



Annual Report 2011

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

11 Industrial Park Dr - Walpole NH 03608 - 603.756.2988 ext.116
www.cheshireconservation.org

Board of Supervisors and Staff

Supervisors

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CCCD Staff & Contractors

Sharlene Beaudry, Administrative Coordinator
Amanda Costello, District Manager
Emerald Levick, Monadnock Farm and Community Connection Coordinator
*Support for the MFCC Coordinator comes from the
New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and the generosity of private donors*
Sarah Sullivan, Farm Needs Assessment Coordinator
Support provided by USDA SARE

NRCS Staff, Walpole Field Office

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

Philip Durgin - Engineer
Heidi Konesko - Soil Conservationist
Steven Pytlik - District Conservationist
Wendy Ward - Soil Conservation Technician

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.

2011 Cooperator of the Year

Picadilly Farm of Winchester 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 that Picadilly Farm is the 2011 Cooperator of the Year.

Picadilly Farm is located in Winchester NH on 71 beautiful acres in the Connecticut River valley. In 2006 Jenny and Bruce Wooster purchased the farm which had been a dairy for 35 years. They now grow certified organic produce crops on 26 acres as well as raise laying hens, pigs, and sheep. The bulk of their produce is sold through the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model.

Picadilly Farm has demonstrated a great commitment to steward their farm with a focus on the long term sustainable use of the land and building the soil health while working for a high quality harvest each season. The following are conservation practices that Picadilly Farm has applied through the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program:

- Riparian forest buffer
- Seasonal high tunnel system for crops
- Conservation cover
- Lined waterway
- Heavy use area protection
- Grassed waterway
- Access road
- Nutrient management
- Pest management
- Cover crop
- Transition to organic production
- Roof runoff structure
- Underground outlet

“ Picadilly Farm has transformed an old Dairy Farm into a modern economically viable and ecologically sound local food production system while demonstrating exemplary land stewardship conservation of their natural resources. ”

**- Steve Pytlik,
NRCS District Conservationist**



Cooperator of the Year continued

Picadilly Farm of Winchester NH

Beyond their work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Picadilly Farm is deserving of this honor because of their strong commitment to community involvement. They have been very generous with food donations since the farm opened five years ago. They are also hosts to many organizations by opening their farm as an outdoor classroom. Students that participate in the school garden club in Winchester have the opportunity to come to the farm for hands on learning, the club is also supported by materials that are donated by the farm. Picadilly Farm host workshops for other farmers in conjunction with UNH Cooperative Extension, the Conservation District, and other organizations.

Since 2006 when they started building their business they have accomplished a great deal. Future goals include keeping the food they produce closer to home and expanding their market in a region where many folks are unfamiliar with the CSA model. They would also like to take on a renewable energy project to take the farm to the next level of sustainability.

The conservation district is so pleased to honor Picadilly Farm as the 2011 Cooperator of the Year and would like to offer Bruce, Jenny, and their crew many thanks for making Cheshire County their home, and for all they offer to the community and contribute to our strong and growing local food system. Please join us in congratulating them for all their hard work and wishing them great happiness and success into the future!



Learn more about Picadilly Farm by visiting them at their beautiful farmstead in Winchester or on the web at picadillyfarm.com



2011 Highlights

The CCCD reached over 1,300 individuals in 2011 with educational programs regarding resource conservation. Some of these programs are highlighted below. If you are interested in learning more please don't hesitate to contact the CCCD office.



NRCS Farm Bill Program Workshops

Each year the conservation district works along side their partner the Natural Resources Conservation Service to assist landowners on the voluntary conservation of natural resources on their land. This is accomplished by providing services that enable people to be good stewards 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 2008 Farm Bill to promote conservation on farm and forest land, on upland forest habitat management, no till farming practices, construction and use of high tunnels, and on the Cornell Soil Health Assessment.

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 and informational 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.

2011 Highlights Continued

Cheshire County No Till Farming Initiative



In 2011 the conservation district is proud to have started leasing a No Till Seeder to landowners and managers interested in reducing soil erosion and improving soil health. This was made possible through funding from the NH State Conservation Committee and their Conservation Grant program, commonly referred to as the “moose plate grant.” This new service available would not be possible without strong and committed partners including R.N. Johnson, Inc. of Walpole NH, UNH Cooperative Extension, Greenstart, and the 12 farms that were willing to sign on to use the equipment from the very beginning.



Fundraisers

Offered 4 fundraisers during 2011 to provide additional funds for CCCD educational programs.

- NH Eat Local Celebration
- Conservation Plant Sale
- Compost Bin and Rain Barrel Sale
- Flowering Bulb Sale



Organizational Membership

Continued membership to the
New Hampshire Association of Conservation Districts
Conservation District Employees Association of New Hampshire
Monadnock Sustainability Network
Monadnock Localvores



The mission of the Monadnock Farm and Community Connection (MFCC) program



is to foster community action to support a sustainable local food system by sharing resources and building collaborations. MFCC a volunteer network driven by community defined needs. In 2011 we are pleased to have hired a program

coordinator through funding from the NH Charitable Foundation and generosity of private donors. This new position will enable us to build the capacity of MFCC. It has been a very active year for the MFCC volunteers & partners and below are some of the programs we have offered:

Feast on This Film Festival

A Film Festival celebrating farms and local food is intended to educate, entertain, and empower. It ran for 4 days in Cheshire County, showing 8 films and drawing 300 people.



Monadnock Menus



Monadnock Menus is a new endeavor to engage restaurants in serving more local food. Pick up a Monadnock Menu card to get involved today by telling your favorite local restaurants that you value their efforts to support our local farms!

Agricultural Commissions Community Outreach

The MFCC Inventory Committee is now offering presentations on starting Agricultural Commissions as a new service to local municipalities. We are pleased to announce that in 2011, after working with the MFCC, 5 communities have new agricultural commissions. They are Fitzwilliam, Harrisville, Keene, Nelson, and Richmond. Contact us to start this process in your town in 2011!

Farm Appreciation Night

A night of merriment and tribute to farmers to show our community's immense appreciation for their work..



2011 Highlights Continued

Farm Infrastructure and Labor Needs Assessment

Through funding made available by the USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program the CCCD has completed a project that helped us gain a better understanding about our farmers labor and infrastructure needs. We conducted 40 on-farm interviews, completed two focus groups, evaluated properties for farm infrastructure and labor training/housing programs, and shared results in a community forum. Partners include: Antioch University New England, Land For Good, Monadnock Developmental Services/First Course, & UNH Cooperative Extension.



Energy Efficiency with Season Extension and Food Preservation



We offered 2 day long workshops to specialty crop farmers interested in improving their energy efficiency with season extension and food preservation. Our partners in this endeavor are Hannah Grimes and UNH Cooperative Extension . Funding is made available through the NH Dept. of Agriculture Markets and Food

through a USDA specialty crop block grant.

Food Safety for Farmers and Service Providers



Working with UNH Cooperative Extension, Alyson's Orchard, and Picadilly Farm we offered two days of workshops on food safety with Linda Titus of Ag Matters in Maine. UVM Extension also contributed their expertise to educate service providers. Funding was provided by the NH Department of Agriculture Markets and Food through a USDA specialty crop block grant.



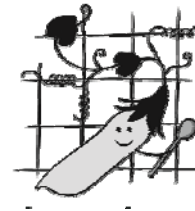
Cheshire County Farm and Infrastructure Study



A feasibility study was conducted to explore the future use of the Cheshire County Farm and former jail with Land For Good, the Monadnock Conservancy, and funding from the Putnam foundation. The Conservation District hosted 6 community forums to gain a better understanding of what County residents would like to see happen with this valuable public property. Top priorities for the land included keeping it actively farmed, permanent conservation, public education, and recreation. For the reuse of the jail the top priorities were to support the agricultural community through a farm business incubator, food storage and processing, and office space for agricultural organizations.

Monadnock Localvores

In 2011 this group offered 8 workshops on everything from raising chickens to making wine. They also offered scholarships to summer farm camp to 10 children through the Jeffrey P. Smith Farm Scholarship. This is a partnership with Hannah Grimes and committed volunteers.



Educational Events

Great Falls Food Hub

We hosted an evening with the Great Fall Food Hub for Cheshire County stakeholders to better understand their goals, current status, and next steps for creating a food hub in the four county region of Cheshire & Sullivan Co. NH and Windham and Windsor Co. VT



Planting and Pest Management Workshop, Compost Tea and Backyard Mushroom Demonstration

With UNH Cooperative Extension, Wichland Woods, and Mack Hill Farm we offered educational workshops at our annual plant sale pick up at Alyson's Orchard.

Annual Local Work Group Meeting

The CCCD hosts an annual opportunity for stakeholders in the field of farm and forestland conservation to come together and share feedback on NRCS Farm Bill programs with the NRCS local and state leadership.

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



Natural Resources Conservation Service District Conservationist Fiscal Year 2011 Report for Cheshire County

2011 has been a very successful year for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Cheshire County Conservation District (CCCD). Over the past year the partnership between the District and NRCS has strengthened significantly thanks to Amanda Costello District Manager. This year two new additional staff members have been hired by the CCCD to assist with fulfilling the mission of both the District and NRCS. Sharlene Beaudry has been hired as the new Administrative Coordinator and Emerald Levick was selected as the Monadnock Farm and Community Connection Coordinator. These two positions have allowed the CCCD to increase their capacity to promote the conservation of natural resources here in Cheshire County.

The CCCD has continued to partner with NRCS on identifying and addressing natural resource concerns in local communities, and coordinating public and private resources to meet local needs on a grassroots level. The District has worked with NRCS during 2011 to provide technical and financial assistance to landowners and producers benefiting from 2008 Farm Bill Funding. This past year NRCS and the District has implemented 90 financially assisted conservation practices totaling \$225,215 in Farm Bill funding for Cheshire County. The following is a summary of the natural resource benefits that resulted from the implementation of those conservation practices.

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.

NRCS Performance Measures Fiscal Year 2011

- **Conservation Plans Written (acres)**
5,165 acres under Conservation Technical Assistance
- **Cropland with Conservation Applied to Improve Soil Quality (acres)**
151 acres under the Environmental Quality Incentive Program
826 acres under Conservation Technical Assistance
- **Land with Conservation Applied to Improve Water Quality (acres)**
3,600 acres under Conservation Technical Assistance
4,814 acres under the Environmental Quality Incentive Program
2,751 acres under the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program
- **Grazing Land with Conservation Applied to Protect and Improve the Resource Base (acres)**
112 acres under Conservation Technical Assistance
95 acres under the Environmental Quality Incentive Program
- **Non-Federal Land with Conservation Applied to Improve Fish and Wildlife Habitat Quality (acres)**
114 acres under Conservation Technical Assistance
425 acres under the Environmental Quality Incentive Program
1,010 acres under the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program
- **Forest Land with Conservation Applied to Protect and Improve Vegetative Condition (acres)**
2,833 acres under Conservation Technical Assistance
5,310 acres under the Environmental Quality Incentive Program
2,831 acres under the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

NRCS 2011 Report continued

Of the 90 conservation practices installed in Cheshire County over the past year the top ten financially assisted practices were:



1. **Seasonal High Tunnel System for Crops** - 6 high tunnels, \$ 50,191.57
2. **Fencing for Rotational Grazing**– 13,163 feet of fence, \$ 26,335.81
3. **Access Roads** – 2,325 feet of road, \$ 20,878.42
4. **Early Successional Habitat Development/ Management** – 33.6 acres, \$18,905.43
5. **Forest Management Plan Development** – 8 Forest Management Plans, \$17,598.12
6. **Heavy Use Area Protection** – 1 barnyard, \$13,844.93
7. **Forest Trails and Landings** – 7,269 feet of forest trails, \$13,508.28
8. **On-Farm Energy Efficiency Improvements** – 1 Reverse Osmosis System for Maple Production, \$8,510
9. **Lined Waterway or Outlet** – 510 feet of lined waterway, \$6,481.62
10. **Forest Stand Improvement** – 57.7 acres, \$5628.40

This year NRCS also closed on 3 conservation easements in Cheshire County under the Wetlands Reserve Program resulting in over 465 acres of permanently protected conservation land.

The CCCD increased Farm Bill Program participation tremendously this year thanks to over a dozen outreach events organized by both the District and NRCS. To the right is a chart of the # of conservation agreements funded by NRCS over the past two years.

**Cheshire County Conservation District Farm Bill
Participation FY 2010 to 2011 Comparison**

Fiscal Year	Farm Bill Program	# of Contracts	Obligation \$
2010	Environmental Quality Incentive Program	19	\$169,829.17
2010	Agricultural Management Assistance	0	\$0
2010	Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	5	\$70,027.33
Totals		24	\$239,856.50
2011	Environmental Quality Incentive Program	32	\$325,627.40
2011	Agricultural Management Assistance	1	\$1,780.00
2011	Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	7	\$145,250
Totals		40	\$472,657.40

197% Increase

The NRCS “Know Your Farmer; Know Your Food” initiative helps farmers increase the availability of locally grown produce by funding the Seasonal High Tunnels. This initiative has complemented the CCCD’s local food priorities very well. The seasonal high tunnel being the most popular conservation practice installed this year here in Cheshire County shows that this District truly has locally led our conservation efforts. This 3 year pilot initiative has been so successful I’m pleased to announce it has been extended into a fourth year. Looking forward into the upcoming year I hope NRCS and the District can keep this momentum going and continue to strengthen our partnership while providing local foods and protecting and preserving our Natural Resources here in Cheshire County.

Together we are “Helping People Help the Land”.

**Steven D. Pytlik
District Conservationist**

Financials - 2011 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.

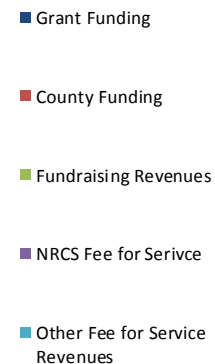
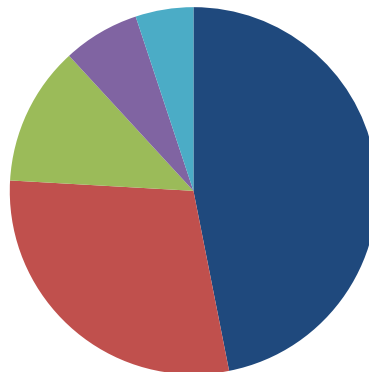
Also appreciated are the technical services offered by our "Partners in Conservation" the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, UNH Cooperative Extension, USDA Farm Service Agency and other cooperating agencies.



2011 Receipts - The revenues include prepayment of some grant awards for project work to be done in 2012.

Income

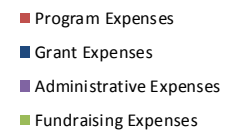
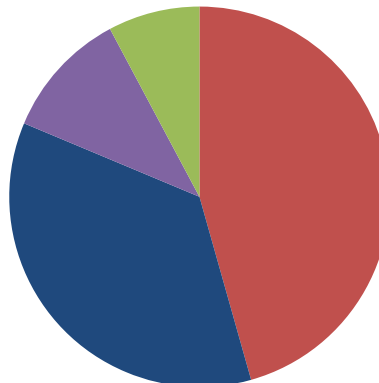
Grant Funding	\$78,208	47%
County Funding	\$48,378	29%
Fundraising Revenues	\$20,430	12%
NRCS Fee for Service	\$11,246	7%
Other Fee for Service Revenues	\$8,510	5%



\$166,772 100%

Expenses

Program Expenses	\$62,613	46%
Grant Expenses	\$48,991	36%
Administrative Expenses	\$14,963	11%
Fundraising Expenses	\$10,702	8%



\$137,269 100%

Contributed Support

A very special thank you is offered to the many people that contribute to the success of the CCCD through their volunteer hours and energy! Without you none of this would be possible! Special thanks to the following organizations and businesses who have made donations or grants during 2011:

Albert's Organics	The Keene Sentinel	Papagallos
Alyson's Orchard	L.A. Burdicks	Pitcher Mountain Farm
Andorra Forest	Lee & Mt. Fuji's	Prime Roast
Antioch University New England	Lindy's Diner	Public Service of New Hampshire
Black Mountain Beefalo Farm	Margaritas	Putnam Foundation
Boggy Meadow Farm	Markem Imaje	R.N. Johnson
Brewbakers Cafe	Milkhouse at Great Brook Farm	Stonewall Farm
C&S Wholesale Grocers	Monadnock Community Market	Toadstool Bookstore
Cheshire Garden	The Mountain Corporation	Tracie's Community Farm
Cheshire TV	New Hampshire Charitable Foundation	Unbridled Chocolates
Cheshire Village Pizza	New Hampshire Department of Agriculture Markets and Food	United Natural Foods
Chesterfield Inn	New Hampshire State Conservation Comm.	USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Edgefield Farm	Olive Garden	USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education
Elm City Brewery	Orchard Hill Breadworks	Video Headquarters
Farnum Hill Cider	Panera Bread	Vose Farms
Fritz the Place to Eat		Walpole Creamery
Granite Gorge		The Works Bakery and Café
Horse & Buggy Feeds		

Contribute Today! Please make a tax deductible gift to the CCCD to ensure the continued success of our educational programs.



YES! I want to help the Cheshire County Conservation District promote the conservation and sustainable use of our natural resources .

I have enclosed a donation of:

\$25 \$50 \$75 \$100 Other \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Please make checks payable to the **Cheshire County Conservation District**,

Cheshire County Conservation District

11 Industrial Park Dr
Walpole NH 03608

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Website: www.cheshireconservation.org

Dedicated to Conservation Education and the
Responsible Use of Our Natural Resources.

