

2017 NHACD Annual Meeting 11/2/17

Welcome/Call to Order/Roll Call

- Welcome address by Keene Mayor Kendall Lane
 - Keene Climate Adaptation plan in Nov. 2007. INSERT LINK.
 - Over 4,000 acres of land in conservation and working to increase.
 - Active Conservation Commission. Monadnock Food Coop extremely support of local food/farms. Farmers' Market.
- Linda Call to Order and Roll Call
 - Counties Present: Cheshire, Sullivan, Belknap, Grafton, Hillsborough, Strafford, Rockingham
 - Not present: Coos, Merrimack, Carroll

Minutes approval/Treasurers report

- Status of Grants, Statement of Income and Expenses we've incurred.
 - If you have any questions please ask, these are general statements

President's Report

- Linda's last year, will still be on executive Board as past president and remain as rep for Grafton on NHACD board.
- Private nonprofit,
- Jackie Cullen has been on board for a year and a half and has been very helpful especially without an Exec. Director
- Linda keeps in contact with Legislative aides in congressional districts so they know who NHACD is.
- Legislature currently working on 2018 farm bill.
 - Submitted some general requests asking foremost for no further cuts to conservation funding
 - Include language emphasizing the importance of technical assistance
 - Include legislation to remove burden of registering for the SAM DUNS requirements for participants in the NRCS cost-share programs
 - Came from Belknap county, up through NACD and voted unanimously to pass.
 - Spring Washington DC fly in with Rick Ellsmore, great opportunity to talk to legislators and inform representatives of success stories.
 - **Anytime your county has a success story please sent to Jackie so we always know what's current in counties to share.**
- NELM This spring
 - Opportunity to come together with other states and learn about other programs.
 - CT electrical development on their farmland was a big topic
 - This year looked closely as tht Regional conservation Partnership Network
 - Future of Farming,
 - Changing Regulatory Role for some districts – this is a current issue in Pennsylvania

- Long Island Sound Regional Conservation Partnership Program
 - Hosting again March 20/21st 2018.
 - If you think of something that should be discussed please tell us now as we're planning and thinking of Speakers.
- LISW- RCPP
 - One of our bigger projects, host is CT Soil/Water conservation partnership
 - Resiliency and land protection are other components that we don't have much stake in at this time.
 - 4 districts along watershed are involved, Hired Bill Fosher this spring as Agronomist and has been
- CIG Grant
 - Putting to use 2 4-row corn planters and one 2-row planter. Fitted with Roller Crimpers and no-till seeders. Farmers invited to do demonstrations for using the equipment. Sullivan had a great turnout recently
 - Machine crimps/kills the cover crop and retains moisture in the soil and reduces the effects of severe rains on bare soil.
- NHACD and Districts support Pollinators
 - Theme of Annual Meeting two years ago in conjunction with a pollinator event
 - Partnered with Xerces society, pledged \$35,000 of match. Surprised at how quickly we reached that goal through districts' hours, farm tours etc.
 - Deadline was September 30th and our commitment was made with over \$40,000 in match in the form of Volunteer hours
- Looking forward
 - Two new five-year agreements with NRCS. One is an outreach agreement and the other is a demonstration agreement. Excited to have a longer term instead of two years.
 - Urban Agriculture Grant from NACD has come up and Kerry
 - New NACD Grant, Tech Assistance grant. Information was sent out to districts, approved in September. \$10million with NRCS to build/enhance district tech assistance across the nation. Can apply if you want to hire a planner/mapper etc. through this grant.
- NHACD plans to reassess our strategic plan
 - Make it into a one or two year plan rather than 5. Easier to focus on and break up into a smaller time period. Next meeting (Nov. 16th)
- Recommendations
 - Have been observing for a long time, heard time and time again in talking with people, CD's are under the radar screen. Or they're the best kept secret in conservation or even "what's a CD?"
 - Recently read some criticism of what's been the traditional conservation delivery system. Relying more on software, management systems,
 - How do we better demonstrate the effectiveness of our partnerships with NRCS, Cooperative Extension, and the Districts?
 - Three steps
 - Comprehensive assessment of your conservation district. Are state statute requirements met?
 - Biggest thing in our favor is we are legislatively enabled to do different things
 - <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/XL/432/432-12.htm>

- Are we regularly assessing the Nat. Resource Concerns in our districts and are we regularly working to address those concerns. Have we secured the funding required to address them?
- Are we taking a leadership role in the local work group process? Are we bringing in a wide array of people? Are we appealing to all the landowners and stakeholders?
- Perform an Honest assessment of your board and staff. Do they attend meetings? Do they engage partners and promote the district and its mission as much as possible. Are annual plans in place that support the strategic plan and mission?
 - Board members should have a belief in their obligation as a board member and dedication to perform with that help. Supervisors will have to play a bigger role today in terms of advocacy.

Officer Elections

- Move
 - President: Richard Mellor - Cheshire
 - First VP Dorn Cox - Strafford
 - Second VP Donna Hepp - Belknap
 - Treasurer John Treat - Cheshire
 - Other nominations from the floor?
- Seconded, all were in favor and motions are passed.

Soil Judging – Alena Warren

- Contest is a competition for High Schoolers, learn about soil and have to describe characteristics in 4 pits and interpret best land uses for that soil.
 - Very fun, hands on and competitive.
 - This year was at Kingman Farm in Madbury, (UNH farm). Top three were Conant, Bellows Falls and Merrimack High Schools. Lots of overlap with Soil Judging and Envirothon.
 - Need a lot of different people together to run the contest.
 - Peter Whitcomb and Don Kierstead from NRCS, Lenny Lord
 - Tom Karr, Mark Jacobs and Adam Duran
 - Lisa and Alena helped out, PhD student from UNH helped out this year.
 - This winter, organizing a meeting to review the contest rules and brainstorm ideas to reach more students and increase participation in the judging contest. All are welcome, if that interests you get in touch with Alena.

District Reports – For slides go to www.nhacd.net/annualmeeting

- Belknap County – Lisa Morin
 - Grants are totally on Donna, has written the grants and been phenomenal on pulling projects together, working with Jan Hooper and others but has been on her. Donna will receive Spirit of NH Volunteer award from Spirit of NH.
 - Jan Hooper received BCCD's volunteer of the year award for her work.

- Thank you – another associate Jamie Irving,
- Cheshire County – Amanda Littleton
 - Soil Health, Water Quality, Wildlife Habitat and Farm Viability
 - 14 grants
 - Soil – education and equipment rentals
 - Have gotten some grants and will get a larger no-till seed drill to help with cover crop insulation
 - Will work with a team working with veg farmers interested in switching to no-till
 - Educate general public – film screening and panel discussions
 - Water – nutrient management and milk house waste
 - Built another timber bridge
 - Annual River Clean-up – 3,000 lbs of trash and many shopping carts, almost 80 volunteers
 - Wildlife focus has been on pollinators, wrapping up a CIG grant with NRCS to install habitat on properties. Wrapped up a three year inventory.
 - Trout unlimited, ID priority culverts
 - Farm Viability – Monadnock menus helps wholesale buyers connect with farmers. No longer the owners, has been launched. Now under Food Connects based in Brattleboro VT.
 - Got a specialty crop block grant this year, bought \$18,000 worth of equipment for farmers to sell their crops. I.e. an Onion Topper saved Picadilly and Tracie’s farm at least five days of labor this year.
 - NH Harvest of the Month program with NH Farm to School
 - Monadnock Farm fun – three grants this year. Hoping to double that.
 - Market Match - \$10 free to buy fruits/veggies when you shop with SNAP/EBT cards. Worked with Farmers’ Market and one CSA, added another CSA and two more farmers market and want to see it across the county.
 - 22 kids sent to farm camps, partnership with many volunteers and donations.
- Coos – Linda Filling in for Sarah
 - SEE SLIDES as they were very descriptive.
 - Received a Mooseplate grant to start a nursery.
 - Coos’s rental program has a great small tool rental program from the county.
 - RMI – resource management institute – one of our sponsors.
- Grafton – Pam
 - Cover Crop Demonstration project at the Grafton County Farm.
 - Not great luck with aerial spreader but is looking better now.
 - Armyworm Damage on the farm. Changed the story of this cover crop, importance of scouting and coordinating a treatment plan.
 - Had a late harvest b/c of new cover crop mix to put down for next year.
 - Talked to Nationwide Insurance who helped us a lot with insurance questions about insuring equipment, small farmers aren’t always insured to get a rider for a few days of rental.
- Hillsborough – Kerry Rickrode
 - In thinking of plans for coming year, talk to local NRCS office and see if there are ways you can benefit from Community Planting day
 - Gleaners – most popular in county Currently ranking 2nd in the state. 40,000 lbs as of today.
 - Facebook page – Hillsborough County Gleaners – please follow
- Rockingham – Lenny Lord

- Lavenger Creek – in New Castle
- Oyster River Forest – working to dispel invasive species with a wiping technique
- Awcomin Marsh – Rye, NRCS, DES started restoration in early '00's. Early 40's/60's dredged Rye Harbor. Over 35 acres of impact, 25 acres of phragmites which started to come back. District got involved about ten years ago with chemical and mechanical methods.
- Nitrogen in Great Bay is a big problem, working on Permeable Reactive Barriers in residential septic systems. Prevents nitrogen from getting in groundwater using woodchips. Trench in between leech field and sensitive area to treat groundwater.
- Strafford – Alena Warren
 - Rental Program – Rockingham and Strafford work together.
 - Wood ash, no till seed drill, sub soil plow and an aerator.
 - Spring plan to have a fence post pounder, fence stretcher and a roller crimper and a couple of trailers to move equipment around.
 - Printing new booklet to send to farms who have never rented. Working with RCCD to build knowledge of who's in our counties to reach.
 - Hold workshops featuring equipment to generate interest in them.
 - Nutrient management initiative – trying to quantify the benefit we provide. Mapped out everywhere equipment is used and asked about what crops they're using equipment on. Want to start collecting data on soil test results, soil moisture, start to really see how practices are helping the soil and farmers.
 - Projects –
 - CIG grant from NRCS for hayfield reseeding project.
 - Biomass planting – funds granted this year. Planting warm season grasses and fast growing woody plants.
- Sullivan County – Lionel Chute and Dawn Dextraze
 - 43000 people
 - Education – created a 4 mile trail on county lands and had 60 people come out for inaugural lands
 - 17 lessons in schools reached over 500 students
 - Loaned stream table out to 7 schools and 5 orgs, used by over 1500 people
 - Over 15 work-shops that have connected over 200 people to public lands
 - Eco Ag Center
 - Hosted by SCCD on county lands Hugelkultur Bed, Pollinator Garden, Insectary Strips added this year.
 - Also have a growing community garden to advance some concepts
 - Community Projects
 - 100 mile market – local food store in Claremont. Over 47 NH producers and over 365 different products. Working to connect them to the EBT population. Now promotion phase and will be running cooking classes with Vital Communities
 - Promoting no-till ag. Workshop with the roller-crimper planter, and hoping to go further with that.
 - Connected to the bio nutrient food association that Dan Kitridge works on through MA. Only chapter in NH, Southwestern BFA chapter.
 - As carbon levels increase, nutritional status of food decreases.
 - What's next?

- Connecting schools to public lands – green spaces, building infrastructure/wildlife habitat in schoolyards.
- Eco Ag Center starting to focus on cover crops – high tunnels is the start. Working in community garden plots too.
- Native pollinator garden, saving seed and experimenting with growing/saving seed.
- Assisting in feasibility study to refurb a root cellar to add value by being a cheese cave or mushroom production facility.

BREAK

Partner Reports

- NRCS – Rick Ellsmore
 - Thank you to Cheshire County
 - New administration – previously were under Nat. Resources and Environment, now under Farm production under Farm/Risk Management. New Acronym is FPAC, Farm Production and Conservation.
 - Budget – under a continuing resolution, funding through 12/8. ¼ of all of our programs, await to see what congress will do and how to move forward.
 - Challenges with staffing. Grafton county has vacancies, 2 selections, one denied and one accepted. Starting End of November. Hoping to advertise for another one because it's one of our busiest offices
 - Vacancies in Concord and Milford offices. Had 4 pathway students this year hoping to retain, one graduates in December and one in May.
 - Linda eluded to two new agreements. Different than in the past.
 - This time we are doing 75/25 agreements and will have a match on outreach that we didn't have before.
 - Reports sent to a national office for review now instead of the state office.
 - Found out we have a new agency – FPAC business center – number of areas within NRCS, Farm Service Agency are moving to that new agency. Some congressional members have said that can't happen without approval so it may be delayed.
 - RCPP
 - \$1.25 million agreement grant to do some work – Monadnock Conservancy.
 - Upper Valley Land Trust - \$1.25 million application in, passed first round
 - South East Land Trust - \$10 million app in, again passed first round.
 - Land protection big part - \$4.1 Million – protected 20 parcels of lands, now at 350 throughout. New Agreement with NHACD for easement monitoring will help out a great deal
 - EQIP still biggest working lands program, had a hard time spending it, now a back log of over 250 applications.
 - Walpole office did 58 new programs this year.
 - Partnerships – very strong, districts/NRCS and cooperative extension etc. fish and game, NH Dept. of Ag, resource, forestry and ag folks always there to help. State Technical committee meetings 4x a year, both senators and Ann Kuster's offices present all the time because they want to know what we're doing.

- Kuster is on the Ag committee, did a series of workshops this summer, Rick invited to be on panels, good to see she's engaging with us to be part of what she's working on.
- NRCS is technical assistance agency, to become an employee, field folks are there from a tech capacity and programs support their work.
- In closing
 - What we're doing is important. By the year 2050 there will be 9 billion people on this earth
 - Challenges – farm production for more people with less land. Lots of stresses and challenges on working lands, air and water quality. Conservation will be at the forefront.
- NACD – Kim LaFleur
 - Now the first female executive officer of NACD as Secretary-treasurer, is the Mass. ACD President.
 - Cranberry farmer in Plympton, MA
 - State FFA advisor for MA. Work with youth, future conservation leaders and decision makers. Great opportunity to listen to what's happening in NH. We may be small but we're pretty mighty.
 - What is NACD?
 - Resource support organization, national voice of CD's in the US.
 - "Every acre, Every American, every day."
 - Advocates for education, conservation and local CD's
 - Staff based in DC and throughout the US working on various issues related to policy at national level. Comes from grassroots level.
 - USDA Reorganization
 - Changes in where different entities are housed and there's still a lot of questions
 - NACD has asked already and continues to ask to remain in contact with NACD so you can remain in contact with your delegation. NACD may need help in reaching out and email communications will be key.
 - What does NACD do for you?
 - \$9 million out to help deal with backlog of work that needs to be done by NRCS, and CD's will partner. 2 year program. Rolling application point starting today when information gets out. Intent for funding out the door by beginning of March. \$50,000 contract, requires a 25% match. Can be in kind but cash is preferred.
 - Important thing is to work with state office/partnership to determine where needs are met.
 - Nacdnet.org for full details
 - Multitude of communications are out there:
 - NACD eResource, The Resource, Forestry Notes, conservation Clip List.
 - Sign up for any/all of these online.
 - Soil Health Champions Network – over 170 soil health leaders, network is to share ideas and advance the soil health mission across the US. Beth Mason in charge of that program for NACD.
 - Newly released Members only section
 - NACD policy book
 - Fundraising tips

- Personnel management
 - Communications guidelines.
 - Need to have paid FY18 dues
- Conservation Boot Camp
 - 3 week intensive program in Lincoln Nebraska. Free of charge, next one is 4/7 – 5/5.
- Urban Ag Conservation Grant Initiative
 - Hillsborough one of the first with a \$2 million grant awarded this year.
- Stewardship and Education materials
 - K-12 resources grouped into every four year blocks available for download free of charge.
 - Poster contest, entry deadline of December 1st. Electronic submissions, can take photos and send in.
- Meetings
 - March, Fly-in in DC. 2018 is announced for March 20th. Not just for state leadership, anyone welcome to attend.
 - Farm bill, conservation funding and tech assistance.
- This summer – Leadership development symposium
 - Opportunity to talk about National Conservation Planning partnership. Come together with 5 partners to work on conservation delivery system.
 - Summer Conservation Forum and Tour Altoona Iowa, 500 people.
 - This year in Virginia, partnering with Southeast Chapter.
- Annual Meeting, Denver Colorado in January. 2018 heading to Nashville, TN
 - Room block rate of \$199/night. Register online is a \$15 discount.
 - Anticipate upwards of 1,000 people attending
- NH District on the web

Partner Reports

- NHCDEA – Vicky Nelson
 - Meetings used for trainings etc. outside of meeting always in contact with each other to work out issues.
 - Great annual meeting in September at the Common Man in Ashland, NH
 - Next meeting Dec. 6th at Farm Bureau Concord, focusing on statewide projects with the new agreements between NRCS and NHACD
- NHDES – Gene Forbes
 - Want to point out some of the interactions we see with members who serve on DES councils/groups.
 - Richard Mellor – serves on wetlands council – hears appeals and guides through wetlands program
 - Roger Noonan – serves on Rivers Advisory Committee
 - One of the most important ways to interact with DES
 - Resources
 - Granite Website – two areas of improvement – Recently contracted for the remainder of the state for Lydar mapping (SP???)

- Working to improve interface
 - Grant with EPA to update efforts behind national wetlands inventory
 - Resource sharing is one area, another is getting projects done.
 - Sharing of information and training work.
 - Gravel/dirt road maintenance held last September.
 - Projects
 - Over 30 that DES have partnered with, some through 319 program. Funding uncertain for next year
 - More focus on non-point source than ag practices
 - 319 goes a long way in improving resources and wetlands
- USDA FSA (Farm Service Agency) – Jenn Gehly, County Executive Director
 - FSA best known for loan offerings, ag risk coverage and crop insurance.
 - Soil conservation, water quality program
 - Conservation Compliance
 - Plan approved by and on file with USDA if they plant
 - ECP – emergency conservation program – rehabbing farmland damaged by natural disasters or to implement programs to deal with drought. Many used this program last year because of drought levels.
 - Conservation Reserve Program
 - One of largest in agency, NH doesn't see a lot of activity but is very competitive in other areas of the country.
 - Voluntary – contracts with ag producers so that land is used for conservation benefits like cover crops/trees instead of turning it into ranch land.
 - In other states districts heavily involved in planning of CRP implementation.
 - Loans
 - Reduced paperwork and shorter turn around, a lot of EQIP using short term loans to pay for high tunnels.
- North Country RC&D: Rick DeMark, Executive Director - **See attached handout**
 - 501c3, work for regional, social innovation and environmental benefits
 - No government support, ended in 2011, some districts donate (Belknap and Carroll and appropriation from Grafton)
 - Handout that goes into detail of what we've been up to.
 - Wood biomass energy, coordinating NH wood energy council,
 - Maintaining markets for low grade wood in NH
 - Assisted in 115 buildings convert to wood biomass, \$39 million and 69,0000 tons reduced CO2 annually.
 - North Country Farmers cooperative on cold hardy crops assessment: investigate 14 crops, 84 different regional/national buyers
 - Primarily breweries, distilleries and pharmaceutical companies
 - 60% prequalified as buyers, 56% are regional.
 - Info right now is proprietary
 - Working with American Farmland Trust on a program siting lands for renewables. Working on a regional workshop on that issue.
 - Rural renewables, working with NH community development finance authority, working to enhance technical assistance for farm

- Developing new partnership with Plymouth State to engage students and faculty with area resource assessments, outcome evaluations. Started working to integrate faculty/students on some projects with goal to institutionalize the program at PSU.

Envirothon Updates

- Coordinator – Sue Kessler
- Winning team for State of NH represented Conant High School in Emmitsburg, Maryland this July
- Margi _____ LAST NAME??
 - From a teacher's point of view, one of the best clubs for students. Learn lifelong skills, research, knowledge of their surroundings, regulations in gov't. fieldwork and presentations.
- Team that won were 5 girls, 3 present.
- Full week in Maryland, jam-packed of information and a lot of fun
- Impressed
- Rindge and Jaffrey Conservation Commissions helped financially
- Emily, Carly, Elaina ??
- Soil, Forestry, Wildlife and Aquatics and a current issue each year, last year it was sustainable agriculture
- Met every Friday to study topics
- Visited local farm in Rindge
- Teams tested on each of four subjects and present to a team of judges
- Opening ceremony had state flags,
 - Two china teams as well
- Mt. Saint Mary's
- First night social, trading items with others from states, learned about other states etc.
- Each had two subjects to learn about.
 - First day – aquatics
- After two training days had a testing day, difficult with different trees NH vs. Maryland
- Presentation, could only use resources from the two training days, no electronics. 6 hours in one room to put together a presentation.
- Went to DC to see the sights
- Crab fest at Sandy Point state Park
- Questions??
 - How did you Score?
 - Having two subs made it a challenge,
 - Many other states have bigger competitions, big enough to have regionals and state competitions
- All seniors and returning next year to compete in NH competition
 - What careers to you aspire to?
 - Chemical engineering, not sure, biomedical science
- Did you participate in Soil Judging?
 - Placed 2nd to a VT team to technical are first in NH.