



# Vermont Natural Resources Conservation Districts Annual Report

- ◆ State Natural Resources Conservation Council
- ◆ 14 Natural Resources Conservation Districts
- ◆ Vermont Association of Conservation Districts

June 2015-July 2016

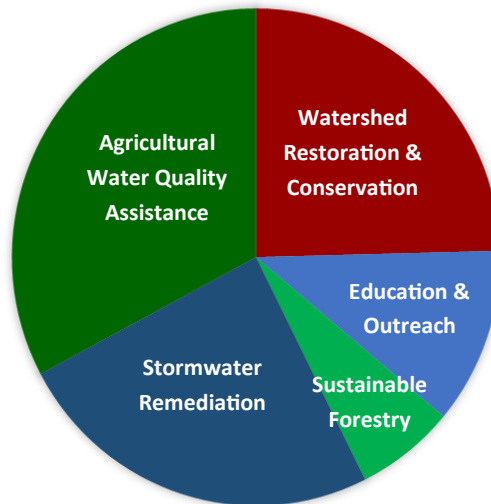


## LOCAL WORK, STATEWIDE PROGRESS

*Conservation Districts coordinate financial, technical and educational resources locally for the conservation of soil, water and other natural resources.* While our state agency, the **Natural Resources Conservation Council (NRCC)** manages the Conservation Districts' legislative and statutory responsibilities and works as a forum for landowners and Districts to interface with state and federal policy makers, the **14 Conservation Districts** write over 80 grants to implement projects and programs to address key local resource concerns. The **Vermont Association of Conservation Districts (VACD)** oversees regional and statewide programming while providing overall leadership and communications support. Together, the Conservation Districts are **making critical and coordinated statewide progress** toward to the goal of improving water quality and conserving Vermont's natural resources.



## PROGRAM AREAS



Key Projects & Programs
Land Treatment Planning
Stormwater Master Planning
Nutrient Management Planning Assistance
River Corridor & Basin Planning
Small Farm Outreach
Trees for Streams & Lakeshore Buffering
Portable Skidder Bridge Rentals
Aquatic Organism Passage Restoration
Rural Fire Protection
Green Stormwater Infrastructure

# Landowners Partnered on Non-Ag Practices	# Towns Served	# Total Volunteer Hours All Programs	# Trees/Shrubs Sold or Planted	# of Farms Assisted
285	104	3364	25,543	1376



# 2016 Project Highlights & Results

## STORMWATER REMEDIATION

Rainfall in developed areas has unique effects on water quality and the hydrologic balance of a watershed. Impervious surfaces—including rooftops, roads, sidewalks, parking lots, and compacted soils—increase the amount of water and pollutants entering streams that would otherwise infiltrate into the ground and reduces groundwater recharge. Conservation Districts work to **identify and install Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) practices and stormwater retrofits** to increase infiltration, reduce stormwater runoff and improve water quality.

# Practices Identified	# Practices Scheduled for Implementation	# Practices Installed	# Gallons Stormwater Treated	# Acres Impervious Surface Treated	# Rainbarrels Distributed	# Landowners Partnered on Stormwater Practices	# of Towns Partnered on Stormwater Practices
100	34	11	42,768	20	81	42	11



Implementation of a stormwater mitigation project at the Rumney Memorial School in Middlesex, installed by the Winooski Conservation District



Suds found in a catch basin in St. Johnsbury which drains to the river, identified in an Illicit Discharge Detection & Elimination Study and corrected thru outreach



Infiltration gallery at Morrystown Elementary School, a Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) practice installed by the Lamoille County Conservation District

## WATERSHED CONSERVATION & RESTORATION

### TREES FOR STREAMS

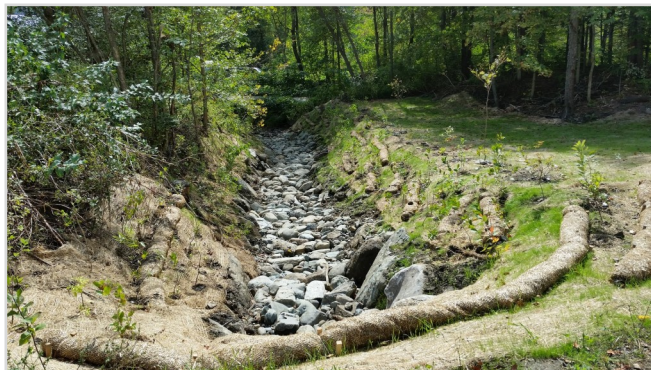


Trees for Streams volunteers from Lamoille Union HS

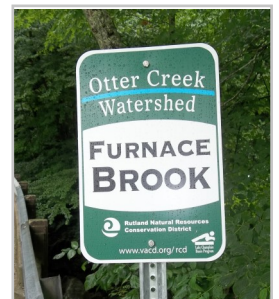
The Conservation Districts' signature riparian buffer program, **Trees for Streams**, has been active since 1999 and expanded from a program at the Lamoille County Conservation District to a key statewide District program offered everywhere. The program focuses on installing vegetated buffers along streams to enhance riparian habitat, improve stream health and floodplain function, and protect water quality. To date the program has installed buffers along 9 linear miles of streams.

Conservation Districts coordinate a wide range of watershed restoration projects to improve water quality and restore habitat, including buffer plantings on non-agricultural land, culvert replacements to restore fish passage, road erosion mitigation, stream assessments, and basin planning activities.

# Linear Feet Buffer Plantings	# Habitat Restoration Projects Installed	# Linear Feet Drainage Improved	# Culvert Designed for Replacement/Retrofit
24,248	6	200	5



Gully Restoration in the Town of Hyde Park, VT



Watershed signage by Rutland NRCD



Culvert with no aquatic organism passage prepared for replacement in Danville, VT



# 2016 Project Highlights & Results

## AGRICULTURAL WATER QUALITY ASSISTANCE



*Winooski Conservation District's Aerator Rental Program, providing opportunities for farms to learn about and implement conservation tillage practices*

The Conservation Districts along with Vermont Association of Conservation Districts (VACD) staff are directly assisting farming operations to balance farming operations with healthy waterways. In 2016, twenty VACD technical staff helped farmers plan for and implement conservation practices to improve water quality throughout Vermont and assisted farmers in accessing financial support to complete these practices.

# Farms On-site Assistance	# Soil Samples Completed	# Manure Samples Completed	# Land Treatment Plans Completed	# Nutrient Management Plans Developed
<b>1060</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>50</b>

### RCPP Nutrient Management Planning Assistance



Conservation Districts assisted Small Farm Operations (SFOs) develop Nutrient Management Plans (NMPs) with the collection of field and farm data, preparation of maps and organization of records.

Once prepared, farms enroll in University of Vermont Extension's winter class called, "Digging In: A Nutrient Management Class for Farmers" and write their own NMP. Funded by USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)



*Collecting soil samples in the Missisquoi Watershed with RCPP farmer and the Orleans County Conservation District*

### Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) Small Farm Outreach



Conservation Districts held public meetings across the state for small farms to learn more about the new proposed RAPs and Small Farm Certification with staff from the Agency of Agriculture Food & Markets. The meetings involved a review of the timeline, purpose and content of the new law, and offered opportunities for feedback and resources to support small farms through the

# Linear Feet Livestock Exclusion Fencing Installed	# Acres Buffer Plantings	# Referrals to Federal & State Programs	# of Acres Conservation Tillage	# of Agricultural Best Management Practices Installed
<b>3590</b>	<b>35.4</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>3787</b>	<b>124</b>

## OUTREACH & EDUCATION



Participants in the Otter Creek Conservation District's **Conservation Bus Tour**, pictured left, viewed and discussed conservation practices on farms, cover crop field trials, farm equipment use such as manure

injection, and shared resources on conservation programs for farms in Addison County and the Lake Champlain Basin.



Ottawaquechee Conservation District's **River Road Show** has provided educational opportunities on river dynamics using the "flume" or river process simulator. The program was "on the road" for 162 days in 2016 with 40 training events.

## PORTABLE SKIDDER BRIDGE RENTALS

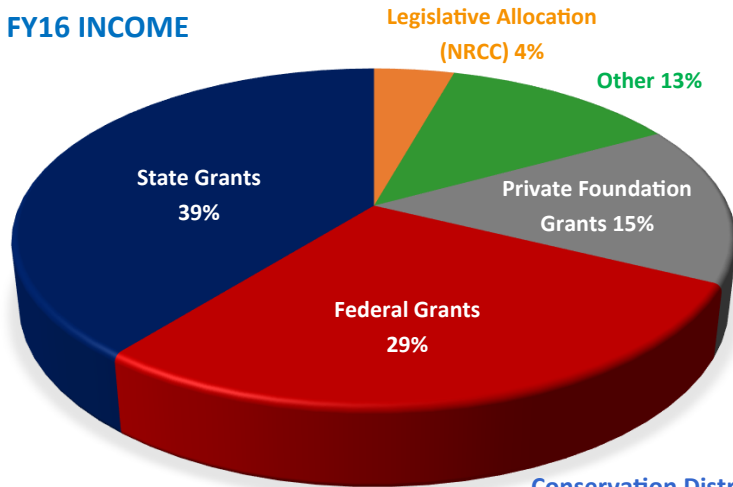


*Conservation Districts around the state provide Portable Skidder Bridges for rent to help protect waterways during logging operations. Pictured is an installed bridge and discussion of proper use and installation of bridges in the Winooski Conservation District; and students from Stafford Technical Center working with the Poultney Mettowee Conservation District after building a new bridge.*



# Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Financial Report

## FY16 INCOME



## FY16 Income to Vermont Association of Conservation Districts (VACD) and 14 Conservation Districts

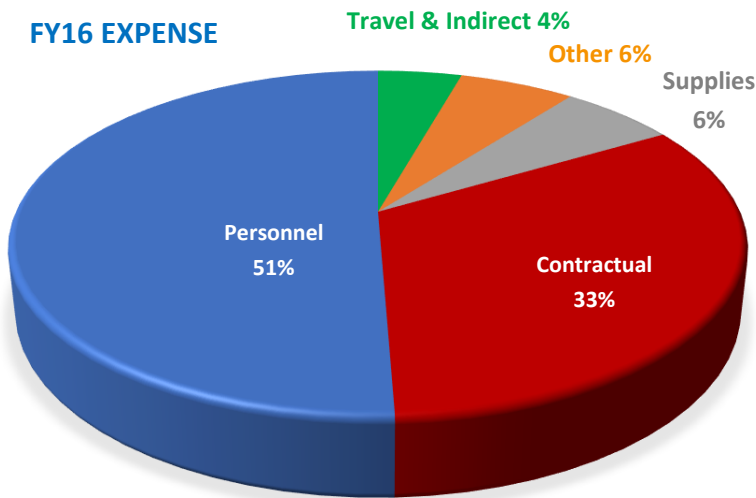
State Grants	\$1,020,258.82
Federal Grants	\$738,497.83
Private Foundation Grants	\$397,676.86
Other Sales, Town Appropriations, Local Contracts	\$329,522.94
Legislative Allocation State Natural Resources Conservation Council	\$112,000.00

Conservation Districts and VACD leveraged \$22 for every \$1 provided by the VT Legislature

### Title 10: Conservation and Development; Chapter 31: Soil Conservation Act

Conservation Districts exist in Vermont State Statute and have specific duties and responsibilities mandated by law. Currently, Conservation Districts receive \$112,000 allocated by the legislature through the VT Agency of Agriculture Food & Markets to the State Natural Resources Conservation Council (NRCC), which provides just under \$7000 to each District. To meet their responsibilities and implement projects and programs, Conservation Districts and VACD must raise additional funding primarily through grants.

## FY16 EXPENSE



## STAFF & SUPERVISORS

Each of the 14 Conservation Districts has a District Manager and a five-member Board of Supervisors who must be landowners within the District, with some additional technical staff and summer interns.



Winooski Conservation District Board of Supervisors

VACD has 25 statewide staff

who work cooperatively with Conservation Districts, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the VT Agency of Agriculture to implement regional and statewide programming. The VACD board is made up of Supervisors from Conservation Districts around the state.



## RURAL FIRE PROTECTION

VACD works with the Vermont Rural Fire Protection Task Force to assist local fire departments and towns in their efforts to improve safety and welfare of Vermont communities by reducing the risk of injury, loss of life, and damage to property and natural resources in rural areas.



Dry hydrant installed in Enosburg

## Thank you Partners & Financial Supporters

VT Agency of Agriculture Food & Markets  
 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
 Ecosystem Restoration Program  
 Vermont Watershed Grants  
 US Fish & Wildlife Service  
 Lake Champlain Basin Program  
 VT Department of Public Safety

VT Department of Environmental Conservation  
 Vermont Regional Planning Commissions  
 New England Grassroots Environmental Fund  
 Upper Connecticut Mitigation & Enhancement Fund  
 VT Department of Forest Parks & Recreation  
 USDA Farm Service Agency  
 Municipalities, Landowners & Businesses

### Vermont Association of Conservation Districts

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### State Natural Resources Conservation Council

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Vermont Conservation District Directory, see insert

# Dry Hydrants Designed	# Dry Hydrants Installed	# Towns Served
43	32	45