



Annual Report

2000-2001

ABOUT SRICD

The Southern Rhode Island Conservation District (SRICD) 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, and to impact 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, by providing technical, educational and financial resources in coordination with



Our Dedicated Office Staff
 Back row: Kris Stuart (left), Susan Letendre (right)
 Front row: Patty Tanalski (left), Alicia Lehrer (right).

SRICD'S STAFF AND BOARD

Join Us

The SRICD is governed by a board of directors consisting of 5 voting directors, two appointed and three elected, and several associate directors that provide technical assistance and diversity. Our board represents various communities and interests throughout Kent and Washington Counties. If your community is not represented, perhaps you would be interested in joining us. Call us at 401-822-8832.

Staff

- District Manager:*
Alicia Lehrer
- Storm Water Management Specialist:* Kristine Stuart
- Education and Outreach Coordinator:* Susan Letendre
- Special Projects Coordinator:* Patty Tanalski

Consultants

- Consulting Civil Engineer:* Anthony Nenna
- Consulting Professional Engineer:* Jean Lambert
- Consulting Project Assistant:* Rebekah Greenwald

New Blood at SRICD

SRICD was fortunate this year to attract new directors and associate directors. We actually have a waiting list to join the voting membership, unheard of in previous years. Much of this increased interest is due to the additional media exposure afforded us through Rudi Hempe, our board secretary and the award winning editor of *The Standard-Times*.

Thanks Rudi!

Meet Our Directors

- Robert Swanson, Chair**
(Hope Valley)
- Patricia Lenihan, Vice Chair**
(East Greenwich)
- Stephen Donohue, Treasurer**
through February 2001
(South Kingstown)
- John Devaney, Treasurer**
since February 2001
(Narragansett)
- Rick Harrison, Secretary**
through October 2001
(Warwick)
- Rudolph Hempe, Secretary**
since October 2001
(Narragansett)
- Edward Renehan, Jr.**
(North Kingstown)

Associate Directors:

- Richard Donnelly, W. Michael Sullivan, Rep. Leona Kelly, Robert Wakefield, Paul Gardner, Harriet Powell, Marjorie Weeden

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Special Note of Thanks

Since 1999 our legislature through the Department of Environmental Management has provided SRICD with base funding. 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!



Water Use Management In South County

The Southern Rhode Island Conservation District has long been a partner in the Pawcatuck Watershed Partnership and its offshoot, the Water Use Stakeholders Group (WUSG). The WUSG has been meeting since December 1997 to discuss and develop a **non-regulatory** approach for managing water needs and uses in the area.

In an effort to keep stakeholders in South County aware of the inter-relationships between water use, water quality and wildlife habitat, SRICD, the Audubon Society of Rhode Island (ASRI), and the Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association (WPWA) share a

grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency. The District's role is to keep irrigators informed and participating in the process that will lead to managing water use in South County so that there is enough for everyone (including the fish in the streams). ASRI's job is to keep the public and residents informed about the importance of water protection and conservation. WPWA, meanwhile, has kept South County Community Boards informed of the activities of the WUSG.

Water use will become a hotter and more complex topic in South County as development places additional burdens

on the sole source aquifer. Over the next few years, the Rhode Island Water Resources Board will most likely exercise its authority to develop a Water Use Management Plan that will determine how water will be allocated throughout Rhode Island, should the need arise. As such, it is critical that all stakeholders take an active role in the planning process to ensure that their needs are represented. Finding the solutions that best meet the needs of all stakeholders and the environment will take everyone's participation.

ISSUE: EDUCATION

The Ever Expanding *Kids Grow!* Phenomenon

This spring the monumental efforts of our Education and Outreach Coordinator, Susan Letendre, were rewarded when a 2,000 square foot *Kids Grow!* greenhouse was built on the grounds of Richmond Elementary School.

Thanks to the generosity of the Feinstein Foundation and the RI Foundation, who jointly funded the greenhouse's purchase, *Kids Grow!* will now be able to meet the seedling needs of



The RI Air National Guard constructs the new Kids Grow! Greenhouse.

Kids Grow!'s current gardens, and provide for expansion into more schools.

The greenhouse will also serve as a central learning site: a destination where youth can gather to learn about the relationship between food, agriculture, abundance, hunger, and citizenship.

Citizens of Warwick Unite To Protect Greenwich Bay

In May 2000, the Department of Environmental Management granted SRICD the opportunity to partner with the City of Warwick on the Greenwich Bay Stormwater Management Program. Funds for this program initiate at the Environmental Protection Agency, in a s. 319 grant for nonpoint source pollution abatement.

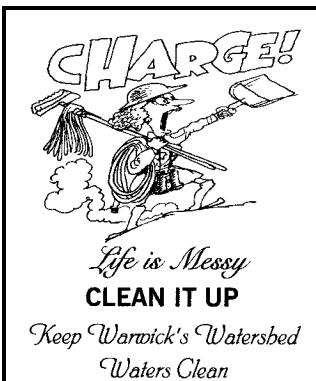
One major component of the program is to work with local residents to reduce the use of potential pollutants. Through various local associations and contacts, SRICD was able to convene a group of residents who have made it their business to do just that. They call themselves the Warwick Watershed Action Team (WWAT) and they have quickly become a dedicated force on behalf of Greenwich Bay.

The WWAT formally began when 14 people signed up to join at a meeting on September 14th, 2000, and the team has met on a monthly basis since then. An additional 20 new members have signed up to date.

In March, April and May of 2001, SRICD and URI Cooperative Extension put on a Home*A*Syst class for the WWAT. The class was held in five ses-

sions, teaching local residents how to protect water quality in and around the home. Participants learned what nonpoint source pollution does, why it is so crucial to minimize it, how to identify nonpoint source pollution problems and ways to prevent them, methods of controlling stormwater, how Greenwich Bay has and is changing as a result of nonpoint source pollution and about the shellfish relocation program. During the last session, participants had an opportunity to envision actions that they would like to take to positively impact this critical problem.

The WWAT's goal is nothing less than the implementation of a master plan to guide the work of the group as it seeks to lessen nonpoint source pollution, and teach their neighbors to do the same. Way to go WWAT!



Look for WWAT volunteers sporting these T-shirts on their mission to improve Greenwich Bay!

New Programs Offered Through RI's Stormwater Service Center

This year, SRICD, on behalf of all Rhode Island Conservation Districts opened a statewide Stormwater Service Center for business. We are glad to report that all of our new programs have been used and our customers have been very pleased with the services we have provided them.

Site Plan Review

In 2000-2001 RI Conservation Districts re-established our once popular site plan review program through the Stormwater Service Center. Through the program, we review development proposals for conformance with community erosion and sediment control and/or stormwater management ordinances. We were fortunate to form a partnership with Jean Lambert, PE, who performs all site plan reviews on our behalf. Since the program's inception, we have performed four reviews receiving thanks and praise on every account.

Community Phase II Services

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Storm Water Phase II Final Rule requires urbanized areas to develop and implement a stormwater management program. Rhode Island will soon be adopting their own version of the Phase II regulations.

Our Stormwater Service Center can partner with communities to both develop and implement their programs. We have already formed such a partnership with the Town of North



Smithfield to develop their storm water management program. We hope to be able to do the same for many other RI communities.

Mapping Services Open Space Mapping

Through the hard work of the dedicated members of the Rhode Island Rural Lands Coalition, legislation was passed in 1999 to establish a Farm, Forest, and Open Space Land Valuation Subcommittee. The subcommittee's job was to research and recommend acceptable, defensible methodologies for calculating tax values on farm, forest and open space land based on current use. In other words, managed forests would no longer be taxed in some communities based on the value of the land were it to be developed, but rather according to the production value of the forest. The subcommittee accomplished this goal in 2000.

One result of the recommended tax valuations was that land in each community's Open Space Program is now recommended to be taxed at a percentage of fair market value depending on soil limitations.

We now offer a mapping service to open space landowners using the ArcView Geographic Information System. We prepare maps that show the percentages of their open space that fall into each of three soil limitations categories. Without these maps, the landowners would be taxed uniformly for their land at 30% of fair market value. With the maps, the rate can be reduced on parts of their property to 20% or even 10% of fair market value. To date, we have produced maps for over 100 open space landowners in Rhode Island.

Parcel Mapping

The Stormwater Service Center now has the capability to produce a five map series for any parcel of land. Anyone can take advantage of this service to get background information on any property in the state.

Five Map Series Includes

1. Aerial photo of property (with hazardous materials sites located)
2. Soils on property (including full descriptions of the soils on property)
3. Soil limitations on property
4. Topography
5. Wetlands

Getting the Word Out About the District

Press Coverage on *Kids Grow!*

This past year, 11 glowing articles—many of them front page—were seen in the Westerly Sun, the Chariho Times and the Providence Journal about *Kids Grow!*. They covered student gardens, Chariho teacher Dan Potts' "Student Teaching Student Program" and the greenhouse project from the idea phase through the all-volunteer construction and grand opening.



Kids Grow! students and volunteers clean out the greenhouse for moving. Photo: Courtesy of Michael Derr, Chariho Times

Meeting Our Legislature

In May, all three Rhode Island Conservation Districts joined forces to host a booth informing our legislators of district activities at the State House. Heath and heather seedlings placed on each legislator's desk really got their attention and made the occasion memorable. Districts displayed maps showing the locations of all conservation partnership activities so legislators could tell at a glance what was going on in their districts.

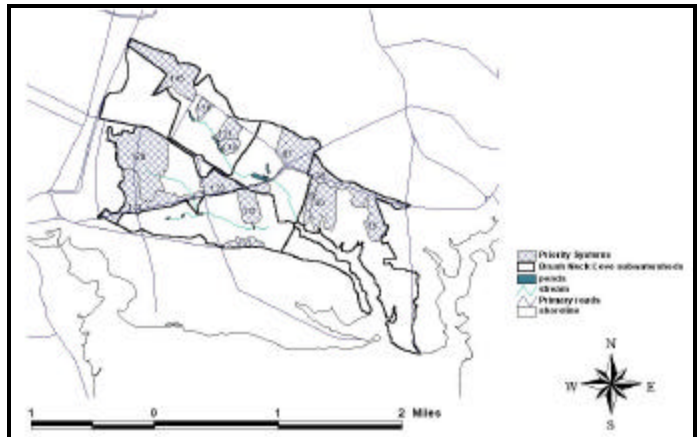
Managing Storm Water in Greenwich Bay

Since 1997, SRICD has worked in partnership with the City of Warwick to improve water quality in Greenwich Bay. We have received several grants to fund this work. We now continue this work under a s. 319 grant. This is the same grant that funds the WWAT (see bottom page 2).

Under previous grants, storm water systems in Brush Neck Cove were evaluated and 13 priority systems were identified for improvement. Under our current grant, we will develop best management practices (BMPs) for two of those systems and evaluate storm water systems around Warwick Cove. The

City also received a 319 grant to install BMPs in three priority catchments.

Some initial ideas for these BMPs include enhancing existing wetlands or constructing infiltration basins in the upper portions of the watershed to treat storm water before it enters the Cove. We plan to have designs completed by May 2002.



Priority storm water systems in the Brush Neck Cove Watershed.

Duck Cove Salt Marsh Restoration Begins

April 2001 marked the beginning of the long-worked-for restoration of the Duck Cove Salt Marsh in North Kingstown. The RI Department of Environmental Management's Marshwalker re-established ditches in the cove to improve the circulation of salt water and to curtail the invasion of *phragmites* (giant reed).

The final phase of the restoration will occur this fall, when the broken cul-



The Marshwalker is a small backhoe with extra wide rubber tracks designed to put less pressure on the Marsh.

vert is replaced which will allow free water flow between the upper and lower portions of Duck Cove.

Through two RI Aquafund grants, SRICD coordinated the agencies involved in the design and permitting of the restoration and will monitor the effectiveness of the restoration over the next five years.

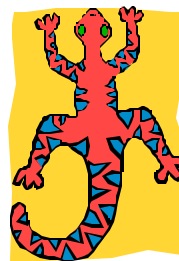
Water Quality v. Wildlife Habitat in the Narrow River: Round 5

A created wetland designed to treat storm water from the Circuit Drive area of Narragansett is awaiting one last permit. The RI Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) is hesitant to issue a Water Quality Certificate for the project, due to concerns about the habitat value of the existing wetland.

SRICD worked closely with the Town of Narragansett, NRCS and the RI Coastal Resources Management Council to design a practice for this site,

which was identified as a priority in a 1995 study. Through an Aquafund grant, SRICD sought to address sediment, nutrients and pathogens entering a degraded wetland through a storm drain. The resulting design reshapes the wetland to improve its treatment abilities.

RIDEM was concerned that the alteration of the existing wetland would destroy its current



The existing wetland may be home to spotted salamanders; then again, it may not.

residents, which may include endangered species such as the spotted salamander. Over the winter, the agencies agreed to monitor activity in the spring to look for endangered species. None were found. At the close of the fiscal year, however, RIDEM was still hesitant to permit the design. Discussions continue... stay tuned!

FY 2000-2001 Financial Report

EXPENSES

Salaries and wages		
Staff Salary, Taxes and Payroll Expenses	\$	98,800.00
Contractors	\$	7,000.00
Insurance, Benefits and Payroll Costs		
Bonding, Renters and Workers Comp. Insura	\$	1,400.00
Health Insurance	\$	10,200.00
Membership in Chamber of Commerce	\$	250.00
Office Expenses		
Rent	\$	16,800.00
Telephone	\$	300.00
Computer Supplies	\$	1,200.00
Office Setup and Equipment	\$	3,100.00
Office Supplies	\$	1,300.00
Postage	\$	1,700.00
Moving Expenses	\$	65.00
Advertising	\$	1,000.00
Printing	\$	2,000.00
Program Expenses		
Annual Dinner	\$	1,000.00
Seedling Sale	\$	8,100.00
Grants Expenses (other than salary)	\$	21,700.00
Legislative Tour Expense	\$	100.00
Travel Expenses	\$	1,000.00
Meetings Expenses	\$	1,700.00
Contributions		
RI Envirothon	\$	500.00
NACD Employee Association	\$	125.00
Shared Big "E" Team	\$	100.00
Dues and Subscriptions		
ECRI	\$	45.00
NACD	\$	1,450.00
RI Ag. Council	\$	40.00
Strategic Reserves	\$	1,000.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$	181,975.00

INCOME

Annual Dinner Income	\$	800.00
Annual Town Contributions	\$	7,000.00
AWESome! Curriculum Sales	\$	445.00
Grants Income	\$	84,500.00
Interest Income	\$	300.00
Open Space Mapping Income	\$	5,600.00
Parcel Mapping Income	\$	150.00
Private Contributions	\$	500.00
Seedling Sale Income	\$	12,100.00
Site Plan Review Income	\$	2,300.00
State Allocation	\$	75,000.00
Strategic Reserves	\$	1,000.00
Tax Refund and Dividends	\$	500.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$	190,195.00

What's New for 2001-2002? A Look Ahead

AWESome! Training In Coventry

SRICD is pleased to announce that we will start training Coventry teachers in our Active Watershed Education Curriculum (It's AWESome!) this fall. This was made possible through a grant from the Wellhead Protection Program under RIDEM's s. 319. Our project partners are the Town of Coventry and the Apeiron Foundation.

Reducing Pollution in the Narrow River Watershed

Through an Aquafund Grant, SRICD will be working with the Towns of Narragansett and North Kingstown, and the Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) to begin a two-pronged attack on the pollution problems in the Narrow River.

First, we will design a system to

treat the Narragansett's Mettatuxet neighborhood's storm water. Second, we will recruit and train a group of local residents and stakeholders to prevent pollution at home. The group will form a Watershed Action Team similar to the one in Warwick described on the bottom of page 2.

We look forward to working with all of our new and old partners!

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 Richmond

Outstanding Conservation Farmer – Richard Schartner

Outstanding Teacher — Gregory D. Breene, Narragansett

Outstanding Conservation Educator – Ana Flores

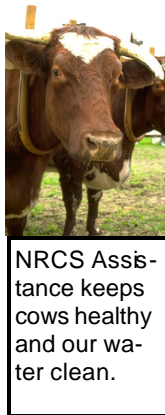
Special Appreciation - Rudi Hempe

Distinguished Service — Robert Swanson and Stephen Donohue

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

The following is a summary of the technical assistance provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service in the Southern District throughout the last year:

- Provided technical assistance to 550 customers in the field to provide site specific resource information and/or address existing or potential problems. Technical assistance usually focuses on one of the following issues: erosion control, water quality, water conservation, grazing lands, wetlands protection or wildlife habitat.
- Provided significant assistance to 20 dairy farmers in the District to improve manure handling and storage.
- Provided on-going assistance to large-volume irrigators to improve the delivery, supply and management of water to crop fields.
- Participated in the Pawcatuck Watershed Partnership Water Use Stakeholders Group (see top page 2).



NRCS Assistance keeps cows healthy and our water clean.

- Coordinated development of 2 new USDA Conservation Programs for RI: the Agricultural Management Assistance and Soil and Water Conservation Assistance Programs.
- This year, the following numbers of new conservation plans and contracts for financial assistance were developed for producers in the Southern District: EQIP – 1, AMA – 3, SWCA – 1.
- Provided assistance to another 28 landowners in the Southern District who continue to implement best management practices as part of their EQIP conservation plans developed in previous years.
- Worked with 3 landowners to develop new conservation plans to improve wildlife habitat under WHIP, and provided on-going assistance to another 9 landowners with implementation of prior year contracts.
- Two salt marsh restoration projects are underway with funding under the Wetlands Reserve Program: Duck Cove in North Kingstown, and the Wadsworth property on

Block Island. NRCS provides substantial technical assistance to these projects to both design the necessary best management practices, but also to ensure that abutting property owners are not subjected to unacceptable flooding following improvements in tide flow.

In all NRCS staff manage 89 contracts statewide under the EQIP, AMA, SWCA, WHIP and WRP programs. For all, technical assistance is provided to landowners to help them plan, design and implement several best management practices per contract. As such, EQIP, WRP and other program responsibilities continue to affect the ability of NRCS to provide “non-program specific” assistance to the District and its partners. If you are interested in assistance, please call well in advance of your plans to construct a new practice. NRCS continues to provide high quality assistance to as many individuals as possible. Your patience and understanding are greatly appreciated!

More than \$1,600,000 in technical assistance provided to Rhode Islanders from NRCS last year!