



Hampden Hampshire Conservation District
USDA-NRCS Hadley Field Office, 195 Russell Street, Suite B-6
Hadley, MA 01035
413-585-1000, 413treesale@gmail.com

Thomas C. Anderson
Executive Secretary
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Re: **Year End FY 17-18 Report** Hampden Hampshire Conservation District
Basic and Innovation Grant Program
Vendor Code: VC0000868563
Contract #: CT ENV 0228170000000002816
FY 2017 Allocation: \$14,000
FY 2018 Allocation: \$28,000-\$13,000 rolled to FY2019

Dear Tom,

A Summary of progress on deliverables and objectives for the Hampden Hampshire Conservation District (HHCD) FY17-18 Grant Period follows.

The Healthy Watershed Initiative's goals are to provide outreach, education, and technical assistance to Hampden and Hampshire county landowners, specifically to address issues such as soil and water health within the Lake Warner/Mill River area. With the help of this Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) Basic and Innovation Grant funding, HHCD was able to complete the following tasks in FY2017 and FY2018.

- Conservation Planner Shannon Rice-Nichols was hired jointly by Massachusetts Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in March 2017 and assigned ten farmers with whom to collaborate.
- Along with NRCS GIS Specialist Aaron Dushku, indicators for prioritizing sites along the river were identified.
- The NRCS GIS Specialist developed a Stream Power Index (SPI) map, hydrologic soil groups and erosion k-factor maps along with watershed and sub-watershed delineations and land-use analysis.
- Shannon researched cooperators and resource concerns in the area, ultimately meeting with various stakeholders to develop plans for workshops and informational events.
- Along with HHCD and Friends of Lake Warner, Shannon coordinated a fellowship event at the HHCD July 2017 meeting with Friends of Lake Warner. Supervisors met with the board, toured Lake Warner, and learned more about what they are doing in that watershed.



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- While continuing to work on identifying stakeholders, Shannon met with NRCS, HHCD, and MACD to discuss project/grant deliverables. This was presented as a proposal to HHCD, as directed by MACD, in an effort to streamline the process.
- A nutrient management workshop on using ‘Low Cost Aerated Composting Systems for Small Acreage Operations’ was conducted at Rocky and Anne Adriance’s farm in Leverett, in August of 2017. This workshop was offered in collaboration with UMASS Cooperative Extension & Friends of Lake Warner. The goal was to discuss low cost manure management systems for small scale livestock operators, using the Blower XXX technique. Farmers and technical advisors were in attendance. Follow up with attendees resulted in one installation of the system demonstrated at the event.
- Through word of mouth Shannon was asked to host another event and to design a system for an equine farm. Although it was outside the Watershed area, a Soil Health Workshop was conducted at the Mason Square Library, Springfield in the Fall of 2017 with the help of Kate Parsons (NRCS) and Ryan Karb (Many Hands Farm Corps).
- Five farmers had Best Management Practices (BMP) funded as per Round 7 (not all in this watershed).
- After the departure of Shannon Rice Nichols in September 2017, the Board collaborated with MACD to hire Conservation Planner Sarah Rippiere to work jointly for HHCD and MACD from October 2017 until she vacated the position in June 2018.
- Along with the Friends of Lake Warner, a Watershed Management Workshop was held in Hadley in September of 2017
- Sarah published an Article in the Friends of Lake Warner Spring/Summer 2017 Newsletter, titled: HHCD’s Healthy Watershed’s Initiative Grant
- A Workshop titled “Losing Ground Soil and Nutrient Movement Off-Farm” was facilitated with soil specialists from USDA NRCS and Massachusetts Department Agricultural Resources (MDAR) in March of 2018
- In collaboration with NRCS the brochure “Working to Conserve the Natural Resources of Hampden and Hampshire Counties, Massachusetts” was updated and produced in June of 2018.
- A Grant Resource Workshop titled “Dollars and Sense” was facilitated with partners USDA-NRCS, UMASS Extension, Land for Good, Northeast SARE and MDAR in Amherst, in June of 2018.

DISTRICT

- The District began preparations for the Annual Tree and Plant Sale, with plans for work to commence in earnest in the Fall of 2017. The loss of their long time Administrator Elaine



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Williamson in October 2017, and delays in hiring a long-term replacement meant the cancellation of the Sale for 2018.

- The District was able to complete both an Annual Plan of Work and Long-Range Plan.
- A Fall Forest Walk at Beckwith Farm in Granville was conducted and included the forest walk and barbecue on October 12th.
- The District conducted an Annual meeting on November 9th where the Annual Report for FY2017 was approved.
- Renewed and had approved a proposal for the EOEEA Basic and Innovation Grant. The Innovation Grant for the District is known as the “Healthy Watershed Initiative.” November 2017.
- The District conducted two searches for a District Administrator, successfully filling the position in April 2018.
- Outreach to local participants for the Envirothon resulted in sponsorship of two schools (Holyoke and Central High Schools) for the May 2018 event in Worcester. Board Member John Omasta and Conservation Planner Sarah Rippiere attended as representatives of HHCD.
- Kate Gervais, Conservation Planner from Worcester Conservation District attended the monthly Supervisors Meeting to speak on Grant Tracking and Reporting in May 2018.
- The District clarified its relationship with the Franklin Conservation District and renamed the District website to ‘HampdenHampshireConservation.org’. The email address was also renamed ‘hampdenhampshireconservation@gmail.com’ to more accurately reflect their identity serving the counties of Hampden and Hampshire, in June 2018.
- Activity on Social Media was increased through informational posts and event listings on the Hampden Hampshire Conservation District’s Facebook page. This promotion included District news as well as activities by partners with common goals and interests and national articles and news related to Conservation practices.
- A laser printer and laptop suitable for use at Workshop events and future Tree and Plant sales were purchased to enable the District to fundraise outside of the NRCS office and allow additional communication options in June 2018.
- The Website was prepared for movement to a new platform on WordPress that can be more easily updated and will include additional information for the public regarding progress on the Mill River Watershed Grant and offer suggestions of best practices. This website will be operational in FY2019.

Any delays or changes to the overall implementation schedule. HHCD was able to complete many preparatory steps and conduct outreach and multiple Workshops for producers in the Mill River Watershed, despite losing critical staff members both at the District and Grant levels. As a result, the



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State was able to shift \$13,000 in funding for FY 2018 into FY2019 and the District looks forward to making significant progress on meeting objectives and deliverables in the coming year.

Financial or budget update can include funds spent so far, amount invoiced for, amount reimbursed and any matching funds that have been utilized. See the Budget Summary for FY17 and FY18 below.

Hampden Hampshire Conservation District

FY2017-FY2018

6/30/2018

Year	Item	Basic	Innovation	Total
FY18	Administrator Salary	\$2,410.30		
FY18	District Annual Meeting	\$285.09		
FY18	District Audit	\$1,000.00		
FY18	Mailing/Copies/Supplies	\$65.74		
FY18	Conference Travel	\$240.61		
FY18	Plant Sale E-Commerce	\$392.32		
FY18	Website Updates	\$638.38		
FY18	Grant Manager/Conservation Planners		\$22,224.55	
FY18	Workshop Materials/Rentals		\$319.78	
FY18	Computer / Laser Printer		\$1,748.23	
FY18	Envirothon Sponsorships		\$300.00	
		\$5,032.44	\$24,592.56	\$29,625.00

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Peotter
HHCD Administrator
413-695-6909 (Cell)



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FY207-2018 Year-end Summary in paragraph form:

With the help of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) Basic and Innovation Grant, the Hampden Hampshire Conservation District (HHCD) was able to sequentially hire two Conservation Planners over the FY17-18 period jointly through the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Shannon Rice-Nichols and Sarah Rippiere reviewed historic background on the Mill River Watershed and along with NRCS GIS Specialist Aaron Dushku, identified indicators for prioritizing sites along the river. The NRCS GIS Specialist then developed a Stream Power Index (SPI) map, hydrologic soil groups and erosion k-factor maps along with watershed and sub-watershed delineations and land-use analysis. The watershed areas were ranked according to each index and the Sub-Watersheds identified for prioritization. Then a plan was devised to identify key property owners within the Watershed and rank them according to these indexes and their existing relationships with various NRCS and FSA programs.

The District formed a partnership with the Friends of Lake Warner organization and facilitated several Workshops with their help. An article about the Grant was published in the Friends of Lake Warner Spring 2018 Newsletter titled: HHCD's Healthy Watershed's Initiative Grant.

With the help of many partner organizations, District Conservation Planners were able to facilitate four Workshops, including a Good Will Boat Tour' with Friends of Lake Warner in Hadley, in July of 2017; a Nutrient Management Workshop titled 'Low Cost Aerated Composting Systems for Small Acreage Operations' in Leverett, in August of 2017; a Workshop titled "Losing Ground Soil and Nutrient Movement Off-Farm" with soil specialists from USDA NRCS and Massachusetts Department Agricultural Resources (MDAR) in Hadley in March of 2018; and a Grant Resource Workshop titled "Dollars and Sense" with partners USDA-NRCS, UMASS Extension, Land for Good, Northeast SARE and MDAR in Amherst in June 2018.

In part due to the loss of two Conservation Planners and District Administration staff, the number of new Conservation Plans written were not quantifiable during this period, however, the groundwork was laid for more definitive progress in FY 2019.

Under the Basic portion of the EOEEA Grant, the District was able to make some significant progress in planning for the long term. The Hampden and Hampshire Districts were able to complete their unification into the Hampden Hampshire Conservation District (HHCD). An Annual Plan of work was developed as well as a Long-Range Plan. After the loss of their long-term Administrator and two



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searches, a new staff member was hired in April 2018. This staffing challenge meant the Tree and Plant sale traditional slated for Spring of 2018 and 2019 was cancelled.

With the help of Conservation Planner Sarah Rippiere, the District's brochure was updated and produced. The Worcester Conservation District Planner, Kate Gervais was engaged for a monthly meeting to assist with Grant progress and tracking. This work will enable the District to increase its outreach and educational assistance throughout the two counties.

Two teams participating in the Envirothon were funded in part by grants from the HHCD.

The District's webpage and contact information were updated to more clearly reflect the combined organization. The foundation was laid to make the webpage fully updateable in order to keep current with events and add additional information to make it more useful to the public. Activity on Social Media was increased with the addition of partner event notices. Finally, the District acquired a Laptop and Laser Printer for future Tree and Plant Sale use as well to provide visual aid at upcoming Workshops and promotional efforts which were not an option on NRCS equipment.