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Message from State Conservationist Roylene Rides at the Door

Over the past few months, the staff has been working very hard to assist clients with obligating farm bill funds by the National deadline of June 1st. NRCS Rhode Island was able to obligate over \$2.2 million in fish passage projects, which helped to accomplish the national goal of \$5 million for fish passage projects nationwide. Rhode Island will provide funding for fish passage projects on three dams in the Blackstone River and at the first dam in the Ten Mile River. There has been over 10 years of work from many partners to make these projects happen. Now, with the collective work of the RI DEM, USFW, USACOE, City of East Providence, hydropower companies, landowners and other organization these projects will begin. Construction will start early spring 2008 with a completion date summer 2008. When the projects are complete they will open up over 20 miles of fresh water, restoring anadromous fish runs for Herring and Shad.

This is a very exciting time for the partnerships in Rhode Island. It is great when federal, state and local funds can pool together to make such a major change in the environment. These projects will have an ever lasting effect on the seventh generation.



I hope you enjoy Rhode Island NRCS's activity report. If you have any questions or need further information, please let me know.

ROYLENE RIDES AT THE DOOR
State Conservationist

Field Staff Happenings/State-wide Upper Narragansett Bay

RI River and Stream Continuity Project
by Michael Merrill, District Conservationist



As long linear ecosystems, rivers and streams are particularly vulnerable to fragmentation. A number of human activities can disrupt the continuity of river and stream ecosystems. The most familiar human-caused barriers are dams. With approximately 500 dams in RI this is a considerable issue; however, there is growing concern about the role of road crossings, especially culverts, in altering habitats and disrupting habitat continuity. Based on a GIS analysis conducted by USDA-NRCS it is estimated that there are over 4,300 road and railroad crossings affecting RI streams. Road barriers can cause fragmentation in the accessibility of habitats and create diminished energy flows across the landscape. Therefore, wildlife and fish populations using these water and riparian systems are also highly impacted. Inadequate road and railroad crossings create fish barriers for spawning anadromous and freshwater fish species, as well as isolating populations of freshwater fish. Water flow becomes restricted through these areas, which may limit fish and wildlife passage. This is both a concern for water quality and population of fish and wildlife, such as small mammals and amphibians. Restoring the continuity of stream and river systems will allow for easier fish and wildlife passage and benefit the overall habitat quality of the watershed. There is great potential for re-connecting many miles of river and stream corridors in RI that would not only benefit the migratory fish species (e.g. salmon, river herring, shad.), but also resident freshwater fish (e.g. brook trout and white suckers) and wildlife populations (freshwater mussels and crayfish).

A pilot project in the Upper Wood River Watershed was completed recently which was coordinated by RC&D. The council worked closely with other partners, including NRCS, Trout Unlimited (TU)-Narragansett Chapter, and the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association (WPWA). This project is integrated in the regional effort started by the University of Massachusetts – Amherst. You can visit www.streamcontinuity.org for more information. Goals of this effort include creating river and stream crossing standards and coordinating a volunteer inventory program to assess culverts and bridges interfering with fish passage and causing discontinuities in river and stream systems.

NRCS has recently funded two projects involving removal or retrofitting of road crossings. These are in the Town of Hopkinton on Dye Hill Road and in Arcadia Management Area on Breakheart Brook. These projects will be the demonstration sites of how to restore fish passage and reconnect stream habitats.

The inventory work continues in the Lower Wood and the Queens River Watersheds. However, a recent meeting with Trout Unlimited, Northern Chapter has started discussions on focusing efforts in the Upper Bay, and more specifically, a few sub-watersheds within the RI portion of the Blackstone River Watershed.

Lower Narragansett Bay

Land Conservancy of North Kingstown - Biological Control of *Lythrum salicaria* (Purple loostrife). WHIP Project

by John T. Richard Soil Conservationist

We partnered with the Land Conservancy of North Kingstown, Town of North Kingstown and University of Rhode Island (URI) – Department of Plant Sciences – Biological Control Lab in a project that aims to start tackling the mounting issue of invasive wetland plants – specifically the control of *Lythrum salicaria*, better known as Purple loostrife.

Purple loostrife is a highly invasive, non-native plant. One of the ways that it was spread to North America was by settlers via seeds that were present in ballast tank soil that was used in European ships for balance. This perennial plant quickly establishes monotypic stands and degrades the functions and values of existing diverse wetland systems affecting the ecosystem as a whole.

Biological control is a control method of managing for this plant. An important point to be made is that this is a control management practice, not an eradication management practice, this means that the plant will still be present at the site, however, advancement of the invasion is to be contained and decreased. URI researchers have been looking into the usage of biological control agents for *Lythrum salicaria*. URI has been rearing two species of *Galerucella* beetles to combat this invasion.

The two *Galerucella* species have similar life cycles and are nearly impossible to differentiate in the field. In the spring, adults emerge from hibernation in the soil and feed for a couple of weeks on Purple loostrife leaves. The adults then mate and females lay eggs from May through July. The new larvae feed on the leaves until maturity (this has the most effect on the plant and can result in almost complete defoliation) when they leave the plant to develop in the soil. Within a couple of weeks the new adults emerge and feed on the leaves. The adult beetles then move to the soil beneath the plant where they over-winter.

The project site is located in North Kingstown and is approximately 41 acres in total of mostly emergent wetland with about 6 acres invaded with Purple loostrife. The project is part on town owned land and part on Land Conservancy owned land. In the spring of 2006, pre-restoration site monitoring was conducted to determine a baseline inventory of the Purple loostrife invasion and if there was an initial presence of beetles. After the monitoring was conducted, approximately 2,000 beetles were released. The next steps are to monitor the reaction over the next few years to see the ecological impact that the beetles are having on the Purple loostrife and adaptively manage accordingly.

Economics - Happenings

by Reena Shaw, Economist

The State Economist is currently working with Program Managers and field staff to transform the cost list into the new Practice Payment Schedule. Beginning FY 2008 NRCS will begin providing clients an incentive payment to install a conservation practice or begin using conservation management strategies. This will be in lieu of the traditional cost share method that the

agency has used in previous years.

This change is taking place, in part, because, the basis of program payments has taken on additional significance in regard to World Trade Organization (WTO) green box compliance and an Internal Revenue Service ruling on the exclusion of conservation payments from gross income, both of which require payments to be based on practice or activity costs incurred, or forgone income by the producer.

NRCS is implementing this new process for a Payment Schedule, Nationwide, to simplify and streamline conservation program development while ensuring that the cost basis for payments is adequately documented so that it will be WTO green box compliant.

Cultural Resources - Happenings

by Reena Shaw, Economist

The Rhode Island State Office is happy to be hosting two Archaeological detailees during the upcoming months. The detailees will be helping us to complete cultural resource surveys and will provide some in-field Archaeological training to the field staff when appropriate.

Teresa Pagilone, employed by Alabama NRCS, will be working with us from June 4, 2007 to June 15, 2007. Dana Vaillancourt, employed by South Dakota NRCS, will be working with us from July 16, 2007 to August 18, 2007.

NEPA - Environmental Assessment Flow Diagrams

by Reena Shaw, Economist

The Notice of Availability (NOA) for the New England Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was published in the Federal Register on May 8, 2007.

The public has 30 days from the publication date to submit comments through the www.regulations.gov website or to send comments to the Maine State Office.

Biological Sciences - Happenings

by Andrew Lipsky, State Biologist

New England Urban Rivers Conference

On March 29, 2007 USEPA New England and the Urban Harbors Institute with the Center for Watershed Protection convened the first Urban Rivers Conference. Andy Lipsky made a presentation to over 300 participants on How the 2002 Farm Bill has been used to restore urban river habitats in the Northeast. In Rhode Island alone approximately 700 acres of urban wetlands and migratory fish habitat have been restored under WHIP and WRP in urban areas with RI NRCS cost share of \$1.6 million.

Blackstone River Fish Passage

Numerous meetings with Old Slater Mill, Blackstone Hydro Associates, and Pawtucket Hydro LLC, the three lower dam owners on the Blackstone River, along with other river restoration partners, were held over the past



few months to coordinate fish passage restoration agreements between NRCS, dam owners, the State of RI, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. See FARM BILL Section for more information.

Ten Mile River Restoration

NRCS has entered into a cooperative agreement with the City of East Providence to restore fish passage to the lower Ten Mile River. This project will work in conjunction with the Army Corps of Engineers, RIDEM, the Ten Mile River Watershed Association, and Save The Bay to restore over 300 acres of migratory fish habitat over the next two years.

One River Project

NRCS provided technical assistance to researchers and designers of the One River Project. The Project proposes a new approach to development along the water's edge that enhances the natural function of our urban waterways and preserves their economic and cultural uses. The Project is a collaboration between the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) and the R.I. Economic Policy Council (EPC). NRCS provided ecological restoration and engineering assistance through a number of design Charrettes hosted by RISD and EPC to address alternative approaches to designing shoreline hard edges by incorporating ecological engineering practices to meet human needs. The project culminated on April 13, 2007 with a One River Symposium presenting design guidelines developed for the Blackstone Valley and upper Narragansett Bay.

Ecological Sciences - Update

Proposed Rapid Watershed Assessment (RWA) of the Wood-Pawcatuck River and western Narragansett Bay watersheds

by J. Eric Scherer, State Resource Conservationist

The Rhode Island NRCS has submitted an application for conducting a Rapid Watershed Assessment (RWA) of the Wood-Pawcatuck River and western Narragansett Bay watersheds. The Fiscal Year 2007 funding request is for NRCS Internal Program RWA funds under the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CPPI). The project, if funded, will be supported by a Core Team from the University of Rhode Island, including Peter August, Director URI Coastal Institute, Arthur Gold, Professor, Dorothy Q. Kellogg, Research Associate, Charles LaBash, Director, URI Environmental Data Center, Gregory Bonyne, RI Geospatial Extension Specialist, University of Rhode Island Geospatial Extension Program and Linda Green, Director URI Watershed Watch.

The objectives of this project are to:

- 1) Provide to the conservation partnership in the State of Rhode Island a comprehensive suite of geospatial data and a systematic assessment process to assist in the delivery of conservation goals, including USDA Farm Bill program assistance to private landowners;
- 2) Provide these data sets and assessment protocols in a single place for synoptic evaluation to support rapid watershed assessment;
- 3) Phase I of this two phase effort will result in a complete coverage of the State of Rhode Island with Rapid Watershed Assessments (RWA). The first phase will be conducted through a multi-partner effort in-State and expanded to a larger multi-partner, multi-State effort in FYs 2008/9.
- 4) Phase II of the RWA effort will establish a long-term, ongoing effort using as its foundation a partnership-supported digital atlas that will provide watershed condition information for use by natural resource

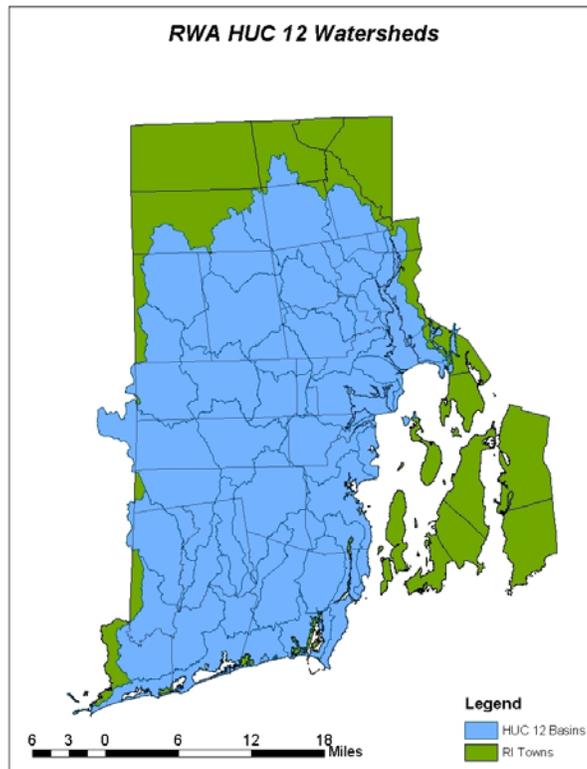
based organizations and others with an interest in adopting RWA as a planning tool for cooperative conservation on a watershed basis.

Once funding for the project is secured the Core Team hopes to invite key partners (Steering Team) into the project. The list of possible Steering Team members includes, but not limited to: US EPA, Narragansett Bay Estuary Program, RI Department of Environmental Management – NPS Program, RI Department of Environmental Management – Division of Agriculture and Markets, RI Natural History Survey, RI Land Trust Council, Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association and The Nature Conservancy

With guidance from our Steering Team (Project Partners) and primary stakeholders (including agricultural producers), the Core Technical Team will design and build an innovative Internet-based RWA Digital Atlas to provide condition information for thirty-four HUC12 watersheds in Rhode Island. The information contained on the web site will meet the needs of the conservation partnership and Farm Bill program participants.

HUC12-digit watersheds to be assessed

WOONASQUATUCKET RIVER	UPPER WOOD RIVER
MOSHASSUCK RIVER	UPPER NARRAGANSETT BAY
REGULATING AND MOSWANSICUT RESERVOIRS	HUNT RIVER
PONAGANSETT AND BARDEN RESERVOIRS	UPPER WEST PASSAGE
SEEKONK AND PROVIDENCE RIVER	QUEEN RIVER
POCASSETT RIVER	LOWER WEST PASSAGE
SCITUATE RESERVOIR	BEAVER RIVER
PAWTUXET RIVER MAINSTEM	LOWER WOOD RIVER
UPPER MOOSUP RIVER	CHIPUXET RIVER
BARRINGTON AND WARREN	PETTAQUAMSCUTT RIVER
PALMER RIVER	PAWCATUCK RIVER MAIN
NORTH BRANCH PAWTUXET	UPPER PAWCATUCK RIVER
FLAT RIVER RESERVOIR	SAUGATUCKET RIVER
UPPER NARRAGANSETT BAY	POINT JUDITH POND
GREENWICH BAY	SOUTHWEST COASTAL WATERS
SOUTH BRANCH PAWTUXET RIVER	BIG RIVER
GREENWICH BAY	UPPER NARRAGANSETT BAY



Field Office Technical Guide:

Manure Management Planner (MMP)

by Tim. Pindell, Resource Conservationist

Development of Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMP) for confined animal feeding operations has been a very time-consuming task. The MMP program recently released for use in RI, will help NRCS planners to develop these complex plans more efficiently and will provide consistent quality to the producers for whom the plans are developed. The MMP program was developed in a partnership with Perdue University. RI-NRCS staff, with help from MA-NRCS, completed the data initialization files (such as: weight of nutrients per unit weight of harvested plant biomass - from published University documents). The initialization files are used to insert the local data needed to tailor the report. Additional information is collected for each farm operation, such as field-by-field soil test information, manure production estimates, and a nutrient balance/budget is developed for the farm. The CNMP is required under EQIP program for certain funded practices, such as waste storage structure, anaerobic lagoons, compost facility, and heavy-use area protection.

Rhode Island Phosphorus Index (RIPI), updated

by Tm Pindell, Resource Conservationist

The RI Phosphorus Index, originally released April, 2001, has been updated. There are several new resource assessment considerations, and it is now an Excel worksheet, rather than a hand-filled form. This spreadsheet developed by Cornell University was modified to meet the needs of RI farming operations and soils. The index aids the NRCS planner by helping to identify whether those fields receiving manure,

have a high source (soil test P) risk and high transport risk factors (slope, erosion, flooding, leaching, proximity to streams, etc.). Both risk factors combined will determine the phosphorus index (PI) score, and whether a change in management is warranted. In some cases, no additional manure (or P fertilizer) should be spread on certain fields, in order to comply with the NRCS nutrient management standard.

National Conservation Practice Standards
by Tim Pindell, Resource Conservationist

There are four updated, draft national conservation practice standards available for review and comment. Once they are in final form, these updated national standards will be updated for RI and posted to the RI electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG). They are:

- 412d1 - Grassed Waterway
- 620d1 - Underground Outlet
- 635d1 - Vegetated Treatment Area
- 638d1 - Water and Sediment Control Basin

These draft documents may be downloaded from:

<ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/NHQ/practice-standards/standard-development/draft/may07/>

The review period for these draft conservation practice standards will run through July 2, 2007. If interested, make comments to: Tim Pindell – (401) 822-8817 tim.pindell@ri.usda.gov

The following updated national conservation practice standards have been released, and need to be updated for RI. Once the draft RI standards are written, the State Technical Team will have the opportunity to review and make comments, before they become final. They are:

From NHCP Notice 141

- 345 - Residue Management, Mulch Till (formerly 329B)
- 329 - Residue Management, No Till / Strip Till / Direct Seed (formerly 329A)
- 346 -Residue Management, Ridge Till (formerly 329C)
- 395 - Stream Habitat Improvement and Management
- 396 - Fish Passage
- 399 - Fishpond Management
- 431 - Above Ground, Multi-Outlet Pipeline (replaces 430HH – Irrigation Water Conveyance, Rigid Gated Pipeline)
- 441 -Irrigation System, Microirrigation
- 521A -Pond Sealing or Lining, Flexible Membrane
- 590 -Nutrient Management
- 614 -Watering Facility (cancels 648 – Wildlife Watering Facility, as a separate standard)
- 659 -Wetland Enhancement

From NHCP Notice 140

- 340 -Cover Crop

Engineering - Update

by Frank Vogel, Assistant State Engineer
Pocasset Floodplain Management Study (FPMS)

National Water Management Center review comments are being incorporated into the FPMS popular and technical reports. NRCS staff is

revising the floodplain maps. The engineering consultant is scheduled to provide to NRCS all complete work accomplished in support of the Watershed Plan by the end of June 2007.

Engineering Services:

Scopes of Work have been completed for the following fish passage projects on the Blackstone River: Main Street Dam, Slater Mill Dam and Valley Falls Dam. NRCS staff has evaluated the cost proposals and are currently negotiating the details for scheduling and price. Engineering construction oversight services are scheduled to start this summer for the Bradford Fish Ladder and Rising Sun Mills projects.

Grazing Land Conservation Initiative (GLCI)

by Michael Merrill, GLCI Coordinator

An agreement was signed by RC&D Council and NRCS to provide technical assistance to landowners who are managing pastures and grazing systems. This will provide assist in developing prescribed grazing plans, pasture condition evaluations, and help host pasture walks. This GLCI partnership will continue through to the end of September 2008.

Earth Team Volunteer Program - Update

by Jeanne Comerford, State Volunteer Program Coordinator

Susan Smith is our newest volunteer. She will be working on upland habitat management bird and vegetation monitoring project – field work and data entry. Welcome to NRCS!

Farm Bill Programs - Update

by Mike Moorman, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs and Joseph Bachand, Resource Conservationist

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

NRCS received 81 contracts requesting in excess of 3.1 million dollars for the Fiscal Year 2000 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). For FY 2007 NRCS approved 35 applicants for funding through EQIP. The contracts are valued at over 2.1 million dollars. A wide variety of projects were funded that included projects for: grazing lands; forest land, irrigated land; livestock operations and aquaculture farms.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

NRCS has completed obligation of the Fiscal Year 2007 contracts for the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). NRCS had received 61 applications for assistance through the WHIP. For FY 2007 Rhode Island funded 10 contracts that totaled in excess of 2.5 million dollars. Most of the projects are for fish passage restoration and will provide habitat for both anadromous (ocean fish that spawn in fresh water), catadromous (freshwater species that spawn in salt water), and fresh water species (native brook trout) of fish. Additionally, several coastal salt marsh restoration projects were funded that will provide valuable habitat to coastal wildlife and migratory water fowl.





Blackstone River Anadromous Fish Restoration Project:

With the approval of several WHIP contracts for FY2007 NRCS and its partners will begin the restoration of anadromous fisheries on the Blackstone River. This is a historic moment for the citizens of Rhode Island since fish passage to the Blackstone River has been lost since the early 1700's when the first dams were built at Slater Mill. Slater Mill is recognized as birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution. Unfortunately, this gain in industrial prosperity for our nation also meant the demise of migratory fish such as Salmon, Shad, and River Herring. This project has come about because of the hard work of many individuals; including local and regional NGO's, federal, state and local officials. NRCS looks forward to working with the partners on this project.

Wetland Reserve Program

NRCS received one application for the Wetland Reserve Program in FY 2007 (WRP) NRCS field staff is currently processing the application for approval.

Operations

by Jackie Pashnik, Management Analyst

Personnel Actions

- Jesse Bateman, Student Career Experience Program as a Biological Science Student Trainee, effective April 2. left for the summer will return in September when school starts.
- David Gold has been selected as Engineering Aide summer intern, effective June 13th.

Performance Update

by Jackie Pashnik, Management Analyst

Rhode Island NRCS Performance Measures May 29, 2007	Program	Goal
Conservation plans written, acres	CTA	5,272
	CTA-GLCI	100
Watershed or area-wide conservation plans developed, number	CTA	1
	RC&D	4
	PL-06	1
Soil surveys mapped or updated, acres	SOILS	5,000
	AMA	25
Cropland with conservation applied to improve soil quality, acres	CTA	137
	EQIP	500
	CTA	1,800
Land with conservation applied to improve water quality, acres	CTA-GLCI	222
	EQIP	500
	WRP	74
CNMP written, number	EQIP	9
CNMP applied, number	EQIP	7

Land with conservation applied to improve irrigation efficiency, acres	AMA	20
	CTA	20
	EQIP	150
Grazing and forest land with conservation applied to protect and improve the resource base, acres	CTA	150
	CTA-GLCI	200
	EQIP	300
Non-federal land with conservation applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality, acres	CTA	358
	EQIP	350
	GRP	20
	WHIP	2,800
Wetlands created, restored or enhanced, acres	CTA	200
	WRP	30
Farmland, forestland, and grazing lands protected by conservation easements, acres	FRPP	219
	GRP	12
Prime, unique, or important farmland protected by conservation easements, acres	FRPP	109
Land and water resources benefited by RC&D projects, acres	RC&D	2,000
Local businesses created in rural communities, number	RC&D	2

Training, Conferences, and Meetings - update

by Jackie Pashnik, Management Analyst

Outreach and Communications-Happenings

by Jeanne Comerford, State Public Affairs Specialist



Event	Date
RIGIS Conference – MapCoast Presentation	June 1
Bio-Blitz – MapCoast and NRCS display and talk	June 2
Channel 10 Watershed Watch reporting on the 2007 Envirothon	May 17
Agriculture Day, State House	May 22
Kickemuit Fish Ladder Media Event, Bristol County Water	April 30
USDA Service Center Open House	May 3,
Drinking Water Week Celebration, Providence Water	May, 8,
Envirothon	May 17,
Northern RI Conservation District Dance Fundraiser	May 18,
Aquaculture Workshop	April 19



Soils Program - Happenings

by Jim Turenne, Assistant State Soil Scientist

Maggie Payne has joined the RI Soil Survey Program. Maggie is finishing up her Masters Degree titled "Subaqueous Soils, an Indicator of Estuarine Health" at URI Department of Natural Resource Science. Maggie started her full time employment in May – welcome aboard Maggie!

The 2008 Northeast National Cooperative Soil Survey Conference will be held at URI's Coastal Institute from June 2 – 6. This will be the first time the conference will be held in the Ocean State, Regional NCSS conferences are conducted every two years in various locations. The purpose of the conference is to discuss and resolve concerns, proposals, and recommendations for the cooperative soil survey. Conference activities relate to the technology used in the collection, management, and presentation of information about the properties, patterns, and responses of soils. The activities also relate to other joint concerns, such as training and coordinated research. A field tour of the soil, geology, and soil uses is planned for June 4th – the tour will focus on archaeological investigations utilizing soils, subaqueous soil mapping, coastal erosion, loess soils used for sod production, and carboniferous till soils. Approximately 50-100 people are expected to attend the conference.

Outreach events featuring the RI Soil Program included a talk about the MapCoast Partnership www.mapcoast.org at the 2007 RI GIS conference, a talk and display at the RI Natural History Survey Bio Blitz event, and the RI Envirothon competition. In addition the MapCoast field crew attended and provided talks about the partnership and subaqueous soil data at the Geo-Tools conference sponsored by NOAA in Myrtle Beach SC.

Remote Sensing: The RI soil program obtained a SIR-2 ground penetrating radar (GPR) from the NY NRCS. GPR provides a continuous profile of subsurface features in the ground and is used to provide soil map unit data, archaeological data, engineering information, and a wide-variety of uses, information about the NRCS GPR program is available at: <http://nesoil.com/gpr>. The GPR is a complementary geophysical tool to the EMI unit housed in RI.

Hydric Soil Monitoring: The 1987 USACE Federal Wetlands Delineation Manual is planned to be regionalized sometime in 2008 and the hydric soil indicators that will be used to determine the wetland boundary (along with vegetation and hydrology) need to be developed for the Northeast Region. The New England Technical Committee for hydric soils has been working to review the current indicators for hydric soils (National and Regional indicators) and a monitoring program was initiated for certain soil types that occur in RI. The RI NRCS soil program set up a series of monitoring stations that will measure the depth to water table, soil temperature, and redox conditions throughout the growing season the data from these locations will be reviewed this summer by the NETCHS during their annual hydric soil tour.

Onsite Investigations: Two on-site soil investigations were conducted during the quarter to provide soil information for engineering structures.

Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D)

by *Chris Modisette, RC&D Coordinator*



Rhody Warm Project

The 2nd Annual Rhody Warm Wool Collection will be held on Saturday, June 9, 2007 from 9:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M. at the Urban Edge Farm, 35 Pippin Orchard Road, Cranston, RI. Only fleeces between 2 and 6 inches long that are clean and dry, shorn within the last year and stored properly, and meet the approval of the inspectors will be accepted. The farmer will receive \$0.50 per pound for their skirted fleece. For more information on fleece requirements, contact Barbara Thompson at 401-949-0264 or mthompson5@cox.net. Membership in the RI Sheep & Wool Producers is required and memberships will be available on June 9th for \$10.00. **No Farm is too Small!** Did you know that 6 lbs. of wool can make a blanket? All are welcome! If you cannot make this date, **do not throw your wool away!** Contact us for tips on wool storage.

Rural Fire Protection

In conjunction with the RI Division of Forest Environment, the RC&D Council approved 14 dry-hydrant projects in 7 rural community fire districts for the design and installation of dry-hydrants in those districts. When completed, these projects will improve fire protection to approximately 13,000 residents in these communities.

Rhode Island Stream Continuity Project

RI River & Stream Continuity Volunteer featured in NRCS Volunteer News

by: Meaghan Shaffer

Lawson Cary is a native of western Rhode Island and a devoted naturalist, outdoorsman, and fly fisherman. He has a strong interest and passion in restoring native brook trout habitat to protect and preserve this fish species. In Rhode Island one threat to native brook trout are road and stream intersections. These intersections disrupt the continuity of river and stream ecosystems, thereby inhibiting upstream and downstream fish passage. As a result, native brook trout habitat is being degraded and brook trout populations are being reduced. As an observant naturalist, Lawson noted these problems and approached the Rhode Island Resource Conservation and Development Area Council (RI RC&D) and the USDA-NRCS with the idea to inventory road and stream crossings and to assess fish passage. With Lawson's enthusiasm and motivation, the RI River and Stream Continuity Project came into existence.

Lawson Cary has been a dedicated Earth Team Volunteer, inventorying stream and road crossings since November 2005. For the past one-and-a-half years, Lawson has lead volunteer groups from the Trout Unlimited-Narragansett Chapter (TU), the Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association, and the USDA-NRCS in the inventory of stream crossings in both the Upper and Lower Wood River watersheds of Rhode Island. Lawson and his teams have field checked more than 290 road and stream crossings, which entails collecting data and field measurements and documenting the crossings with upstream and downstream photos. In this effort, Lawson and his TU volunteer crew alone have logged approximately 670 volunteer hours. Lawson is the motivation and the solid foundation for the RI River and Stream Continuity Project. It is through his inspiration

and knowledge of native brook trout that the project continues. Lawson, the NRCS, RI RC&D and the native brook trout greatly appreciate your efforts.

RI River and Stream Continuity Project Meeting

A follow-up meeting on the RI River and Stream Continuity Project was held on April 18, 2007 at the USDA Conference Room in Warwick. With assistance from Trout-Unlimited Narragansett Chapter and the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association, the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and the RI Resource Conservation and Development Council coordinated an effort to create river and stream crossing standards and a volunteer inventory program for culverts and other crossing structures. The objective is to more effectively identify and address barriers to fish movement and river and stream continuity. 291 crossings have been surveyed within the Upper and Lower Wood River watersheds resulting in three (3) applications for restoration work under the USDA WHIP program. This meeting was held to update existing and potential partners on the status of the project and solicit suggestions, comments, and participation to further the development and implementation of the project on a statewide basis. Partner Meeting held April 18, 2007 to present the results of the project in the Upper and Lower Wood River Watersheds. Partners discussed future project direction, project logistics and outreach.

RC&D Council approves Queens River Watershed Stream Continuity Project

With assistance from Trout-Unlimited Narragansett Chapter and the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association, the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, the RI RC&D Council approved a project to inventory culverts and other crossing structures in the Queens River Watershed. Work is expected to begin on this project during the summer of 2007.

River Continuity Presentation to Northern RI Chapter of Trout Unlimited on May 9, 2007 to explore options for extension of the project into northern RI.

RC&D Co-sponsors Estate Planning Workshop

Is your land one of your most valuable assets? Would you like to protect your land? Do you believe your will protects your land? If you answered YES to any of those questions, then you should plan to attend our Estate Planning Workshop to learn more about protecting your land and other assets as they are passed on to the next generation. RIFCO, the RI Tree Farm Committee the RI Land Trust Council, the RC&D Council co-sponsored a Estate Planning Workshop for farmers and woodland owners. 95 people attended the one-day conference held at the Canonicus Conference Center in Exeter, RI to learn about estate planning tool. For more information contact RIFCO at 401-568-3421 or [RIFCO](#).

RC&D Co-sponsors RI Envirothon Competition

Rhode Island Envirothon, Inc. part of an international program designed "To develop knowledgeable, skilled and dedicated citizens who are willing and prepared to work towards achieving and maintaining a natural balance between the quality of life and the quality of the environment." Teams of high-school-aged students are tested in the areas of Aquatics, Forestry, Soils and Wildlife. Additionally, each team prepares an oral presentation on a special topic which changes annually. (In 2007, that topic is "Alternative and Renewable Energy.") This year's competition was held at the Camp Yawgoog on May 17, 2007. This year's overall

Team Winner was the Wheeler School. The winners will compete against teams from around the country this summer at the annual Canon Envirothon which will be held in New York state.

In 1997, Canon USA signed on as the official Envirothon sponsor. Local Envirothon programs continue to raise their own funds, largely from corporate sponsors, local conservation districts and other environmental agencies.

Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control Training Session

The southern New England Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society, the RI RC&D Council and the Patriot (MA) RC&D Council are co-sponsoring a series of review course and exams for certification as a *Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control*. The first session was held on April 19, 2007 at the USDA Conference Room in Warwick, RI.

2007 Forestry & Wood Expo to be held October 14, 2007 at the Crowne Plaza at the Crossings in Warwick, RI

The 2007 Forestry & Wood Expo is a collaborative event with the 2007 Energy Expo sponsored by the RI Office of Energy Resources. The events main theme will be energy awareness and renewable energy alternatives for residential and commercial applications.

New England RC&D Annual Fall Conference:

Save the Date!! New England Association of RC&D Councils 2007 Fall Conference, October 18-20, 2007, The Village Inn, Narragansett, Rhode Island. Theme - CONSERVATION THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS.

RC&D Featured at Local Events

Event	Date
RC&D materials requested for Amgen Earth Day Celebration	April 21, 2007
Rhody Warm Sheep Shearing, Bally Duff Farm, Gloucester	April 28, 2007, 10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.
RC&D Council Meeting	May 2, 2007, 1:00-3:00 P.M.
Stream Continuity Presentation to Northern RI Chapter Trout Unlimited	May 9, 2007
Rhody Warm Sheep Shearing, Watson Farm, Jamestown	May 12, 2007
Celebrate South County Day, RI State House	May 15, 2007 – All Day
Envirothon	May 17, 2007, All Day
Rhody Warm Wool Skirting Demonstration & Wool Collection, Coggeshall Farm, Bristol	May 19, 2007
RI AG Council Mtg. – RC&D Report	May 17, 2007
Presentation to Portsmouth Town Council re: RC&D services to community	May 21, 2007
Agriculture Day, RI State House	May 22, 2007, All Day
RC&D materials requested for SVF Foundation 1 st Annual Visitor's Day	May 26, 2007

USDA Service Center Open House, Warwick, RI	May 30, 2007
Rhody Warm Wool Collection Day, Urban Edge Farm, Cranston	June 9, 2007, All Day

Inside the RC&D Council

Council Vice-President attends New England RC&D Councils Spring Business Meeting

Council Vice-President Ray Robinson attended the New England RC&D Councils Spring Business Meeting held in Portland, Maine on March 23-24, 2006. Ray distributed informational *"Save the Date"* packages to those attending about the upcoming New England Fall Conference which is being hosted by Rhode Island.

RC&D/NRCS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

RC&D is preparing a MOU with NRCS for the remainder of 2007. This MOU defines the service and assistance each party will provide to implement the strategies, goals, and objectives listed in the Council area plan and annual plan of work as jointly agreed upon by the Council and NRCS. As part of this MOU NRCS will be providing funds for use by the Council in the furtherance of its Area Plan.

Grazing land Conservation Initiative Agreement

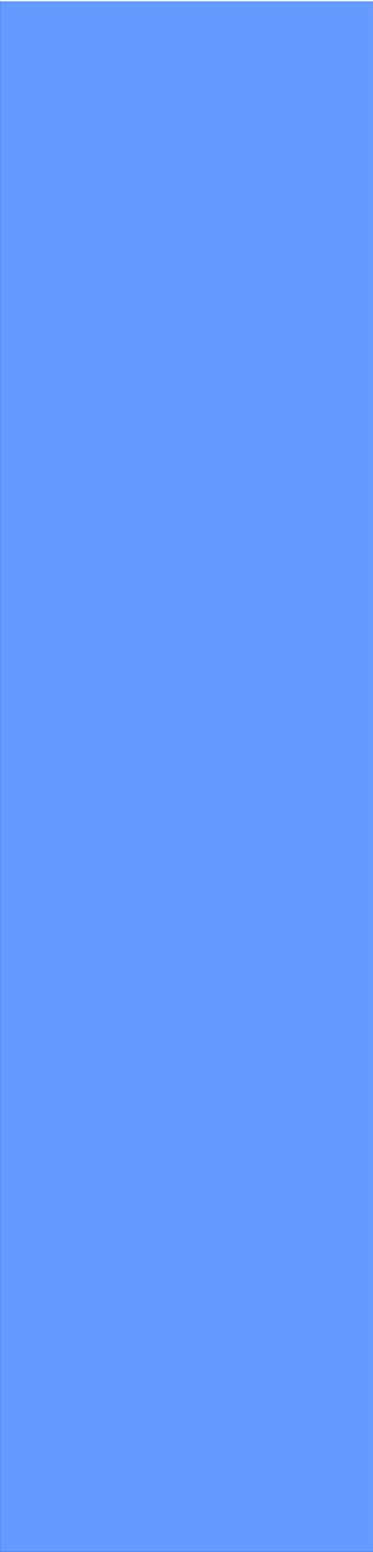
The Council, under this agreement, will assist in the implementation of specific components of RI RC&D FY 2004-2009 Area Plan and Fiscal Year 2006/7 Business Plan.

The Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) is a national grassroots effort to enhance the quality and quantity of technical assistance available to owners of private grazing lands. The driving force behind this effort is the commitment of private landowners to voluntarily improve the condition of their grazing lands and properly manage their land resources. The NRCS administers the GLCI earmark for Rhode Island. The main objectives of the GLCI are to:

- Ensure adequate technical assistance from personnel trained in grassland management to help landowners improve their grazing lands and the economic status of their farms;
- Encourage integration of conservation assistance and landowner management decisions into useful management plans;
- Strengthen partnerships through improved communication; encourage enterprise diversification in order to achieve greater economic, environmental, and social benefits;
- Ensure adequate research, training, and educational programs in grazing lands management; and
- Increase public awareness of the importance of private grazing land resources.

The purpose of this agreement is to provide to the public timely and professional technical assistance to grazing land managers in planning, designing and implementing conservation practices that contribute to agricultural viability, pasture and livestock health, water quality improvements, soil and plant health, wildlife habitat improvement and other natural resource enhancements on grazing lands. The Council and NRCS have and will continue to work together to coordinate the implementation of the USDA programs. By combining resource efforts and sharing in common mission-related goals and activities, the resulting implementation of the USDA programs will better help improve and sustain the state's natural resources and bring added technical assistance and resources to grazing lands of the state.

RI Blueways interested in partnering with RC&D on Woonasquatucket River



Access Projects

The RI Blueways Council is interested in partnering with the Council to establish a series of river access points along the Woonasquatucket River. They will bring a proposal to the May 2, 2007 Council meeting.

Council Associate Begins Work

Gerard Bertrand began work as the Council Associate under the agreement approved by the Council at its March 2007 meeting. Under this agreement, the RI Rural Development Council has agreed to provide Gerry's services for up to 15 hours per week between April 1 and September 30, 2007. Gerry will be assisting with a variety of Council initiatives.

RI RC&D e-Notes

RI RC&D e-notes were released in April 2007 as a means of keeping RC&D Council members up-to-date on Council activities in between regularly scheduled Council meetings. If you would like to be included on the distribution list for this "occasional" publication, please contact Chris Modisette at 401-822-8877 or e-mail message to chris.modisette@ri.usda.gov.