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# BERKSHIRE CONSERVATION DISTRICT FY 2004 ANNUAL REPORT

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**Founded in 1946**, the **Berkshire Conservation District** is one of more than 3,000 conservation districts across the country. Authorized by state law and guided by an elected volunteer Board of Supervisors, Berkshire Conservation District is a not for profit agency dedicated to the conservation of natural resources in Berkshire County. The District works in cooperation with state, federal, and local agencies on matters of natural resource protection. The Berkshire Conservation District serves the community in the preservation of its natural resources. The District was created to coordinate state and federal conservation programs at the local level. The District provides technical assistance and education on soil, water, and related natural resources. Municipalities, farmers, and landowners use this information to make proper land use decisions.

Office Hours Vary! The best way to reach us is by e-mail at [bcd@berkshire.net](mailto:bcd@berkshire.net) or visit our website at <http://www.berkshire.net/~bcd/>.

### **NEW ASSOCIATE!**

Aimee Thayer of Lanesboro, MA, former FSA employee, has joined the Board of Supervisors as an Associate. We welcome Aimee, who will be a definite asset to the Board with all her knowledge and tireless ambitious nature.

### **SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT**

Congratulations to Christine Holmes, this year's recipient of the \$250 Berkshire Conservation District Environmental Science Scholarship at Berkshire Community College. Guidelines for this scholarship require that the student be a second year environmental studies student, pursuing studies at BCC that will lead to a career in natural resources. Christine came highly recommended by the Environmental Science faculty and has been very active in the environmental programs at the College.

### **ANNUAL SALES**

The Berkshire County Conservation District sold 8626 plants at our annual spring sale and 963 packages of bulbs at last year's annual fall bulb sale. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped make our fundraisers successful. Donations of plants and seedlings were made this year to the West Side Initiative. The 2005 spring sale brochure will be mailed out by February 2005. Proceeds from these sales go towards providing technical assistance to landowners, the BCC scholarship and environmental educational materials to schools in Berkshire County.

### **WORKSHOPS**

District Supervisor, Dennis Mareb, held a free workshop this year for District Customers purchasing seedlings from our Annual Seedling Sale. It was held at Windy Hill Nursery the week before pick up so that customers would be able to learn how to successfully handle their seedlings when they get them.

### **GIFT IDEAS**

Our Nature Store on our home page <http://www.berkshire.net/~bcd/> offers great gift ideas for nature lovers for the holidays!

## MASSACHUSETTS ENVIROTHON

Congratulations to the overall first place winner, Acton-Boxborough Regional High School, who then represented Massachusetts in the International Canon Envirothon at Wesleyan college in West Virginia.

Next year's envirothon will be held May 12, 2005 at the Essex Agricultural and Technical High School.

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### *District Conservationist's Ramblings*

From time to time it is worthwhile to take stock of past accomplishments and reflect on the direction for the future.

Over the years our agency has undergone many changes and has met various challenges. As the Soil Conservation Service, we provided technical service with cost sharing available primarily for PL-566 programs, RC&D, EWP, or ACP. Other agencies served as the main project funding source for agricultural structural measures for which our agency provided both technical and engineering technical assistance.

With a long standing focus on all our natural resources, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) name change was instituted in 1994 to reflect a public image as an agency that more closely portrays our long standing focus on all of our natural resources.

In addition to a more encompassing agency name, environmental cost share programs have evolved within our agency that offer cost share funding targeted for water quality, water conservation, wildlife habitat improvement, forestry, as well as for land preservation.

It may also be said during the last ten years that conservation districts have also undergone changes and met many challenges. Conservation districts, as well as state funded agencies, felt the economic cut backs due to State of Massachusetts' budget constraints.

These events, however, have not put a damper on the conservation district movement in Massachusetts. If anything, it has benefited conservation districts. Dynamic conservation districts have become innovative in funding their community operations by utilizing various grants. Most recently an additional source of funding thru the NRCS has become available as active conservation districts become technical service providers to their agricultural constituents.

With a strong commitment to natural resources, effective conservation districts continue to enthusiastically provide public outreach by periodically teaching conservation related topics in their community schools, actively participating as a spokes person at topic related meetings, through their district newsletters, conducting field days and workshops, and providing real time technical service.

It may be said that those individuals and organizations that are successful build upon successes and are charting future courses for new accomplishments regardless of the obstacles.

**Bruce Philbrick – District Conservationist**

## TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Technical support is furnished to clients by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in cooperation with the Berkshire Conservation District.

Several examples of the assistance that NRCS provided to area farmers and other land users during 2004 included:

- Land users were aided in planning over 450 acres of crop land and over 200 acres of grazing land.
- The various 2002 USDA Farm Bill Programs and a State of Massachusetts Dept of Agricultural Resources program were well received by our agricultural constituents following our field office informational outreach. As a result, about eleven applications for USDA programs and nine for the State of Massachusetts were processed.
- Construction was completed on two USDA Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) livestock waste storage facilities; while, construction continues on a third. Designs are underway for five additional projects.
- Comprehensive nutrient management plans (CNMP) are in the process of being developed for about five farm operations.
- USDA through the Farmland Preservation Program supplies financial as well as technical support to states that have ongoing agricultural preservation programs. Special soils reports were developed for four Berkshire agricultural property owners on seven parcels that encompassed 520 acres of farm land for which applications were submitted to the Massachusetts Dept. of Food & Agriculture's Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program. The success of the program was illustrated when one Berkshire farm with an existing agricultural preservation restriction was recently purchased by a farmer so that he might begin a dairy operation on his 'new' farm.

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## **Berkshire Conservation District FY 2004 ANNUAL MEETING**

**7PM WEDNESDAY  
DECEMBER 1, 2004**

**ZUCCHINI'S RESTAURANT  
PITTSFIELD, MA**

### **BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Fred Turner	Chairman
Adrian Meyer	Vice-Chairman
Arthur Williams	Treasurer

Dennis Mareb

Ned Kirchner

Dave Jurczak

Robert Lear

### **ASSOCIATE SUPERVISORS**

Daniel Galusha

Frances Turner

Aimee Thayer

### **STAFF**

Deborah Burke Administrator

Beverly Daignault Secretarial Support

Berkshire Conservation District  
78 Center St. Suite 206  
Pittsfield, MA 01201

BUILD RATE  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT No. 187

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

## **Massachusetts Junior Conservation Camp**

The Massachusetts Junior Conservation Camp is a two week overnight summer camp experience allowing youth to develop skills and confidence that will last a lifetime. Girls and boys 13 -17 years of age who enjoy outdoor activities and want to learn more about the environment are eligible to attend. Subjects include Fish & Pond Life, Forestry, Soil Conservation, and Wildlife Management. Outdoor skills taught include Archery, Basic Camping, Fly & Spin Casting, Orienteering, Riflery, and Shotgun. These courses are lead by experts in their field. Additional MJCC curriculum involves the Massachusetts Hunter Education Program and Small Boat Safety. The program is operated by Mass. Sportsmen Junior Conservation Camp, Inc with the assistance of state and local environmental agencies. Deadline for application is May 1. Cost is \$500/camper. Tuition covers lodging expenses, as well as food and activities. Some optional activities may have additional costs associated, but most will be included with the standard tuition. Many conservation and sportsmen's groups sponsor area teens to camp. Currently, the MJCC is hosted at the Chesterfield Scout Reservation on 521 acres near Scout Pond in Chesterfield, Massachusetts. Applications will be available for download on this website in early 2005: <http://www.juniorconservationcamp.org/enrollment.html>, In order to reserve a place in the 2005 session, campers will need to complete an application and submit it along with a \$250 deposit. Full tuition must be paid by May 2, 2005.