

# State Conservation Committee

PO Box 2042 • Concord NH 03302-2042

November 19, 2015 • Meeting Summary

NH Department of Environmental Services, Concord, NH

## Members/designees/advisors present:

Dea Brickner-Wood, Moose Plate  
Grant Coordinator  
Linda Brownson, Coos and Grafton  
CCDs  
Rich Cook, NH Fish and Game  
Department  
Rick Ellsmore, Natural Resources  
Conservation Service  
Bob Goodrich, Rockingham and  
Strafford CCDs  
Jennifer Gornert, NH Department of  
Agriculture, Markets & Food  
Sabrina Stanwood, Department of  
Resources and  
Economic Development  
Peter Throop, Cheshire and Sullivan  
CCDs

## Member/designees/advisors absent:

Earle Chase, Belknap and Carroll  
CCDs  
Nik Coates, NH Association of  
Conservation Commissions  
Linda Grames, Farm Service Agency  
Amanda Littleton, CDEA-NH  
Roger Noonan, NH Association of  
Conservation Districts  
John Parker, Hillsborough and  
Merrimack CCDs  
Lori Sommer, NH Department of  
Environmental Services  
Amanda Stone, UNH Cooperative  
Extension  
Jon Wraith, University of NH  
Agricultural Experiment Station

## Minutes Recorder:

Stacy Luke, Merrimack CCD

Linda Brownson, Chair, opened the meeting at 9:08 am and welcomed everyone. Brownson welcomed Bob Goodrich as the new representative from the Rockingham/ Strafford CCDs.

## Consent Agenda

Stanwood motioned to adopt a consent agenda including the minutes. Cook seconded the motion. Throop abstained. The motion carried.

Districts, agencies, and organizations discussed the highlights of items on the Consent Agenda.

- Throop reported that Cheshire CCD has been very busy. This year has been a busy year with equipment, they are adding a fourth skidder bridge to their rental program with a workshop this spring, has worked on a culvert removal project, and expanded their local foods promotion programs.
- Cook passed out a written update and discussed license fee increases that go into effect in 2016 and significant changes to the WAP mapping, which is now on GRANIT.

- Stanwood reported that NHB assisted with the WAP updates, that there are revisions to the rare plant list, and that Mooseplate marketing has resulted in a 3% increase. \$17MM has been raised through the Mooseplate program since 2001.
- Ellsmore reported that there is still a chance for a shutdown starting December 12<sup>th</sup>. The State Office has moved into its new office and will host an open house soon. WMI has submitted a RCPP application for \$6.1MM with New Hampshire as the lead state.
- Gornert reported the Pollinator Summit was well attended and successful. There will be a FSMA meeting in Brattleboro, VT, on December 14<sup>th</sup>. On December 15<sup>th</sup> the Finance Committee will discuss the Ag Land Preservation Fund and discuss possibly funding the program. Vicky Smith has retired. Farm & Forest will be on January 22-23.
- Goodrich reported on Rockingham CCDs Watershed Assistance Grant to eliminate nitrogen from septic systems using a patented PRB system. Goodrich reported on the pollinator planting at his farm and a second at Goss Farm. Goodrich also reported on Strafford CCD's Yeoman's Plow.
- Brownson reported that Coos CCD had a successful bulb fundraiser and that the District Manager attended the NHACD Annual Meeting. Grafton CCD is re-evaluating what the District would like to be based on its constituents. Progress is being made on transferring their conservation easements.

### **Conservation "Moose Plate" Grant Program Coordinator's Update**

Brickner-Wood gave her coordinator's report. All grants are going well with one grant extension due to weather. Brickner-Wood reported that the new application paid off in that there was more consistency in the applications and it was easier to make comparisons. This year there was a cap of \$24,000 and a goal of not partially funding projects. Land conservation projects had a cap of \$20,000. Many Grants Committee members stated that the process was better, the scoring system was improved, and grouping the grants was easier. Brickner-Wood's increased administrative hours made the process easier.

### **Moose Plate Grant Sub-Committee 2016 Grant Recommendations**

The Grant Review Committee of the NH State Conservation Committee met on November 10, 2015, and compiled its review of thirty (30) submitted grant applications for the FY2016 grant round. The total request for grant funds was \$480,824. The SCC has a total of \$265,000 available for grant funding. The Grant Review Committee unanimously recommends to the State Conservation committee to obligate a total of \$263,629 in SCC Conservation License Plate Grant funds to the sixteen (16) applications listed below.

Applications recommended for funding:

#### 1. Cheshire County Conservation District

Windyhurst Farm - Manure & Waste Water Handling Improvement Project. \$24,000

The Windyhurst Farm project will improve water quality in the Connecticut River Watershed by retrofitting an existing dairy barn to effectively and efficiently move manure and milkhouse waste from the dairy cattle barn and milking center to the watertight manure tank. This will remove two direct discharges of waste into surface water and improve nutrient management on the farm.

## 2. Coös County Conservation District

Coös County Conservation District's Plant Nursery. \$10,930

The Coös County Conservation District's Native Plant Nursery is partnering with The Town of Columbia to utilize otherwise unsuitable conventional forage production land to form a native plant nursery. Diverse native plant species will be readily available for sale to educational facilities, contractors and associates for bank stabilization and native plant restoration projects.

## 3. Five Rivers Conservation Trust

Stonehurst Farm Conservation Project. \$20,000

Five Rivers Conservation Trust will buy a conservation easement on a 217-acre farm in Dunbarton. Ownership will remain with the Stone family, who have farmed the land since the 1780s and operated a commercial dairy for 4 generations, 1853-2006. The land is now managed for hay and as a woodlot. It abuts 2 conservation properties and is historically rich, scenic and a Town conservation priority.

## 4. Grafton County Conservation District

Improving Hayland and Pastureland by Improving Soil Health. \$10,000

Grafton County Conservation District will purchase an AerWay aerator pull-behind model for producers to rent to improve soil health in pasture and hayland. The AerWay tines fracture compacted soil, opening channels for air, nutrient and water infiltration. The District will attach a Herd broadcast seeder to the AerWay so seed can be applied in the same pass.

## 5. Hanover Conservancy

Vision 2020- Implementing the Hanover Conservancy's Strategic Conservation Plan. \$4,221

The Hanover Conservancy will complete and publicize a detailed strategic conservation plan with distinct priorities for each region of our community, and, working with the Town of Hanover, pursue a high priority conservation project that will protect wildlife habitat, prime agricultural soils, a portion of the corridor of Mink Brook, potential trail connections, and a well-loved scenic view.

## 6. Harris Center

Osgood and Hurd Hill. \$20,000

The project seeks to protect the highest priority parcel in the Town of Nelson Priority Conservation Plan. Protection of the Osgood and Hurd Hills parcel will greatly enhance an existing 1,700-acre corridor of protected land extending north from Spoonwood Pond to Route 9 in Stoddard. We ultimately plan to sell the parcel to the Town of Nelson, while retaining a conservation easement on the land.

## 7. Merrimack County Conservation District

Supporting Soils for Small Agricultural Producers through Shared Soil Amendment Equipment. \$24,000

Supporting Soils for Small Agricultural Producers through Shared Soil Amendment Equipment will assist Central NH agricultural growers with the ability to spread mulch, wood ash, and other beneficial soil amendments to improve soils, increase water efficiency, improve plant health, reduce weeds, and improve our local foods infrastructure through the availability of this shared equipment.

#### 8. Monadnock Conservancy

Conserving Platt Farm. \$20,000

The Monadnock Conservancy will permanently protect 50 acres of farmland along the Contoocook River and Cochran Brook in Antrim, NH through the purchase of a conservation easement. The easement will ensure the protection of: 4,500' along the Contoocook River and Cochran Brook, 48 acres of Tier 2 Wildlife Action Plan habitat, and 35 acres of important farmland soils.

#### 9. Monadnock Conservancy

Devan Preserve Natural Resource Inventory. \$5,000

The Monadnock Conservancy will complete a natural resource inventory (NRI) on 400 acres in the towns of Marlborough named the Devan Preserve. The goal of the NRI is to act as a guidance document for all management on the Preserve including trail construction and habitat enhancement projects. This property will serve as an educational resource and potentially a demonstration site for management practices both regionally and statewide.

#### 10. Moose Mountain Regional Greenways

Woods, Water, Wildlife Conservation Action Plan. \$6,500

Moose Mountains Regional Greenways, a land trust covering seven towns comprising the watersheds of two nationally threatened rivers, proposes to embark on a land conservation planning process. The goal is to develop a Conservation Action Plan with natural resource protection priorities and identified next steps and strategies, including the establishment of a regional greenway.

#### 11. Piscataquog Land Conservancy

Black Brook Preserve. \$20,000

Piscataquog Land Conservancy will purchase 101 acres abutting the existing PLC 126 acre Black Briar Woods Preserve. These properties, open to the public for passive recreation, protect a mile of riparian corridor along Black Brook, a pristine tributary of the Merrimack River. This acquisition will protect designated Goffstown Prime Wetlands, numerous vernal pools, and Wood and Blanding's Turtles documented on the site.

#### 12. Rockingham County Conservation District

Odiorne State Park Forest and Shrub Thicket Restoration. \$14,978

The Rockingham County Conservation District will utilize integrated pest management techniques to restore approximately 11 acres of upland forest and state imperiled maritime shrub thicket habitats that have become overrun by invasive plants. In addition to impacting native plant diversity, wildlife habitat, and soil properties, these invasive plants impact the aesthetic, recreational, and educational values of the park.

#### 13. Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests

Powder Major Farm and Forest – Goss. \$20,000

The Forest Society will purchase in fee from three Goss family entities 195 acres of land in Madbury, Lee and Durham, NH as a new Reservation. We will also purchase a 32-acre conservation easement on abutting agricultural land surrounding the historic hoe being retained

by one Goss family. This land is an ecologically rich, historic property used heavily by the public for outdoor recreation.

14. Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire

Bodwell Farm: Kensington's Last Dairy Farm. \$20,000

SELT is working to conserve the Bodwell Farm, Kensington's last dairy farm. The 115 acre property has been in the Bodwell family for six generations, and it represents one of only six commercial dairy farms remaining in all of Rockingham County. The farm contains over 82 acres of important agricultural soils, and their cows enjoy the natural benefits of a pasture-based system.

15. Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire

Harvey Forest - Growing Pawtuckaway to Great Bay Greenway. \$20,000

The Harvey Forest project will result in the conservation of 1,114-acres of important uplands, wetlands, ponds and streams identified as high priority by numerous plans and studies and permanently conserve habitat for several documented state and federal rare/endangered species. In addition, the project will result in the land remaining open to the public for outdoor recreational uses.

16. The Nature Conservancy

Ashuelot River Floodplain Forest Restoration. \$24,000

Restore 11 acres of riparian area, currently hayfield, and areas surrounding 5.5 acres of oxbow wetlands, to floodplain forest habitat and eradicate approximately 2 acres of invasive species along 1500 feet of the Ashuelot River in Swanzey, NH. Restoration will include the planting of approx. 2700 trees and shrubs.

Cook motioned to accept the Grant Sub-Committee's 2016 recommendations. Gornert seconded the motion. The motion carried.

## **Agritourism Update**

Throop gave an update on agritourism and proposed changes to legislation. Throop handed out draft language presented by a work group initiated by Sen. Boughton. looking at revisions to RSAs 21:34-a, 672:1,III-b, 672:1, III-d, and 674:32-b with the addition of 674:32-d, which would state: "As defined in RSA 21:34-a, agritourism uses shall be permitted on any property where the primary use is for agriculture, subject to RSA 674:32-b, II." Throop discussed his experience working with the Town of Peterborough as they were working on agritourism. Brownson read a statement that Roger Noonan prepared related to agritourism.

The SCC agreed that this topic should be monitored. Throop stated he would send the NHPA/NHMA's spreadsheets on LSRs.

## **District Grant Writing Workshop Update**

Brownson updated the SCC on the District Grant Writing Workshop. A date has been chosen as March 28<sup>th</sup> with March 31<sup>st</sup> as a snowdate. It will be held at the Lamson Library in Plymouth with Brickner-Wood, NRCSS Don Keirstead, and Plymouth State University's Gary McCool as the presenters.

Ellsmore stated that there is a SARE workshop in Baltimore on March 28<sup>th</sup>, which may be a conflict. Brownson will look see if any District Managers are attending the Baltimore workshop and, if so, the date will change to March 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **Supervisor appointments, re-appointments, and filling unexpired terms**

Brownson, Goodrich, and Throop presented the appointments and re-appointment by reading a brief description of the nominated supervisor.

A nomination for re-appointment was submitted for William Stockman, Carroll County Conservation District.

A nomination for re-appointment was submitted for Jon Marshall, Carroll County Conservation District.

A nomination for re-appointment was submitted for Andrew Pressman, Cheshire County Conservation District.

A nomination for appointment was submitted for Amy Bodwell, Cheshire County Conservation District.

A nomination for re-appointment was submitted for Bill Fosher, Cheshire County Conservation District.

A nomination for re-appointment was submitted for Charles Hardy, Hillsborough County Conservation District.

A nomination for re-appointment was submitted for Christopher Connolly, Hillsborough County Conservation District.

A nomination for appointment was submitted for Robert Bradbury, Merrimack County Conservation District.

A nomination for re-appointment was submitted for Jeffrey Moore, Merrimack County Conservation District.

A nomination for re-appointment was submitted for Robin Aikman, Strafford County Conservation District.

A nomination for re-appointment was submitted for Mark Perry, Strafford County Conservation District.

Bridges motioned to approve the above nomination. Parker seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Five re-appointment nominations were submitted by Sullivan CCD but using the old form and with no back-up information for each nomination. Consensus was to request the new form with the required information for review in February, 2016.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30am.

**The next meeting will be held on February 18, 2016, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm in the conference room at NH Department of Environmental Services, 29 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH.**