North Central Conservation District

Annual Report

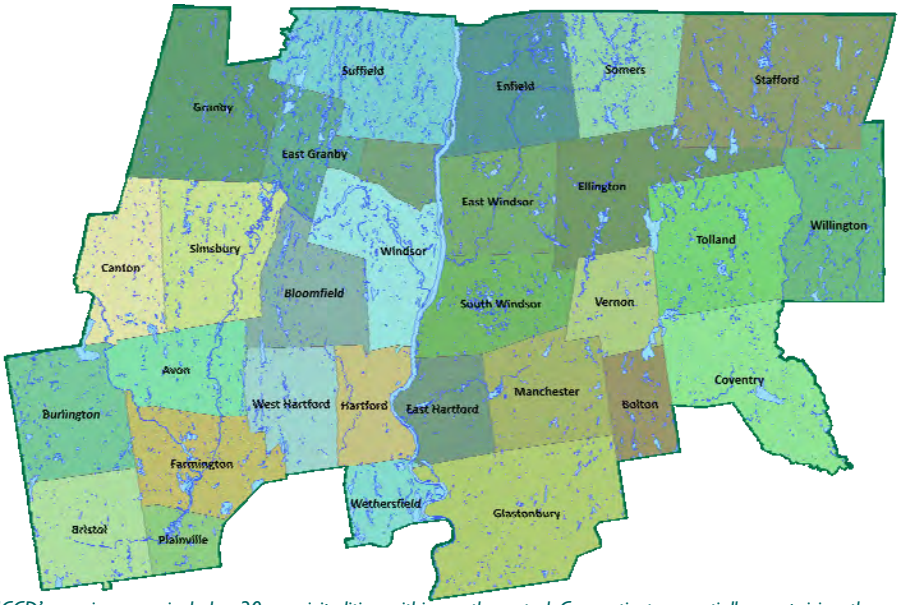
Fiscal Year 2013–2014

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 2013-2014 fiscal year. The District is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, financed through municipal contributions, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) funding, US EPA Clean Water Act Section 319 non-point source grants, an annual Plant and Seedling Sale fundraiser, and private grants and contributions.



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

The District is governed by a volunteer board of directors made up of local landowners with expertise and interest in the management and protection of our natural resources. The District is also an active member of the CT Envirothon Steering Committee, the Council on Soil and Water Conservation, and the CT Association of Conservation Districts. Meetings are open to the public and are held at the Tolland County Agricultural Center, 24 Hyde Avenue (Rt. 30) in Vernon, at 7:00pm on the fourth Thursday of most months. Please visit www.conservect.org/northcentral or call (860) 875-3881 for details.

Board of Supervisors

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

Staff

David Askew	Executive Director
Barbara Kelly	Program Coordinator
Ruth Miller	Landscape Specialist
Joanna Shapiro	Natural Resource Specialist
Heidi Cerrigone	Bookkeeper
Salvatore DeCarli	Environmental Planner *Left NCCD at the end of the 2013-2014 fiscal year*

Chairman's Year in Review

The District provided services to municipalities by *reviewing development plans and wetland boundaries*, as well as serving as *wetland agent* in Somers, Bolton, and Granby, and as acting wetland agent in Tolland during the first three months of the fiscal year. The District also assisted landowners with natural resource issues, providing technical support regarding soil erosion solutions, invasive plant control, planting guidance, pond maintenance, and more.

The District provided *nutrient management* services to *local farmers*, collecting soil samples from cornfields in early summer. The UCONN soils lab provided the results and fertilizer recommendations. The program has helped local producers to reduce fertilizer usage.

The *Plant and Seedling Sale* and *Fish Fingerling Sale* were successful fundraisers, promoting ecological landscaping and open space enjoyment. Volunteer Master Gardeners assisted plant sale customers, answering many planting questions. A related *workshop* was held, entitled "Landscaping for Wildlife: Using Native Plants to Sustain Wildlife in your Backyard."

Top (L and R)—Plants lined up in preparation for sale.
Bottom—Pre-ordered plants grouped and ready for pick-up.

The District coordinated the *Connecticut Envirothon* program. Educational workshops were held throughout the year for high school students to learn about aquatics, forestry, soil, wildlife, and the 2014 current issue, sustainable agriculture. The annual field day competition was held at the Tolland County Agricultural Center (TAC) in Vernon.

Students working on the forestry exam

A room full of students awaiting the awards ceremony

A tremendous amount of staff time was dedicated to specific *projects and grant work*, which is described and depicted on the inside section of this document.

See inside for grants/project information

NCCD

FINANCIAL STATEMENT*

July 2013—June 2014

Income

DEEP 319 Grant Projects	64,550
State of CT	50,000
Municipal Fee for Service	48,234
Seedling/Fish Sales	45,030
CT DoAG Agviability Grant	37,027
Town Donations	33,479
CT DoAG Farmland Restoration	32,080
Interest/Investments	20,041
DEEP 604B Water Quality Grant	19,867
NRCS CTA Grant	11,250
Soil Testing Services	3,747
Misc.	95
Total	**365,401**

Expenses

Salaries & Benefits	234,676
CT DoAG Agviability Grant	31,120
Seedling/Fish Sales	30,387
Taxes and Insurance	19,471
LIS Restoration Grant	18,125
DEEP 319 Grant Projects	15,750
DEEP 604B Water Quality Grant	13,800
Rent	8,396
Office Expenses/Postage/Equipment	3,890
Auto Expenses and Mileage	3,643
Scholarships	2,000
Audit	2,500
Misc.	1,259
Dues	945
CT DoAG Farmland Restoration	271
Total	**386,233**

*Detailed financial statement available upon request

Grant/Project Work

North Branch Park River Implementation

With primary funding through the EPA Clean Water Act Section 319 nonpoint source program, locally administered by the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), the District completed a stormwater quality project within the North Branch Park River Watershed. The District facilitated and administered two grants to implement projects identified in the North Branch Park River Watershed-Based Plan. The District oversaw construction of two bioretention areas, designed to treat polluted stormwater before it discharges to the North Branch Park River, adjacent to parking areas serving UConn School of Law and Hartford Seminary.

Laurel Marsh Ecological Restoration

The District has been implementing a plan to remove invasive plants from Laurel Marsh in Manchester, using a *Long Island Sound Fund* grant. The project primarily targets Phragmites Australis, an invasive aquatic plant that has formed a monoculture throughout much of the marsh. The District has completed a three year treatment plan, involving both mowing and aquatic herbicide treatment. The treatment is intended to allow native plants to re-inhabit the area and better support wildlife. District staff observed impressive results during a tour of the treatment area. In the photos below, native plants are seen sprouting where phragmites once stood throughout Laurel Marsh. The District hopes to extend this successful treatment program for an additional year.

Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) Grant

Working in conjunction with the Council on Soil and Water, all five CT Conservation Districts have continued their assistance to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) through the Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) Partnership agreement. This District completed a *Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan* and provided technical assistance to NRCS staff throughout the District. The District is eager to continue its partnership with NRCS and expand upon the skills and experience gained from the CTA Partnership.

Farmland Restoration Grant

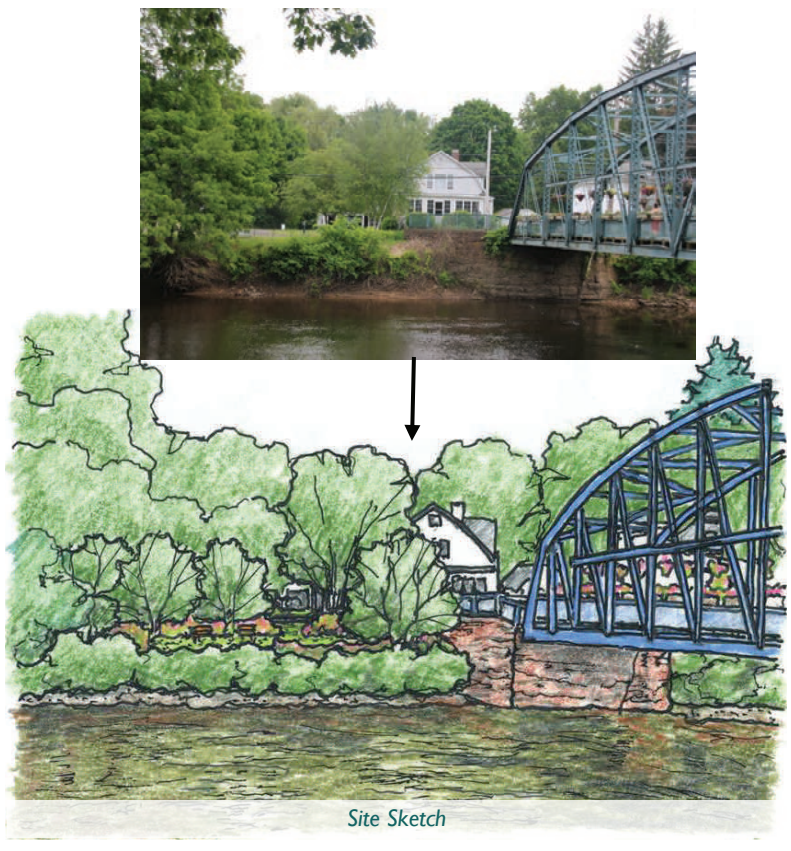
The Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DoAG) has contracted with the District to assist with implementation of the Farmland Restoration Program. The Farmland Restoration Program is a grant available to farmers and land-owners who are working to reclaim former production farmland. The grant can be used for various activities, including tree removal, well development, stump removal, and fence installation. The District's role in the program is to provide technical assistance, complete initial site inspections, and prepare *Restoration Plans*. The District is also assisting the DoAG with monitoring conservation easements, and has completed several monitoring reports and site investigations.

Agriculture Viability Grant

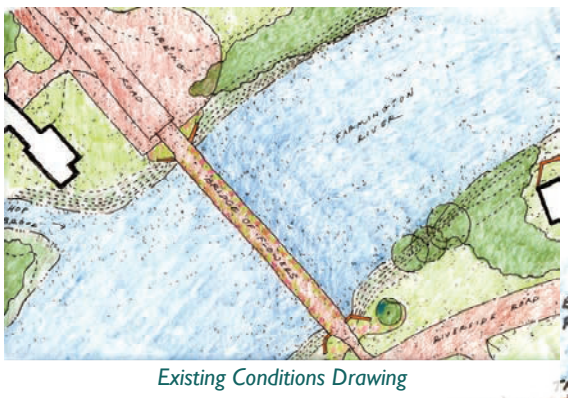
The District secured funding through the CT DoAG Agriculture Viability Grants Program to construct both a *greenhouse* and a *seasonal high-tunnel* at Osborn Correctional Institute in Somers. These structures will be used to grow crops throughout an extended growing season for use within the prison facility, with surplus crops being donated to local charitable organizations. Through the grant, the District was also able to provide lumber for construction of planting benches within the greenhouse, and to purchase a supply of vegetable and herb seeds. The greenhouse has been completed, and the high tunnel will follow in the next fiscal year.

Landscape Design Projects—FRWA

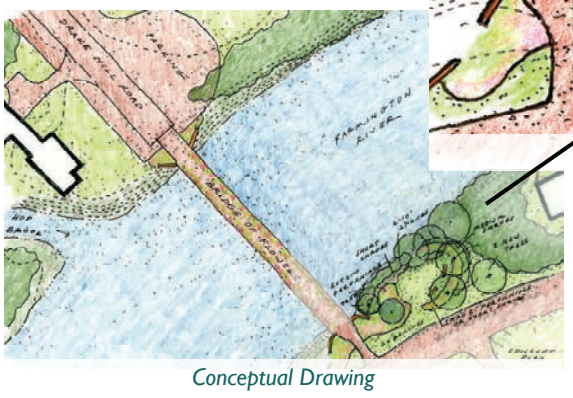
Throughout the year, the District provided *planting instruction*, as well as formalized *concept designs*, to individuals and organizations. The images below depict a project with the Farmington River Watershed Association to improve the landscape along the Farmington River. The site sketches and conceptual drawings below were completed by the District for work to be completed on private property adjacent to the Bridge of Flowers in Simsbury, CT. The property owner wishes to create a community park on the land, remove invasive plants, as well as repair an eroding bank along the Farmington River. This project is in a design stage, awaiting a final plan for bank stabilization, and should be implemented within the following year.



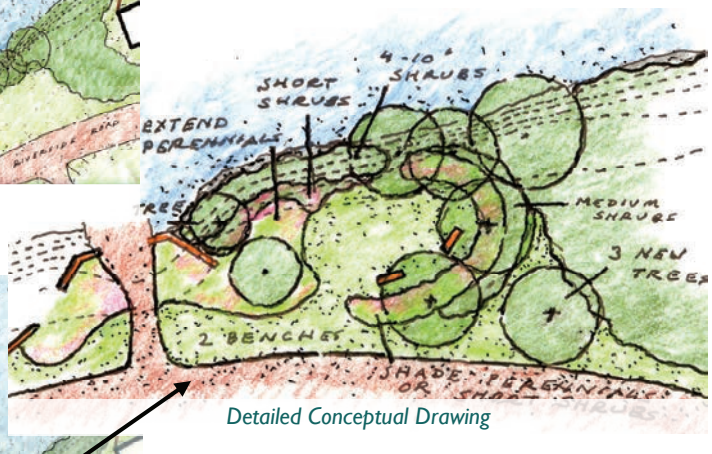
Site Sketch



Existing Conditions Drawing



Conceptual Drawing



Detailed Conceptual Drawing