

CHESHIRE COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Annual Report 2018

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

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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
Steven Pytlik - District Conservationist
Wendy Ward - Soil Conservationist
Jessica Zuzack - Program Assistant

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.

2018 Cooperator of the Year

Amy Bodwell & Carol Saunders of Roxbury, 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 Amy Bodwell and Carol Saunders of Roxbury, NH as our 2018 Cooperators of the Year.



The Property

Their property “Woodland Views” is comprised of 235 acres of mature and early successional forests, vernal pools, upland meadows, forested wetlands, a perennial stream, a renewed apple orchard, and prime shoreland along Spectacle Pond. The land supports a headwater stream to the Minnewawa Brook, which eventually helps to form The Branch. These waters are all part of the Ashuelot River watershed. It is a refuge for wildlife including black bears, bobcats, grey fox, frogs, birds, flying squirrels, and many types of pollinators including bees, butterflies and bats.

Developing a Conservation Ethic

Both Amy and Carol grew up in the Northeast region. Although they have traveled and led tours throughout the world, they have always felt a close attachment to this region with its fresh water, gentle typography and familiar animals.

From her early childhood days, Carol enjoyed Girl Scouts, rearing all sorts of odd pets, and camping with her family in New England. Her mother was a graphic artist and encouraged Carol to explore hobbies such as nature photography and sketching. Meanwhile, Amy grew up watching her parents support conservation organizations in New Jersey. But her love for nature really blossomed in the 1980s when she began volunteering at Zoo Atlanta. Since then, Amy has focused her career on adult education. She served as Assistant Director and Education Director at the Belize Zoo in

Cooperator of the Year continued

Belize, Central America for six years, followed by working eight years at Brookfield Zoo near Chicago doing exhibit design and program management. Amy enjoys encouraging people to be outside making connecting with nature in various ways, as well as to looking at their own lifestyles in order to make good choices for the health of the planet.

Carol's career has also been devoted to wildlife and biodiversity conservation. When working on her PhD at Cornell, she spent a year walking with wild baboons in Kenya studying their behavior. She then accepted a position at the Chicago Zoological Society (Brookfield Zoo) as a primate education specialist. She was instrumental in expanding Brookfield's investment in evaluation, one of the first zoos to have such a program. While leading creative visitor stud-



ies research with teams of interns, Carol co-founded the field of Conservation Psychology. The field of Conservation Psychology is a network of researchers and practitioners who work together to understand human-nature relationships for the purpose of encouraging conservation. Carol then developed programs and exhibits based on conservation psychology principles and measuring their success. More recently she served as a research faculty for the Department of Environmental Studies at Antioch University New England where she has taught graduate courses, and mentored Masters and PhD students, and helped launch a series of training institutes and webinars.

In the Midwest, where both were employed by the Chicago Zoological Society, they were active members of the Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network. Amy also volunteered with the River-Watch citizen science program, and she assisted with various prairie habitat restoration projects. Once settled in the Monadnock Region, Amy wasted no time getting civically involved, volunteering for the Monadnock United Way Allocations Committee, serving on boards for Healthy Monadnock and the Conservation District, and six years as the chair of the Roxbury NH Planning Board.

"Both of us love wildlife" Amy explains. *"With Carol, butterflies and smaller creatures are a strong attraction while I bonded with the playful otters."* Now, thanks to that love and commitment to butterflies, otters, and so many more creatures big and small – all find a home at Woodland



Views.

Carol commented that *“Although I studied primates, focusing on smaller and common creatures such as butterflies was a better avenue for encouraging the public to make connections in their own backyards. No matter what, animal behavior has been the basis for my personal and professional interests.”*

She observed that *“For me, Conservation Psychology came from a place of passion. I’ve been interested in observing wildlife and engaging with nature ever since I was a little kid. I wanted to understand those experiences and how they transform us. I still do. Beyond understanding, I wanted to turn those experiences into some kind of positive action on behalf of the natural world. This reciprocal relationship between humans and the rest of nature is the essence of how Conservation Psychology was defined.”*

In terms of what she personally could do, Carol stated that *“my biology and psychology background put me in a good position as a bridge-maker. Zoos, aquariums, natural history*

museums and nature centers are wonderful ways to communicate with the public. I found that I could facilitate connections between educators, conservation biologists, psychology researchers, evaluators, and artists. Linking research & practice is an important part of Conservation Psychology—each perspective informs the other.”

Biodiversity Conservation and Stewardship

Amy and Carol have worked with Jeff Littleton, Principal Ecologist of Moosewood Ecological, to define their goals and to create and execute a management plan for wildlife on the land. An important part of that management is wildlife monitoring and during the past five years of monitoring over 30+ species of conservation concern have been recorded.

“I love working with Amy and Carol,” shared Jeff. *“It is exhilarating due in part to their tremendous curiosity and appreciation of the*

Cooperator of the Year continued

natural world and the land stewardship values that we share. Stewardship runs deep for Amy and Carol; for them it seems easy. They have this wonderful ethic that exemplifies the careful and responsible management of Woodland Views, safeguarding and enhancing its ecological integrity. They appreciate how their property fits in with the larger landscape of the Monadnock region, but they certainly do not lose sight of its smaller wonders. From monarchs and bear cubs to bobcats and birds, Amy and Carol have developed an intimate relationship with Woodland Views. It's a legacy to be proud of and an example to be followed."

Amy and Carol both continue to seek out knowledge on best practices for resource stewardship. This quest for stronger understanding has led to relationships with foresters, wildlife biologists, and specialists to help them refine their plans and reach their goals. It is in this vein that their cooperation with NRCS and the Conservation District started in 2009. They worked with NRCS and CCCD to leverage their own resources, gain new perspectives from conservation planners, and increase the impact they could make on their property in a short timeframe.

Through the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program, they added a stone ford and improved forest trails and landing. They put in a 2-acre patch cut for wildlife habitat and planted native

shrubs. When they bought a neighboring property, and increased their land holding from 18 to 235 acres, they worked with NRCS and forester Geoff Jones of Loveland Forestry to create a Forest Management Plan through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program. This same program helped to support their efforts controlling invasive plants, adding pollinator habitat, releasing apple trees, and installing bird boxes.

From 2015-2017 Amy and Carol participated in the Cheshire County Pollinator



Initiative spearheaded by the Conservation District. They added an additional acre of pollinator habitat and allowed monitoring on site for three years where 95 species of bees were identified.

This Fall, the Conservation Stewardship Program is helping support their establishment of monarch butterfly habitat. The Conservation Stewardship Program is set up to reward a high level of land stewardship and encourage landowners to go even

further and take that next step. Through this program, Amy and Carol will be documenting how they maintain soil quality; keep snags, den trees, and coarse woody debris on the ground; enhance forest understory; manage trees for improved mast production; continue to improve pollinator and bird habitat; enlarge the smaller patch cut; and overall increase the habitat potential of their property.

Sam Jaffe, Executive Director of the Caterpillar Lab, shared that *“Amy and Carol’s fields represent some of the best habitat I’ve seen in Cheshire County for meadow and early successional insects and caterpillars. The wealth and diversity of flowering plants and the ample edge habitat with native trees and shrubs growing in dense young groves, provide an important resource for native insects and other animals. These habitats have become less common in New Hampshire since woodlands have spread and taken over much of the historic open spaces.”*

Woodland Views in Roxbury is surrounded by conservation land including the Keene Watershed Land and other privately held conservation easements, and it sits in the Quabbin to Cardigan corridor, which conservation partners have identified as an ecologically significant region for wildlife passage. Amy and Carol’s long-term plans include permanent conservation of the land so the habitat they have fostered will continue to benefit biodiversity of the region for years to come. They have made arrangements for the ongoing monitoring of wildlife on their property through their partnership with Moosewood Ecological.

Educational Opportunities

But their stewardship doesn’t stop with

the land. They are also committed to sharing their experiences with the next generation of conservation planners, educators, and land managers. Each year they hire multiple interns from Antioch University New England’s Environmental Studies Department to assist with land management, monitoring, and trail building on their property. On top of this, they often open up Woodland Views for educational events in partnership with organizations such as the Conservation District and Cheshire Walkers. Through the internships and community education they hope to see the investment they have made in their land touch the hearts of many.

Mary Ellen Cannon, the lead NRCS Conservation Planner for their property shared that *“Amy and Carol care about land and creatures. They know so much about the natural world, are so willing to share their knowledge, and they open their land for workshops and education. They created a floral explosion from what had been an unproductive hayfield.... They take action. Nature responds. Amy and Carol are beautiful women who help butterflies, pollinators, birds, and other creatures thrive. They take care always for the land and water, and create beauty in the process.”*

Everyone at the Conservation District could not agree more. Both Amy and Carol have dedicated their lives to conservation and furthering connections to the natural world. They are an inspiration. It is with great honor that the Cheshire County Conservation District presents Amy Bodwell and Carol Saunders with the 2018 Cooperator of the Year Award.

2018 Educator of the Year

Eleanor Elbers of the Orchard School & Community Center

The CCCD is honored to recognize Eleanor Elbers of the Orchard School & Community Center in Alstead, NH as the 2018 Educator of the Year. As one of its founding members, Eleanor embodies the heart and soul of Orchard School & Community Center. Eleanor teaches and organizes Day Camps, the Arts & Ecology After-school program, and community festivals throughout the year.

The Orchard School & Community Center was founded in 1991 as a place of inclusion focused on gathering, growing, and learning. Eleanor's story however, began much earlier than that. In 1971, Eleanor found her way to Erewhon Farm in East Alstead where she and 25 novice farmers grew organic food for Erewhon Trading Company in Boston, one of the first organic food distributors in the U.S. They grew vegetables, root crops, all kinds of dry beans, and learned homesteading and farming skills from local farmers. At the root of her work, Eleanor believed that by increasing access to healthy food she could empower the disenfranchised, improve health and build community.

While farming at Erewhon Farm, Eleanor met Anton Elbers, who she later married and started a family with. In 1973 Eleanor and Anton began community farming with others at Stepping-



stone Farm in Marlow, NH until 1988. Through those years Eleanor found herself drawn to working with and caring for the various children that surrounded her on the farm, including her own three children. Eventually, she began to wonder how she could share this farming knowledge with kids and connect it back to her mission of caring for the children in a way that built self-esteem and self-reliance in a world rapidly forgetting the value of cooperation, creative problem solving and hands on work. Eleanor embarked on this mission with her first

childcare at Steppingstone Farm in 1973. The daycare operated out of a shared home and property where 8-14 members lived closely with each other and the land. They grew and sold vegetables and much of their own food, launched the Keene Farmers' Market, sold firewood, and made maple syrup.

During this time Eleanor began to recognize the importance of creating inclusive spaces where all children can grow and learn. This insight was prompted by her own family, the children who came to stay at the farm, and her work with Monadnock Developmental Services (then called New Hope New Horizons). As if she was called to champion this work, Eleanor did just that. As she interacted with her own children and the children and families that attended the daycare, she began to notice that "so many of the children in our life had what later was known as 'learning differences'" and there were things that everyone could gain from, regardless of these differences. Things like being in nature, growing your own food, eating and preparing food, participating in music and art and community work; all these things demonstrated to children that they can succeed no matter their abilities or differences.

Eleanor and her family moved back to East Alstead in 1990. In 1991 she joined with two colleagues and The Orchard School & Community Center was born. The mission was simple; make it accessible and

inclusive and focus on the things that translate to everyone. "You need to include everybody" Eleanor says, "whether a child is going to throw dirt in the air or plant, that child is still included here because he/she has some good ideas that we are going to need." Eleanor believes that we must model for children simple understandings we can all relate to. Ideas like: I don't know – Let's see what happens – Here's what I do know. Andrea Alderman, Homeschool Program Leader at The Orchard School, had this to say about Eleanor: "Eleanor is a loving visionary who maintains constant forward motion on her quest to manifest her dreams of a safe and supportive community for children and their families. Her life's work has been in creating a place that is a safe hold of inclusion, kindness and humanity, where people can put down roots, sing together, and forge lasting friendships." Eleanor's focus has always been to create an environment where everyone is welcome, where everyone can live together, be in community, and work things out collectively. This is her foundation as an educator and is the foundation of the Center.



Educator of the Year continued

In 1994, the 2,500 square foot building that is now The Orchard School & Community Center was erected thanks to the leadership of Eleanor, Kathy Torrey, and Kathleen Vetter, a team of 12 skilled builders including her husband Anton, and the help of over 275 volunteers who contributed more than 3,000 hours of work. The Center opened to 45 students on September 14, 1994. As you enter the large open space of the Center, you are greeted with a hand-made sign that reads: “Welcome to The Orchard School & Community Center – Our mission is to be an accessible place of learning that nurtures a sense of community, respect for individual differences, the land, lifelong learning, and a connection between the cultural life of our rural com-

munity and that of the world beyond.” Since its beginning, The Orchard School & Community Center has hosted over 2,000 children in their pre-school/kindergarten childcare, summer day camps, homeschool programs, and afterschool programs. The children embark on a range of activities that include math projects, growing food and tending animals, participating in festivals and performances, singing songs, exploring nature and everything in between.

The Orchard School & Community Center is a 501(c)3 nonprofit institution that relies on a range of grants and volunteer support to continue its success. Funding sources include the United Way, the Acworth Community Charitable Fund, Alstead &



Acworth Conservation Commissions, the Marlow Children's Fund, the Catalyst Fund, and Monadnock Developmental Services (MDS). Each year 20-30 kids with identified differences and at-risk youth can attend programs at the Center with the help of a grant from MDS. At any given time, at least one third (if not half) of the students enrolled in the programs are kids with differences. That is a huge number for such a rural community – and it doesn't stop there! Kids keep coming back well after their time in the program has ended, working as counselors in the programs that meant so much to them as students and continuing the cycle of inclusion, community, and connectedness.

Eleanor shared some of her thoughts with us about her work at The Orchard School:

“These days one of the most important pieces educators can share is a sense of wonder for life. If we are lucky, we work in schools that invite the child to walk through a portal on their own. Not away from the real world with all its injustice and sorrow, but close to the heart of hands on situations and projects. I work from a curriculum that strives to find a zone of connection for each member of the group. To feel and to touch life directly inspires the most shut down child. To walk the bridge to twig village requires concentration and balance for the most over active child, to sit still (a practice where each camper finds a place to sit or lie down for a whole 5 minutes in complete quiet) allows for regulation.”

Eleanor would be reluctant to call what she's doing “environmental education” in



the traditional sense of the phrase. Rather, she refers to it as an “ecology of community & compassion.” Eleanor believes that her work as an educator is environmental, but in a unique and different way by not placing the focus on the environment, but on the children in the environment – whatever that environment may be! By focusing on community and connection, she and her students live this “ecology of community & compassion” and thus of environmentalism and conservation. Her teachings highlight realities that everyone can relate to such as: we're all in this together and many hands make light work. She believes that including kids with differences enriches everyone in the group and changes lives for the better.

We thank Eleanor for the valuable service she provides to the youth in our community and it is with great honor that the CCCD presents Eleanor Elbers with the 2018 Educator of the Year Award. Congratulations Eleanor!

Organizational Membership

- Antioch Community Garden Connections - Advisory Committee
- Monadnock Conservancy - Stewardship Committee
- Monadnock Farm and Community Coalition - Board of Directors
- Monadnock Sustainability Network - 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 2018 to provide additional funds for CCCD programs.



- **Conservation Plant Sale** - **Bulb Sale** - **Bulk Seed Sale** - **Pizza Night at Orchard Hill Breadworks**

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 2018 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

2018 Highlights

The CCCD reached out to over 3,000 individuals in 2018 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 2014 Farm Bill —workshops included— **Cover Crops, No Till Farming, Soil Health Equipment Demonstrations, Wildlife Habitat, and Conservation Easements.** Educators from Cheshire County UNH Cooperative Extension 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 2018 the Conservation District further developed its Soil Health Education and Equipment Rental program to help producers meet their soil health goals. The following implements are now available: no-till seeder, single shank sub-soiler, penetrometer, roller-crimper, aerator, zrx roller planter, and wood ash/lime spreader.

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

In 2019 the CCCD & partners will launch a statewide no-till initiative for vegetable producers. Starting in the Spring growers will have use of a new no-till transplanter and BCS walk behind tractor with implements for improving soil health and efficient production.





WATER

Improving Water Quality Through Skidder Bridge Rentals, River Clean Ups, and Farm Partnerships

Dairy Farms Invest in Water Quality

Reducing Tillage

Reducing tillage from your management regime can improve your soil's structure and stability, water infiltration and water-holding capacity, organic matter content, temperature, and 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.

Nutrient Management

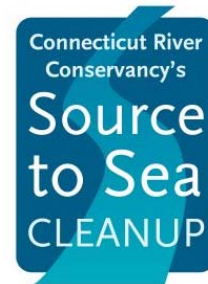
Windyhurst Farm of Westmoreland NH constructed a new barn, improved infrastructure in their existing barn, and installed an effective new manure and milk house waste handling system in an effort to improve water quality. In the Spring of 2018 they opened their farm to host a workshop to share the work accomplished in partnership with the CCCD, UNH Cooperative Extension, and USDA NRCS .



Source to Sea River Clean Up



On September 21st and 22nd a large group of enthusiastic volunteers pitched in to help clean up the Ashuelot River in Keene, Marlow, and Swanzey and Beaver Brook in Keene as part of the Connecticut River Conservancy's "Source to Sea Cleanup". 69 volunteers pulled over 1,500 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, Antioch University New England, Surry Village Charter School's Keene Campus, and Monadnock Waldorf School, as well as a group from the Keene Unitarian Universalist Church. This event is made possible with the partnership of the Ashuelot River Local Advisory Committee, City of Keene, Keene State College, Moosewood Ecological, and Keene Young Professionals Network.



Cheshire County Skidder Bridge Initiative



In 2018 the conservation district continues to rent two skidder bridges to land owners and managers that are interested in making stream crossings while preserving water quality during timber harvests. This is made possible through funding from the NH State Conservation Committee. This service would not be possible without strong and committed partners including UNH Cooperative Extension and Peter Renzelman.



Improving Wildlife Habitat for the Health of Our Ecosystems

WILDLIFE



The CCCD's new Closer Look Workshop Series encourages a closer look at the natural world and our connections to it.

Throughout the year the CCCD worked with partners on this ecological and natural history workshop series to take a closer look at over a dozen topics such as the land use history of our forests, trees & shrubs, vernal pools, birds, wildflowers, pollinators, beneficial insects and more!

Pollinator Gardens & Conservation Bio-Control

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers worked with the CCCD, Moosewood Ecological, Surry Village Charter School, and Brooks Construction Co. to install a pollinator garden and offer a community education day.



CCCD in partnership with USDA NRCS will work with the Xerces Society to offer a Conservation Bio-Control Short Course in December 2018.



Trout in the Classroom

The Trout in the Classroom program is designed to help foster an understanding of the habitat that native brook trout need. The Monadnock Chapter of Trout Unlimited, with financial support of the Cheshire County Conservation District purchased a new chiller for Marlborough School. This will bring the participating number of schools up to 10 in the Monadnock Region in the 2017-18 school year. This continues a multi-year partnership to expand the program in the Monadnock Region.





Initiatives to Increase Local Food Production and Expand Markets

FARM VIABILITY

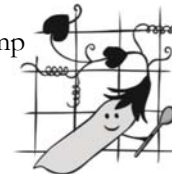
Monadnock Food Co-op Farm Fund

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. Four grant awards were made in 2018 to Brookfield Farm, Echo Farm, Tracie's Community Farm, and Picadilly Farm. Funds were used to expand cold storage, acquire field and processing equipment, and improve packaging and marketing materials. 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 2018 the Localvores offered scholarships to summer farm camp to 24 children through the Jeffrey P. Smith Farm Scholarship. This is made possible through funding from the You Have Our Trust Fund, generous local donors, and committed volunteers.



NH Harvest of the Month

In 2018 CCCD and partners provided educational resources and professional development to schools on the NH Harvest of the Month program. The goal of the program is to promote seasonal eating, encourage healthy diets and support the local economy. Classroom Cooking Kits were developed and provided to schools in the region to facilitate the use of curriculum materials.

Partners of this initiative are the regional school districts in Cheshire County, NH Farm to School, Food Connects, Monadnock Menus, Vital Communities, Antioch University New England, and The Cornucopia Project. Funding has been provided by the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets, and Food through the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant.



Cheshire County Complex—Maplewood Garden



In 2018 the County of Cheshire continued their partnership with Antioch University New England's Community Garden Connections program to cultivate vegetables at the Cheshire County Farm in Westmoreland NH. The 1,100 lbs of produce they harvested was donated to the Community Kitchen in Keene. In 2018 with funding through USDA NRCS they constructed a high tunnel on site to extend the harvest and increase production for individuals and families with limited food access.

Community Supported Solar for NH Farms

In 2018 the CCCD collaborated with the Monadnock Sustainability Network to start raising funds to launch a Community Supported Solar Installation in partnership with farms in the region. Through a crowd funding campaign our community chipped in \$2,550 to this effort. These dollars will be a springboard for additional investment and we look forward to further developing a community supported solar program for farms in 2019.





Granite State Market Match

In 2018 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). Six new locations at Foggy Hill Farm, New Dawn Farm, Stonewall Farm, Sun Moon Farm, Tracie's Community Farm, and the Hinsdale Farmers' Market were set up to accept SNAP and offer GSMM. They join a network that includes the Farmers Market of Keene, Team Jaffrey Farmers Market, Winchester Farmers Market, Hillside Springs Farm, and Picadilly Farm. 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 Hinsdale Farmers Market worked with the CCCD to offer a Vouchers for Veterans program during September 2018. 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. \$3,000 of Vouchers were distributed to 58 veterans.



Educational Events

Radically Rural Summit

Two-day summit that brought together 500 people 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 the farm and forest economy. The Hannah Grimes Center & Keene Sentinel were lead organizers of the event.



Conservation Commission Potluck

Partnered with the NH Association of Conservation Commissions to offer the fourth annual networking and information sharing event for conservation commissioners at Stonewall Farm. Eric Aldrich of The Nature Conservancy shared his experience with camera trapping wildlife in the region.



Farm Transfer Planning Workshop

Partnered with Land For Good and the Monadnock Conservancy on a workshop for farmers on succession planning and conservation easements. This workshop builds on the work of the Land Resources Action Team of the NH Food Alliance. The Land Resources Action Team has developed a Community Education Guide for how towns and organizations can successfully offer these events. During 2018 the Action Team also laid the groundwork for a new grant program to assist with the permanent conservation of important farmland paired with farm viability and succession planning technical assistance.

Gardening Education: Getting Started with Fruit Trees, Handling & Planting Bareroot Stock, Ecological Landscape Design, and Planting with a Purpose

This diversity of topics on gardening and landscaping were presented in a series of workshops with partners such as Distant Hill Gardens, Moosewood Ecological, and UNH Cooperative Extension.

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 2018 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 2018 NRCS and the District have implemented 288 individual conservation projects throughout Cheshire County. This year NRCS obligated 38 new Farm Bill conservation program contracts totaling \$825,835 in financial assistance enrolling 7,815 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 4 high priority easements in Cheshire County and are looking to close in 2018 and 2019. The District has recently entered an agreement with NRCS to assist with easement monitoring of existing Farm Bill easements. 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

NRCS Key Performance Measures 2018 for Cheshire County NH

- Conservation applied to improve environmental quality: 8,637 acres on private agricultural land including forests
- Land with conservation applied to improve water quality: 8,389 acres
- Cropland with conservation applied to improve soil quality: 713 acres
- Forest land with conservation applied to protect and improve vegetative condition: 6,867 acres
- Non-Federal land with conservation applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality: 6,540 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.

for habitat restoration opportunities. Together the District and NRCS are partnering with the Harris Center for Conservation Education, Trout Unlimited, NH Fish and Game, NH Department of Environmental Services, and US Fish and Wildlife Service. Together we have identified the Thompson Brook watershed as high value Eastern Brook Trout habitat. The watershed has a major fish passage barrier we are looking to address by designing passage through an existing perched box culvert. The District has secured funding through a demonstration agreement with NRCS and NHACD and has applied for an Aquatic Resources Mitigation



Antioch High Tunnel in Westmoreland



Silver Maple Floodplain Forest Restoration (above)
and Swanzey Riparian Buffer Planting (right)

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

Soil Health and Quality is another high priority 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, 3 no-till corn planters, no-till vegetable transplanters, and a BCA 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 2018 Report continued

Of the NRCS funded conservation projects installed in Cheshire County throughout 2018 the top ten conservation practices were:



1. **Cover Crop** – 812.1 acres planted
2. **Forest Stand Improvement** – 805.6 acres treated
3. **Conservation Crop Rotation** - 713.1 acres rotated
4. **Forest Management Plans** - 8 plans written on 703.7 acres
5. **Nutrient Management** – 479 acres applied
6. **Forage and Biomass Planting (pasture and hayland seedings)** – 214.5 acres seeded to perennial forage
7. **Brush Management (invasive and noxious plant control)** - 38.5 acres treated
8. **Early Successional Habitat Development/Management** – 16/7 acres applied
9. **Mulching** – 11.8 acres mulched
10. **Riparian Forest Buffer** – 9.4 acres planted to trees and shrubs



Financials - 2018 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.

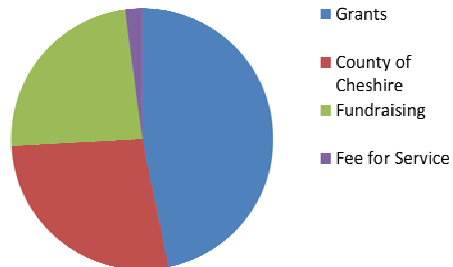


2018 Receipts, January-September.

Income

Grants	102,412	47%
County of Cheshire	59,876	27%
Fundraising	51,922	24%
Fee for Service	4,638	2%

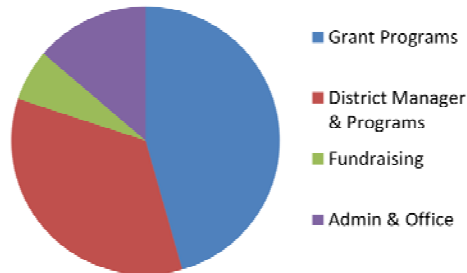
218,848 100%



Expenses

Grant Programs	96,681	46%
District Manager & Programs	73,091	34%
Fundraising	13,167	6%
Admin & Office	29,156	14%

212,095 100%



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 2018:

Alyson's Orchard	Land For Good
Archway Farm	Peter and Roberta Letourno
Lesley Arnold	Joseph & Joanne Majewski
Blackhead Mountain Bear Works	Mayfair Farm
Amy B. Bodwell & Carol D. Saunders	Monadnock Berries
Wendy Byrn	Monadnock Food Coop
C&S Wholesale Grocers	Monadnock Sustainability Network
James Casey	Moosewood Ecological
Susan W. Carlson	NH Association of
Cheshire County Farm Bureau	Conservation Districts
Cheshire Garden	NH Charitable Foundation
Cheshire Medical Center	NH Department of Agriculture
Bruce & Ellen Clement	Markets and Food
Cold River Ranters	NH Food Bank
Martha & Maury Collins	NH State Conservation Committee
Anne Cook	Orchard Hill Breadworks
Lawrence Conboy	Phoenix Farm
County of Cheshire NH	Picadilly Farm
Paul & Dorothy Crosby	Natalie Quevedo
Judith Daniels	Peter Renzelman
Walter Derjue	Cathy Sims
Distant Hill Gardens	Jim Skofield
Ron Farina	Dottie Smith
Chris & Cindy Feiker	Stonewall Farm
Janice Fiandaca & Leo Rheume	University of NH Sustainability
Foggy Hill Farm	Institute
Anne B. Francisco	USDA Natural Resources
Marcia French	Conservation Service
HNH Foundation	USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant
Holland Homestead Farm	Wellscroft Farm
Honey Meadow Farm	Westmoreland Lions Club
Iron Kettle Farm	Wholesome Wave
Carl & Ruth Jacobs	Marilyn Wilking
Keene Country Club	Winchester Centennial Lions Club
Keene Lions Club	Mary Wright
Keene Public Works	You Have Our Trust Fund
	Joseph & Lorraine Youngs



CHESHIRE COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT



SOIL

WATER

WILDLIFE

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