



WINDHAM COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION DISTRICT

DECEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

Greetings from the Windham Conservation District! I hope you and your families are doing well and staying healthy. An unusually warm fall season is finally over, and it looks like we may have a white Christmas this year. The conservation district has several exciting events in the works for the new year, including a Meet the District event for producers, agricultural workshops, and the much-anticipated annual plant sale and trout sale. To find out more, read on!

Please don't hesitate to contact the district if you are looking for help with a natural resource concern.

Best Wishes

Cory Ross

District Manager





2022 Plant and Tree Sale



The pickup day for the 2022 Plant Sale will be held on Saturday, May 7th at Green Mountain Orchards in Putney, from 9 AM until 12 Noon.

We will begin accepting orders online and by mail on **Monday, January 3rd**. Ordering online is the best way to make sure you get exactly what you want – as the website updates our inventory in real time. Those wishing to order by mail are encouraged to do so as early as possible. In the event that you do order something by mail that has sold out, we will contact you to arrange a replacement item or a refund.

You can access the online store and the order form and product description starting January 3rd by visiting:

<https://windhamcountynrcd.org/continuing-programs/plant-sale/>

New this year – The Southeast Chapter of the University of Vermont Extension Master Gardeners will be partnering with the district on the plant sale. Master gardeners will help with plant sale preparations and provide free advice to customers on pick up day.



Plant sale orders packaged up and ready to be picked up at last year's sale.

An Opportunity for Agricultural and Forest Product Producers to Learn about the District's Programming and provide input into future district plans!

Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District



Join us at Rebop Farm for light refreshments, warm drinks and good conversations.

Please email Heather at blunk.wcnrcd@gmail.com or call 802-689-3024 for more information or with any questions you might have.

WINDHAM COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION DISTRICT

We hope you will join us at Rebop Farm 10am on January 22nd, 2022 to learn more about how your Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District (NRCD) can assist you and your land.

NRCD's Cory Ross, district manager, and Heather Blunk, agricultural outreach specialist, want to connect with producers in Windham County to talk about the services offered through the NRCD and listen to what farmers and producers have to say. We are excited to learn about the needs and concerns of our community and provide opportunity for networking amongst Windham County's producers.

Rebop Farm, located at 1320 Sunset Lake RD, Brattleboro, VT, 05301, is graciously hosting and providing a warm environment for us to gather. Wearing masks will be required per Brattleboro's indoor mask mandate.

You may RSVP at this link, <https://tinyurl.com/ycks44y9>. This link is also available on our website at windhamcountynrcd.org You can also email Heather at blunk.wcnrcd@gmail.com or call our office 802-689-3024 for more information or with any questions you might have.



A new funding opportunity for conservation work on farms and forest lands in Vermont:



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Source Water Protection in Vermont

A Commitment to Conservation



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Working lands can be key to protecting clean drinking water. We can help!

Agriculture is a vital part of our infrastructure and so is water. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is working to prioritize land and water conservation practices on private working lands. These practices provide many benefits, including protecting public and private drinking water supplies. In Vermont there are 1,929 source water protection areas which are associated with intakes for surface water (lakes, reservoirs and rivers) or groundwater wells in aquifers. Surface waters are often more at risk for from pollutants such as excess nutrients, sediment, chemicals, and bacteria. Many towns in Vermont are dependent on surface waters to supply drinking water to their residents.

We can help private landowners

NRCS is focused on improving private working lands and providing assistance to farmers and forest landowners to improve water quality. NRCS often starts by looking at the types of land uses in the watershed.

Agricultural Lands

Installing best management practices on agricultural lands such as: riparian buffers, cover crops, prescribed grazing, nutrient management and manure storage help to reduce runoff and excess nutrients to water supplies.



Forest Lands

Installing best management practices on forested lands such as: forest management planning to help locate woods roads, installing water bars, seeding down steeper areas and using temporary stream crossings minimize erosion from timber harvesting operations.



Conservation Easements

Protecting farmland and forest land are key ways to reduce impervious surfaces and further development. Furthermore, easements require that best management practices are followed to protect water quality. Working with local Land Trusts, NRCS and State partners would like to prioritize easement funding in source water protection areas, wetlands, headwater streams and riparian corridors. Every day, new producers are stepping up to work hand in hand with the NRCS to plan and apply practices that improve water quality and strengthen agricultural operations.

Priority watersheds will increase applicant's likelihood of funding based on a cumulative ranking system with many factors involved.

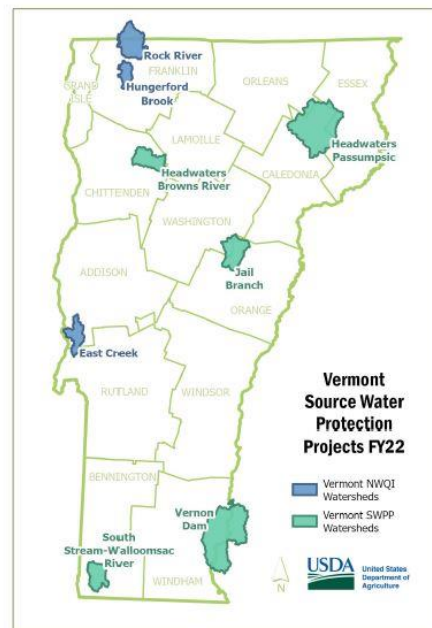
Financial and Technical Assistance

Increased payment rate is available for the following source water protection practices:

- Conservation Crop Rotation
- Cover Crop
- Ground Water Testing
- Riparian Forest Buffer
- Filter Strip
- Heavy Use Area Protection
- Nutrient Management
- Pest Management Conservation System
- Agrichemical Handling Facility
- Well Decommissioning

Vermont NRCS' 5 source water protection areas (SWPA's) are:

- Headwaters of the Passumpsic River
- portions of the Vernon Dam Watershed
- South Stream Wallomsac River
- Jail Branch
- Headwaters of Brown River



Our increased-payment-rate practices and how they can help:

Heavy Use Area Protection

If animals spend a lot of time in one area, it sees 'heavy use.' That also means there is a lot of manure and urine deposited there. If there isn't an improved surface where the animals spend a lot of time, then it can be difficult to clean the area and capture the nutrients deposited there. The nutrients can enter ground or surface water. Heavy Use Areas protection enhancement can help make it easier to capture those nutrients.



Cover Crops:

Cover crops are a key component to creating healthy cropland soil. Cover crops capture nutrients, hold soil in place, break up soil compaction and provide habitat for soil microbes. Keeping these 'crops' on the field, even in the off season, help prevent erosion and nutrient loss through runoff.

Let us help keep nutrients on the farm.

Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), funding is available to help achieve conservation goals and improve agricultural production. Interested applicants who are already USDA customers can submit applications online via farmers.gov. Visit farmers.gov/service-locator to find your local office

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender. VT • Fiscal Year 2022

If you are a producer interested in learning more about Source Water Protection Area funding for your operation, please contact the district. We can help!

windhamcountynrcd@gmail.com

802-689-3024

Interested in helping native plants in Vermont? Consider volunteering with the Plant Conservation Volunteer Program at the Native Plant Trust:



Native Plant Trust PCV PROGRAM

Native Plant Trust is the nation's first plant conservation organization and the only one solely focused on New England's native plants. We save native plants in the wild, grow them for gardens and restorations, and educate others on their value and use. Based in Garden in the Woods in Framingham, MA, we work throughout New England each year to monitor and protect rare and endangered plants, collect and preserve seeds to ensure biological diversity, detect and control invasive species, conduct research, and offer a range of educational programs.

THE PCV PROGRAM

We are looking for passionate volunteers to join our Plant Conservation Volunteer (PCV) program! Established in Massachusetts in 1993, Native Plant Trust's PCV program is the first rare plant monitoring program in the country that engages conservation-minded volunteers in monitoring rare and endangered plants, seed collection, and habitat management across the six states of New England. Since its creation, the PCV program has grown to a consortium of over 120 professional botanists and hundreds of volunteer botanists.

PCV ACTIVITIES

Plant Conservation Volunteers (PCVs) have the unique opportunity to participate in a variety of activities vital to the preservation of the native flora of New England, including:

Rare Plant Monitoring — Survey populations of endangered plant species to help provide critical information used by local, state, and federal land managers to make important conservation and habitat-management decisions.

Seed Collection — Learn how to collect seeds from imperiled species to send to Native Plant Trust's Seed Bank to preserve the genetic diversity of New England's flora into the future.

Habitat Management — Help fight the loss of natural communities affected by development, invasive species, and succession by identifying new threats and participating in organized management projects.



PCV MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- You have opportunity to visit some of the most diverse and unique natural communities in New England, many of which may not be accessed by the general public.
- You may join special field trips led by professional botanists throughout New England every year, which offer training in identification, ecology, and conservation in the field.
- You have free access to select botanical courses offered by Native Plant Trust.
- You will also have the satisfaction of knowing that you are doing your part to help prevent the extinction or extirpation of New England's rarest species.

QUALIFICATIONS

New applicants should have some botanical knowledge, a commitment to native plant conservation, good observation skills, a sense of adventure, and their own transportation.

JOIN THE PCV PROGRAM

If you are interested in joining the PCV Program, please complete the application at <https://www.nativeplanttrust.org/conservation/plant-conservation-volunteer-program/>.

Questions?

Please contact Micah Jasny, Botanical Coordinator:
mjasny@NativePlantTrust.org,
 508 877-7630 x 3204.

Visit our website at: www.NativePlantTrust.org





American Farmland Trust

A New Funding Opportunity for Farms in Windham County!

American Farmland Trust is offering \$5,000 microgrants to provide **direct financial assistance** to farmers.

80% of these funds will be spent on projects that improve the resiliency of livestock operations through improved soil health or other regenerative agricultural practices in specific counties in Western New England – **including Windham County**.

To learn more, please visit: <https://farmland.org/new-england-farmer-microgrants-program/>

If you would like help navigating the application process, please reach out to the district.