



Belknap County Conservation District PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS 2007



527-5880 or -9146

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COMMUNITY PLANNING: Funding from the Pardoe Foundation assisted BCCD's Roger Hogan in work obtaining conservation easements on several properties. His work with municipalities, The New England Forestry Foundation, USDA and others generated funds: \$90,000 for Hillcrest Farm in Laconia, from USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Grazing Land Program; Ramblin' Vewe Farm in Gilford \$352,500 from the USDA NRCS' Farm and Ranchland Protection Program, and \$44,250 from the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Program (LCHIP). Gilford, Laconia and private donors have paid considerable additional funds into these two important projects. The Annual Meeting featured Alternative Energy and how it connects to Smart Growth. Dr. Rob Wills of Solar-Stream in Temple, NH explained the basics of solar and wind technology for home use. He described the projects BCCD is implementing thanks to Conservation Innovation Grants from USDA NRCS. Other speakers included:

- ⌘ Mo Gouin of Meredith explained using water wells for heating and cooling, -Rick DeMark of the ⌘ North Country Resource Conservation and Development Area (NCRC&D) described Biomass (wood and pellet) burning systems that can be used by institutions and businesses,
- ⌘ Ward Bird of Moultonboro explained his "off the grid" solar home,
- ⌘ Jeff Burns of Sanbornton described the straw bale homes he has been constructing and the alternative energy methods being used with them.

Please see the Agriculture and Alternative Energy section below for more information.

NCRC&D, Prescott Farm – NH Audubon and BCCD collaborated on a Land and Shoreland Management program held at Paugus Bay Park, and at Prescott Farm. Speakers included:

- ◆ UNH Cooperative Extension's (UNHCE) Amy Ouellette on Landscaping,
- ◆ NH Dept. of Environmental Services' Jacquie Colburn (NH Lakes Coordinator) and Diane Hanley (Laconia's Conservation Commission) on shorefront rules and changes due to begin in April 2008. BCCD's Jan Hooper assisted the Town of Ctr. Harbor with information on stormwater and its impact on their bay of Lake Winnepesaukee. Nancy Rendall, Supervisor, participated in the Belknap Mt. Range group. Review and monitoring services continued to be available to and used by municipalities (fee program). BCCD's Lisa Rixen has been working with the Town of Alton on our first monitoring project for road installation with Ray Wenninger, PE retired USDA NRCS. The Clean Air Cool Planet's Global Warming and Energy Solutions Conference was attended by 3 BCCD staff and 1 supervisor, providing many more connections and ideas. Promotion of the "Stormwater Management and Erosion Control for Urban and Developing Areas of NH" Manual continues. Many of the practices used to control stormwater also provide protection to water quality.

WATER QUALITY: Gunstock River/Brook provided the venue and model for a program sponsored in part by NCRC&D;

- ◆ Steve Couture, NH Dept. of Environmental Services (NHDES) Rivers Coordinator and former BCCD intern discussed how waterways behave naturally and how human intervention can interfere with or augment them
- ◆ Rick DeMark (NCRC&D), discussed decades worth of problems and plans for improvements along the river,
- ◆ Sheldon Morgan, Gilford's Public Works Director described several situations and concerns for the future,
- ◆ James Hayes, Gilford's Fire Chief, the problems with siltation in dry hydrant intakes making them unusable.

Roger Hogan continued working with the Lake Waukewan Watershed Advisory Committee. They were BCCD's Cooperator of the Year in recognition of their award winning Lake Waukewan Water-

shed Management Plan for the Town of Meredith water supply. The plan at <http://meredith nh.org/> is serving as a guide for other groups' watershed plans in the Lakes Region and across the state. Hogan is also working the group creating a septic system data base for Lake Waukegan. He also worked with individuals and groups to help plan improvements to their waterfront situations to reduce erosion and improve water quality. BCCD's grant from Samuel P. Hunt helped support these activities. Activities in the watersheds surrounding waterbodies, including yard management, are being emphasized in projects because they, in addition to shoreline activities, affect water quality. Water Quality testing was done at Hunkins Pond in Sanbornton in conjunction with NHDES' Volunteer Lake Assessment Program, please see the agricultural section for more description of the entire project. Programs for the NH Association of Conservation Districts (NHACD) and district employees by NHDES' Ted Diers provided training on river management and opportunities to provide input on Wetlands rules changes. BCCD is seeking ads from local businesses to assist in printing the Woods Loop booklet, for the 1/2 mile trail at Gunstock Area that explains how logging and other roads in the woods can use best management practices to help protect water quality. BCCD Chairman John Hodsdon served on State Committees: NHDES' Water Quality Standards Advisory Committee and the Commission to Study the Relationship Between Public Health and the Environment. He is chairman of the NHACD Water Quality and Urban Conservation Committee, chairman of the NCRC&D Water Resources Committee, serves as NH's Director to the National Association of Conservation Districts and was recently appointed to the National Assoc. of Conservation Districts (NACD) Water Resources Committee. Hodsdon and Hogan attended NHDES' fall Watershed Conference and Rixen attended DES' spring conference.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION:

- ◆Booths were staffed and materials provided for numerous local fairs and expositions promoting the USDA Cost Share programs and conservation measures for landusers. ◆BCCD's Nancy Sapack attended the "No Child Left Inside" Conference, to promote outdoor activities for children.
- ◆Students from Inter-Lakes High School assisted with packing plants for our annual fundraiser through the Belknap County Restorative Justice Program.
- ◆BCCD's Jan Welch provided an educational activity for the Inter-Lakes Clean Lakes Day for 7th graders.
- ◆Information was provided to schools and other agencies to assist with adding soils to their student curriculums.
- ◆Sapack and Rixen assisted with the NHACD High School Soils Judging Contest. ◆Hooper filled in one day for the NH Technical College's Environmental Science teacher utilizing materials from Project Food, Land & People and Randall Arendt to guide students in understanding Smart Growth and using natural resources information to help with decisions.
- ◆The Lakes Region was represented at the NH ENVIROTHON (Alternative Energy theme) by Newfound High School. The 2007 theme is Recreational Impacts on the Environment. On a voluntary basis Hooper continues to serve as the NHACD ENVIROTHON Steering Committee Chair.
- ◆Contact the office for information on new teams for either high school program.
- ◆"The Power of Conservation" poster contest winner for NH was Sarah Morin, grade 3 from Holy Trinity. K to gr 12 can compete, the 2008 theme is "Water is Life" and entries are due in the fall; call the office or visit <http://www.nacdnet.org/education/contests/poster/>.
- ◆The EnviroScape water quality landscape model was borrowed by local teachers, NHDES and the White Mt. Nat'l Forest for demonstrations.
- ◆The Watershed and Water Quality (WSWQ) Days for middle school students at the Wetlands Walk area have been suspended until AmeriCorps members return or other arrangements can be made.
- ◆ Len Campbell, from NH Catholic Charities, coordinated student groups from Laconia Christian School and Laconia's Alternative High School to assist with invasive plant management and preparing the Community Gardens for winter.

AGRICULTURE: Swain Farm in Sanbornton was visited by NHDES and US EPA to view the new installations for reducing nutrients from manure washing down into Hunkins pond, their grant and NH Mooseplate assisted with the projects. The farm is the demonstration site for BCCD's two Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) from NRCS. The newest matching grant will start the process of mitigating the cyanobacteria and algae problems that causes the pond to turn green July – Sept. Windmills will pump air to dissipaters in 6 locations around the pond to add oxygen to the ecosystem to help nutrients stay bonded to bottom sediments unavailable to cause blooms. As part of this, an island base made of recycled plastic will have strawberries, tomatoes and native plants planted in peat moss to help draw some of the nutrients out of the water. A household size turbine will be installed to help supply power to their barn and shop. BCCD's Rixen and Solar-Stream will be heading up the project, and matching funds are needed. The prior CIG developed a portable solar pump to water cows for the farm and a solar pump for BCCD's Community Gardens at the Opechee Tract. Lake water for the upper gardens was available by hose, soaker-hoses, and the first set of drip irrigation was installed. Refugees had great gardens on the prime agricultural soil providing inspiration for our other gardeners. A special thanks to Bobby Smyth and Lou Kahn for donating gardening equipment and a small tractor to help the refugees and others work at the gardens. The Annual Meeting was held at Heritage Farm in Sanbornton featuring a complete country breakfast for dinner, frozen custard sundaes for dessert, and a chance to visit the farm animal petting zoo & playground. Thanks to additional federal funds this year, USDA Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) had many contracts with County farmers amounting to \$242,245. Lynch and his assistant Bill Hoey worked with farmers to assist them in developing their Conservation Plans for the Food Security Act program with farmers. Soil Potential Index (SPI) ratings for use in determining values of open land in Current Use for tax determinations and information about them were provided to landowners. We provided a speaker on conservation easements for the Belknap County Farm Bureau's Annual Meeting. Hooper met with representatives of the county jail planning for re-establishing food production on their prime farmland. Rixen represented Conservation Districts at the Northern Beginner and Small Farmers' Annual Meeting.

WILDLIFE: NRCS staff worked with landusers and allocated \$23,530 in contracts through the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP). For more information contact the office or visit http://www.nh.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/Farm_Bill/wildlife.html. WHIP is one of several USDA programs that does not require agriculture on the property. BCCD held its 9th trout sale for stocking private ponds at Longridge Farm in Meredith on the same day they hosted the NH Antique Tractor plowing demonstration. Several BCCD staff attended training for the new state wildlife programs and materials.

DISTRICT OPERATIONS: The sixteenth Annual Tree and Shrub Sale was held offering evergreen, fruit trees, shoreland and wildlife shrub seedlings at Longridge Farm's new stand. A planting workshop at the delivery site was conducted by BCCD Assoc. Supervisor Paul Rushlow. The eleventh fall bulb sale, seventh composter sale, and fourth rainbarrel sale were held. Board of Supervisors' member Marge Muehlke sadly was not present at these events since she passed away in March. Her great insights, guidance, and calm demeanor will be greatly missed. Programs on BCCD's services and volunteer opportunities were provided to community groups. John Hodsdon, BCCD chairman, serves on the NHACD Executive Committee as a past President of NHACD. He attended the NACD New England Leadership Meeting and the NACD annual meeting. The Conservation Districts Employees Association of NH provided training on Conservation Districts, their partners and operations which was attended by most staff and several supervisors. This training, along with much in house training of part-timers over the year, helped with the transitioning of Hooper (Coordinator of nearly 18 years) to a very part time position, as the new Coordinator, Lisa Morin of Laconia started taking over the responsibilities in December. Welch represented BCCD at the NRCS Cultural Awareness Day which focused on nondiscrimination. Our newest Senior Community Service Employment Program

Office Assistant is Mary Baker from Belmont. She and Erva Marsh of Laconia provide invaluable help to our office while they receive training.

VOLUNTEERS: BCCD's Volunteer of the Year was Everett McLaughlin for his land protection efforts in Gilford. He has been enormously important to the success of the Ramblin' Vewe Farm, Saltmarsh Pond, Weeks Forest, and placed an easement on his own property. In addition to these, in the past he assisted with student days and pond reviews. Volunteers helped in every aspect of our program: indoors, outdoors, computers, mailings, trails, plants, streambank and shoreland restoration, booth staffing at fairs, at the Wetlands Walk, etc. Our third BBQ for Volunteers and Partners was held at Ramblin' Vewe Farm, thanks to food donations from Hannaford's in Gilford, Shaw's in Belmont and EM Heath's in Center Harbor. Farm Manager, Jeff Keyser gave the attendees a hayride tour of the property and treated them to a magnificent sunset behind the Belknap Mts. Range. *Thanks! We couldn't do it without you!!*

The BCCD Board of Supervisors feels that the accomplishments of this past year were made possible through the generous support of many individuals, businesses, Belknap County, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other natural resource partners, and grants from the Pardoe Foundation, Samuel Hunt Foundation, NH Dept. of Environmental Services/EPA, USDA NRCS, Lakes Region Charitable Foundation and NH Mooseplate Program.

2/5/08

All programs & services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, political belief, marital/ familial status.

Respectfully Submitted,
BCCD Board of Supervisors

John Hodsdon, Chairman, Meredith
Ken Kettenring, Supervisor, New Hampton
Jon Martin, Supervisor, Laconia
Paul Rushlow, Assoc. Supervisor, Tilton

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