



Vermont Association of Conservation Districts

Our Land. Our Water. Our Future.

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Your favorite place has likely benefited from the work of the Conservation Districts.

The state budget for fiscal year 2023 included increased funding for Vermont's 14 Natural Resources Conservation Districts. Specifically, Sec. B.225 of the FY23 state budget appropriated an additional \$250,000 to the State Natural Resources Conservation Council line item within the VT Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets' budget to help with ongoing operational expenses among the 14 Conservation Districts (for a total base appropriation of \$362,000), and Sec. B.1100 appropriated \$248,000 in one-time funding for capital improvement projects. Below are some examples of how that one-time funding has been spent since the beginning of the 2023 fiscal year.



New Office Building in Downtown Poultney

The Poultney Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District spent \$100,000 in one-time funding from the state to purchase a new office building in downtown Poultney. Poultney Mettowee is one of the few state Conservation Districts that is not co-housed with the national Natural Resources Conservation Service and therefore does not enjoy the cost-share of office space with the federal government. Furthermore, Poultney Mettowee lost their office space in 2019 when Green Mountain College closed.

One-time funding from the state made it possible for the Poultney Mettowee Conservation District to purchase a small, previously vacant office building on Main Street in Poultney, increasing their visibility and accessibility of programming to the community while contributing to Poultney's economic revitalization. The District secured the new office building and relocated there in April 2022. After the field season ended and the grant agreement from the VT Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets went through, local legislators joined District staff and Supervisors, Poultney Town officials, the Poultney Chamber, and District constituents for a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Wednesday, November 16. Attendees also heard from District staff and local partners about the District's work and request for state in fiscal year 2024.

Water Quality and Tree Planting Equipment at Lamoille County Nature Center

The Lamoille Natural Resources Conservation District owns a 40-acre nature preserve with a Nature Center in Morristown, VT and used one-time funding from the state to purchase equipment necessary for programmatic and tree planting operations. The equipment purchased includes water quality testing and monitoring equipment, a stream table for demonstrations with youth and others as well as a trailer and pump for tree planting operations. This equipment will help the Lamoille Conservation District implement water quality and conservation projects on the ground as members of the [Vermont Agricultural Water Quality Partnership](#) and increase visibility of programming among the community and visitors to the nature preserve.

The Lamoille Conservation District has three large scale tree planting projects lined up for 2023, where the new trailer will be used to transport tree stock, the new water pump also funded with one-time state monies, and a riding lawn mower when needed to help trees outcompete canary grass. In 2022, no large-scale tree plantings were conducted by the Lamoille Natural Resources Conservation District due to a lack of capacity and proper equipment. **The new equipment will allow for more efficient planting operations and therefore more trees planted, increasing climate resilience**

for **Lamoille County's landscape**. The water pump can water tree stock in less than half the time it took to water manually, significantly reducing the staff time commitment to this aspect of the District's work, and the three tree planting projects lined up for 2023 will cover a total of 14 acres of land.



Tree Planting Equipment and Hardware for Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District



The Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District also used their one-time funding from the state to purchase new tree planting equipment, which was used in Fall 2022 to plant around 900 trees and shrubs along riparian corridors in Shelburne, Orange, and Westford. **Riparian corridors are critical habitats for preventing soil erosion and protecting against flooding, and the trees and shrubs planted will make the riverbeds in these three towns more resilient to adverse climate impacts.** The new equipment included a fleet of shovels and gloves as well as a new portable water pump, which holds all the same benefits as mentioned for the Lamoille Conservation District.

The Winooski Conservation District also utilized one time funding for new office hardware and software for District staff, which will greatly improve performance, security, and comfort of staff working remotely.

4WD Vehicle for the White River Natural Resources Conservation District

The White River Natural Resources Conservation District recently purchased a truck from St. Johnsbury Buick GMC to have a District-owned vehicle for field visits. The District is currently on a year-long waitlist to purchase an electric truck, but due to supply chain issues and low hauling capacity and mileage, the White River District Board of Supervisors made the decision to purchase a new gasoline powered truck to serve the District's immediate needs.

(Pictured on right, Jennifer Byrne, District Manager and Karl Thidemann, District Supervisor)

