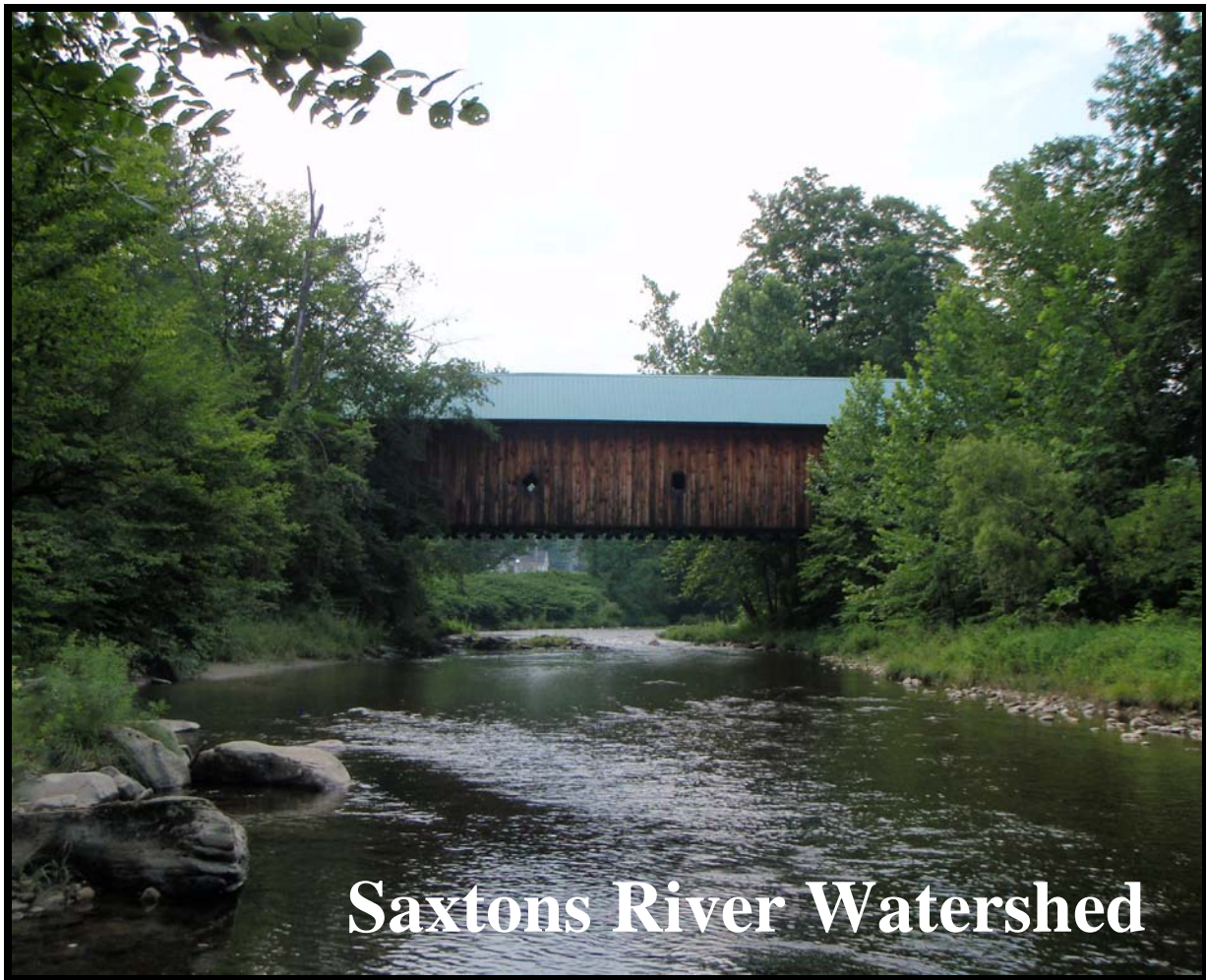


**Windham County Natural Resources  
Conservation District**

**2010 Annual Report**



**Saxtons River Watershed**

## Windham Natural Resources Conservation District

28 Vernon Street, Suite 332  
Brattleboro, Vermont 05301  
802-254-5323 x104  
jolene.hamilton@vt.nacdnet.net  
[www.vermontconservation.org](http://www.vermontconservation.org)



This report for the 2010 Fiscal Year of the Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District was prepared by Jolene Hamilton. To the knowledge of the District and its staff, all information contained in this document is true and accurate.

### ***Programs/Activities not represented in the pictorial review.***

1. *Portable Skidder Bridge Rental Program*
2. *Horse Manure Composting Bins*
3. *Guilford Welcome Center Fundraiser*
4. *Game of Logging for Women Only*
5. *Buffer planting on the Morse Brook*
6. *Southern Vermont Nutrient Management Services*
7. *Maintenance of Dummerston Bridge Rain Garden*
8. *Vermont Association of Conservation District Technical Programs*

*All programs and assistance of the Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District are available without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, marital status, handicap or national origin.*

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## **Mission**

- *To advance conservation awareness to all citizens so that the people understand and act on basic principles of rational use and care of Windham's environment.*
- *To ensure the wise use, protection and enhancement of Windham County's farmland, woodland, water, and related natural resources.*
- *To provide leadership for conservation issues in Windham County*

## **History**

In 1946, the Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District was organized. What began as primarily an interest in soil erosion prevention now encompasses all natural resources and especially water quality. The function of the District is to focus and coordinate available technical, financial and educational resources to meet the needs of Windham County land users.

### **Board of Supervisors**

Harry Evans - Guilford  
Andrea Darrow - Putney  
Meg Kluge - Brattleboro  
Elizabeth Woods - Dummerston  
Ian Martin - Brattleboro

### **Associate Supervisors**

Ross Thurber - Brattleboro  
David Major – Putney  
Gail MacArthur - Marlboro  
Barbara Cole - Wilmington

## **Staff**

Jolene Hamilton - District Manager

*Technical Staff work statewide and are under direction of Vermont Association of Conservation Districts (VACD) and/or Southern Vermont Nutrient Management Program (SVNMP).*

Sylvia Harris - Agriculture Resource Specialist/Basin Planner (VACD)  
Bruce Howlett - Nutrient Management Consultant (SVNMP)  
Jennifer Alexander - Nutrient Management Educator (SVNMP)  
Brandon Carpenter - Land Treatment Planner (VACD)

### **Agency Partners**

Lance Gorham – Natural Resource Conservation Service  
Drew Adam – Natural Resource Conservation Service  
Julie Jacque – Farm Service Agency

# Year in Review: Watershed Management

## Crosby Brook Buffer Plantings and Slope Stabilization Project

Funding for this project provided from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. Evan Fitzgerald from Fitzgerald Environmental Associates, LLC coordinated planting materials and design for the slope stabilization. The Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC) served as partners to assist in the field work.



**Completed terrace construction, conservation seed mix applied, erosion matting installed and staked and plants that are shade tolerant planted throughout the slope.**

**The VYCC Crew members performing a position check on the coir fiber log installation and starting to plant the site with dogwoods and nannyberry shrubs.**



# River Corridor Plan for the Saxtons River Watershed

The goal of the river corridor planning effort is to provide:

- 1) A basis for understanding the overall causes of channel instability and habitat degradation
- 2) The data needed to develop FEH Zones for the study area
- 3) A list of preliminary corridor restoration projects that can be further developed in the future to mitigate flood and erosion hazards in the watershed
- 4) Progress on the development of 5 high-priority restoration projects



**Bull Creek  
Erosion**

**Upper Saxtons  
Slope Failure**



# Whetstone Brook Watershed Stream Geomorphic Assessment and River Corridor Plan

## Conserving the Locke Farm Field

Funding for this project was provided by the Agency of Natural Resources through the SFY 2010 & 2010 Ecosystem Restoration Grants and a Whetstone Preservation Project Fund Drive by the West Brattleboro Association. The Vermont River Conservancy has agreed to purchase the land and hold and monitor conservation rights in perpetuity to preserve the field for agricultural, recreational and flood reduction purposes.



# Year in Review – Service to Communities

## Whetstone Corridor Plan Project – The Brattleboro Area Farmer’s Market Riparian Buffer and Minimal Impact Parking Area

Funding of this project was provided by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation and through a Rural Development Rural Business Enterprise Grant. The Windham Regional Career Center Natural Resources Class assisted with the riparian buffer planting and knotweed removal.



**Impervious pavement installed**

**Installed buffer with sugar maple, northern red oak, butternut, redosier dogwood, elderberry, serviceberry and shrub willow.**



# Year in Review – Schools and Landowners

## Trees for Streams for Williams River

Funding for this project was provided through a Watershed Grant from the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Putney School students assisted with the forest buffer planting plan.

**Willows and shrubs planted along sections of the bank where no woody vegetation was established**



**Willow tubelings were planted at water's edge to stabilize slumping bank**

# Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Riparian Forest Buffer on the Williams River

The Windham Regional Career Center Natural Resources Class assisted with the planting.



**Jolene demonstrating  
the proper planting  
techniques**

**A riparian buffer  
boarding the Williams  
River. It was planted  
with white ash, sugar  
maple, black cherry,  
northern red oak,  
alternate leaf dogwood  
and common elderberry.**



## Spring Seedlings and Shrub Sale Program

We offer plants for their landscape value, conservation value, and food value, for both ourselves and our feathered friends. We have also tried to focus on providing mostly native plants for our shrub varieties in an effort to combat the spread of invasives. We have added spring perennials to our program along with planting accessories.



This sale program helps to generate funds to provide professional and general interest workshops on natural resources concerns. Continuing education and recertification credits are available for most workshops.

## Trout Stocking Program

Rainbow and Brook trout are offered for stocking private ponds through the Spring Stocking Program sponsored by the Windham Conservation District. A Ponds Manual that covers planning, construction and maintenance is also available at the District office.



**PONDS:  
Planning, Construction &  
Maintenance**

## Profit and Loss FY 2010

	<u>Jul '09 - Jun 10</u>
<b>Income</b>	
BAFM Holdings LLC	3,142.19
Skidder Bridge Rental Program	925.00
VACD - Program Administration	159.33
USDA-CREP	3,840.64
Bank Interest	32.36
Donations	1,265.79
<b>Grant Inc</b>	
2010-RCG-3-12	8,750.00
2010-RGC-2-06	7,312.69
Crosby Brook CCC Grant	3,760.83
Crosby Brook 319 Grant	5,159.26
Floodplain Conservation	50,333.28
Horse Composting Bins VACD	603.94
Saxtons River Watershed PDM	27,234.32
State of Vt.	8,000.00
SVNM Program	198.22
Trees for Streams Project	-63.16
VT River Management Program	<u>9,222.14</u>
<b>Total Grant Inc</b>	120,511.52
Grant Overhead Income	431.72
Horse Bin Donations	650.00
NRCC	996.60
Pass-through	64.99
<b>Sales Income</b>	
Fall Bulb Program	100.00
Tree Seed Sales	14,060.60
Fish Stock Income	<u>4,044.00</u>
<b>Total Sales Income</b>	18,204.60
Workshops	<u>1,350.00</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	151,574.74
<b>Expense</b>	
Accounting Assistance	100.00
Advertisement	52.50
Audit	200.00
BAFM	2,142.95
Bank Charges	16.20
Bulb Stock	98.00
Computer Supplies & Software	272.21

<b>Dues</b>	
VACD	1,055.00
VLC&T	585.00
Woodland Owners' Association	<u>10.00</u>
<b>Total Dues</b>	1,650.00
<b>Fish Stocking</b>	
Stock	<u>3,294.00</u>
<b>Total Fish Stocking</b>	3,294.00
<b>Grant Overhead Expense</b>	431.72
<b>Meeting Expenses</b>	
Other Meetings	25.00
VACD Annual Mtg	<u>260.00</u>
<b>Total Meeting Expenses</b>	285.00
<b>Mileage</b>	894.09
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	382.08
<b>Office Supplies</b>	78.51
<b>Payroll Expenses</b>	
Administrative Support	17,366.94
Employees	8,968.75
FICA/Medicare	2,014.68
VT Employment & Training	<u>110.00</u>
<b>Total Payroll Expenses</b>	28,460.37
<b>Postage</b>	347.59
<b>Project Contractors</b>	125,219.40
<b>Project Supplies</b>	5,043.82
<b>Reconciliation Discrepancies</b>	-0.50
<b>Tree Seedling</b>	
Refunds	819.00
Expenses	498.06
Postage	149.53
Stock	<u>7,107.29</u>
<b>Total Tree Seedling</b>	8,573.88
<b>USDA-CREP projects</b>	2,015.95
<b>VLCT PACIF</b>	1,276.00
<b>Website</b>	191.40
<b>Workshop Expense</b>	<u>30.49</u>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<u>181,055.66</u>
<b>Net Income</b>	<u><u>-29,480.92</u></u>

# **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for 2010.**

## **Report provided by Jennifer Varin**

Most of the following cost share programs are competitive. There are a number of sign ups each year for each program; unfortunately due to limited funds not all can be approved. The information below reflects the number of approved participants for 2010.

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**

The EQIP program is provided through the USDA, NRCS. The EQIP program provides technical and financial assistance to farmers and landowners to assist in resolving environmental quality issues. There is also funding through EQIP for the development of land management plans on forest lands, management plans for addressing energy use concerns, and management plans to address nutrient concerns. These are known as CAP plans. Also available through EQIP is a separate pool of funding to address resource concerns particular to organic and transitioning to organic agricultural operations. During FY 2010, 29 applicants in Windham County were approved for EQIP contracts. Of these, 12 were for the development of CAP plans. Also, three of the contracts were approved through the organic and transitioning to organic EQIP program.

- **Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP)**

The WHIP program is provided through the USDA, NRCS to improve and increase wildlife habitat. It is a voluntary program under the Farm Bill legislation. New to WHIP this year was the forestry initiative to address wildlife habitat concerns on forest ground. During 2010, 10 Windham County landowners were approved for WHIP contracts. Of these, 9 were approved through the forestry initiative.

- **Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)**

The AMA program is provided through the USDA, NRCS to assist producers with risk attenuation conservation practices. During 2010, 5 applicants were approved for AMA contracts in Windham County.

- **Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)**

WRP is a voluntary program that offers landowners a chance to receive payments for restoring & protecting wetlands on their property. WRP obtains conservation easements from participating landowners and provides cost share payments for wetland restoration. During 2010, no new WRP easements were purchased in Windham County.

- **Farmland Protection Program (FPP)**

NRCS provides dollars in the State of Vermont for purchase of farmland development rights through the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board. This requires an FPP conservation plan. NRCS worked with one client in protecting their farmland in 2010 in Windham County.

- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

CRP is a program administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). The program encourages landowners to protect land along streams and establish riparian buffers or grass filter strips. NRCS and partners assisted FSA with two new CRP contracts in Windham County in 2010.

- Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)

This program is provided through USDA, NRCS and FSA. GRP promotes conservation and restoration of grasslands and pastures. During 2010, one Windham County landowner was approved for a GRP easement.

- Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)

This program assists landowners with loss of livestock water due to drought and flood or other natural damage. This program was implemented in Windham County in 2010 in response to the drought. So far, there are 11 applications for this program. These applications are in the process of being reviewed by NRCS staff.

- Farm Bill Compliance

Farmers who receive USDA assistance agree to manage Highly Erodible Lands (HEL) in a sustainable manner. Bill Forbes has been working on these determinations for us, and has done 3 HEL determinations in Windham County in 2010.

- Certified Wetland Determinations (CWD)

Farmers who receive USDA assistance also agree not to drain or alter wetlands. This can require a certified wetland determination. Chuck completed one of these determinations in 2010.

- Partners For Fish & Wildlife

The District in cooperation with the USDA, NRCS and U.S. Fish & Wildlife encourages landowners to carry out practices which enhance fish & wildlife habitat.

- Other

--Chuck Armstrong was promoted and reassigned to Brattleboro in January of this year.

--Jackie Carr worked for NRCS out of the Brattleboro office as a WAE from September 26<sup>th</sup> to December 28<sup>th</sup>. WAEs are part time temporary employees that assist NRCS planners with technical work products such as simple practice checks, mapping, and surveying.

--Chuck has attended and provided reports for all South Zone NRCS staff on a high tunnel workshop and a GAP and Food Safety Workshop.

--Bill Forbes is working of the Rutland office as an employee of the Poultney-Mettowee NRCD and has been assisting our office and others with HEL determinations, compliance checks, wetland determinations, construction checks of completed practices, general non-program assistance to landowners, and some miscellaneous program work for our planners.

## **Agricultural Resource Specialist / Basin Planner - Fiscal Year Report 2010**

**Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District**

***Sylvia Dawn Harris - 802-254-5323 ext. 105***

The Agricultural Resource Specialist assists farmers in the implementation of Accepted Agricultural Practices (AAP), natural resource conservation practices and programs. Services include technical assistance to farmers on AAP compliance; Agricultural Environmental Management assessments of farm practices and water testing of farm wells; assistance with AAP manure spreading exemption requests; development of educational and training materials for farmers, Districts and the public; assistance to Districts in the development and implementation of workshops and programs; assistance with watershed planning, monitoring and organization; and assistance to farmers on Best Management Practices applications.

*The Basin Planner coordinates Agricultural Focus Groups to investigate agricultural issues and concerns within watersheds. These Focus Groups make recommendations and inclusions to the DEC Basin Management Plans; review the Basin Management Plan Drafts and fosters community understanding and acceptance of the Basin Management Plans and Recommendations.*

*Examples of Activities within the Past Year Include:*

*Training/Reports/Coordination:*

- Attended in 1 Nutrient Management Planning Coordination Meeting
- Attended 1 District Employee Meeting
- Attended 1 VACD Annual Meeting
- Participated in 1 Agricultural Environmental Management Training
- Participated 1 Farm Energy Audit Training
- Participated in 1 Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning Training
- Participated in 1 Vermont Coverts Workshop

*Windham Assistance:*

- Attended 1 Board Meeting
- Attended 1 Local Work Group Meeting
- Attended 1 Windham Farm Bureau Meeting
- Attended 1 Windham Coverts Meeting
- Completed 7 Farm Water Samples
- Completed 4 Farm Soil Samples
- Completed 6 AAP Farm Visits
- Completed 3 Farm Visit for Compost Bins
- Participated in 1 Raw Milk Workshop
- Participated in 1 Knotweed Removal Project
- Participated in 1 Trees for Streams Project
- Presented 1 WCNRCDC Compost Workshop
- Responded to 30 Info Requests

# *Southern Vermont Nutrient Management Program*

## **A Project of the Southern Vermont Natural Resource Conservation Districts:**

The Southern Vermont Nutrient Management Program provides planning and consulting services for agricultural producers in the Poultney-Mettowee, Rutland, Bennington, Windham, Ottauquechee, White River and Winooski Conservation Districts.

The Districts oversee the activities of two full-time employees. Jennifer Alexander is a full-time Nutrient Management Educator, who provides one-on-one assistance to farmers, coordinates on-farm research projects, and assists with implementation of conservation practices. Bill Forbes is a half-time Nutrient Management Consultant who also facilitates practice implementation. Both Jen and Bill have spent substantial time in Windham county assisting with CREP projects, wetland determinations, and nutrient management practice installation.

In the fall of 2009, the SVNMP received funding from the Vermont State Legislature to purchase two aerators for use in the Lake Champlain Basin. Aerators are a tillage tool that is used to help increase infiltration of manure into the soil. Based on discussions with farmers, two sizes of aerators were purchased; one 15' and the other 8'6" in width. While larger ones are used in other parts of the state, these smaller sizes are more useful on our smaller farms and require less horsepower to pull. We also secured funding from the Agency of Natural Resources, the Lake Champlain Basin Program and SARE to conduct on-farm research studies evaluating the effectiveness of the aerators. Results will be presented during winter 2010-2011 farmer meetings and in the SVNMP newsletter.

At the end of 2010, the SVNMP was awarded funding to hire a 3-year, full-time agronomist with funding from Senator Patrick Leahy through the Lake Champlain Basin Program. While these funds too are limited to the basin, it is our hope that this will free up other resources to work in other parts of southern Vermont. The agronomist should be hired by January, 2011, and will be working solely on direct farmer assistance and encouraging improved nutrient management and increased acceptance of conservation practices like CREP, cattle exclusion and aeration and reduced tillage.

While nutrient management plan development is no longer possible with our current funding, farmers can still receive state funding that may fully cover the cost. Contact Jennifer Alexander for further information about SVNMP services.

### **Staff:**

**Jennifer Alexander, Nutrient Management Educator – 802-558-6470 Cell**