



2004 Annual Report

Southern Rhode Island Conservation District



October 2004



About The Southern Rhode Island Conservation District (SRICD)

SRICD's MISSION

Our mission is to promote and achieve a healthy environment and sustainable use of natural resources for the people of Kent and Washington Counties and the state of Rhode Island, by providing technical, educational and financial resources in coordination with our partners.



Our board (left to right): Rudi Hempe, Ed Renehan, Pat Lenihan, Harriet Powell, Stephen DelPozzo, and Marjorie Weeden (associate director).

SRICD is governed by a board of directors—five voting members and several associate directors who provide technical assistance and diversity. Our board represents various communities and interests throughout Kent and Washington Counties.

SRICD's Operating Philosophy

Fostering a sustainable balance in the ways we relate to our landscape—as a place to work, grow things, store rainfall, hike, swim, and play, or provide habitat for other creatures—will create a wholesome and beautiful Rhode Island. SRICD's work promotes such a sustainable balance by focusing effort and resources on the most essential and challenging elements of the equation:

- Clean and plentiful waters
- Secure sources of food
- Well managed open space
- Abundant wildlife habitat

To be effective in our mission and operating philosophy, we pay close attention to building organizational strength and vision.

2004 Annual Report

Cover: *Growing A Future Garden*—see page 4.

Staff:

Alicia Lehrer—District Manager, Susan Letendre—Education and Outreach Director, Patricia Gambarini—Stormwater Planner/Designer, Kristine Stuart—Stormwater Management Specialist, Patricia Tanalski—Special Projects Coordinator, and Jean Lambert—Engineering Consultant.

Directors:

Patricia Lenihan, Chair (*East Greenwich*), Edward Renehan, Jr., Vice-Chair (*North Kingstown*), Stephen DelPozzo, Treasurer (*West Greenwich*), Harriet Powell, Secretary (*North Kingstown*), and Rudi Hempe (*Narragansett*).

Associate Directors:

Richard Donnelly (*North Kingstown*), Stephen Donohue (*South Kingstown*), Paul Gardner (*Charlestown*), W. Michael Sullivan (*South Kingstown*), Robert Swanson (*Richmond*), Marjorie Weeden (*Hopkinton*), Bryan Wolfenden (*West Warwick*).



SRICD serves the communities of Kent and Washington Counties:

Coventry, West Warwick, Warwick, West Greenwich, East Greenwich, Exeter, North Kingstown, Hopkinton, Richmond, South Kingstown, Westerly, Charlestown, Narragansett and New Shoreham (Block Island). In addition, we serve all of Rhode Island in stormwater assistance and food policy programs. If your community is not represented by our directors, perhaps you would be interested in joining us. Call us at 401-822-8832 or look us up on the web: www.sricd.org.

Assuring Secure Sources of Food in RI

Growing A Future, SRICD's sustainable food project funded by USDA* CREES*, is embedded in a multicultural neighborhood of South Providence, where 85-92% of households qualify for food stamps, 23% of heads of households are homeless and 71.5% of children live below the poverty level. Youth team up to explore and tackle issues of food security: insuring that all people have access to enough nutritious, culturally appropriate food, grown in such a



Youth and community members farm in the inner-city.

way as to preserve the environment, to sustain health without need for hand-outs, begging or stealing. Now, and over the next two years, these students and their mentors at Brown, RISD*, Johnson & Wales, URI* and in the community, will: get to know the local food system, people, and their issues; study national and international issues, rebuild the RI Community Food Security Coalition with all stakeholders; and work with the legislature to form RI's first Food Policy Council with

permanent roles for youth. They have built a raised-bed garden in South Providence that feeds them and community members, AND supplies them with a living classroom.

Through their work with the food system, youth will learn: gardening, environmental science, entrepreneurship, research and evaluation skills; how to work as a team; leadership and shared-leadership; cross-cultural communications; conflict resolution; mediation; group facilitation; public speaking; persuasive writing for different audiences (i.e. media, funders, legislators); coalition-building; the legislative process, and many more skills. With this program, SRICD will fulfill its goal of supporting and educating youth to become active, effective citizens who will ensure sustainable resource use and environmental justice.



Youth leader at work.

BACKGROUND:

RI's challenge for food security is multi-faceted. Between 1964 and 1997, 47% of our farmland was lost to development. Southern RI, once blanketed with potato farms, is now covered with house lots, golf courses, and turf fields. 79% of RI's agricultural output is now in ornamentals and turf. Due to these trends, the climate of our state, and lack of year-round growers, the average food on a Rhode Islander's dinner plate has traveled from 1,200 to 1,500 miles. Farming of the sea fares no better, though RI's fishing and shell fishing are major industries. Environmental degradation is threatening the livelihood of our fisherfolk and the price of fish, with nearly a third of all RI waters impaired.



A bumper crop of heirloom tomatoes.

In our state, 34% more children fell below the poverty level between 1990 and 2000. In that same period, Rhode Island had the nation's 9th largest increase in the gap between the richest 20% of families and the poorest 20%. Income indexed to cost of living went up in the southern region, and down in Providence. Our state has the largest rate of poverty among Latino peoples. Who gets to eat and who doesn't, how much it costs, and what they get to eat is greatly determined by race, ethnicity, geography, and economic status.

RI has a great need for food security education and food policy to make our food system sustainable, and insure its benefits to those within our state, without negatively impacting those outside its borders.

**For translations to acronyms used in this report, see Alphabet Soup (page 14).*

Stormwater Pollution Solutions

Greenwich Bay

SRICD continued to address stormwater issues in Greenwich Bay during the past year. A draft report evaluating the storm systems in Warwick Cove was sent out for review and comment. A preliminary evaluation of the effect of stormwater on the beach and salt marsh was made for the Chepiwanoxet Neighbors' Association. Comments were provided to the Coastal Resources Center on the Water Quality Chapter of the Special Area Management (SAM) Plan for Greenwich Bay. SRICD also continued to design infiltration structures near Carpenter Brook.

SRICD has provided the results of its work in the Brush Neck and Warwick Cove watersheds to RIDEM's Sustainable Watersheds Office as they begin a project to identify opportunities for restoring vegetated buffers. Maps such as the one below of the Warwick Cove watershed will facilitate RIDEM's inventory process.



Warwick Cove's buffered areas

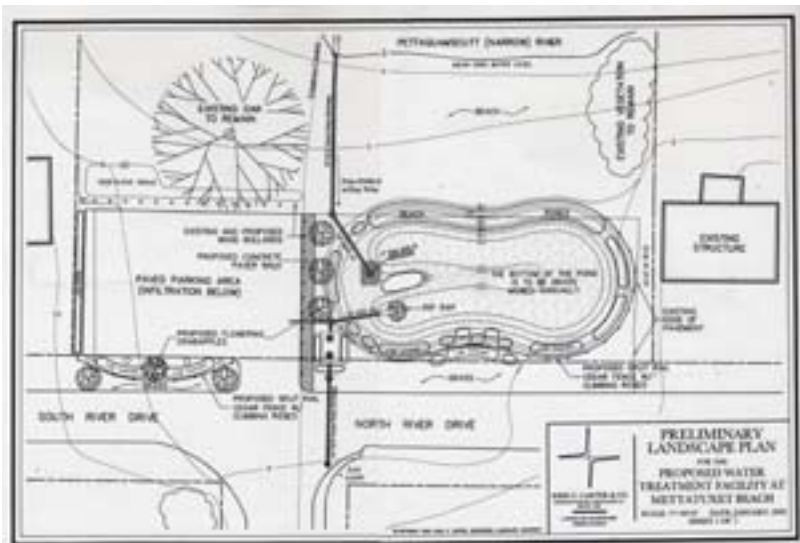


Narrow River—Mettatuxet Beach

SRICD developed an innovative plan to pretreat stormwater at the Mettatuxet Beach outfall to reduce the amount of polluted stormwater entering the Narrow River. This work was accomplished in partnership with the Town of Narragansett, the Mettatuxet Improvement Association, the NRPA, RIDEM and CRMC. The Mettatuxet Beach location is one of the 12 priority outfalls identified by RIDEM’s TMDL pollution study.

The plan involves a three-part treatment system with stormwater first entering 1) a swirl-separator unit to settle out solids such as sand, soil and leaves, and then traveling into either 2) infiltrators buried beneath the beach parking lot or 3) a detention pond. The system is designed to treat the stormwater from a typical one-inch storm.

The project, funded by a grant from Rhode Island Aqua Fund, is in the final stages of permitting. The Town of Narragansett plans to install it in the spring of 2005 through a grant from the USEPA Watershed Initiative. Dr. Tom Boving of URI’s Geosciences Department will monitor the effectiveness of each part of the system. Dr. Boving’s work has been funded by CRMC.



SRICD developed the design for the stormwater treatment system with help from the Town of Narragansett. John Carter of John Carter & Company, Design & Build in Narragansett produced and donated this landscape design.

More Stormwater Pollution Solutions

Helping Narragansett Manage Stormwater Pollution

Narragansett's final Phase II Stormwater Management Program Plan (SWMPP) acknowledges that nutrients (primarily from lawns) and pathogens (primarily from animal waste) are the major pollutants washing into the waters that surround the Town.

As such, SRICD is helping the Town of Narragansett to kick off implementation of the SWMPP with a major education campaign aimed at reducing the amount of pollution from lawns. The first piece of work involves a demonstration project at the elementary school, a highly visible property with a lively constituency of children, parents, teachers, and administrators that can help take the message about better lawn care practices to many other people in the community. The opportunities to promote the advantages for public health (with children) and ecological health (with direct proximity to Pettaquamscutt Cove) are expected to add power to the message and impetus to making actual changes in practice.



As part of implementing the SWMPP, SRICD is working with Narragansett to improve lawn care practices throughout the Town. Better mowing, watering, and fertilization techniques will help reduce the amount of lawn care chemicals washing with each rainstorm into rivers and streams. The soccer field at Narragansett Elementary School, shown here, is one place where such practices will soon be adopted.



SRICD is currently working with the Narragansett's Town engineer, community development director, school facility personnel, teachers, and administrators to develop a project that both reaches into the school itself (through the curriculum), and also reaches out to the community (through the work and voices of students). As part of the campaign, SRICD has prepared a slide show entitled "Reconsidering the Lawn." The show, which articulates the case for natural lawn care practices, will be presented by SRICD to neighborhood associations and clubs throughout Narragansett. SRICD is also working to secure sources of natural organic lawn care products for residents' use.

Discouraging Waterfowl that Pollute Fry Brook and the Hunt River

Fry Brook is polluted by fecal coliform bacteria for the full length of its 6.2 mile journey into the Hunt River. Waterfowl, and particularly Canada geese, are one of the major sources for this contamination. Working under a Clean Water Act Section 319 grant from the RIDEM, SRICD is helping Stanley Bostitch and the East Greenwich Golf and Country Club to reduce the population of resident waterfowl. SRICD has developed a menu of options and is currently producing an educational presentation to help other abutting landowners to both understand and to make decisions about better managing the geese population.



Because Canada Geese are a major source of fecal coliform contamination to Fry Brook, SRICD is working to help landowners make decisions about better geese management.

Habitat Restoration

Duck Cove Salt Marsh in North Kingstown

Healthy salt marshes are among the most productive known ecosystems. The marsh at Duck Cove in North Kingstown began to degrade when a culvert between Upper and Lower Duck Cove collapsed, preventing free flow of salt water into the marsh. Then *Phragmites*, or giant reed, overgrew the natural marsh vegetation.

SRICD got involved with the restoration of Upper Duck Cove Salt Marsh in 1997 when the Duck Cove Bluffs Association and the Lone Tree Point Neighborhood Association needed a project manager for an Aqua Fund Grant to restore the marsh. SRICD has been monitoring the marsh since before the culvert was replaced to improve tidal flow. December 2003 marked the second anniversary of the new culvert, and oh, what changes have occurred!

**August
1999**



Phragmites
height at
one
monitoring
location.



**December
2003**

The difference in the invasive *Phragmites* is the most visible indicator of those changes. In the photo on the left, taken before the culvert was replaced, the *Phragmites* measured nearly 11 feet in height. The photo on the right, taken 2 years after more salt water was allowed in the Cove, shows nearly bare ground at the same location. Now we wait to see if the desired salt marsh species move back in!

Monitoring consists of:

- Measuring the salinity of the soil water at 15 points throughout the marsh
- Measuring the percent cover and height of plant species in over 90 plots throughout the marsh
- Measuring the height of the spring tides
- Photo-documenting the height of the *Phragmites* in three locations



Technical Assistance

Helping Rhode Island Farms

This year USDA NRCS contracted out some of its work to Technical Service Providers. Rhode Island's NRCS office requested proposals to assist in its Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) and its Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). Since SRICD's Kris Stuart met the criteria for a Certified Conservation Planner, the District prepared proposals and entered into contracts with NRCS.

Under the FRPP contract, Kris contacted a number of farmers who sold their development rights and agreed to follow a conservation plan. Kris's job was to determine if any of the land involved was Highly Erodible and, if so, to make sure their plan was adequately followed. Under EQIP, she developed alternative pasture rotation scenarios for a horse farm and alternative grass buffers on a long, sloping vegetable field. She enjoyed getting her boots dirty!

Assistance to other RI Conservation Districts

SRICD's Stormwater Center worked with Northern and Eastern RI Conservation Districts to develop stormwater management programs for communities in their districts.

Eastern RI Conservation District (ERICD)

SRICD staff trained volunteers in Barrington to conduct a stormwater survey for the Allin's Cove watershed, and results were evaluated with ERICD staff. This led to a Clean Water Act Section 319 grant to the Town to design BMPs. ERICD continues to coordinate meetings.

Northern RI Conservation District (NRICD)

SRICD developed an outline of training sessions on "Good Housekeeping" for municipal staff in Scituate, Gloucester and Foster for NRICD. The District plans to run a number of these workshops, sponsored by Providence Water, to help the towns in the Scituate Reservoir watershed meet the goals of their Phase II Stormwater Management Program Plans (SWMPPs).

Financial Statement—July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004

Income

Professional Development Grants	453.00
Annual Meeting Income	630.00
AWESOME! Curriculum Sales	100.00
Seedling Sale Income	4,029.15
Contributions Income	
Legislative Funding	75,000.00
Town Funding	
Coventry	1,103.00
Narragansett	1,500.00
North Kingstown	1,500.00
South Kingstown	1,000.00
Warwick	1,000.00
West Greenwich	300.00
Westerly	256.00
Grants Income	
Aquafund	
Duck Cove Monitoring	7,080.99
Providence Metropolitan School	354.16
USDA CREES Grant: Growing a Future	36,163.80
RI Service Alliance Grant: Kids Grow 02-03	11,872.40
RIDEM Section 319 Funding	
Discouraging Fry Brook Waterfowl	1,961.62
Greenwich Bay Stormwater Mgmt.	3,268.13
Town Stormwater Management Grants	
Cumberland	462.40
Narragansett	10,513.93
Contracts Income	
Municipal Technical Assistance	
Crooked Brook Mosquito Abatemen	943.17
Farm Bill Assistance Contracted by NRCS	
Farm & Ranch Protection Program	4,179.26
EQIP Follow-up	3,903.73
Clerical Assistance to NRCS	18,256.00
Engineering Services	
Sakonnet Greenway Design Services to AILT	1,567.29
Site Plan Review	6,225.00
Assistance to ERICD on Allin's Cove Project	176.05
Assistance to NRICD	
Scituate Watershed Education Program	1,145.63
Parcel Mapping Services	300.00
Open Space Mapping	1,425.00
Miscellaneous Income	679.71
Reimbursed Overhead	9,370.04
Expenses reimbursed through grants	
Materials & Supplies	18.49
Travel	2,024.44
Reimbursed Expenses - Other	24.45
Interest Income	78.13
TOTAL INCOME	208,864.97



Expenses

Volunteer Support	30.73
Awards	1,070.34
Rent	23,880.01
Electric	3,984.71
Pass-Through funds to the State Committee	3,000.00
Professional Development	453.00
Annual Meeting Expenses	600.00
Advertising Expense	115.24
SRICD Outreach Expenses	534.71
Conferences or Meetings	166.00
Educational Materials	524.45
Seedling Sale Expenses	3,242.70
Bank Service Charges	43.25
Contributions	
Rhode Island Envirothon	100.00
Shared Big E 2004 Expenses Team USDA	41.75
Dues and Subscriptions	
Central RI Chamber of Commerce	295.00
Sam's Club	30.00
RI Association of Conservation Districts	1,500.00
NACD 2004 quota payment	775.00
RI Agricultural Council	20.00
Environment Council of RI	45.00
Insurance	1,461.50
Meeting Expenses	1,446.54
Postage and Delivery	464.90
Printing and Reproduction	1,800.59
Computer Repairs	77.43
Travel Expenses	2,412.77
Contract Labor	6,687.50
Office Supplies	
Computers and Supplies	2,545.30
Office Supplies - Other	610.18
Other Materials & Supplies	418.69
Payroll Expenses	134,764.98
Benefit Expenses	16,462.68
Web Expenses	159.58
Total Expense	206,531.62



Alphabet Soup

You will find several acronyms used throughout this report. Here is a handy guide to decoding them:

AILT	Aquidneck Island Land Trust
AWESome!	SRICD's Active Watershed Education curriculum for educators
BMP	Best Management Practice
CREES	USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service
CRMC	Coastal Resources Management Council
EQIP	NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentives Program—a cost-share program to assist agricultural landowners in protecting natural resources
ERICD	Eastern Rhode Island Conservation District
FRPP	NRCS' Farm and Ranchland Protection Program
NACD	The National Association of Conservation Districts
NRCS	USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRICD	Northern Rhode Island Conservation District
NRPA	Narrow River Preservation Association
RIDEM	Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
RISD	Rhode Island School of Design
SAM	Special Area Management (coastal management plans developed by CRMC)
SRICD	Southern Rhode Island Conservation District
SWMPP	Stormwater Management Program Plan (required under RIDEM's Phase II for communities that have urbanized areas)
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load—pollution studies developed by RIDEM for polluted water bodies
URI	University of Rhode Island
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency



Are your fish dying for a
better stormwater plan?

Are you hungry for a new
food security policy?

Is your science curriculum
less than **AWESOME!**?



Our friendly and knowledgeable staff (left to right): *Patty G., Patty T., Susan, Alicia and Kris.* For more information about our staff and services, see pages 3 and 15 inside.

WE CAN HELP!

Call us at 401-822-8832

Visit our website www.sricd.org

or just stop in at our friendly office at
60 Quaker Lane, Suite 46, Warwick, RI 02886

The Southern RI Conservation District
We don't just sell seedlings anymore!