

SUSSEX COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

JANUARY 2016

District contact information

Mailing address: 186 Halsey Road, Newton, NJ 07860

Telephone: 973-579-5074

Facsimile: 973-579-7846

Website: www.sussexscd.org

E-mail: sussex@sussexscd.org

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January 31, 2016

To the Residents and Land users of Sussex County

As chairman of the Board of Supervisors, I am pleased to present the 2015 Annual Report of the Sussex County Soil Conservation District (SCSCD). The report represents a summary of the activities of the SCSCD during calendar year 2015.

The Sussex County Soil Conservation District (SCSCD) is a special purpose unit of state government. We are currently in our 65th year of operation. The SCSCD is one of 15 SCD's in the State of New Jersey and one of 3,000 Districts nationwide. Although we are an independent operation, the SCSCD operation is subject to oversight and guidance from the New Jersey State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC). The SSCC is part of the NJ Department of Agriculture, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

In the United States, Soil Conservation Districts originated in the 1940's as part of the "New Deal" response to the "Dust Bowl" in the central plains. Districts were formed to act as a liaison between the local land user and the newly formed U.S. Soil Conservation Service (SCS). The SCS was formed to educate and guide producers in the sustainable, renewable and wise use of their land. Participation in the SCS programs was "voluntary" and the Districts consisted of recognized progressive leaders of the farming community. Farmers entered into "Conservation Agreements" with the Districts. This enabled the SCS to meet with the farmer and to generate "farm conservation plans" geared specifically to the proper use of their lands. Compliance with the plan was voluntary, but often resulted in significant increases in production and in farm income, as well as the protection of natural resources. SCS and the Districts were highly successful in halting the dust bowl and returning the lands to sustainable and productive agricultural use.

In addition, each District has broad authority to review the natural resource issues facing its area and to determine its priorities for addressing these issues. A major principal of the District movement is the "locally led" process wherein landuser input is sought to determine and address natural resource issues.

In New Jersey, each District is managed by a volunteer five-person Board of Supervisors. The statute requires that the Supervisors reflect the geographic distribution of the jurisdiction as well as the natural resource issue areas of concern. The Supervisors are "nominated" by a committee of local conservation interest groups and are appointed by the State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC). The SSCC has the legislative power to oversee all aspects of District activities. The SSCC can review and override all actions of the District staff and Board of Supervisors. All actions of the District staff are appealable to the District Board of Supervisors. All final decisions of the District's Board of Supervisors are appealable to the SSCC.

Sussex County was initially part of a three county District that consisted of Morris, Warren and Sussex Counties. On September 1, 1950, the Secretary of State granted a charter that established the Sussex County SCD and an independent District.

The SCSCD is a model of governmental efficiency. We receive no state, county or local taxpayer funds. All District operations are supported solely by fees for services.

The SCSCD welcomes public input and participation. **You are our constituents.** We are here to serve the landowners and land users of Sussex County. The Board of Supervisors meets on a monthly basis. We welcome your participation and your questions. The SCSCD stands ready to assist all Sussex County residents and landowners in addressing their natural resource needs.

Very truly yours,

Barbara Rosko
Chairwoman

MEET THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

The 2015 members of Board of Supervisors were as follows:

BARBARA ROSKO- CHAIRMAN- Term expires 6/30/2016.

Barbara Rosko is the current chairperson of the Board of Supervisors. Barbara has served on the District Board since 1996. Barbara resides in the Crandon Lakes section of Hampton Township and is retired from the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT.) Mrs. Rosko is also a long time member of the Hampton Township Planning Board and currently serves as its vice chairman. Barbara also previously served as a member of the NJ State Soil Conservation Committee, as the President to the New Jersey Association of Conservation Districts (NJACD) and as a member of the Sussex County Planning Board and Sussex County Open Space Committee. Barbara also currently serves as Chairman of the North Jersey Resource, Conservation and Development Council (NJRC&D.) NJRC&D is a regional water quality initiative involving 7 North Jersey counties and is co-sponsored by the District.

PHILIP DEACON, 1st Vice Chairman – Term expires 6/30/2017

Phil Deacon is currently serving in his 18th year as a District Supervisor and is currently a vice chairman. Phil is a well-known and well respected builder throughout Sussex County. Phil owns and operates Deacon Homes and has built over 270 homes and other projects throughout Sussex County. He has been cited on multiple occasions for the high quality of his work and the sustainability of his developments. Throughout his career, Phil has worked with surveyors and engineers and has a strong background in septic design, surveying and land use development. He is also a licensed NJ realtor. Phil is a life director of the New Jersey Builders Association (NJBA) and a member and former director for the National Association of Home Builders. He serves on the Board of Directors of Franklin Mutual Insurance Company. Phil has also served as a Board member for Newton Hospital and as a member of the Sussex County Strategic Growth Advisory Committee. Phil has also been cited on multiple occasions for his charitable and community activities.

JAMES KILDUFF- 2ND Vice Chairman- Term expires 6/30/2018.

James Kilduff has served as a District Supervisor since 2010. Jim is a 30 year resident of Franklin Borough and has a record of achievement in business and government with demonstrated expertise in land use and planning matters. Jim currently serves as the Vice Chairman of the District. Jim holds a BS and MA in Psychology from Fordham University and SUNY Oswego. He also holds a MA in communications from the New York Institute of Technology. During his career Jim has served as the Planning and Community Development Director for both Hardyston Township and Franklin Borough. He has most recently served as Administrator of Franklin Borough.

MATTHEW FOX, P.E., L.S. –Secretary/Treasurer- Term expires 6/30/16

Matt Fox is currently in his third year of service to the District. He is currently the Secretary Treasurer. Matt attended the Catholic University of America Metropolitan School of Engineering in Washington, D.C. and is a professionally licensed civil engineer and land surveyor of the State of New Jersey. Matt is a principal and owner of Canger Engineering Associates, Inc. located in Sussex County. Matt's areas of expertise include: land use planning, storm water management, hydrologic and hydraulic modeling, site construction and layout, sanitary sewer and septic design and boundary line location. A resident of Green Township, Matt serves on the Green Hills School District Board of Education, the Green Township Zoning Board of Adjustment and the Green Township Environmental Committee. Matt has served as a District Supervisor since 2013 and served as a judge of the 2014 NJ Envirothon. Matt is married and has 3 children.

FRED HOUGH- Term expires 6/30/2018

Fred Hough is the longest serving District Supervisor in the 65 year history of the District. Fred is currently in his 46th year of service to the District having served continuously since 1970. Supervisor Hough was feted at a luncheon sponsored by the District in July. Citations were provided to Mr. Hough from the NJ Secretary of Agriculture and the State Conservationist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service. Fred is a lifelong resident of Sussex County and has resided on the family farm in Wantage his entire life. Fred is a retired dairy farmer and still assists his son Tom in the family dairy operation. Fred and his wife, Betty have three daughters and one son. In addition to serving on the District, Fred also served for many years as Mayor of the Wantage Township. Fred also served on the Sussex County Agricultural Development Board and on the Board of the Sussex County Farm and Horse Show.

HELP WANTED

After 46 years of District service, Supervisor Fred Hough has requested to be granted "emeritus" status and to step down from active service. The District is currently seeking a member of the agricultural community who might be willing to serve on the Board. Fred has agreed to continue on an interim basis until his successor can be appointed. Anyone interested in possibly serving on the Board should contact, District Manager Cliff Lundin at 973-579-5074.

MEET THE DISTRICT STAFF

All District staff members are appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The key staff position is the District Manager. The District Manager is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the District and for compliance with all state and federal laws and regulations. The District Manager also serves as the Custodian of Public Records for all requests for information from the public.

CLIFFORD R. LUNDIN- DISTRICT MANAGER/GENERAL COUNSEL

Cliff Lundin has served as the District Manager of the District since September 2009. Prior to that Cliff served as a member of the Board of Supervisors for 30 years, serving as chairman for much of that time. Cliff also served for 12 years as a member of the NJ State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC), for 4 years as President of the NJ Association of Conservations Districts (NJACD), for 3 years as a Director of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) and for 2 years as a member of the Executive Board of NACD. Cliff is a recognized expert in urban conservation and currently serves on the national NACD Urban and Community Conservation Committee. Cliff holds a Master of Science degree in Environmental Science as well as a law degree from Rutgers University and Rutgers Law School. He is a licensed attorney of New Jersey. Cliff also previously served as Mayor of Hopatcong for 8 years, as a member of the Lake Hopatcong Regional Planning Board for 28 years, as a member of the Hopatcong Zoning Board and Planning Board (30 years), as a founding member of the Hopatcong Environmental Commission and as a member of the Hopatcong Board of Health. He also served 10 years as a member of the Hopatcong Board of Education. He currently serves as chairman of both the Hopatcong Open Space Committee and the Sussex County Open Space Committee. Cliff previously worked for the US EPA Region II office in the water and hazardous waste enforcement section. Cliff also served on the Board and on the Legislative Committees of the NJ League of Municipalities.

CATHERINE WILLIAMS

Cathy Williams serves as the District's Office Administrator. Cathy has worked for the District since 2001 and is skilled in all aspects of office administration.

JEFF ECKERT

Jeff Eckert has worked for the District since 2003. Jeff serves as the District's primary job site inspector.

THOMAS HANSEN

Tom Hansen has served as a part time soil erosion inspector with the District since 2011. Tom holds a BA from William Paterson University. Prior to his retirement, Tom worked as a full time inspector for the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and NJ Board of Public Utilities. His responsibilities included inspections and investigations relative to solid waste and recycling. Tom also previously worked for the Franklin Mineral Museum.

DISTRICT CONSULTANTS

The District also uses the services of the following professionals and consultants:

Special Attorney- William Haggerty, Esquire, Dolan and Dolan, Newton, NJ

Consulting Engineer- Joseph Sedivy, P.E., Byram Township, NJ

Auditors- Thomas M. Ferry, C.P.A., R.M.A., Ferraioli, Wielkotz, Cerullo and Cuva, PA,
Newton, NJ

DISTRICT SUPERVISORS- 1950-2014

The following community leaders have served as members of the SCSCD Board of Supervisors over the 65 year history of the District

S.R. Crissy	1950-1955
George Geary	1950-1955
Russell Snook	1950-1955
Jacob Krotje	1952-1955
Douglas M. Roy	1953-1956
Jacob Blakeslee	1955-1970
August Katterman	1956-1962
John Post	1957-1959
Herman Kleindienst	1961-1975
R. Andrew Jones	1962-1973
Charles Pratschler	1967-1996
Theodore F. Holbert, Jr	1968-1970
Ann Alford	1970-1973
Fred A. Hough	1970- Present
Phyllis Bauer Anderson	1973-1975
Delbert G. Voight	1973-1996
Charles Lain	1974-1975
Raymond Hopkins	1975-1979
Alex Everitt	1976-1980
Clifford R. Lundin	1979-2009
Walter C. Ricker	1980-2013
Barbara Rosko	1996-Present
Philip Deacon	1996-2010
Winifred Straub	2010-2012
James Kilduff	2010-Present
Philip Deacon	2013-Present (Supervisor Deacon also served from 1996-2010)
Matthew Fox, P.E.	2013-Present

DISTRICT MANAGERS- 1975 to 2014

1974-1975	Herbert Geifer
1975 to 1997	Phyllis Bauer Anderson Norwalk Millette
1997 to 2009	Winifred Straub
2009 to present	Clifford R. Lundin

Ms. Anderson Bauer Norwalk Millette and Mr. Lundin both served on the Board of Supervisors prior to their appointment as District Manager. Mrs. Straub served on the Board of Supervisors subsequent to her retirement as District Manager.

AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES

In 2015, the SCSCD continued its long history of providing assistance to Sussex County land owners and land users. Producers seeking to utilize the assistance programs of the United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) must first submit to the District, a “Conservation Agreement- Request for Assistance.” Once approved by the Board of Supervisors at a monthly meeting, the request is forwarded to the NRCS.

NRCS can provide technical assistance in developing an overall farm conservation plan (FCP) or a limited farm conservation plan that addresses a specific natural resource problem. In addition, NRCS can assist the agricultural producer in becoming eligible for financial cost sharing assistance under the various assistance programs provided by the Conservation Title of the Federal Farm Bill. All NRCS developed FCPs and cost share proposals are subject to approval by the District’s Board of Supervisors.

The current Federal Farm Bill programs under which assistance is available include: the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA), the Conservation Stewardship Program (SCP), the Agricultural Conservation Easement (Federal Farmland Preservation Program), the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP) and the Conservation Resource Enhancement Program (CREP)

During 2015, the District approved 8 new requests for Conservation Assistance from Sussex County landowners. These requests involve 234.6 acres of land. This is in addition to over 300 previously approved conservation agreements. As of December 2015, there are currently 43 active Farm Bill financial assistance contracts within Sussex County representing financial assistance in the amount of \$920,192.77. The grant contracts impact 2,032.9 acres of land. These consist of 4 AMA contracts, 27 EQIP Contracts and 12 WHIP contracts. In addition, as of December 2015, there were 38 additional applications for financial assistance pending before NRCS for Sussex County producers and landowners.

The District also plays a role in Animal Waste Management. Under NJ law and regulations all agricultural operations having more than a defined number of animal units must develop an animal waste management plan. The District works with the NJ Department of Agriculture in investigating complaints and in educating producers as to the regulatory requirements. The goal is to achieve voluntary incentive based compliance. In many cases, agricultural waste management issues can be addressed through one of the NRCS technical or financial assistance programs.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION

The SCSCD has a long history of involvement in the State of Federal Farmland Preservation programs. For many years, Supervisor Fred Hough represented the District on the Sussex County Agricultural Development Board (SCADB). In 2015, the District entered into a contract

with NRCS, to conduct field reconnaissance of farmland that was preserved using federal funds. As part of the monitoring activities, the SCSCD staff visited multiple preserved properties to ensure landowner compliance with the deed provisions restricting the property for use as agriculture. In some cases, the effort also included meeting with agricultural producers to review possible improvements to the preservation program.

LIAISON TO SUSSEX COUNTY AGRICULTURAL GROUPS

District Manager Lundin has been designated as the liaison from the SCSCD to the Sussex County Board of Agriculture.

SOIL EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL ACTIVITIES

In 1976, the New Jersey Legislature adopted landmark legislation known as the New Jersey Soil Erosion and Sediment Control (SESC) Act. This was one of the first laws of its kind in the United States. The Federal Clean Water Act now requires all states to have a similar program.

The SESC Act requires anyone disturbing more than 5,000 square feet of land for non-agricultural purposes to prepare and implement a Soil Erosion and Sediment Control (SESC) Plan. The SESC plan must be reviewed, approved and certified by the local Soil Conservation District. In addition, the SESC Act mandates that the Districts inspect the sites and enforce the plans. In order to obtain a Certificate of Occupancy from municipal officials, applicants are required to first obtain a Final Report of Compliance (FROC) from the District. During the non-growing season or in special circumstances, the District can issue a Condition Report of Compliance (CROC) that enables an applicant to obtain a temporary certificate of occupancy. In the event of a violation of the Act, the District can issue Notices of Violation, Stop Work Orders or seek judicial relief. Violations of the SESC Act can result in fines and penalties of up to \$3,000.00 per day of violation. The SESC Act requires uniformity in implementation among the 15 NJ Districts. The NJDA- State Soil Conservation Committee has adopted regulations and standards to ensure this uniformity of implementation.

The goal of a SESC plan is to prevent sediment from entering, clogging and/or polluting the local waterways. Scientific studies have shown that a properly prepared and implemented SESC plan results in a 97% decrease in the loss of soil from a site during construction.

Between 1976 and 2010, the District reviewed and approved 4,954 “projects” within Sussex County. These projects involved the disturbance of more than 42,913 acres of land. During that same time period, as part of its enforcement jurisdiction, the District conducted 99,103 inspections and expended 173,054 hours of staff time. It is estimated that the District’s work in implementing the NJ SESC Act from 1976 to 2010 prevented 1,913,919.8 tons of material from entering Sussex County’s waters.

In 2015, the District received 75 new applications for certification under the SESC Act. After review by the District and amendment by the applicants, 62 applications were approved. An additional 13 applications were approved with conditions. The total area of disturbance included in the 2015 projects was 157.41 acres on properties containing 1,776.15 acres of land. This results in an approximate disturbance rate on each tract of 8.8%.

In 2015, the new applications were distributed by municipality as follows:

Andover Borough		0
Andover Township*	To District	0
	To Township	3
Branchville Borough		1
Byram Township		7

Frankford Township		8
Franklin Borough		1
Fredon Township		2
Green Township*	To District	0
	To Township	1
Hamburg Borough		1
Hampton Township		2
Hardyston Township		4
Hopatcong Borough		8
Lafayette Township		1
Montague Township		0
Newton Town		2
Ogdensburg Borough		1
Sandyston Township		1
Sparta Township		11
Stanhope Borough		1
Stillwater Township		2
Sussex Borough		0
Vernon Township		12
Walpack Township		1
Wantage Township		9

Andover and Green Townships have been approved by the SSCC to conduct their own SESC programs. Certain projects must still be submitted to the District. Therefore jurisdiction for these two municipalities is split between the District and the municipal authority. The District is mandated by state regulation to annually conduct a review of the activities of all such delegated municipalities. State law mandates that the municipal programs must, at a minimum, be equivalent to the program provided by the District. Liaison meetings were held with both Green and Andover in February 2015. The review includes a windshield survey of each municipality to ensure all projects are included; technical review of all approved plans, review, sample inspections of projects and review of enforcement procedures.

In addition to the new incoming applications, the District also recertified 77 certifications that were expiring. (Most plans have a 42 month time period to complete the construction.) If construction is not completed within that time frame, the SESC plan must be recertified.

In 2015, the District also issued 50 final reports of compliance (FROCs) to applicants and municipalities and 9 conditional reports of compliance (CROCs). The District also performed 2,474 site inspections and expended 4447 staff hours in enforcing the SESC Act. The District during 2015 issued 11 Notices of Violation and 28 Stop Work Orders.

As of December 2014, the District was monitoring approximately 320 active construction projects within Sussex County. Those project sites are distributed by municipality as follows:

Andover Borough	1
Andover Township-District projects	0
Branchville Borough	5
Byram Township	17
Frankford Township	25
Franklin Borough	8
Fredon Township	2
Green Township- District projects	2
Hamburg Borough	3
Hampton Township	25
Hardyston Township	28
Hopatcong Borough	18
Lafayette Township	13
Montague Township	10
Newton Town	8
Ogdensburg Borough	2
Sandyston Township	5
Sparta Township	50
Stanhope Borough	4
Stillwater Township	9
Sussex Borough	2
Vernon Township	40
Walpack Township	1
Wantage Township	40

Certain larger construction projects under the SESC Act also require a parallel New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) permit under the NJPDES (New Jersey Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permit program. These permits are issued under the Federal and State Clean Water Acts and are known as General Permits for the Discharge of Construction Site Stormwater Runoff. (Also known as 5G3 permits or RFAs.) Applicants for these NJDEP permits must first obtain District certification. The District has a Memorandum of Understanding with NJDEP in which the District is the “first line” of enforcement authority for these permits. If significant violations are found, the District can request NJDEP to intervene. Violations of the NJPDES permits can result in fines of up to \$10,000.00 per day of violation. In 2015 the District assisted in the issuance of 27 NJPDES general permits and assisted in the enforcement of 155 previously approved NJDEP permits.

DISTRICT EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The SCSCD works in conjunction with the NJ Conservation Partnership in sponsoring several conservation education programs. Some of these include:

NJ ENVIROTHON

The SCSCD is a co-sponsor of the New Jersey Envirothon. This is a competition of High School environmental teams. Each team consists of five students and up to two alternates. Teams of home-schooled students and non-school based activities may also participate. The teams are given written and field tests in the areas of: Soils, Aquatics, Wildlife and Forestry. In addition, teams are tested on a Current Issue which changes each year. There is also an oral presentation component in which teams are challenged to provide an oral presentation relative to the current issue topic. Each member of the winning teams receives a \$1,000 scholarship as well as traveling expenses to the national competition.

The 2015 NJ Envirothon was held on May 1-2, 2015 at the Cape May 4H Fairgrounds in Cape May Court House, NJ. Over 45 teams participated from around the state. This involved over 200 students. Sussex County was represented by Kittatinny High School. The 2015 “current issue” topic was Urban and Community Forestry. SCSCD Chairwoman Barbara Rosko and SCSCD Manager Cliff Lundin acted as judges for the oral presentation component.

In 2015, the Sussex County SCD also coordinated the Northern NJ Envirothon Training Field Day. Participants are provided training in each of the Envirothon areas. This session was held on April 15, 2015 at Swartswood State Park. The training involved over 25 students from 3 northern NJ high schools.

CONSERVATION POSTER CONTEST

The District annually sponsors a Conservation Poster Contest. Prizes are awarded for each of the following grade levels: 2-3, 4-6, 7-9 and 10–12. Contestants must either reside within or attend school within Sussex County. Entries can come either individually or through the student’s schools. Winners from the Sussex County competition also are eligible for prizes at the state and national level. The theme is chosen by our national organization and varies from year to year.

The 2015 theme of the Conservation Poster Contest was **LOCAL HEROS- YOUR HARD WORKING POLLINATORS**. The District received over 200 entries from 7 different Sussex County Schools. Winners were provided with cash awards and certificates. Certificates were also provided to the host schools of each of the winners. The 2015 Poster Contest Winners can be viewed on the “Education” page of the District’s website.

SUSSEX COUNTY FARM AND HORSE SHOW- NEW JERSEY STATE FAIR

The District joined other Sussex County municipal, county and non-profit entities in sponsoring a display in the Ernie Kosa/Sussex County Building at the New Jersey State Fair/Sussex County Farm and Horse Show. District personnel manned the display on a part-time basis during the entire 10 days of the fair.

The District also participated in “Green Day” at the fair using the inflatable SOIL TUNNEL. The soil tunnel is an inflatable educational tool jointly owned by NJ’s 15 NJ Districts. The Soil Tunnel contains educational materials for children relative to the importance of soils. During Green Day over 450 people toured the Soil Tunnel exhibit.

PRESENTATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

The District, upon request, works with Sussex County school and community groups in educational displays and presentations. The District can also provide trees to Sussex County schools for Arbor Day tree plantings.

ANNUAL SUSSEX COUNTY 4H ORAL PRESENTATION COMPWETITION

All participants in Sussex County 4H programs are annually required to make an annual presentation before a panel of judges. Winners go on to a statewide competition at Rutgers and are eligible for scholarship awards. In 2015, the District Manager Cliff Lundin served as a judge for the competition.

SOILS CURRICULUM FOR USE IN NJ SCHOOLS

The District in cooperation with the 14 other NJ Districts has developed a Soils Curriculum for use in NJ Schools. The curriculum is available for use at no charge on the District website.

REFOREST NJ

The District serves as the Sussex County focal and distribution point for the Reforest NJ program. In 2015, over 100,000 tree seedlings were made available statewide for planting to municipal, school and volunteer groups. In Sussex County the District distributed approximately 5,000 trees. The aim is to replace within the next 5 years, all of the trees that were damaged or killed in Superstorm Sandy.

LAKE MANAGEMENT/LAKE CURRICULUM

The District has developed a guide to assist Sussex County lake associations and lakefront owners to identify problem aquatic weeds in Sussex County lakes and waterways. The guides are available on the SCSCD website. In addition, the District has previously worked with the Lake Hopatcong Regional Planning Board to develop a Lake Curriculum for use in NJ schools. The curriculum is available at no charge on the District's website.

BUTTERFLY GARDENING

The District has also developed a guide to assist landowners in adapting their home gardens to promote butterflies. The guide is available at no charge on the District website.

ARBOR DAY

The District has annually assisted schools and/or community groups in the planting of trees for Arbor Day. The District will provide a tree for planting to up to 5 schools on a first come/first served basis.

OTHER DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

NORTH JERSEY RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

The SCSCD is one of the primary sponsors of the North Jersey Resource Conservation and Development Council. (NJRC&D). This is a regional initiative sponsored by the Board of Chosen Freeholders and Soil Conservation Districts of 7 northern NJ counties. The NJRC&D is primarily concerned with agricultural and water quality issues. Among other things, NJRC&D sponsors a River Friendly Farm Conservation Program, a Stewardship of Open Space program and is involved in the Highlands Cluster of the William Penn- Delaware River Water Quality Program. Barbra Rosko of the SCSCD chairs the NJRC&D council. District manager Cliff Lundin is the District's alternate representative to the RC&D council. The NJRC&D is in the process of forming a strategic partnership arrangement with the Musconetcong Watershed Association.

COMMON WATERS

The District is an active participant in the Common Waters Program. District Manager Lundin is the District's liaison to the Common Waters Program. This program seeks to coordinate efforts in the NJ, NY and PA area constituting the Upper Delaware River Watershed. The District serves as the principal point of contact and focal point for a pilot grant assistance program to forested landowners to better manage their forests for water quality protection. The Common Waters program has prepared a guide to assist area landowners in adapting to climate change. The document may be accessed through the District's website.

LAKE HOPATCONG SYMPOSIUM

District Manager Cliff Lundin has a strong background in lake management. In December 2015, Mr. Lundin was invited to participate in the first annual Lake Hopatcong Symposium sponsored by the Lake Hopatcong Foundation.

DISTRICT WEBSITE

The Board of Supervisors strongly believes that all district operations must be open and transparent to the public. The District website at www.sussexscd.org meets or exceeds all state requirements for SCDs. The District utilizes its website as a means of outreach to the District's constituents, the landowners and land users of Sussex County.

OPEN SPACE PROTECTION

District Manager Lundin currently serves as the Chairman of the Sussex County Open Space Advisory Committee. This committee advises the Freeholders relative to funding applications for open space preservation within Sussex County. A 2015 referendum that extended the county's preservation efforts for an additional 10 years was overwhelmingly approved by Sussex County voters.

The District also owns a vacant parcel of environmentally sensitive land located in Frankfort Township. Known as the Flynn Preserve, the land located between Lake Owassa and Culvers Lake is primarily freshwater wetland or wetland transition zone. The parcel also connects several other state tracts. The District has entered into a cooperative agreement with the Lake Owassa Association for the protection of the tract.

STATE SOIL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

The NJ Soil Conservation Act is administered by the State Soil Conservation Committee within the Department of Agriculture. The SSCC is chaired by the NJ Secretary of Agriculture Douglas Fisher and has 10 members. In 2015, SCSCD Chairwoman Rosko and SCSCD District Manager Cliff Lundin both served on numerous SSCC subcommittees.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS (NACD)

The SCSCD is a member of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD). The NACD represents the interests of the nation's 3,000 districts. District Manager Lundin previously served for 4 years as the NJ Delegate to the NACD. He later served as the Northeastern US representative on the NACD Executive Board. In that capacity, he chaired the National Conservation Policy Committee. He currently continues to serve as a member of the Urban and Community Conservation Resource Policy Group. As part of that group he was primarily responsible for authoring the NACD Urban Policy and Urban Strategy. Through Mr. Lundin's efforts, the Sussex SCD has been nationally recognized as a leader in urban and suburban conservation.

NJ FERTILIZER LAW

In 2011, the New Jersey Legislature adopted the New Jersey Fertilizer Law. Primarily designed to protect water from nutrient pollution, this is one of the most stringent fertilizer laws in the United States. This law limits the amount of nitrogen and phosphorous loadings that can result in aquatic weeds and algae blooms as well as high nitrogen levels in drinking water. The law establishes uniform statewide fertilizer standards, requires certification of professional applicators, limits the time periods when fertilizer can be applied and establishes buffer requirements. Agricultural and golf course uses are exempt when fertilizer is applied by a licensed applicator. The District is one of several governmental agencies charged with educating the public on this law and in enforcing the various standards.

DISTRICT FINANCES

As a special purpose unit of state government, District finances are closely regulated by the State of New Jersey. These regulations include provisions governing District purchases, contacting and auditing. In addition, all District fees are based upon a published fee schedule, which is approved by the SSCC. Under NJ law, all District fees must bear a reasonable relationship to the services provided.

The Sussex County Soil Conservation District receives no direct local, municipal, county, state or federal tax revenues. In fact, a portion of each fee that the District receives is submitted to the SSCC to help defray the cost of SSCC oversight of District operations.

In 2015, the principal source of revenue to the District is the soil erosion and sediment control program. Due to the downturn in the construction industry, District revenues have seen a significant decrease over the past 6 years. In 2015, the District was operating on 40% less staff hours than in 2008. Other than minor adjustments, the District fee schedule has remained constant since 2008. The Board of Supervisors has also imposed an austerity program that has eliminated all non-essential travel and has deferred equipment replacements.

The District, pursuant to state law, retains an independent outside auditor to conduct an annual review of all District financial transaction and procedure. The annual District budgets and audit reports are available to the public on the “Finance” page of the District website. The financial reports are presented on a fiscal year basis. In the past 6 years, the independent auditors have found no deficiencies or irregularities whatsoever in District financial procedures.

Since each soil erosion and sediment control plan has a potential life of 42 months, the NJ state regulations requires the District to set aside a portion of each fee received as a “reserve” for future inspection and enforcement costs. The District reserve is intended as a buffer for slow economic years. The Board of Supervisors notes that the District has incurred a deficit in operating revenues versus expenses for FY2014 and FY2015. These deficits have been offset by the use of the “reserves.” The District continues to have sufficient reserves to allow it to continue to operate at its current level of service for the foreseeable future. The District Board of Supervisors monitors the District’s financial status at every meeting and has adopted a very conservative approach to all expenditures.