



Berkshire
Conservation
District

CONSERVATION SUCCESS STORY

Berkshire workshop refreshes soil evaluators

ASHLEY FALLS, Mass. (November 3, 2009) — Certified soil evaluators from across Massachusetts attended a two-day refresher workshop on “Describing, Documenting, and Interpreting Soil Conditions within Deep Holes” sponsored by the Berkshire Conservation District and the Berkshire Community College.

Held at the Berkshire Community College’s South County Center in Great Barrington and the Bennett Farm in Ashley Falls, the workshop was designed for professional certified soil evaluators who perform Title V septic system inspections in the commonwealth.



Instructor Peter Fletcher and participants stand on a drumlin to discuss glacial, lacustrine and fluvial land formation influences on Bennett Farm.

Certified Professional Soil Scientist Peter Fletcher taught the course, which focused on interpreting the landscape and describing, documenting, and interpreting soil conditions within deep observation holes located in areas with varied soil and geologic conditions.



The first day featured lecture and hands-on exercises to help soil evaluators accurately describe the soil and geologic features in a deep observation hole.

The second day was a field exercise in which participants described, documented, and interpreted soil conditions within four or five deep observation holes. At the end of the workshop, Fletcher discussed his interpretations and lead a question and answer session.

“Peter Fletcher’s course provided an environment in which students learn to use published data and maps in combination with hands on field and test pit soil evaluation,” said participant Gail Ceresia of Berkshire Wetland Services.



Gregg Newman (left) and Patrick McColligan, are orienting Bennett Farm landscape with the USGS Topographical and Surficial Geological Maps.

Each participant who successfully completed the workshop received a certificate, handouts and a field guide, as well as credit with the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission, the approving authority for soil evaluator certification.

The Berkshire Conservation District provides technical assistance and education on soil, water, and related natural resources. Massachusetts’ 14 conservation districts work in partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to identify and address natural resource concerns and establish priorities for conservation projects, and provide conservation education and technical assistance to their communities.

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