



What is a Conservation District?

A Conservation District is a voluntary group of local individuals who share a

vision for well managed natural resources; from coastal waters to drinking water...to forests and farmland...to urban green spaces.

Conservation Districts were established in Rhode Island (RI) by State Law in 1944 as non-regulatory/non-enforcement environmental entities. RI's Conservation Districts are based on the belief that local people know the most about local needs.

The function of RI's Conservation Districts is to take available resources (technical, financial, and educational), focus those resources, and coordinate them to meet the needs of the local land user for optimal management of soil, water and related resources. RI's Conservation Districts encourage landowners to effectively conserve natural resources through watershed education programs, agricultural technical assistance, and the Farm, Forest, and Open Space Act.

Our programs do require funding support from applicants. Please contact the Conservation District "hub" for a conversation about programs and contacts.

RI Association of Conservation Districts

www.riacd.org
17 Smith Avenue, Greenville, RI 02828
phone (401) 949-1480
fax (401) 949-4436

Local farms ensure a readily available source of food close to metropolitan areas, while forestland and open space are key natural resources that provide recreational areas and contribute to the welfare and happiness of the state's inhabitants.

"A Citizen's Guide to the Farm, Forest, and Open Space Act", RI DEM, Jan. 2003

Get Connected--We Can Help

RI's Conservation Districts offer a range of tools and techniques to help individuals and municipalities. If you know specifically what your needs are, please contact the program leaders below directly.

Programs

Agricultural Technical Assistance & Outreach

Tom Sandham
ph. (401) 294-9273
email: tom.sandham@ri.nacdnet.net

Farm, Forest, and Open Space

Contact your town or city's Tax Assessor.

Watershed Education & Outreach

Gina DeMarco
ph. (401) 949-1480
email: gina-demarco@nricd.necoxmail.com

Individual Boards of Directors

***Please call to confirm monthly meeting times and locations.**

◆ **Eastern RI Conservation District** ***Serving Bristol & Newport Counties***

email: lindawildes@cox.net
(401) 624-7490
Open, public meetings: second Tuesday of each month.

◆ **Northern RI Conservation District** ***Serving Providence County***

www.nricd.org
email: gina-demarco@nricd.necoxmail.com
(401) 949-1480
Open, public meetings: first Wednesday of each month.

◆ **Southern RI Conservation District** ***Serving Kent & Washington Counties***

www.sricd.org
email: tom.sandham@ri.nacdnet.net
(401) 294-9273
Open, public meetings: third Monday of each month.



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RHODE ISLAND'S CONSERVATION DISTRICTS



conserving
natural resources
for our future

LOCAL PEOPLE

IMPACT LOCAL CONSERVATION



Local Decision-Making

Rhode Island's Conservation Districts are governed by volunteers who are locally elected and appointed to participate on the Board of Directors, as Directors and Associate Directors. Each District Board meets monthly to review requests from local landowners for conservation assistance and to establish priorities in response to the conservation needs and concerns within the counties.

We serve & support YOU

RI's Conservation Districts serve and support landowners, municipalities, organizations and businesses that desire help with resource conservation and management through the following avenues...



Agricultural Technical Assistance

Partnerships between local, state and national organizations allow for effective conservation in RI. Conservation Districts work

alongside RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to help landowners successfully manage their agricultural and forest land, through technical assistance and financial incentives.



Farm, Forest, and Open Space

The Farm, Forest, and Open Space Act (FFOS) helps citizens conserve these lands for themselves and for future generations. The purpose of this law is to allow enrolled property to be assessed at its current use value, not at the land's development value. This assessment makes the ownership of that land more affordable and increases its viability for growing crops or timber, providing wildlife habitat, and preserving ecological values.

The recommended state-wide current-use values are determined by the FFOS Subcommittee of the RI State Conservation Committee and distributed to tax assessors every year. Although these values are *recommended*, they are often adopted by most cities and towns.

Property must meet specific criteria in order to be eligible for enrollment in the Program. You can look at the specific criteria, which is found in the "Citizen's Guide to the Farm, Forest and Open Space Act[1]", to determine which designation best suits your situation. For the Farm and Forest designations, a Farm Conservation Plan Application or a Forest Management Plan is required prior to completing an Application form and submitting it to the RI DEM. Open Space designations are handled by each town's tax assessor.

Outreach and Education Programs

Information is powerful and can alter public perceptions, as well as public actions. Providing communities with pertinent environmental information effectively causes people to change their habits and ways they interact with their environment. Coordinating projects with a unified approach increases conservation of land and water resources throughout a watershed.

Outreach and Education Programs are provided through RI's Conservation Districts in an effort to powerfully inform and positively impact residents' decisions. Small decisions ultimately combine to cause a significant impact on RI's natural resources.

Our programs vary depending on the audience and the topic of information being conveyed. We strive to reach students, homeowners, farmers, business owners, foresters, and all residents whose actions impact our resources.



Our specialties include topics on:

- Agriculture
- Stormwater Impact
- Forestry
- Non-point source pollution reduction

Outreach techniques include:

- Classroom presentations
- Direct mailings
- Demonstration sites
- Water Festivals
- Web sites, brochures, etc.

Explore how Conservation District Education and Outreach programs can help your community.