

SUSSEX COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

February 2018

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February 28, 2018

To the Residents and Land Owners and Land Users of Sussex County,

As chairman of the Board of Supervisors, I am pleased to present the 2017 Annual Report of the Sussex County Soil Conservation District (SCSCD). The report represents a summary of the activities of the SCSCD during calendar year 2017.

The Sussex County Soil Conservation District (SCSCD) is a special purpose unit of state government. We are currently in our 67th year of operation. The SCSCD is one of 15 SCD's in the State of New Jersey and one of 3,500 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 1930'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 (and still is) "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.

Each District also 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 2017 members of Board of Supervisors were as follows:

BARBARA ROSKO- CHAIRMAN- Term expires 6/30/2019.

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.

MATTHEW FOX, P.E., L.S. –Vice Chairman- Term expires 6/30/2019

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.

PHILIP DEACON, Secretary/Treasurer – Term expires 6/30/2020

Phil Deacon is currently serving in his 18th year as a District Supervisor and is currently Secretary-Treasurer. 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.

NATALIE BURGER- term expires 06/30/2018

Natalie Burger was appointed to the District Board of Supervisors by the State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC) on September 12, 2016. Natalie has a BA in English and Business Administration. Together with her husband, Mike Burger, Natalie owns and operates Hidden Pastures LLC, a livestock operation in Frankford Township. Her livestock currently includes alpacas, goats, sheep, yaks and rabbits. Natalie's responsibilities in the operation include financial management, livestock management, marketing and sales. Natalie also serves as: the secretary of the Sussex County Board of Agriculture; a member of the Woman's Leadership Committee of the NJ Farm Bureau; a member of the Sussex County Chamber of Commerce, Women in Business Committee; and as a 4H leader. She is also involved in the Hooked on Fishing Not on Drugs (HOFNOD) program.

RICHARD A. VOHDEN, JR.- term expires 06/30/2018

Richard Vohden was appointed to the District Board of Supervisors by the State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC) on September 12, 2016. Rich grew up on small farms in the Springfield and Union area. He played football and wrestled while in High School and in the military. He enlisted in the US Army on his 18th birthday and spent 16 of his 36 months of service on the DMZ in Korea. He later attended Newark College of Engineering (now NJIT). He has 35 years in the construction industry and served as a union official. Rich has also been in farmer in Green Township since 1983. His main crops include asparagus, raspberries, chicken and ducks. He now also has a small vineyard and orchard. He has three grown children and has been married to his wife, Faith for more than 35 years.

Richard has extensive experience in government and has served on the Green Planning Board, the Green Open Space Committee and the Green Township Environmental Committee. He also served as a member and chairman of the Sussex County Open Space Committee and as a member of past chairman of the Sussex County Planning Board. Supervisor Vohden has served as a Sussex County Freeholder for the past 6 years. In that capacity he has served as a member of the NJ Highlands Council and on the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority.

Mr. Vohden is also active in the following organizations: NJ Association of Counties; Sussex County Chamber of Commerce; the VFW; the Green and Sussex County Historical Societies; the NJ Farm Bureau, the Sussex County Board of Agriculture, the NJ Forestry Association and the Sussex County League of Municipalities.

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- 1950-2016

The following community leaders have served as members of the SCSCD Board of Supervisors over the 66 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	1970-2016*
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 (Also served from 2013 to present)
Winifred Straub	2010-2012
James Kilduff	2010-2016
Philip Deacon	2013-Present (Supervisor Deacon also served from 1996-2010)
Matthew Fox, P.E.	2013-Present
Richard Vohden	2016-Present
Natalie Burger	2016-Present

* Longest serving District Supervisor 46 years

** Second longest serving District Supervisor- 33 years

*** Third longest serving District Supervisor- 30 years

DISTRICT MANAGERS- 1975 to 2017

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 2017, 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), the Conservation Resource Enhancement Program (CREP) and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCCP).

During 2017, the District approved 6 new requests for Conservation Assistance from Sussex County landowners. These requests involve 236.1 acres of land. This is in addition to over 300 previously approved conservation agreements. As of December 2017, there were 42 active Farm Bill financial assistance contracts within Sussex County representing financial assistance in the amount of \$803,725.41. The grant contracts impact 2,004.3 acres of land. These consist of 2 AMA contracts, 27 EQIP Contracts, 7 WHIP contracts and 6 RCCP contracts. .

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. Small operations are self-certifying. Moderately sized operations must prepare the plan and file the same with the Rutgers Extension Service. Large operations must submit their plans for approval to the NJDA through the District. 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, retired Supervisor Fred Hough represented the District on the Sussex County Agricultural Development Board (SCADB). District Manager Lundin and Supervisor Natalie Burger now act as a liaison between the SCADB and the District. In 2015, 2016 and again in 2017, 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 and Supervisor Natalie Burger have been designated as the liaison from the SCSCD to the Sussex County Board of Agriculture. Manager Lundin also attends the monthly meetings of the Sussex County Agricultural Development Board on an “as needed” basis.

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 2017, the District received 76 new applications for certification under the SESC Act. After review by the District and amendment by the applicants, 65 applications were approved (or “certified”). An additional 10 applications were approved subject to conditions. The total area of disturbance included in the 2017 projects was 153.39 acres on properties containing 1943.38 acres of land. This results in an approximate disturbance rate on each tract of approximately 7.8%.

In 2017, the new applications were distributed by municipality as follows:

Andover Borough		0
Andover Township*	Total	4
	To District	1
	To Township	3
Branchville Borough		0
Byram Township		2
Frankford Township		9
Franklin Borough		1
Fredon Township		1
Green Township*	Total	3
	To District	1
	To Township	2
Hamburg Borough		0
Hampton Township		6
Hardyston Township		2
Hopatcong Borough		7
Lafayette Township		3
Montague Township		2
Newton Town		1
Ogdensburg Borough		1
Sandyston Township		2
Sparta Township		14
Stanhope Borough		2
Stillwater Township		1
Sussex Borough		1
Vernon Township		7
Walpack Township		0
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 early March 2017. 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. The District determined that both municipalities were conducting a program equivalent to the statewide and district requirements.

In addition to the new incoming applications, the District also recertified 27 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 and a new fee submitted to the District.

In 2017, the District also issued 48 final reports of compliance (FROCs) to applicants and municipalities as well as 7 conditional reports of compliance (CROCs). The District also performed 2799 site inspections and expended 4179.5 staff hours in enforcing the SESC Act. The District during 2017 issued 11 Notices of Violation and 3 Stop Work Orders (in connection with violations at projects.) The District Board also authorized the filing of formal Summons and Complaints in the Vernon Municipal Court against two landowners for failure to obtain the necessary SESC certification and for violations of a District Stop Work Order. In addition, the District filed a request for a formal hearing before the Sussex County Agricultural Development Board (SCADB) for an issue⁴ involving soil disturbance practices on an agricultural property in Frankford.

As of December 2017, the District was monitoring approximately 301 active construction projects within Sussex County. Those project sites are distributed by municipality as follows:

Andover Borough	0
Andover Township-District projects	1
Branchville Borough	2
Byram Township	20
Frankford Township	18
Franklin Borough	8
Fredon Township	4
Green Township- District projects	0
Hamburg Borough	4
Hampton Township	23
Hardyston Township	20
Hopatcong Borough	26
Lafayette Township	12
Montague Township	11
Newton Town	9
Ogdensburg Borough	3
Sandyston Township	5
Sparta Township	54
Stanhope Borough	4
Stillwater Township	5
Sussex Borough	1
Vernon Township	35
Walpack Township	1
Wantage Township	35

Projects under Chapter 251 can fall into one of several categories. As of December 2017, the distribution, by category, of the active certifications is shown below. The total is slightly higher than the number of actual certifications because the some certifications may fall within two or more categories.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of projects</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Single Family Homes	133	43%
Multi-Family developments	15	2%
Roads, Drainage Basins, Utilities, Bridges	57	18%
Mining Quarrying, Landfills	22	7%
Commercial Developments	82	27%
Total		

By far, the largest category of District regulated projects are single family homes. Of the single family files, 111 or 83% were for individual single-family homes. Twenty-two or 17% are for projects involving more than one single-family home.

The next highest category of District regulated projects are considered “commercial” These are classified by the area of disturbance. A breakdown of the commercial projects by area of disturbance is as follows:

<u>Area of disturbance</u>	<u>Number of Projects</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Less than .4 acres	9	11%
.4 to 1 acre	26	32%
1-3 acres	27	33%
3-10 acres	15	18%
10-20 acres	2	2%
20-30 acres	1	1%

This chart confirms that the majority of commercial projects regulated by the District are small and community based.

Under the SSCC regulations, the District must submit quarterly reports as to its activities under the Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Program. The quarterly reports can all be viewed on the “Reports” page of the District website.

**FEDERAL AND STATE CLEAN WATER ACT
NJDEP-NJPDES GENERAL PERMIT OF DISCHARGE
OF CONSTRUCTION SITE STORM WATER**

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 2017 the District determined that RFAs were required for issued of the applicants (roughly 1/3.) The District issued 25 “certification codes” which enabled the applicants to apply on-line for the NJDEP permit. Under the agreement with NJDEP, the District monitors all applicants to ensure that they obtain the required permits. In the absence of the RFA, the District is unable to issue a Report of Compliance, allowing the applicant to obtain a municipal Certificate of Occupancy. As part of its regular inspection process, the District screens sites for compliance with the NJDEP requirements.

In 2017, the District issued “certification codes” were distributed among the municipalities as follows:

Andover Borough	0
Andover Township	1
Branchville	0
Byram	0
Frankford	4
Fredon	0
Green	1
Hamburg	0
Hampton	1
Hardyston	0
Hopatcong	1
Lafayette	2
Montague	0
Newton	1
Ogdensburg	0
Sandyston	1
Sparta	7
Stanhope	0
Stillwater	1
Sussex	1
Vernon	2
Walpack	0
Wantage	2

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.

Prior to the Envirothon, Field Training Days are conducted in the northern, central and southern regions of the state. In 2017, the Sussex County SCD coordinated the Northern NJ Envirothon Training Field Day. Participants are provided training in each of the Envirothon areas. This session was held on April 25, 2017 at Swartswood State Park. The outdoor training involved two schools, three teams and 16 students. (Attendance was reduced due to miserable weather conditions.)

In addition to the Field Day, the Districts maintain three training trunks of educational materials, which are loaned to the competing schools over the course of the school year. Training trunks are maintained in the northern, central and southern regions of the state. The Sussex District is the designated northern coordinator for the training trunks. In 2017, the trunk was utilized by 5 schools and reached a total of approximately 50 students.

The 2017 NJ Envirothon was held on May 12-13, 2017 (in similar miserable weather conditions) at Schooley's Mountain Park located in Washington Township, NJ. The park is operated by the Morris County Park Commission. NJ Over 29 teams participated from around the state. This involved over 170 students. Sussex County was represented by two teams from Kittatinny High School. The 2017 "current issue" topic was "Agricultural Soil and Water Conservation Stewardship." SCSCD Vice Chairman Matthew Fox, P.E. and SCSCD Manager Cliff Lundin acted as judges for the oral presentation component.

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 2017 theme of the Conservation Poster Contest was **HEALTHY SOILS ARE FULL OF LIFE** The District received over 258 entries from 5 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 2017 Winners are as follows:

Grade Level	Winner	Grade	School- Teacher
2-3			
1 st Place	Catelyn Rich	2nd	Fields of Green- Ms. Smorto
2 nd Place	Ava Ortolani	2nd	Fields of Green- Ms. Smorto
3 rd Place	Grayson Leonard	2rd	Fields of Green- Ms. Smorto
Hon. Mention	Aaron Sweeten	3 rd	Fields of Green- Ms. Smorto
4-6			
1 st Place	Jayla Elias	5th	Hptcg- Durban Ms Fialcowitz
2 nd Place	Blake Brown	5th	Hptcg- Durban Ave.-Mrs.Munoz
3 rd Place (tie)	Ryan Coats	5th	Hptcg- Durban Ave.- Ms. Dean
3 rd Place (tie)	Michoela Neiper	6 th	Hamburg School- Mrs. Christiansen
Hon Mention	Samantha VanBeekum	5 th	Hptcg- Durban Ave.-Mrs. Fialcowitz
Hon.Mention	Madison Danley	5 th	Hptcg- Durban Ave.-Mrs. Fialcowitz
Hon.Mention	Janie Henderson	5 th	Hptcg- Durban Ave.-Mrs. Fialcowitz
7-9			
1st Place	Liah Shead	8th	Sussex Middle- Mrs. Marchese
2nd Place	Madison Lungren	8th	Sussex Middle- Mrs. Marchese
3 rd Place(tie)	Madelyn Link	8th	Sussex Middle- Mr. Watson
3 rd Place (tie)	Felicity Schmitt	7th	Sussex Middle- Mrs. Lowin
Hon Mention	Heidi McCollum	8th	Sussex Middle- Mrs. Marchese
Hon.Mention	Emma Dacosta	8 th	Sussex Middle- Mrs. Marchese
Hon. Mention	Desiree Armstrong	7 th	Sussex Middle- Ms. Ison
Hon Mention	Victoria Volpe	8 th	Sussex Middle- Mr. Watson
Hon. Mention	Lauren Paducci	8 th	Sussex Middle- Mr. Watson
Hon. Mention	Hannah Douglas	8 th	Hamburg School- Mrs. Christiansen

Grades 10-12

1 st Place	No entry
2 nd Place	No entry
3 rd Place	No entry

In the state contest, the poster submitted by Caitlyn Rich was chosen as the 2nd place winner in the grades 2-3 category

The winning 2017 Posters can be viewed on the “Education” page of the District’s website.

SUSSEX COUNTY FARM AND HORSE SHOW- NEW JERSEY STATE FAIR

In 2017, the District 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.

PRESENTATIONS FOR SCHOOLS, SCOUTS AND OTHER GROUPS

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 COMPETITION

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 2017, the local contests were held in February and March. District Manager Cliff Lundin again served as one of the judges 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.

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.

REFOREST NJ

The District serves as the Sussex County focal and distribution point for the Reforest NJ program. In 2017, 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. Most of the seedlings were distributed through municipal offices. However, seedlings were also made available directly through the District.

.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 also available at no charge on the District's 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 (SOS) program and is involved in the Highlands Cluster of the William Penn- Delaware River Water Quality Program.

In 2016, the NJRC&D program underwent a major reorganization. NJRC&D and the Musconetcong Watershed Association entered into an Affiliation Agreement in which the two non-profits corporations agreed to share office space, administrative staff and some technical staff. Laura Tessieri, P.E., was named as the Assistant Director for the RC&D portion of the operation. The former governing council of RC&D that previously consisted primarily of governmental representatives was converted to a Technical Advisory Committee. SCSCD Chairman Barbara Rosko of the SCSCD represents the District on the new Technical Advisory Committee. SCSCD Manager, Cliff Lundin is the District's alternate representative.

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.

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. All District Minutes, Budgets, Reports and Audits are available for public review on the District website.

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. In November 2017, a referendum was placed before the Sussex County voters. The proposal sought to expand the allowable use of the Open Space trust fund to include trail development and stewardship of preserved open space. The referendum was overwhelmingly adopted in the county.

FLYNN PRESERVE

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. .

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 3,500 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 Resource Conservation Policy Committee. He currently continues to serve as a member of the Urban and Community Conservation (ECC) Resource Policy Group (RPG). 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 2017, 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 9 years. In 2017, 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 imposed an austerity program that has eliminated all non-essential travel and has deferred equipment replacements. All current employees are working under a program of reduced hours.

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 9 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 through FY2017. 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 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.