

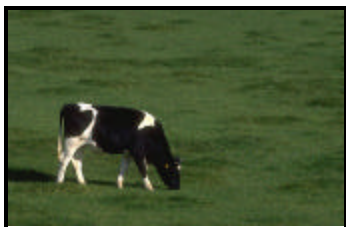


ABOUT SRICD

The Southern Rhode Island Conservation District serves Kent and Washington Counties, home to diverse resources from beaches to farmland. Our board and staff serve eagerly, proud to have the opportunity to improve water and land quality, impacting the future of our state and quality of life for generations to come. Consider joining our team – call Alicia at 822-8832.

Mission Statement:

The mission of the SRICD is to promote and achieve a healthy environment and sustainable use of natural resources for the people of Kent & Washington Counties and the state of Rhode Island, now and for the future, by coordinating partners to provide technical, educational and financial resources.



Farmers Assist in Water Quality Protection

In Kent and Washington Counties, farmers care about the quantity and quality of our water and soil resources. More inside.

KIDS GROW! KEEPS ON GROWING

Kids Grow! - Chariho School District

This program, funded by the Rhode Island Service Alliance, has completed its fourth year of successful service learning and has been refunded for three more!

Kids Grow! is a community gardening program, now in the Chariho School District, that engages school age youth in service learning and developing academic, social and personal skills. There are three gardens, managed and maintained by the students: raised beds at Richmond and Ashaway Elementary Schools and a half acre donated by Tuckahoe Turf at the Chariho Middle School. All the produce is donated to an agency of their choosing. The Middle School and Ashaway Elementary donate to the West-erly WARM Shelter and Richmond Elementary School donates to the RI Community Food Bank.

The Kids Grow! Club at the Middle School has taken a pivotal role in planning, and has instituted and expanded a successful recycling and composting program (compost is used to enrich the garden), expanded the program into Ashaway, and designed Power Point presentations. Two members addressed the faculty of the



Kids Grow! Students
at Harvest Time

Middle School this fall about the teaching advantages of Kids Grow! and its role in fostering citizenship. Middle and High School Students teach children at the elementary school to plant their gardens in the spring.

This coming year, Middle School students will be trained to deliver a new curriculum to elementary school students. SRICD and Kids First are developing materials that combine Kids First's grow box course with hunger curriculum from around the country. The curriculum is being designed to help very young children to begin to explore the relationship between agriculture, food, and people's needs. A database linking Kids Grow! activities with testing standards will be developed this year and put on the Web to encourage and facilitate teacher participation. Exciting methods for sustaining the program, and encouraging its growth, are in the works. Stay tuned!

Annual Report

1999 – 2000

Inside this issue:

Board of Directors and Staff	2
Public Service Announcements	2
Statewide Sustainability	2
Stormwater Management	3
NRCS Technical Assistance	3
Awards and Staff Notes	4
Watershed Protection	4
Duck Cove Restoration	4

Special Note of Thanks

SRICD has been funded for 1999 and 2000 by our legislature through the Department of Environmental Management. We are thankful to all who supported us in this endeavor and we set our goals to make the best possible use of public funds.

Thank you for your vote of confidence!

Board of Directors and Staff

The Southern Rhode Island Conservation District is governed by a board of directors consisting of 4 voting directors and several associate directors that provide technical assistance and diversity. Our board represents various communities and interests throughout Kent and Washington Counties. There are two appointed and two elected voting directors. If your community is not represented, perhaps you would be interested in joining us. Call us at 401-822-8832.

Directors:

Robert Swanson, Chair (Hope Valley)
Stephen Donohue, Treasurer (South Kingstown)
Rick Harrison (Warwick)
Rudolph Hempe (Narragansett)

Associate Directors:

Richard Donnelly (Saunderstown)
W. Michael Sullivan (West Kingston)
Rep. Leona Kelly (Peace Dale)
Robert Wakefield (West Kingston)
Paul Gardner (Charlestown)

Meet Our Growing Staff!

District Manager: Alicia Lehrer

Storm Water Management Specialist:
Kristine Stuart

Education and Outreach Coordinator:
Susan Letendre

Administrative Assistant: Jennie Dino

Civil Engineer: Anthony Nenna

USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (Our Conservation Partners)

State Conservationist
Joseph DelVecchio

District Conservationists

Vicky Drew and Joseph Bachand

Public Service Announcements Help “Keep The Country In South County”

The ad campaign for Keep the Country in South County, a series of five videotaped public service announcements (PSA's), has just completed its second round of concentrated airing on WJAR NBC 10, thanks to the good work of members from the Pawcatuck Watershed Partnership and Robyn Long, the District's former Education and Out-

reach Coordinator. The campaign aims to help people understand some of the major sources of nonpoint source pollution and what we can do to prevent it.

Our 5 PSA topics cover:

- watersheds
- pesticides and fertilizers
- sprawl
- septic systems

- stormwater runoff

Catch them on the air!!!

Videotaped public service announcements completed the second round of concentrated airing on WJAR NBC 10.

Statewide Sustainability Initiatives

SRICD recognizes that if we do not use Rhode Island's land and water resources with sustainability in mind today, they will not be available for the Rhode Islanders of tomorrow. To this end, SRICD participates in the RI Rural Lands Coalition and the RI Sustainability Coalition. In addition, the District coordinated a project to help three Rhode Island Communities plan for growth and long term quality of life more effectively.

The Rhode Island Rural Lands Coalition (RIRLC)

The Rhode Island Rural Lands Coalition is a partnership of federal, state, local public and private organizations that are working to ensure a future for Rhode Island's rural lands. SRICD coordinates and provides administrative

support to this coalition. Among the fastest growing areas in New England, Rhode Island lost 20% of its cropland over the last 20 years. Most of this loss has occurred in the form of suburban sprawl from urban to rural areas.

The RIRLC was the driving force in passing recent legislation that required the State Conservation Committee to reassess and recommend new **Maximum Tax Valuations** for Farms, Forest and Open Space Land. In most RI communities, these values will mean a tax break that gives landowners help in keeping these important lands from being built upon.

SRICD recognizes that if we do not use Rhode Island's land and water resources with sustainability in mind today, they will not be available for the Rhode Islanders of tomorrow.

Sustainable Communities Workshops

In March of 1999, SRICD received a Resource Protection Grant through NRCS on behalf of the Rhode Island Rural Lands Coalition to work with three communities to develop strategies and methods that can be used to retain rural character, maintain open space and unfragmented green space, and avoid sprawl. Two of the three chosen communities are in the Northern Rhode Island Conservation District: North Smithfield and Burrillville. The third community is Coventry.

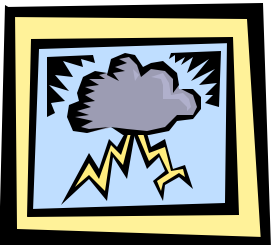
Workshops were held in the three towns in February and March of 2000. Follow-up reports with recommendations of how the communities might change local ordinances to better fulfill on their comprehensive plans are now being completed for each community.

Stormwater Management Assistance for RI at SRICD

Greenwich Bay Stormwater Management Program

SRICD is working with the City of Warwick, the Coastal Resources Management Council, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Save The Bay, local residents and others on the second phase of addressing nonpoint source pollution through stormwater management. Using the procedures we developed previously through an Aqua Fund grant, SRICD is evaluating the storm systems in the Warwick Cove subwatershed. Those systems in Brush Neck Cove that were identified as having the greatest potential pollutant loading are getting a second and third look for remediation; the City will install practices at some sites and SRICD will design practices for two more.

SRICD is also working with the Oakland Beach Association and other residents to determine the best methods for reducing pollution sources in the watershed. This lively group is looking at the possibility of putting up “doggie



Stormwater can be a major carrier of pollutants into water bodies.

m i t t ” dispensers at the beaches, and is eager to tackle a big h a b i t a t restoration project.

The stormwater project is funded via a

DEM water pollution abatement grant provided in cooperation with EPA under section 319 of the Clean Water Act.

Storm Water Center

SRICD received special funding from the State Legislature this year to increase office space and equipment. This will accommodate additional staff who will be available on a statewide basis to assist municipalities with stormwater management activities. The three Conservation Districts in the state anticipate much more work being done similar to the Greenwich Bay and Narrow River programs, especially as EPA's Phase II stormwater regulations come into effect.

Narrow River Stormwater Runoff Treatment System Planning and Permitting

SRICD began work on this Rhode Island Aqua Fund granted project in January of 1998. The focus of the project is to design a stormwater runoff treatment system to collect and treat runoff from two selected outfalls that

drain directly into the Narrow River. These two outfalls were ranked among the top five for contributing the highest nonpoint source pollution loading to the Narrow River. The selected outfalls are located at Wampum and Conanicus roads. The runoff treatment system will incorporate a variety of innovative best management practices to capture suspended sediments and achieve reductions in bacteria, particulate and nutrient levels. The treatment system design was completed this year and is in its last stages of permitting. SRICD along with the Town of Narragansett hope to receive funding by Spring 2001 to implement the design.

This project has led SRICD, NRCS, RIDEM, and the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) to form a closer working relationship with full communication between all parties.

Narrow River Stormwater Management Program

SRICD has recently received approval through the Aqua Fund program to address additional stormwater concerns in the Narrow River. Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be designed for another stormdrain outfall in the Mettatumet area. SRICD will also be working with the Narrow River Preservation Association to establish a local Watershed Action Team, to work on reducing sources of nonpoint source pollution in the watershed.

Technical Assistance Provided by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Through the SRICD

The United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical assistance through partnerships with the conservation districts. During the 1999 - 2000 fiscal year technical assistance was provided through SRICD's partnership with the NRCS on 1,303 occasions to individuals, groups and units of government in Kent and Washington Counties. 381 of these represent

technical assistance to primary business clients (full time farmers).

\$900,000 in technical assistance was provided to Rhode Islander's through the USDA, NRCS this past year.

Many of the individuals in Kent and Washington Counties were provided basic technical information about their natural resources, such as acres of ly-

dric soil, land use suitability for new or revised farming operations, or on-site assistance to solve relatively simple resource concerns. Many others were provided detailed conservation planning and engineering design assistance. Specific technical assistance can be viewed in detail at the USDA's Performance and Results Measurement System Web-site: <http://calais.itc.nrcs.usda.gov/prmsproducts/summarybycounty.asp>.

AWARDS

Annual Award Recognition

Outstanding Conservation Legislators—The Honorable Antonio J. Pires, Chairman, House Committee on Finance and The Honorable Peter T. Ginaitt, Chairman, State Conservation Committee

Outstanding Conservation Community – The Town of North Kingstown

Outstanding Conservationist – Gidget Loomis, North Kingstown

Outstanding Conservation Educator – Jennifer Anderson, Chariho PTO

The “Golden Johnnycake Award” - Dick Donnelly, Saunderstown for Exceptional Contributions to SRICD and Just Being An All Around Great Guy

Exceptional Leadership and Devoted Service—Rick Harrison, Warwick

Staff Notes

This year we said goodbye to Robyn Long, Outreach & Education Coordinator as she set out to Guatemala to serve in the Peace Corps for two years.

We welcome Susan Letendre as she replaces Robyn providing for our Outreach and Education needs.

Welcome!

Protecting Our Watersheds: Action Required

Queen’s River Watershed Action Team (WAT)

Through a Resource Protection Grant, SRICD has helped to form and train a team of local volunteers in the Queen’s River Watershed (a subwatershed of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association). Partners from Rhode Island Watershed Watch, Save the Bay and the Coastal Resources Center helped to train volunteers in shoreline survey

and community assessment techniques. The team came up with priorities and an action plan that includes monitoring changes in water quality as the Ladd Re-development progresses and cleaning up a popular swimming hole. The WAT is an integral part of the South County Watershed Partnership, a regional team (including four watershed associations, NRCS, RIDEM, URI and many others) that identifies issues and concerns for

the region and coordinates workplans to address them.

Brush Neck & Warwick Coves WAT

Local citizens of these two watersheds in Warwick met first in September 2000 at a meeting hosted by the Oakland Beach Association. This very active Team is exploring the possibility of large scale habitat restoration.

SRICD is planning to help other active WATs form statewide. Join us!

Upper Duck Cove Marsh Restoration

Since 1995, Upper Duck Cove has suffered from reduced tidal flows due to the collapse of the concrete culvert that connected it to the Lower Cove and Narragansett Bay. Under a grant from Rhode Island Aqua Fund, SRICD worked with the Town of North Kingstown, RIDEM, the Duck Cove Bluffs Association and the Lone Tree Point Association to develop a realistic marsh restoration plan. NRCS prepared designs that have gone through the

CRMC, RIDEM and Army Corps of



Engineers’ permit process. The next step is for the Town to put the job out to

bid, to install an enlarged culvert and improve the ditches in the marsh. These actions will increase tidal flow, which should knock back the salt-sensitive Phragmites and restore the marsh to a healthy condition. SRICD was recently approved under the Aqua Fund program to monitor the marsh over the next five years to make sure the restoration practices work.

This Spring, the Wickford Middle School helped with pre-construction monitoring.