



# BERKSHIRE CONSERVATION DISTRICT FY 2011 ANNUAL REPORT

## **DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR**

I am officially passing the torch at this year's Annual Meeting to the new District Administrator, Aimee Annichiarico. Over the past decade or so I have had the privilege of working with the most supportive group of board members, federal, state, and local government colleagues and volunteers from the community that you could hope for. I will continue to stay in touch with the District and provide Aimee with any assistance she needs. I am excited for the beginning of a new chapter, not only in my own life, but for the Berkshire Conservation District as well. Aimee brings with her a background in biological and environmental studies and a passion for the environment. She will provide the District with new ideas and enthusiasm to help the District move forward. Thank you for the support and dedication you have shown me and the Berkshire Conservation District!

Fondly, Deb Burke

## **ANNUAL SALES**



Considering the economy, we did pretty well with our fundraisers this past year. Sales were comparable to the year before. Our customers purchased over 6500 seedlings during the Spring 2011 Seedling Sale, and about 500 packages of bulbs were sold during the Fall 2010 Bulb Sale. The Master Gardeners volunteered their time to help us out with soil testing on pickup day. Thank you once again to all the volunteers who help make our fundraisers successful and the loyal customers who keep returning each year.

The 2012 spring sale brochure will be mailed out by February. Proceeds from these sales help to provide technical assistance to landowners, workshops, BCC scholarship and environmental educational materials to schools in Berkshire County.

## **BCC 2011 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT**

Congratulations to **Jarred Mongeon** of Dalton, MA, this year's recipient of the Berkshire Conservation District Environmental Science Scholarship award at Berkshire Community College. This scholarship requires that the student be a second year environmental studies student at BCC.

## **MASSACHUSETTS ENVIROTHON**

Some 250 Massachusetts high school students from nearly 40 public and private schools and youth organizations demonstrated their environmental knowledge as they competed in the 24th annual Massachusetts Envirothon held at Great Brook Farm State Park in Carlisle, Mass. At the outdoor field competition event, teams of five students rotated through four "ecostations" where they performed hands-on activities such as soil analysis, wildlife habitat assessment, tree measurement, and identification of water insects. Each team gave a presentation before a panel of judges on their research into this year's designated current environmental issue, **Wetland Protection**. The judges' panel included environmental professionals from government agencies, non-profit organizations, academia, and private industry. Once again, **Lexington High School** came away as the overall 1<sup>st</sup> place winner!

## **DISTRICT FARM TOUR**

The Berkshire Conservation District hosted a farm tour and State Commission meeting on October 14, 2010. District Conservationist Kate Parsons led the tour to four different farm operations in Berkshire County.

First stop was **Sean Stanton's on Blue Hill Rd. in Great Barrington**. Sean Stanton has a diversified organic operation, producing raw milk, eggs, meat and tomatoes that he markets directly to consumers at the farm, farmer's markets, grocery stores, and restaurants. He began participating with NRCS as a beginning farmer in 2006 and has installed a wastewater treatment strip, stream crossing, and animal trail and walkway with assistance from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Next we met at **Neil and Kathleen Chrisman's in Sheffield**. This year they began tackling the very heavy infestation of exotic invasive species on their property using cut-stump and foliar herbicide application with the assistance of EQIP.

We also visited **Pine Island Farm in Sheffield**, owned and operated by Louis "Chico" Aragi, Sr. and Louis Aragi, Jr. They milk approximately 460 cows and grow hay and corn on 1100 acres, including some APR land. They recently installed a waste storage facility through EQIP and the DAR Agricultural Environmental Enhancement Program (AEEP) and upgraded their manure spreading equipment through the DAR Farm Viability Program.

The last stop was at **Howden Farm, in Sheffield**. Bruce Howden and David Prouty own and operate Howden Farm, home of the Howden Pumpkin and the Howden "Biggie," a jack-o-lantern pumpkin created by Bruce's father. Bruce and David grow approximately 40 acres of pumpkins, 48 acres of sweet corn, 2 acres of blueberries and raspberries and a small amount of mixed vegetables. In 2006, they installed a 1.1 KW photovoltaic system sized to power a drip irrigation system for the small fruit. The main line and drip irrigation system was installed through EQIP, as well as the implementation of nutrient and pest management plans and cover crops.

Following the tour, the Berkshire Conservation District hosted a luncheon and the State Commission quarterly meeting. Commission members from across the state enjoyed the tour on a beautiful fall day in the Berkshires!

## **Budget Update**

The Berkshire Conservation District board of supervisors voted on and approved the FY 2011 Budget and forwarded it to the State Commission. The State, however, has not found enough money in its coffers to fund us. However, we are able to continue to keep our doors open with the support of our loyal customers through our general sales and annual plant sales.

## **Board of Supervisors**

For FY 2011 there was an open seat on the board of supervisors. The same officers were re-elected last November: Robert Lear, Chairman; Anthony Boyer, Treasurer; and David Jurczak, Vice Chair.

## **Local Work Group**

MACD awarded The Berkshire Conservation District a \$6,000 grant to develop a Local Work Group model. Development of the model will help to determine the county's natural resource concerns, needs, and priorities as well a natural resource inventory. The District contracted Jess Toro of Native Habitat Restoration, LLC to carry out this work during 2011.

## **About the Berkshire Conservation District**

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. Authorized by State Statute, 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. The Berkshire Conservation District is a not for profit environmental educational organization which works with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to protect the soil and water of Berkshire County.

### **Board of Supervisors**

Bob Lear, Chairman  
Dave Jurczak, Vice-Chair  
Tony Boyer, Treasurer  
Dennis Mareb  
Ned Kirchner  
Kevin Zimmer

### **Associate Supervisors.**

Aimee Thayer  
Frances Turner  
Jeff Jourdain

### **Administrator**

Deborah Burke

### **District Conservationist**

Kate Parsons

**FY 2011 INCOME AND EXPENSE REPORT  
7/1/2010 – 6/30/2011**

<u>Subcategory</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b><u>INCOME</u></b>	
2010 Bulb Sale	\$6,465.00
2011 Tree Sale	\$14,631.06
FY 2010 Annual Meeting	\$784.00
Income from Savings/Unassigned Income	\$8,014.98
LWG Grant	\$6,000.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$35,895.04</b>
<b><u>EXPENSES</u></b>	
2010 Bulb Sale	\$3,527.79
2011 Tree Sale	\$6,939.25
Payroll – Deborah Burke	\$8,533.24
Payroll Processing	\$286.50
Unassigned Administrative	\$346.20
FY 2010 Annual Meeting	\$850.08
BCC Scholarship Award	\$250.00
Donations	\$50.00
Insurance	\$805.00
Website Maintenance	\$276.25
Unassigned Administrative	\$1,085.72
MACD Membership	\$25.00
Supplies	\$816.74
Taxes	\$2,652.25
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$26,629.02</b>
<b><u>INCOME LESS EXPENSES</u></b>	<b><u>\$9,266.02</u></b>

## Berkshire County Accomplishments

In 2011, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), in conjunction with the Berkshire Conservation District had another successful year “getting conservation on the ground.”

☀ \$922,000 of financial assistance was provided to landowners to aid in the implementation of the following conservation practices:

Access Road- Erosion Control	2700 lf
Animal Trail & Walkway	1415 lf
CNMP	1 no
Conservation Cover	12 ac
Cover Crop	13.9 ac
Early Successional Habitat: (grass/old field)	110.8 ac
Early Successional Habitat: (shrub/young forest)	85.4 ac
Fence	7079 lf
Fish Passage	1 no, 55 mi
Forage Harvest Management	63.2 ac
Forest Management Plan	1 no
Forest Stand Improvement	2.7 ac
Irrigation Water Management	2.3 ac
Nutrient Management	1808 ac

Oak Regeneration	50.4 ac
Pasture and Hayland Planting	5.3 ac
Pest Management (Invasives control)	486.4 ac
Pipeline	72 lf
Prescribed Grazing	107.5 ac
Riparian Forest Buffer	1 ac
Seasonal High Tunnel	4 no
Stream and Shoreline Protection	1360 lf
Transition to Organic	5.3 ac
Tree/Shrub Establishment	8.3 ac
Tree/Shrub Preparation	2.2 ac
Waste Utilization	418 ac
Watering Facility	2 no
Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (wood turtle)	7 ac

☀ New conservation plans were developed on over 1300 acres of crop, hay, pasture, forest land and wetland. Financial assistance was obligated for 1050 of these acres, including land operated by one Limited Resource Producer and one Socially Disadvantaged Producer. The new obligations are as follows:

☀ **EQIP**– 29 applications were accepted and 16 contracts were awarded for a total of \$237,758 on 793 ac. (Environmental Quality Incentives Program) Focus: Invasive species control, forest stand improvement, forage quality, nutrient management, season extension and planning for energy efficiency & forest mgmt.

Project Type	#	Acres	Dollars
Forest Mgmt Plan	3	222.0	\$3,918
Ag Energy Mgmt Plan	3	25.2	\$9,435
High Tunnels	3	0.6	\$30,524
Forestland	4	342.0	\$66,034
Pasture & Hayland	2	196.0	\$124,924
Organic Transition	1	7.3	\$2,922
	16	793.1	\$237,757



☀ **WHIP**- 14 applications were accepted and 11 contracts were awarded for a total of \$298,379 on 256 ac. (Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program) Focus: At-risk species habitats, for example Bog Turtle and New England Cottontail (pictured below). Also, forest stand improvement under the NEFI.

Project Type	#	Acres	Dollars
Wetland	5	40.6	\$52,592
New England Cottontail	1	25.3	\$37,776
New England Forestry Initiative (NEFI)	5	190.3	\$208,010
	11	256.2	\$298,378



☀ **AMA**- 1 application was accepted and funded for a total of \$11,972 on 5 ac.  
(Agricultural Management Assistance) Focus: Drought mitigation

☀ **FRPP** (Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program)- 3 farms were permanently protected from development in cooperation with the MA DAR Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program. The farms total 263 acres with 58% of the soils being prime or state and locally important.

**Photos from 2011 Implementation**



Tree/Shrub Establishment along Housatonic River



High Tunnel



Animal Trail and Walkway on grazing farm



Dam Removal and Plantings on North Branch of the Hoosic River



Oak Regeneration and Early Successional Habitat



Invasive Species Control in forest land