



BERKSHIRE CONSERVATION DISTRICT FY 2009 ANNUAL REPORT

This past fiscal year was a very busy one for the Berkshire Conservation District. We partnered with many agencies to promote various programs and educate the public. The following is a list of some of our accomplishments:

- Energy Workshop with Rural Development
- Invasive Species Workshop with the Highland Communities Initiative
- Farm Bill Workshop with Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Tree ID hike with Mass Audubon
- Wildlife Management Workshop for Private Landowners with NRCS, DCR, & Ruffed Grouse Society
- Forest Management Site Walk with DCR
- Public Site Visit of Moran and Chalet WMA's with DFW
- Tree Watch Partnership
- Exhibit at Berkshire County 4H Fair
- Exhibit at Big E

DISTRICT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

We are very pleased to announce two new associate supervisors to our board. The first, Kevin Zimmer, Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer at Greylock Credit Union joined our board this past year. Kevin has been a customer for years and brings a new perspective to the board. The second, Lisa Dachinger, a farmer from Lenox, is familiar with the services available to landowners and farmers.

We are still looking for someone to fill the last opening. Anyone interested in helping to oversee the programs and direction of the Berkshire Conservation District may apply for the volunteer position by contacting Deb Burke at deborah.burke@ma.usda.gov

Ideally we are looking for someone who:

- Understands farm related conservation issues
- Has a willingness to volunteer (3yr term)
- Can help out with annual sales
- Is available for the monthly meetings: (3rd Wednesday of the month at 4pm.)

ANNUAL FUNDRAISING SALES

The Berkshire County Conservation District had record breaking sales with over 600 packages of bulbs sold to 102 customers at the **Fall '08 Bulb Sale** and over 9800 seedlings to over **290 customers** at the **Spring'09 Seedling Sale**. The number of customers served was up another third and gross sales were slightly better than last year. Considering the economy, we were very pleased with the outcome. The Master Gardeners volunteered their time to help us out with soil testing on pickup day. Thank you to all the volunteers who help make our fundraisers successful and the loyal customers who keep returning each year. The 2010 spring sale brochure will be mailed out by February. Proceeds from these sales go towards providing technical assistance to landowners, workshops, BCC scholarship and environmental educational materials to schools in Berkshire County.

MASSACHUSETTS ENVIROTHON

Massachusetts Envirothon is a statewide competition that tests students' knowledge of aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and environmental issues. Congratulations to **Tantasqua Regional HS** of Fiskdale, the overall first place winner, of the 2009 Massachusetts Envirothon.

BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

2009 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Congratulations to **Glenn Lynde**, this year's recipient of Berkshire Conservation District's Environmental Science Scholarship at Berkshire Community College. Guidelines for this scholarship require that the student be a second year environmental studies student at BCC.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS	
Robert Lear	Chairman
Dave Jurczak	Vice-Chair
Aimee Thayer	Treasurer
Dennis Mareb	
Ned Kirchner	
Tony Boyer	

ASSOC. SUPERVISORS
Kevin Zimmer
Lisa Dachinger
Frances Turner
Jeff Jourdain
Dan Galusha
Deborah Burke, Administrator, Editor

NRCS Accomplishments

By Kate Parsons, District Conservationist

NRCS, with the assistance from the Berkshire Conservation District had another successful year helping farmers and other landowners with conservation issues. While we still provided valuable technical and financial assistance to our traditional agricultural customers, we responded to a high demand from the forestry community. The majority of our new conservation plans focused on sustainable forest management, invasive species control and wildlife habitat enhancement, all priorities of the 2008 Farm Bill. There was also considerable interest in renewable energy production, which was new with this Farm Bill. This past year brought increased scrutiny on NRCS' management of contracts, which has resulted in improved implementation of conservation on the ground in Berkshire County.

Below is a summary of the major NRCS activities and accomplishments from 2009:

- Land users were aided in planning approximately 1878 acres of crop, hay, pasture and forest land.
- Comprehensive nutrient management plans (CNMPs) were developed for 2 farms and applied on 5 farms.
- Conservation practices were applied to improve:



Grazing land on 978 acres
Soil quality on 4485 acres
Water quality on 4846 acres
Fish and wildlife habitat on 348 acres



- Financial assistance was provided to landowners (#) for developing CNMPs (2) and implementing nutrient management (13), waste utilization (5), forage harvest management (7), prescribed grazing (3), fencing (2), integrated pest management (1), cover crop (4), residue management (1), transition to organic production (3), pasture and hay planting (2), crop rotation (1), animal trail & walkway (1), irrigation conveyance (1), oak regeneration (1), early successional habitat – grasslands (3), early successional habitat – shrub lands/ young forest (10) and invasive species control (10).
 - 9 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) applications were accepted, planned and ranked against others across the state and 3 were funded for a total of \$102,205. One of these contracts included a photovoltaic system for the agricultural energy needs of the farm.
 - 12 Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) applications were accepted, planned, ranked against others across the state and 11 were funded for a total of \$410,120.
 - USDA through the Farmland and Ranch Protection Program (FRPP), in cooperation with the State of Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources' (MDAR) Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program, permanently preserved 3 farms in Great Barrington and Sheffield. This represented 243 acres of farmland, including 123 acres of prime or state and locally important soils.
 - 1 Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) contract was completed, protecting the Margaret Lindley Park in Williamstown.
 - Technical assistance was provided to the Farm Service Agency (FSA) under the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) for 5 landowners impacted by the December 2008 ice storm.
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