural resources for the people of Cheshire County by providing technical, financial, and educational resources.

11 Industrial Park Dr - Walpole NH 03608 - 603.756.2988
www.cheshireconservation.org

Board of Supervisors and Staff

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CCCD Staff

Lola Bobrowski, Outreach Coordinator
Amanda Littleton, District Manager

NRCS Staff, Walpole Field Office

The District works in partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) staff who supply technical conservation assistance.

Mary Ellen Cannon - Soil Conservationist
Heidi Konesko - Soil Conservationist
Jonathan Meadows - Soil Conservationist
Steven Pytlik - District Conservationist
Wendy Ward - Soil Conservationist

The CCCD Board of Supervisors meet on the 4th Thursday of each month at 9am at the CCCD Office. These meetings are open to the public, please call the District office if you would like to attend a meeting.

2019 Cooperator of the Year

Mary Ballou of Swanzey, NH

Each year the Cheshire County Conservation District honors an individual, business or organization with the “Cooperator of the Year” award. This is done to celebrate the efforts the recipient has undertaken to steward the natural resources on their land in cooperation with the Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). This year we are happy to announce Mary Ballou of Swanzey, NH as our 2019 Cooperator of the Year.

Mary Ballou is the owner and steward of Ballou Farm, a twenty eight acre property in Swanzey NH. The farm includes 1,500 feet of frontage on the Ashuelot River and 13 acres of floodplains, wetlands and river oxbows. Her land offers critical habitat for wildlife and these natural features play an important role in maintaining and improving water quality and managing floods.

In 2016 Mary chose to put a conservation easement on the Ballou Farm protecting



Cooperator of the Year continued

it's valuable natural resources for future generations. She worked with the Swanze Conservation Commission, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and the Monadnock Conservancy to bring this protection to her land. The agreement prevents the property from ever being developed, but allows farming, forestry and recreation to continue. This land has an agricultural history, it was originally a working farm of the Adams family, then had row crops being grown by the Barrett family in past years, and currently Mike Johnson hays the fields.

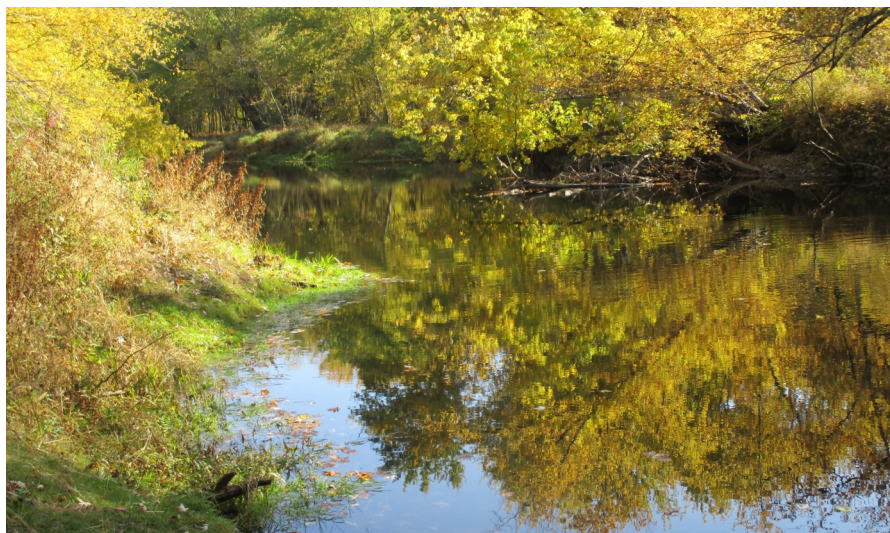
"This type of property speaks to the region's rural character with its scenic beauty, farming heritage and open views down to the river that people can enjoy from the rail trail," said Stacy Cibula, Deputy Director for the Monadnock Conservancy. "Swanzy is known for its farming and this preserves that legacy," she added.

Mary Ballou was born and raised in Keene, NH. Many generations of her family have called the Monadnock Region their home. Seven Ballou brothers came to America and eventually settled in Richmond, NH; which at one time was even referred to as "Ballou City." Mary purchased her farm in Swanzy from Ruth Adams in the late 1980s so she could have some land of her own to explore and enjoy. Mary is a Psychologist with a depth of

experience as an educator, therapist, and writer. She is recently retired with an impressive career that included 34 years as a professor in the Department of Counseling and Applied Psychology at Northeastern University. She has developed a feminist ecological model and has authored or co-authored nine books, nineteen book chapters, over thirty peer-reviewed articles, and three manuals. Today she maintains a private therapy practice in Swanzy NH.

Her conceptual research and life's work has relevance to her commitment to the land. She appreciates nature, the aesthetic beauty of her property, and understands there is a balance between private enjoyment and other uses and benefits. Mary had a strong desire to do her part to protect the valuable resources of our region. As she shared





“it is not enough to think about it, but you have to do something about it.” She was committed to not seeing her land developed but instead strongly values and wants to see compatible uses of the land. This commitment led her to the protection of the farmland and restoration of the critical wildlife habitat on her property. “Research and restoration is incredibly important particularly in this era of climate change. To do a little bit about it is what it’s all about” shared Mary.

Native floodplain forest species were planted and invasive plants were controlled as the primary focus of the restoration. In total over 3,000 native trees and shrubs were planted on 13 acres as a riparian forest buffer at the Ballou Farm. This work has made the habitat more resilient, less prone to erosion and better able to buffer against future flooding. While the property’s lower flood-prone field were restored to floodplain forest, the upland fields (11

acres) continue to be hayed. Floodplain habitat restoration on the property was planned and funded by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Wendy Ward, the lead NRCS Conservation Planner for her property shared that “Mary was committed to the restoration and had complete trust in the partnership and expertise of NRCS and TNC to develop an ecologically sound plan. She even agreed to have her ornamental trees in her yard removed when she learned they were non-native invasives and threatening the health of the floodplain habitat. Her dedication to the restoration, and willingness to change her pastoral landscape back to a natural woodlands is a rare find.” It is with great honor that the Cheshire County Conservation District presents Mary Ballou with the 2019 Cooperator of the Year Award. Congratulations Mary!

2019 Educator of the Year

Tom Beaudry of Walpole, NH

Each year the Cheshire County Conservation District honors an individual or organization with the “Educator of the Year” award. This is done to celebrate the efforts the recipient has undertaken to steward a conservation ethic and awareness through their personal and professional work, in whatever form of education that takes. This year we are happy to announce Tom Beaudry of Walpole, NH as our 2019 Educator of the Year.

Tom Beaudry is a Certified Crop Consultant who works with farmers to meet their production goals and provide education on best management practices for soil health and water quality. Tom has been doing this work since 1995 on over 20,000 acres of farmland on both sides of the Connecticut River, from the MA border to Woodsville, NH.

Tom grew up right here in the region, in Charlestown, NH, and prior to attending college and later starting his own farm Tom worked on several local farms including Putnam Farms in Charlestown, Ascutney View Farm in West Claremont, and Boggy Meadow Farm in Walpole. After gaining this experience, Tom received two back-to-back degrees – an undergraduate degree



in Animal Science from the University of New Hampshire and a Master's degree in Dairy Science from Virginia Tech.

All of Tom's early education and work experience led him to purchase Elm Island Dairy Farm in Walpole in 1995, at which point he also began his career as a Crop Consultant. While Tom only raises approximately 15 heifers on the farm today, at its peak the dairy farm was milking approximately 50-60 cows.

As a Crop Consultant, Tom supports farmers throughout NH and VT in a variety of ways. First and foremost, Tom's work focuses on meeting each farmer where they're at to provide

recommendations to meet their desired production goals. His work varies from farm to farm for this reason, but often involves a focus on nutrient management and recommendations for manure/fertilizer/herbicide application rates, seeding rates, farm equipment and machinery conversions and maintenance, as well as education and advice regarding soil health & water quality.

If you were to ask Tom, he might not label himself an educator – but that doesn't change the fact that he certainly is. Through his consulting work Tom aims to help farmers understand best management practices for soil and water health, and how to navigate those practices when and if they make sense for each farm's end goal. This includes

conversations and education regarding pH levels in the soil, cover cropping, crop rotation, manure application, erosion control, seed application, and especially no-till practices – all practices that support the conservation of soil and water resources in the region. This year alone, Tom has worked with farms to transition approximately 2,000 acres on both sides of the Connecticut River to no-till - which is no small feat!

Farmers in and around our region respect Tom and trust his input. As he puts it *"This is their game"* and *"it's about building relationships."* Tom is a farmer, which goes a long way to bridging those tough conversations. He recognizes the financial restrictions farms are plagued with given the current state of the local dairy economy. He recognizes that



Educator of the Year continued

implementing these practices must make sense in more ways than one and thus, does his best to communicate the value of practices such as cover cropping and no-till, while remaining transparent that change is not going to happen overnight though the benefits, both economically and ecologically, will grow over time.



Additionally, as a Technical Service Provider (TSP) for the USDA NRCS in New Hampshire Tom serves as a liaison between NRCS and local farmers to develop nutrient management plans. He has worked closely with NRCS Soil Conservationist Heidi Konesko through the years and Heidi had this to say about the great service Tom provides to the conservation community:

“Tom has a deep understanding of the plant and soil interactions that affect the nutrient cycle on our farms. His practical knowledge of farm operations and local soil and climate conditions allow him to help farmers improve their crop production and bottom line while minimizing the risk of environmental harm from nutrient leaching and runoff. Farmers trust his advice. He knows the landscape and he has personally sampled the soil in just about every crop field in the CT River Valley as well as many outside it!”

In addition to working closely with the USDA NRCS, Tom plays several additional volunteer roles throughout the farming community. He is an Associate Board Member of the CCCD, a member of the NH Soil Health Partnership, he sat on the Walpole Conservation Commission for 12 years and served as Chair of that Commission for 7 years, sits on the newly established Modern Nutrient Management Commission as well as the NH Agricultural Experiment Station External Advisory Commission, and also served as Vice-Chair of the Connecticut River Watershed Farmers Alliance.

If this all seems like a lot of work – that’s because it is! Education comes in all shapes and sizes and presents itself in obvious and sometimes not-so-obvious ways. The impact of Tom’s work educating through crop consulting often has a more immediate impact than traditional education. Tom’s advice is respected by



farmers and practices are often quickly implemented as a result of his guidance. Remember those 2,000 acres converted to cover cropping in just this year alone? Those converted acres yield a range of ecological benefits that include increased water retention in the soil, reduced erosion, and increased soil biodiversity and organic matter. These benefits not only have a positive impact on farm productivity but support the overall

health of our watershed and the wildlife they support.

The service Tom provides is invaluable to the region and we thank him for his commitment to conservation and advancing the farming community in NH and beyond. It is with great honor that the CCCD presents Tom Beaudry with the 2019 Educator of the Year Award. Congratulations Tom!



Organizational Membership

- Antioch Community Garden Connections - Advisory Committee
- Monadnock Conservancy - Stewardship Committee
- Monadnock Farm and Community Coalition - Board of Directors
- Monadnock Economic Development Corporation - Board of Directors
- National Association of Conservation Districts
- New Hampshire Association of Conservation Districts
- New Hampshire Food Alliance - Land Resources Action Team
- New Hampshire Nutrition Incentive Network - Regional Lead
- Southwest Region Planning Commission - Natural Resources Advisory Committee

Fiscal Sponsorship & Fundraising

The CCCD serves as the fiscal sponsor for the Monadnock Farm and Community Coalition. The CCCD Board of Supervisors conducted an annual appeal and offered four fundraisers during 2019 to provide additional funds for CCCD programs.



- **Conservation Plant Sale - Bulb Sale - Bulk Seed Sale - Bowling Fundraiser at Yankee Lanes**

We would like to offer many thanks to the community members who participated!

Planning & Communications

The CCCD adopted a five year Strategic Plan in 2017 setting the organization up with refined priorities and measurable outcomes. During 2019 significant strides were made to achieve our strategic objectives. We continually seek an open dialogue with stakeholders in our community and welcome your feedback.

The Cheshire County Conservation District was created in 1945. It is a political subdivision of the State of New Hampshire, [RSA 432:12](#), with a 170 C 1 non-profit status under the IRS tax code. As a subdivision of the State of New Hampshire, conservation districts foster partnerships between federal, state and local agencies interested in the wise use of natural resources.



SOIL



WATER



WILDLIFE

2019 Highlights

The CCCD reached out to over 3,200 individuals in 2019 with programs regarding resource conservation & farm viability. If you are interested in learning more or have suggestions for future programming please don't hesitate to contact the CCCD office.



NRCS Farm Bill Program Workshops & Demonstration Projects

Each year the conservation district works along side their partner the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to assist landowners on the voluntary conservation of natural resources on their land. This is accomplished by providing administration of the technical and financial assistance that enables good stewardship of the soil, water, air, wildlife, and related natural resources. This year workshops were offered on how landowners can apply for financial and technical assistance from NRCS through the 2018 Farm Bill —workshops included— **Cover Crops, No Till Farming, Soil Health Equipment Demonstrations, Wildlife Habitat, Forestry, and Erosion Control.** Educators from Cheshire County UNH Cooperative Extension (UNHCE) are key partners in these workshops.

Services of CCCD

Offered historical **aerial photography** of Cheshire County and provided soil information to Cheshire County landowners, particularly the **Soil Potential Index (SPI)** assessment for landowners in the Current Use program. Provided **talks as well as educational displays** at community events through out the year. Worked with landowners on an individual basis to assist them in better understanding the resources on their property and how to conserve them. The CCCD also offers **outreach on behalf of NRCS** to make landowners aware of the conservation programs available to them.



All programs are offered on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, disability or political beliefs.



Supporting Healthy Productive Soil through Education and Equipment Rentals

SOIL

In 2019 the Conservation District further developed it's Soil Health Education and Equipment Rental program to help producers meet their soil health goals while improving farm efficiencies.

The following implements are now available: no-till seeder (7' & 12'), wood ash/lime spreader, aerway aerator, roller-crimper, zrx roller corn planter, no-till transplanter, BCS walk behind tractor with six implements, single shank sub-soiler, and penetrometer.

We worked with UNH Cooperative Extension, NCAT, and USDA NRCS to offer workshops, demonstrations, and host our annual Equipment Field Day.

We also served on the NH Soil Health Partnership implementing cover crop mix trials.



Reducing Tillage on Vegetable Farms

2019 was our second of a three year grant to focus on reducing tillage on vegetable farms to benefit soil health. To accomplish our goals we acquired new equipment, offered trainings, and partnered with farms on field demonstrations. 150 growers attended these education sessions. Partners included the Belknap, Hillsborough, Rockingham, Strafford, and Sullivan CCDs, UNHCE, the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), and USDA NRCS. Funding was provided by a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant through the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets, and Food.



13 workshops were hosted with 160 community members in attendance and 18 people were provided one on one technical assistance for their gardens in 2019. A seed and tool library was started at the Keene Public Library where there are now 98 community members participating in this program. This work is a partnership between the CCCD, Antioch University New England, NCAT, Community Garden Connections, and the Keene Public Library. Funding is provided by the National Association of Conservation Districts Urban Agriculture Grant Program and USDA NRCS.





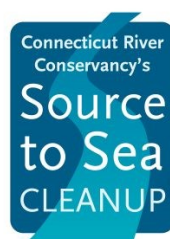
WATER

Improving Water Quality Through River Clean Ups and Farm Partnerships

Source to Sea River Clean Up



On September 27th and 28th a large group of enthusiastic volunteers pitched in to help clean up the Ashuelot River in Keene and Swanzey and Beaver Brook in Keene as part of the Connecticut River Conservancy's "Source to Sea Cleanup". 73 volunteers pulled over 3,251 lbs of trash from the two water bodies! We would like to thank the amazing group of volunteers who turned out with such great attitudes! There was a contingent of students and staff from Keene High School, a group from the Keene Unitarian Universalist Church, and many more individuals and families. This event is made possible by the partnership of the Ashuelot River Local Advisory Committee, the City of Keene, Keene State College, Moosewood Ecological, Keene Young Professionals Network, and the Harris Center for Conservation Education. In conjunction with the river clean up, the City of Keene, lead by Eric Swope, hosted 150 students from pre-school-8th grade at Beaver Brook to see what lives in the brook, learn about water quality measurements, and learn how the storm drains are tied into the brooks and rivers.



Dairy Farms Invest in Water Quality



Reducing tillage from your management regime can improve your soil's structure and stability, water infiltration and water-holding capacity, organic matter content, while reduce compaction, runoff, erosion, and ponding. The Cheshire, Rockingham and Strafford County Conservation Districts obtained grants to help farmers pay for modifications to their corn planters in order to make them work in a no-till system. Any New Hampshire farmer with a corn planter and a desire to go no-till is eligible for funding for equipment and technical assistance. CCCD serves as the statewide administrative lead for this project and to date has provided \$38,000 to help 13 farms for this transition to no-till. In conjunction to providing dollars for equipment we also provided free site visits with one on one technical assistance on equipment selection in partnership with UVM Extension.

Long Island Sound Watershed - Regional Conservation Partnership Program

The NH Association of Conservation Districts (NHACD) has been focused on improving soil health and nutrient management in the Connecticut River Watershed since 2017. Their efforts have been lead by Bill Fosher, NHACD staff and project agronomist who offers technical assistance to landowners with a focus on improving water quality. Through this project 34 conservation plans and 12 nutrient management plans have been completed. These plans also include grazing plans for livestock farmers. The Cheshire, Coos, Grafton, and Sullivan County Conservation Districts have partnered on this effort. Funding is provided by the USDA NRCS



through their Regional Conservation Partnership Program. In 2020 this project will expand it's scope to a statewide focus and one additional full time planner will be added to the NHACD staff to increase the technical assistance capacity of Conservation Districts in NH.



Improving Wildlife Habitat for the Health of Our Ecosystems

WILDLIFE

Thompson Brook Restoration Project

Wild brook trout now have more room to roam thanks to a new stream restoration project on Thompson Brook in Surry, NH. This exciting project eliminated a severe barrier to fish passage under Route 12A, restoring access to two and a half miles of prime, cold-water spawning and summer refuge habitat for brook trout and other native fish. This was identified as the third highest priority site for restoration for aquatic organism passage in the Ashuelot River watershed. Funding was provided by the NH Department of Environmental Services through the Aquatic Resources Mitigation Fund, USDA NRCS, Connecticut River Conservancy, and the NH Association of Conservation Districts. Partners included Trout Unlimited, NH Fish and Game, Surry Conservation Commission, NH Department of Transportation, USDA NRCS, Harris Center for Conservation Education, and the Ashuelot River Local Advisory Committee.



Connecticut River
Conservancy



Walpole & Alstead Land Stewardship (WALS) Collaborative

WALS Collaborative is an informal group of private and public landowners in Walpole and Alstead, NH who share information and ideas while helping neighbors work together across property boundaries. The mission of the WALS Collaborative is to encourage landowners to develop an intimate connection to the land, empower them to learn more about how to best meet their land stewardship goals, and aid members in seeking available assistance to sustain the resources on their property. This is an initiative started by the CCCD, UNHCE, Micheal Nerrie of Distant Hill Gardens, and local forester and logger Peter Renzelman. In 2019 we organized a kick off meeting with 60 landowners in attendance and have continued to offer a selection of educational workshops. In 2020 the WALS Collaborative seeks to offer community gatherings and conduct an ecological assessment of the focus area.

Conservation Opportunity Grant Program

Thanks to the generosity of a local donor and support from the NH Charitable Foundation the CCCD will be launching a Conservation Opportunity Grant program for small landowners in Cheshire County interested in improving the wildlife habitat on their property. This will be an annual opportunity to support the ecological integrity and stewardship of wildlife habitat in



Cheshire County NH. A request for applications will be released in December 2019. Eligible activities include creating pollinator habitat, installing rain gardens, and creating/maintaining early successional habitat.

Conservation Commission Potluck

The CCCD partnered with the NH Association of Conservation Commissions and Stonewall Farm to offer the fifth annual networking and information sharing event for Conservation Commissioners of Cheshire County at Stonewall Farm. Jim Oehler and Rachel Stevens of NH Fish and Game offered a session on Siting Recreational Trails with Wildlife in Mind.



Initiatives to Improve Farm Profitability, Expand Markets, & Increase Food Access

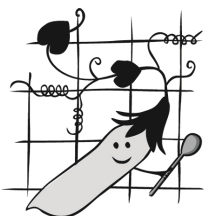
FARM VIABILITY

The Monadnock Food Co-op Farm Fund's mission is to support local farmers in increasing sustainable food production and wholesale sales to contribute to a thriving local farm economy. This grant opportunity for local farmers is made possible through a partnership with the Monadnock Food Co-op. Three grant awards were made in 2019 to Archway Farm, Bascom Farm, and Sun Moon Farm. Now in its third year the fund has awarded over \$32,000 to area farmers. We owe a great deal of gratitude to Co-op customers who round up their change at the register to contribute to this fund. Additional funding is provided by the You Have Our Trust Fund and the Monadnock Food Co-op.



Monadnock Localvores

In 2019 the Monadnock Localvores offered scholarships to 24 Cheshire County youth to attend summer farm camp through the Jeffrey P. Smith Farm Scholarship program. This is made possible through funding from the You Have Our Trust Fund, generous local donors, and the commitment of a volunteer steering committee. Partners include Stonewall Farm, The Orchard School, UMass 4H Camps, and Kroka.





The mission of the NH Farm Future Fund is to provide funding for farm viability planning in concert with the conservation of important agricultural soils. This program will leverage the singular opportunity of putting a conservation easement on farmland to also invest in the future viability of the farm business. The goal of this fund is to ensure that farmland is conserved, productive, and available for future generations. Funding was provided by the You Have Our Trust Fund of the NH Charitable Foundation and the generosity of individual donors. \$90,000 will be available for the first grant round and the RFP will be available in November 2019. This is an integrated approach to funding farm viability, farmland conservation, and farmland access and fills an important niche in building the capacity of agricultural service providers in the state.



Community Supported Solar for NH Farms

In 2019 the CCCD made strides to launch a Community Supported Solar installation in cooperation with farms in the region. This is a partnership with the Monadnock Sustainability Network with funding provided by the Thomas W. Haas Fund of the NH Charitable Foundation. Sun Moon Farm of Rindge, NH was selected as the site partner and ReVision Energy will be the contractor and investment partner. Nixon Peabody LLP has generously provided legal counsel to pave the way for this project's success. Contracts with participating farms and construction will be finalized in 2020.





Granite State Market Match

In 2019 we strengthened our Cheshire County network of farms and farmers markets to double Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP/food stamps) benefits with Granite State Market Match (GSMM). There are now twelve farm locations in Cheshire County that accept SNAP and offer GSMM. These locations include Farmers Market of Keene, Foggy Hill Farm,

Hillside Springs Farm, Hinsdale Farmers' Market, New Dawn Farm, Pete's Stand, Picadilly Farm, Stonewall Farm, Sun Moon Farm, Team Jaffrey Farmers Market, Tracie's Community Farm, and the Winchester Farmers Market. We continued work with a statewide network of incentive providers lead by the NH Food Bank to share resources and best practices. Funding is made available through the USDA Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Program, the Wholesome Wave Foundation, and Healthy Monadnock.



The Keene and Hinsdale Farmers' Markets worked with the CCCD to offer a Veterans Appreciation Month program during September 2019. Each market day Cheshire County Veterans were invited to the market and provided a \$20 Voucher to purchase food from area farmers. The goal of this program is to show our gratitude and appreciation to service members for protecting our freedoms and to expand markets for farmers. Funding was provided through Cheshire Medical Center's Center for Population Health to increase community members access to healthy foods, an effort which supports the Healthy Monadnock Initiative. \$6,560 of Vouchers were distributed to 112 veterans in 2019.

Monadnock Farm Share

Eight Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) produce farms in the Monadnock Region came together in 2019 to work with the CCCD to ensure that farm fresh CSA vegetable shares are affordable for all interested community members.

The Farm Share Program provides limited-income Monadnock Region residents with the opportunity to support their local CSA farmer and receive reliable high-quality produce on a regular basis all season long. The prices are discounted through an innovative cost-share model. Participating families and individuals end up receiving a discounted vegetable share at 50% of it's value. Farmers raise funds to cover 25% of the program costs and 25% of costs are provided by the Cheshire Medical Center for Population Health through it's Healthy Monadnock Initiative. Twenty-two families participated in 2019 and we look forward to continuing to grow the program in 2020.



The 2nd annual two-day summit brought together 586 people from 25 states who are passionate about creating vibrant, robust, rural communities. CCCD partnered with the Monadnock Conservancy to host the Working Lands Track. This track included three workshops on farm and forest economies.

Session topics included managing land for climate resiliency, governing for farm viability, and creative financing for farmers and food producers. The Hannah Grimes Center & Keene Sentinel were lead organizers of the event.

Cheshire County Complex - Westmoreland Garden



In 2019 the County of Cheshire continued their partnership with Antioch University New England's Community Garden Connections (CGC) program to cultivate vegetables at the Cheshire County Farm in Westmoreland NH. The 1,900 lbs of produce they harvested was donated to the Community Kitchen in Keene. CGC staff were aided by the help of 64 volunteers that came out to their weekly gardening parties from April through October. Drip irrigation was installed in all beds and CGC implemented year 1 of the irrigation water management plan for the garden. A beautiful outdoor classroom was also installed on site and it will serve the community for years to come.

The Cheshire County Conservation District welcomes your input on future educational programming and services that we can make available to landowners.



USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service District Conservationist Fiscal Year 2019 Report for Cheshire County

The Cheshire County Conservation District (CCCD) continues to be the most instrumental partner with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) getting conservation on the ground at the grassroots level. Without the District's support NRCS would not be nearly as successful fulfilling our mission. Throughout 2019 NRCS and the District have implemented 288 individual conservation projects throughout Cheshire County. This year NRCS obligated 30 new Farm Bill conservation program contracts totaling \$1,075,126 in financial assistance enrolling 10,927 acres. The District continues to partner with NRCS and the Monadnock Conservancy on Farm Bill Agricultural Land Easements program under a Regional Conservation Partnership Program agreement. We are currently working on high priority easements in Cheshire County and are looking to close on additional projects in 2020. The District has recently entered an agreement with NRCS to assist with easement monitoring of existing Farm Bill easements.

NRCS Key Performance Measures 2019 for Cheshire County NH

- Conservation applied to improve environmental quality: 8,370 acres on private agricultural land including forests
- Land with conservation applied to improve water quality: 3,488 acres
- Cropland with conservation applied to improve soil quality: 1,378 acres
- Forest land with conservation applied to protect and improve vegetative condition: 6,563 acres
- Non-Federal land with conservation applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality: 5,884 acres

The Natural Resources Conservation Service is a core partner of the Cheshire County Conservation District. The partnership between the NRCS and Conservation Districts is one that was carefully designed to foster a unique and productive relationship to get conservation on the ground and provide federal resources at a local level.

The District and NRCS continue to partner on water quality and aquatic organism passage projects addressing wildlife resource concerns. We are currently assessing multiple sites for habitat restoration opportunities. Together the District and NRCS have partnered with the Harris Center for Conservation Education, Trout Unlimited, NH Fish and Game, and NH Department of Environmental Services on the Thompson Brook stream restoration. This is a watershed of high value for Eastern Brook Trout habitat. The watershed had a major fish passage barrier that we addressed by designing passage through an existing perched box culvert. The District secured funding through a demonstration agreement with NRCS and NHACD and through the Aquatic Resources Mitigation grant with the NH Department of Environmental Services to fund the habitat restoration project. This is perfect example of how the District and NRCS have worked together with



Antioch High Tunnel in Westmoreland



Silver Maple Floodplain Forest Restoration (left) and Swanzev Riparian Buffer Planting (right)

other partners to address the resource concerns identified at the local level while meeting our core mission objectives.

Soil health and water quality are other high priorities for the CCCD and NRCS. The equipment rental program that the District offers including the no-till seeder, aer-way aerator, roller crimper, wood ash spreader, sub-soiler, and skidder bridges gives producers the tools needed to implement soil erosion, soil health, and water quality conservation projects funded by the Farm Bill while raising funds for the District. This year the District acquired even more equipment including a large grain drill, no-till corn planter, no-till vegetable transplanter, and a BCS walk behind tractor to allow producers to implement cutting edge conservation practices without needing to buy specialized equipment themselves. We have focused on establishing cover crops and have been very successful promoting soil health. The next step is to continue to promote the adoption no-till and reduced till planting methods for annually tilled crops.

Together we are “Helping People Help the Land”.

**Sincerely,
Steven D. Pytlik
District Conservationist**



NRCS 2019 Report continued

Of the NRCS funded conservation projects installed in Cheshire County throughout 2019 the top ten conservation practices were:



1. **Aquatic Organism Passage** – 4 miles restored with 2 dam removals.
2. **Cover Crop** – 943.8 acres planted
3. **Conservation Crop Rotation** - 748.8 acres rotated
4. **Forest Management Plans** - 7 plans written on 696 acres
5. **Nutrient Management** – 481.4 acres applied
6. **Prescribed Rotational Grazing** – 92.6 acres rotated
7. **Forest Stand Improvement** - 83 acres treated
8. **Brush Management** – 66.3 acres treated
9. **Forage and Biomass Planting (pasture and hayland seedings)** – 63.8 acres seeded to perennial forage
10. **Early Successional Habitat Development/Management** – 39 acres applied



Financials - 2019 Treasurer's Report

The Board of Supervisors appreciates the continued support of the District's conservation programs by the Cheshire County Commissioners and the Cheshire County Delegation.

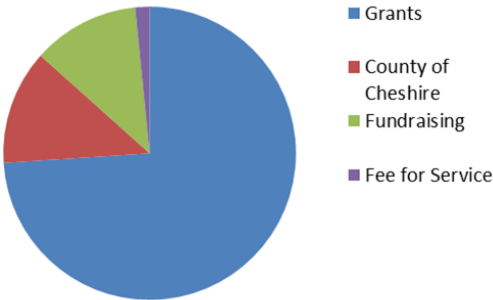
Also appreciated are the technical services offered by our "Partners in Conservation" the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, UNH Cooperative Extension, USDA Farm Service Agency and other cooperating agencies.



2019 Receipts, January-September.

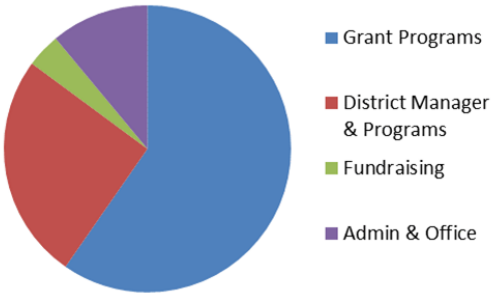
Income

Grants	369,841	74%
County of Cheshire	63,254	13%
Fundraising	59,057	12%
Fee for Service	7,918	2%
	500,070	100%



Expenses

Grants	165,052	60%
District Manager & Programs	70,426	25%
Fundraising	10,621	4%
Admin & Office	30,535	11%
	276,634	100%



Contributed Support

A special thank you is offered to the many people that contribute to the success of the CCCD by volunteering their time and energy! We extend our gratitude to the following individuals, organizations and businesses who have made donations or provided grants during 2019:

Joy Ackerman & Richard McVoy

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