



Date: January 31, 2025

**Worcester County Conservation District - Quarterly Accomplishments Report  
C129- HSAP Round 1**

**Contact:** Jennifer Mason, Administrator  
[Jennifer.Mason2@usda.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Mason2@usda.gov)

Contract Start Date: 6/03/2024  
Contract End Date: 6/30/2026  
Contract Ref# **C129**

FY 2024 Allocation: \$500.00  
FY 2025 Allocation: \$63,418.00  
FY 2026 Allocation: \$11,082.00

**Amount Received to date:**    **FY2024: \$ 0.00**  
   **FY2025: \$4,428.46**  
   **FY2026: \$ 0.00**

Budget Sources of Match Utilized:

- 2023 NACD Outreach & TA Grant
  - Conservation Planner Wages and Taxes (75%): \$3,342.23
- EEOA DC192
  - Administrator + Plant Sale Coordinator time and wages (10%): \$1,294.95
- Spring Sale Plant Sale purchases to date: \$10,232.00
- Contributions to office/workshop expenses, postage, travel, and training: \$2,190.87
- NRCS Facilities, Network Infrastructure and Support: \$1,800.00
- Volunteers In-Kind Contributions this quarter
  - Board- Monthly meetings: \$3,060.00
  - Board-NACD and EEA Grant Application: \$600.00
  - Interviews for Program Coordinator: \$500.00
  - Annual Meeting: \$2,040.00



### **Progress on Deliverables and Objectives to date:**

#### **Program Coordinator**

- Hired Program Coordinator, Bethany Nichols on 12/4/24
  - Bethany will solely focus on achieving the deliverables of this grant.

#### **Conservation Planner/Soil Tests/Postage**

- Soil samples for 8 customers were collected sent to UMaine lab for analysis
  - All these clients were backyard gardeners looking to improve their soil for better growing conditions and to minimize fertilizer runoff.

#### **Field Visits:**

- Field visits were made by our Conservation Planner
  - Two were to provide technical assistance for farmers looking to improve their land's natural resources; improve soil quality and wildlife habitat
    - These sites ranged from a small beginning farmer to a medium sized farm who has been in operation for generations
  - One was inspecting completed conservation practices in woodlands where invasive species had been treated.

#### **Workshops/Trainings attended**

- Program Manager: Massachusetts Association of Conservation District all staff meeting for collaborating and training along with fellow districts. This resulted in several follow up meetings and plans with other Healthy Soils grant recipients. We also made plans on how to share resources and support one another's program goals.
- Conservation Planner: One training from Homeland Security for NRCS, FSA, RD staff and partner employees as a safety training to better prepare us for situations that may arise at work. This training was incredibly useful as it also covered rules and regulation for what is and is not acceptable behavior from clients, co-workers, and other people we may interact with at work.

#### **Travel Expenses**

- Gas to Massachusetts Association of Conservation District all staff meeting

#### **Outreach/Partnership development**

- Collaboration with both Hampden/Hampshire County and Middlesex County for shared knowledge and workspaces
- Collaboration with Department of Conservation and Recreation on a habitat/forest initiative for small landowners
- Reaching out to several local farms to share soil conservation practices and resources



## **Timeline**

### **December**

- Hired Program Coordinator
- Actively seeking sites for demonstrations
- Actively seeking partner organizations
- Collaborating with Plant Sale Coordinator regarding upcoming seedling sale
- Outreach partnerships as noted above
- Attended Annual Meeting in November
- Attended and presented at December Board meeting
- Initiated regular check in sessions with board members for project planning and feedback
- Initial design of web pages for Healthy Soils Program
- Began to gather resources and materials for a Healthy Soils teaching kit

## **Next Quarter Happenings**

- Workshop on Winter Sowing hosted by Wild Seed Project
- Workshop on Stormwater Management and Rain Gardens hosted by Native Plant Trust
- Speaking event with Wachusett Garden Club
- Tabling at Healthy Kids Day at the Worcester YMCA family day
- Seedling sale and soil health demonstration
- More meetings for partnership and collaboration scheduled
- Our Conversation Planner moved to a full time position mid-October, and we've actively been interviewing for a replacement. We are hoping to have a new hire on board in the new year.

## **Metrics accomplished**

- 8 soil tests performed/ 3 field visits
- As our Program Coordinator and new Conservation Planner gets up and running, we expect a number of reportable metrics for next quarter.