North Central Conservation District

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2017-2018

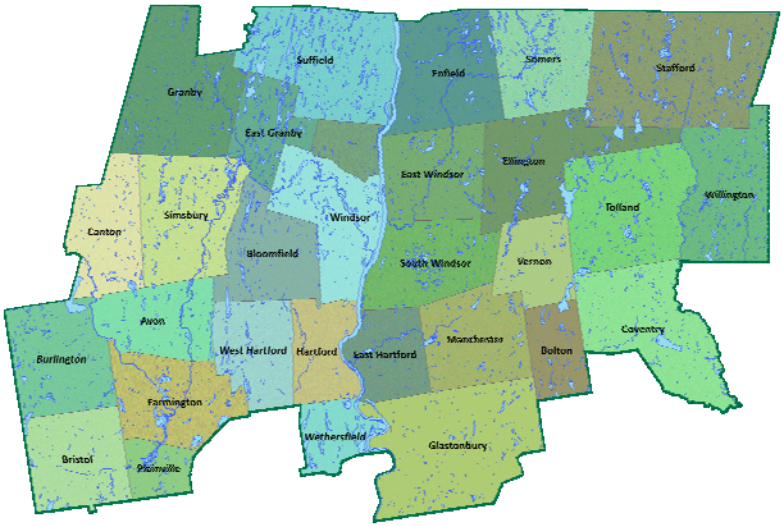
www.conservect.org/northcentral

North Central Conservation District

Introduction

This Annual Report summarizes work performed by the North Central Conservation District (NCCD, or the District) during the 2017-2018 fiscal year. NCCD is one of five Conservation Districts created by state statute to "assist the Commissioner of Environmental Protection in identifying and remedying the problems of soil and water erosion," and is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. NCCD is funded through municipal contributions, State of CT funding, US EPA Clean Water Act Section 319 non-point source grants, technical assistance contracts with the Connecticut Department of Agriculture and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, an annual Plant and Seedling Sale fundraiser, and private grants and contributions.

This fiscal year, Connecticut's five Conservation Districts successfully regained state funding, as part of the new Passport to Parks program. We greatly appreciate the tremendous efforts of those who advocated on our behalf to reinstate this critical, base funding, which allows us to continue to support our towns and residents, and to pursue environmentally beneficial projects.



NCCD's service area includes 30 municipalities within north central CT, essentially comprising the area within the northern Connecticut River watershed. NCCD's office is located in Vernon.

The District is governed by a volunteer board of directors comprised of local landowners with expertise and interest in the management and protection of our natural resources. The District is an active member of the CT Envirothon Steering Committee, CT Council on Soil and Water Conservation, CT Association of Conservation Districts, and CT Resource Conservation and Development Council. Meetings are open to the public and are typically held at the Tolland County Agricultural Center, 24 Hyde Avenue, Vernon, at 7:00pm on the fourth Wednesday of each month. Visit www.conservect.org/northcentral or call (860) 875-3881 to learn more.

Board of Supervisors

Jack Collins, *Chairman*	Enfield
Jeff Folger, *Vice Chairman*	Ellington
Lin Marino, *Secretary/Treasurer*	Tolland
Dan Camerota	West Hartford
Bob DePietro	Bolton
Harold Eastwood	Somers
Michael Mocko	Stafford Springs
Jane Seymour	Tolland

Staff

Joanna Shapiro	Executive Director
Barbara Kelly	Program Coordinator
Ruth Miller	Landscape Specialist
John Dudula	Natural Resource Specialist
Tina Pelletier	Bookkeeper

Year in Review

The District provided valuable *technical services* to municipalities by *reviewing development plans, verifying wetland boundaries*, and serving as the municipal *wetland agent* to inland wetland and conservation agencies in Somers and Bolton, and also in Tolland for part of the year. Our primary services to towns included providing assistance to land use staff and commissions throughout the local regulatory process, and evaluating proposed *erosion control measures, stormwater management, and wetland impacts* of development projects. The District also assisted many landowners with natural resource issues; providing technical support regarding *invasive plant control, native planting guidance, pond maintenance, navigating local regulations, conservation and financial assistance programs* available for agricultural producers and landowners.

Vernal Pool monitored by the District

Flowering Dogwood 'Rubra', in this year's sale

The spring *Plant and Seedling Sale*, our annual fund-raiser, promoted *ecological landscaping* and open space enjoyment, and provided funds to help support District programs. Several experienced Master Gardeners and interns helped to assemble pre-orders and assist plant sale customers, answering many planting questions. Customers shifted to online ordering as a convenient option, with the number of online orders surpassing conventional mail-orders. Our Bloomfield pickup location shifted from the old apple barn, which is slated to be demolished, to barns within the 4H complex.

A pollinator-focused *educational workshop* on March 3rd conveyed relevant, practical information to area residents. This topical workshop, entitled "Landscaping for Birds, Bees, and Butterflies Using Native Plants," was presented by Jane Seymour, CT DEEP Wildlife Biologist, and Pamm Cooper, UConn Plant Technician/Educator.

The *Connecticut Envirothon program*, coordinated by NCCD, had another successful year. Statewide hands-on educational workshops were held throughout the year for high school students to learn about aquatics, forestry, soil, wildlife, and the annual current issue topic, which for 2017 -2018 was Rangeland Management. The field day competition was held on May 24 at Topsmead State Forest in Litchfield. This year's first time champions from the Academy of Aerospace and Engineering in Windsor moved on to compete in the North American Envirothon in Idaho.

Students focusing on the Aquatics test

Winning team from Academy of Aerospace & Engineering

Open for project information

Grant/Project Work

Clean Water Act Nonpoint Source Project Updates

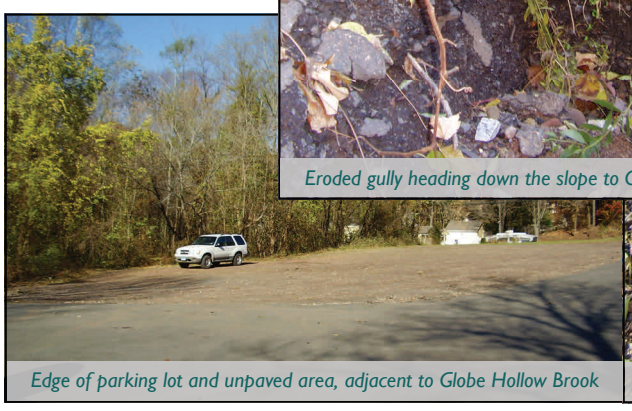
This fiscal year, significant progress was made toward completion of several projects with funding through the EPA Clean Water Act Section 319 nonpoint source program, locally administered by the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP). While these projects are largely in the design phase, this work represents a critical step toward implementation.

Globe Hollow Park—The District initiated the fourth project resulting from a previous Watershed-Based Plan/Trackdown Survey that identified potential water quality enhancement projects within the Hockanum River Watershed in Manchester. The District secured funding through a 319 grant to complete a stormwater retrofit adjacent to the Globe Hollow parking lot. The parking lot lacks stormwater management, and runoff sheet-flows to an unpaved area before reaching Globe Hollow Brook, which drains to Hop Brook, a major tributary of the Hockanum River (*photos of existing conditions on right*). The stormwater runoff contributes pollutants to the brook and also causes erosion, resulting in sedimentation and degradation of the brook. Utilizing the expertise of the Town of Manchester Engineering Division, two stormwater quality basins are being designed to repair this condition and provide water quality treatment to stormwater from both the parking lot and from an outfall that discharges off-site stormwater to Globe Hollow Brook. This design will be implemented in the next fiscal year under this same contract.

Eroded gully heading down the slope to G.H. Brook

Eroded gully in foreground, headed to Globe Hollow Brook in background

North Branch Park River—The District, in partnership with the North Branch Park River Watershed Coordinator, secured CWA Section 319 nonpoint source funding to complete two projects, continuing the multi-phase work adjacent to parking areas serving UConn School of Law and Hartford Seminary. One of these grants will support the engineered design to ultimately repair an eroded channel that conveys drainage directly to the Park River. The design will incorporate a step-pool conveyance system to stabilize the channel and dissipate energy from stormwater flows to prevent future erosion. The second grant will allow for additional repairs, maintenance, and supplemental planting work within the three bioretention basins that were previously completed on the site.



Edge of parking lot and unpaved area, adjacent to Globe Hollow Brook

Broad Brook Implementation—Following the recent completion of the Broad Brook Watershed Based Plan Phase 2, the District is working to secure funding for immediate implementation of several agricultural projects, aimed at reducing nutrient and bacteria levels within Broad Brook. Over a century of intensive agricultural usage has contributed to impairment of the watershed, yet the current operators have recently made tremendous improvement to their management of the land and are interested in implementing best management practices to improve water quality.

Farmland Restoration Grant

The District has continued to assist the Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DoAG) with implementation of the popular and productive Farmland Restoration Program, which was created to increase food and fiber production state-wide, and help farmers and landowners to reclaim former production farmland or to expand existing farmland. The program can fund various practical work that will expand agricultural production, including tree removal, well development, stump removal, access improvement, and fence installation. The District's role in the program is to provide technical assistance to producers, complete initial site inspections, and prepare *Restoration Plans*. This work has allowed District staff to assist many farms throughout the state.

Restoration work in Ellington & South Windsor will protect water quality and restore agricultural production land

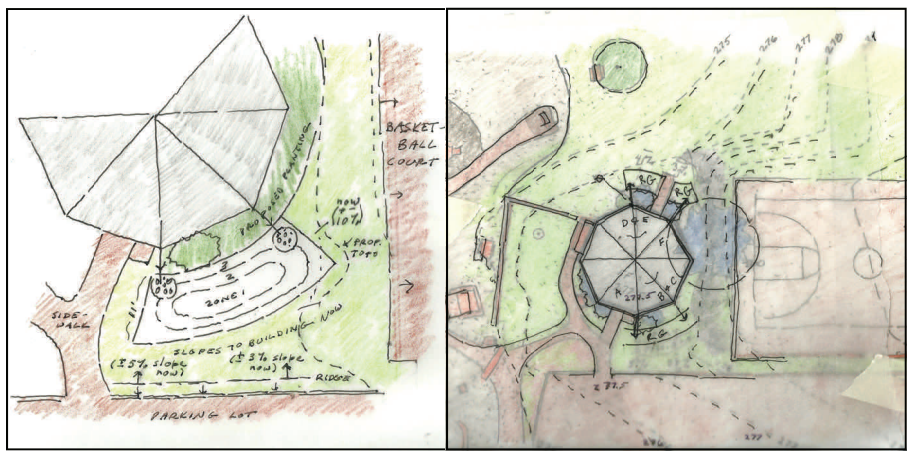
Previously overgrown prime farmland in Enfield was out of production, and now has been restored and seeded

Landscape Design and Planting Projects

The District's in-house *landscape designer* provided technical assistance all year to landowners and organizations throughout the District, including *native planting instructions* as well as formalized *concept designs*. This capacity also allows us to partner with local organizations on projects.

CT Water/Farmington—The District continues to work with CT Water Company, the Farmington River Watershed Association, and the Town of Farmington on a four-phase project. Another portion of the native planting designed by the District within an aquifer area, previously infested with Japanese Knotweed, was completed this year, and the fourth and final phase will be completed next year.

Page Park Rain Garden Project—The District is in the design phase of a rain garden project for a recreational structure in Page Park in Bristol (see preliminary drawings to the right). The overall goal is to improve water quality in the Pequabuck River, a tributary of the Farmington River, which has a largely wooded watershed yet significant urban/industrial development through Bristol. A collaboration between the Farmington River Watershed Association, the City of Bristol, the District, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); the project is intended to improve on-site drainage and capture roof runoff before it enters an adjacent parking lot, which drains to a nearby stream. The site topography is complex, in that over many decades, multiple recreational uses have been layered into a small area. The District is working with the project partners to design the rain gardens and planting plans, to be implemented in the spring.



Keney Park Sustainability Project—The images below represent a completion of a collaborative project between the District, the Farmington River Watershed Association (FRWA), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Towns of Windsor and Hartford for the Keney Park Sustainability Project in Windsor. Keney Park was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and his firm in the late 19th century, and represents significant landmark in the Towns of Windsor and Hartford. The Farmington River Watershed Association attained Supplemental Environmental Project funds through CT DEEP to financially support this project. The District provided the landscape design and plant selection work, and participated in the site preparation and planting effort. Several summer youth groups with a focus on outdoor environmental projects helped to implement the plan. The design provided by the District last year was implemented and completed this year. Three rain gardens were constructed and planted with native and edible plant varieties, which are both beautiful and useful for wildlife and water quality.

Conceptual Drawing— 3 Rain Gardens in Keney Park

NORTH CENTRAL CONSERVATION DISTRICT, INC.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT*

July 2017—June 2018

Income

CWA Section 319 Grant Projects	86,500
NRCS Technical Services Contract	82,936
State of CT	80,000**
Plant/Seedling Sale	52,284
Fee for Service	32,917
Town Contributions	31,415
CT DoAG Farmland Restoration	15,226
NACD Technical Assistance Grant	10,000
Interest/Investments	7,488
Total	**398,766****

Expenses

Salaries & Benefits	143,178
DEEP Grant Projects	5,743
Seedling/Fish	34,334
NRCS Technical Services Contract	75,164
Taxes and Insurance	13,246
Rent for Office Space	7,600
Office Expenses/Postage/Equipment	6,840
Auto Expenses and Mileage	3,495
Audit	2,500
Outreach	1,500
Dues	245
Total	**293,845**

*Detailed financial statement available upon request.

**State funding received at end of fiscal year and resulting surplus will aid in recovery from years without base state funding that resulted in deficits, including depletion of reserves.