

FREEHOLD SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Serving Middlesex & Monmouth Counties Since 1938

2014 ANNUAL REPORT



**2014 Freehold SCD Photo Contest
First Place Winner
“Sunset’s Invitation”
By Tammy J Kelly, of Belford**

Freehold Soil Conservation District

is a special purpose subdivision of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture serving Middlesex and Monmouth Counties. Freehold SCD is one of 15 New Jersey soil conservation districts empowered to conserve and manage soil and water resources in cooperation with the State Soil Conservation Committee. We address stormwater, soil erosion and sedimentation problems that result from land disturbance activities. We also provide environmental education outreach programs within the two counties.

In response to growing concern for water quality, the District has become the primary local agency responsible for controlling nonpoint sources of pollution associated with construction, agriculture and mining. Technical services of the USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service are made available through the District.

With ongoing cooperation between residents, contractors, developers, educators, landowners, farmers, municipalities and engineers, Freehold Soil Conservation District personnel continue to work to help to ensure environmental resource quality for years to come.



Award Winning Shot



Second Place Winner “Mist on the Rocks”
By Tom Maughan, of East Brunswick

Chapter 251 Report

The Freehold Soil Conservation District has been a region of intense land development for several decades requiring determined and consistent implementation of the Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Act (Chapter 251). This construction trend continued in 2014 in spite of the general economic downturn since 2008. During the year 744 new applications for development projects were received and more than 20,000 hours were spent by District staff to review plans, inspect construction sites and maintain the records associated with implementation of the Act. This included 7,935 hours of inspections by the District's full time inspection staff.

Our jurisdictional oversight is required on land development activities which result in soil disturbances of more than 5,000 sq. ft. It is the project owners who are required to provide the controls to mitigate soil erosion and sedimentation problems, including potential stormwater damages. It is the District that monitors their success. Currently there are more than 2,500 active construction projects being monitored at any one time which may vary as determined by new applications, closure of completed projects (releases) and start of idle projects. Since 2008 the number of active projects has been rising which is believed to be a result of the improving confidence in the economic conditions and continued rebuilding efforts in the area affected by Super Storm Sandy in 2012. New single family applications in 2014 totaled 352, or 45%, of all new applications. This is about twice the number of single family applications as in ordinary years. Correspondingly, exemptions from certifications remains unusually high as a result of ongoing demolition work associated with the aftermath of Sandy. A total of 753 exemption requests were processed, which is 70% to 100% higher than typical years.

In spite of the increase of single family activity, the majority of land disturbance activity continues to be a result of multi-unit housing developments, commercial and other activities. Of the new applications filed last year, 461 are less than 1 acre, 294 are over an acre and 70 are over 5 acres. The single largest project filed last year is expected to involve a land disturbance of 184 acres. Projects over 1 acre require a Stormwater Discharge Permit (5G3) from the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). In a cooperative effort, the District conducts inspections and submits reports to DEP regarding compliance with 5G3 permits. This resulted in 77 inspection reports being filed with DEP in 2014. Finally, the District also responded to 31 formal Complaints, issued 1635 Partial Reports of Compliance and 510 Final Reports of Compliance.

This year longevity awards were given to Stacy Abrahamsen Brady (25 years), Christina LaBianca (15 years) and Donna Cramer (10 years). In addition, Michael Infanti, Tim Thomas and Steve Grosch performed three data collection inspections for farmers seeking assistance regarding more energy efficient options for their farms.

District staff remained active members of number of committees and associations during the past year. Ines Zimmerman, Stacy Abrahamsen Brady and Christina LaBianca are members of the Policy and Procedures Subcommittee and Training Subcommittee of the State Soil Conservation Committee, respectively. Courtney Davidson remains the Treasurer of the New Jersey Conservation District Employee Association in which many of the staff are members. Tim Thomas is the President of the Northeast Conservation District Employee Association and a member of the National Association. Finally, Michael Hill is Treasurer of the South Jersey Resource Conservation and Development Council and a member of the Middlesex County Sediment Control Committee, Middlesex County Water Resources Authority, the Metedeconk Watershed Stakeholders Committee and the New Jersey

Geospatial Forum. In addition to this, the staff has volunteered significant effort and personal time toward the success of the New Jersey State Flower Show, the Middlesex County Fair, Monmouth County Fair, New Jersey Envirothon, Rutgers Day, Monroe Green Day, Trout Release Day and Wild Outdoor Expo to name a few.

Finally, as a result of a partnership between Rutgers University and the NJ Department of Agriculture-State Soil Conservation Committee, the entire District staff has been devoting a significant part of each work week to data entry efforts to capture and preserve land use, hydrologic and hydraulic design data used in the development of storm water management plans. This Herculean task is expected to take up to a year to complete and involves entering historical data into a central data base regarding every known storm management installation in the State. This will become a valuable tool for future planning and design efforts aimed at protecting our State's environmental and economic resources.

The Freehold District efforts are important to the economic and environmental vitality of the communities in Middlesex and Monmouth Counties and we hope to be able to improve on those efforts in coming years.

Mark Alliston — Resource Conservationist II

Manager's Message

2014 brought new challenges and accomplishments to the Freehold Soil Conservation District.

The District has been hard at work at various initiatives set forth by the State Soil Conservation Committee. The Freehold District, in partnership with all of the other 14 districts around New Jersey has been focusing on the programs and procedures we use to carry them out. The Freehold District is actively involved in the Policy and Procedures, Training and District Review Subcommittees. Through these subcommittees, there is an effort to foster uniformity, clarify procedures and share information among districts as quickly as possible. This effort has been under way since 2012 and has produced many key guidance documents and learning opportunities.

As we are able, the Freehold Soil Conservation District will look to offer assistance wherever possible. We participated as a distribution point for the New Jersey Tree Recovery Campaign. Free trees furnished by the NJ Forestry Service were distributed to municipalities and they in turn passed them on to the public. In Monmouth and Middlesex Counties over 1,800 trees were distributed.

In 2013 we began work on a grant project to enhance the Manalapan River and Lake watershed. The District received a \$500,000 grant from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to work with county and local partners to rehabilitate drainage structures and repair stream bank erosion. A video explaining the purpose of the grant project and the nature of the watershed was completed and is available on You Tube at <http://youtu.be/XaOlzRIGyXE>. We will continue to work with Rutgers Cooperative Extension to educate the public on these projects through a video series which address the installation and maintenance of restored stormwater basins.

Also, the first of our restoration projects have been installed. I have picked up the plants to jump start your garden. Would tomorrow work for you for me to drop off your plants? A cart would be helpful if you have. Two floating wetland islands have been launched into the lake at Thompson Park, Monroe Township.

Conservation Education

This year we have 22 returning schools and 7 new schools joining the Plants for Pollinators in the Classroom (PPIC) Program for a total of 29 schools participating in this unique, hands-on learning experience where students discover the important role pollinators play in our food supply.

In our ninth year in the Trout in the Classroom (TIC) program, we have 20 schools and one environmental center raising rainbow trout. In May, over 100 students and teachers attended Trout in the Classroom Field Day to release the trout they raised, from eggs to 3-4 inch fingerlings, into the Toms River at the Forest Resource Education Center. Students also participated in programs in soil, forestry, water and trout life. It is estimated that over 630 trout have been released into NJDEP permitted waters this past year through Freehold SCD TIC tanks.

“Dig Deeper: Mysteries in the Soil” was the theme for Stewardship Week and for the Conservation Poster Contest. District prizes were awarded in four grade divisions. All first place winning posters were submitted to the State level contest and we had winners at the state level.

The 2014 NJ Envirothon, was held at the School of Conservation in Sussex County in May. The 21st annual event tested 33 teams of high school students from throughout NJ in aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife and the current environmental issue of “Sustainable Local Agriculture/Locally Grown.” MATES Team #1 (Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science) from Stafford won the event for the fifth year in a row. High Tech High Team #1 won second place for the event and third place went to West Windsor-Plainsboro HS North.

The NJ Conservation Partnership display at the 2014 NJ Flower & Garden Show promoted the different ways we can protect our natural resources. “Conservation Keeps America Blooming” was very popular and was viewed by over 20,000 show visitors. The garden earned awards for “Most Educational,” “Best Environmental Focus” and “Best Plant Material.”

Our Board of Supervisors awarded three \$2,000 scholarships in 2014. Melissa Clelland, New Brunswick, received the Neal W. Munch Scholarship, Alyssa Petersen, Manalapan, received the Mac Clark Scholarship, and Samantha Dreher, New Brunswick, received the Bill Schauer Scholarship. This was the 34th consecutive year awards have been provided by the District. Students majoring in conservation related fields from Middlesex or Monmouth County are awarded these scholarships.



The 2014 NJ Envirothon at the School of Conservation in Sussex County.



The NJ Conservation Partnership’s “Conservation Keeps America Blooming” display at the Flower & Garden Show was viewed by over 20,000 attendees.



Trout in the Classroom Field Day 2014



Without a doubt the biggest thing to happen in our office in 2014 was the passing of the new Farm Bill. As with any new Farm Bill this has meant a lot of change and training in the office. We also welcomed a new program technician, Ruth Garcis to our staff. Ruth has filled a void in our office and will be the program technician in charge of conservation and disaster programs.

The two biggest changes that came out of the new Farm Bill for us has been the introduction of the ARC/PLC (Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage) programs and the upgrades in the NAP (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program) program. ARC/PLC was established to replace the DCP (Direct and Counter Cyclical) program) as the safety net for New Jersey farmers. Farmers will have the option of enrolling crops into one of three programs:

- PLC is strictly a price protection program, very similar to the Counter-Cyclical Program that was active under prior Farm Bills. The yields of the crop do not have any impact on payment in PLC. Payments will be made when the yearly average price of a crop falls below the reference price set in the 2014 Farm Bill. Producers are not required to plant a covered commodity on the farm in order to receive benefits, but reductions for FAVs planted on payment acres will apply. Those that sign up for PLC will also have the option to purchase additional coverage through their crop insurance agent call SCO or Supplemental Coverage Option. SCO allows producers to cover a higher percentage of their yield at a lower rate than traditional crop insurance.
- ARC-County is based on crop revenue, so it takes both price and yield into consideration when determining payments for crops. Payments will be

made when the county level actual revenue for a crop falls below the average of the prior 5 years of county level revenues. Like PLC, producers are not required to plant a covered commodity on the farm in order to receive benefits, but reductions for FAVs planted on payment acres will apply.

- ARC-Individual is also based on revenue; the combination of price and yield. Payments will be made when the actual revenue of a producer at the farm level falls below the average of the prior 5 years of actual revenue on that farm. Unlike the other two programs, ARC-IC requires producers to submit production evidence to establish the revenues for the 5-year "benchmark" period and the contract year.

The NAP program will now offer buy-up coverage in addition to catastrophic coverage. Both options have a service fee of \$250 per crop up to a maximum of \$750 per county (additional crops are free). Multi-county producer have a maximum of \$1,875. Buy-up can increase coverage from 50% to 65% of the farmer's expected yield at 100% of the National Average Market Price (NAMP)(CAT coverage is paid out at 55% of the NAMP). Premiums will be based on 5.25% of the acreage planted x NAMP x the farmer's individual approved yield, but will max out at \$6,563 (5.65% of the maximum payout, which is \$125,000). FSA will waive NAP service fees and reduce buy-up premiums by 50% for: Beginning farmers (BF), Limited resource farmers (LR), Under Server (minority) farmers.

United States Department of Agriculture
 Farm Service Agency
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 Freehold, NJ 07728
 732-462-0075
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FSA Staff

Gabi Grunstein — County Executive Director
 Beth Pine — Program Technician
 Ruth Garcis - Program Technician

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Activity Highlights of 2014

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conservation professional's assists land managers by assessing resource concerns and offering alternatives to improve land conditions. NRCS works with the agricultural producers to develop a Conservation Plan. This plan provides guidance and recommendations to improve conservation on the land. NRCS can also assist land managers with resource information, technical reports and interpretations on land no longer in agricultural production. In addition, NRCS is responsible for implementing Farm Bill cost-share programs and providing technical assistance for some State programs. All participation in NRCS programs is voluntary.

In 2014 NRCS staff provided the following technical services in Middlesex and Monmouth Counties:

- Developed conservation plans for 1,100 acres. Applied conservation practices on 3,1300 acres.
- Assisted agricultural producers with the implementation of soil improvement projects on 522 acres.
- Assisted agricultural producers with the implementation of conservation practices to improve water quality of 730 acres.
- Helped agricultural producers improve irrigation efficiency on 100 cropland acres.
- Assisted agricultural producers with the implementation of conservation practices on 179 forest land acres.

CTA - Conservation Technical Assistance is providing technical assistance to help people help their land. NRCS has used CTA successfully, for more than 75 years. We provide assistance to New Jersey farmers, private landowners and managers. New Jersey's farmers invest in conservation with the help from CTA; to care for the more than 70 percent of our land, water and other natural resources that are in their hands. In FY2014 New Jersey received \$2.8 million in CTA funds. NRCS employees work with customers to identify natural resource problems, inventory resources, develop conservation alternatives and help individual farmers, local governments and urban landowners with their conservation decisions. This prepares the way for using Farm Bill and other conservation funding.

Super Storm Sandy

After Super Storm Sandy devastated the NJ coast in October 2012, NRCS was able to assist coastal communities through the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) and the Emergency Watershed Protection-Floodplain Easement Program (EWP-FPE).

EWP: 17 agreements totaling over \$5M will provide up to 90% reimbursement of construction costs, plus cover a portion of the engineering costs for restorations. Through this funding, storm debris has been removed from over 13 miles of streams and channels resulting in a net economic benefit of over \$8.5 M.

EWP-FPE: NRCS was able to assist with 20 parcels, including 18 residential lots in Cumberland and Monmouth Counties (40 acres) and 2 agricultural lots in Hunterdon and Cumberland Counties (462 acres).

- \$4.8M for easement acquisitions
- \$1.4M for restoration

NRCS Farm Bill program activity in the District service area includes:

EQIP – The Environmental Quality Incentives Program is available for active agricultural lands owned or operated by non-governmental entities. Nineteen active contracts are currently underway throughout the District. These contracts include implementation of Season High Tunnels, forestry management practices, cover crop, organic cover crop, nutrient management, pest management, low-flow pivot irrigation systems, drip irrigation systems, irrigation water management, erosion control, leaf mulching, residue management, grazing lands management, grassed buffers, and air quality practices. Also included in the EQIP Program is an incentive to install Agricultural Chemical Handling Facilities (AHF). In the spring of 2014 this

AHF was installed on a grain and vegetable farm in Monroe Township, Middlesex County to assist in the proper handling of agrichemicals. The Agricultural Chemical Handling Facility is a structure that is either open or roofed with an impervious surface to provide an environmentally safe area for the handling of on farm agrichemicals. The facility will provide for a safe area to store, mix, load, and clean up agrichemicals as well as retain incidental spillage or leakage and reduce pollution to surface water. NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program-Conservation Activity Plans (EQIP-CAP) gives a much-needed boost to forest stewardship in Middlesex and Monmouth woodlands.

Habitat fragmentation is a major resource concern in central Jersey counties; it is caused by suburban development that leaves only small pieces of degraded, isolated woodland or open land for wildlife. Forest stewardship is becoming more and more important to district landowners to improve these small wooded areas. A recent emphasis on forestry by NRCS is perfectly timed to help make that happen. Landowners may apply for EQIP-CAP contracts with NRCS to have a site-specific Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP) written by a professional forester, who is approved as an NRCS Technical Service Provider (TSP). An FSP gives landowners a valuable tool to manage their woodland for forest health and/or wildlife habitat, and also may help them to meet farmland assessment requirements. This partnership between NRCS and forester TSPs has proven to be very productive; over the last five years, 15 district cooperators have entered into such contracts on about 1,000 acres of woodland. Most of them have gone on to request NRCS funding to implement forestry and wildlife practices as recommended in their FSP, including forest stand improvement, forest trails and landings, firebreaks, invasive plant species removal, native tree planting, species-specific wildlife habitat monitoring, and, brand new in 2015, structures for wildlife, such as nest boxes, brush piles and escape ramps. Results? Around a thousand acres of much happier critters and trees, plus increased carbon sequestration and groundwater recharge.

WHIP – The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program provides funding to enhance grassland habitat, improve forest, bog turtle habitat, and riparian areas through five year contracts. Two active contracts on approximately 105 treated acres active in the District. These WHIP contracts support the creation of grassland habitat, the improvement of wetland habitat, pollinator habitat and the planting of trees and shrubs.

CSP – The Conservation Stewardship Program is a watershed-based voluntary program. Producers are awarded stewardship payments for applying and documenting high levels of on-farm conservation and management. In addition they have ability to earn increased payments for implementing/or expanding conservation activities. Within the Raritan watershed, three contracts covering 700 acres are being implemented and are scheduled to be completed in 2015.

AMA – Agricultural Management Assistance offers an opportunity to limited resource and beginning farmers to use new or innovative conservation practices by offsetting the cost of implementation to reduce risk to the farmer. Three active agreements on 24 acres are currently supporting pollinator habitat creation, water conservation practices, prescribed grazing practices and soil protection practices in Middlesex and Monmouth counties.

GRP – The Grassland Reserve Program, administered by the Farm Service Agency, offers landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance grasslands on their property. This results in the protection of water quality and provides wildlife habitat. There are currently two GRP contracts in Monmouth County, covering 151 acres.



Restoration in Monmouth County

NRCS 2014 Staff – Freehold Office
 District Conservationist – Nicole Ciccaglione
 Soil Conservationist - Laura Coover
 Soil Conservationist - Doug Kauffman
 Program Assistant - Maria Iannuzzelli

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Forest Resource Education Center

- Interpretive Programs:** The staff at the Forest Resource Education Center (FREC) hosted 75 interpretive programs with a total of 2,079 attendees in 2014. The 20th annual Fall Forestry Festival was held in very poor weather conditions but still attracted about 500 people. The festival continued to showcase forestry and forest resources in New Jersey and featured exhibits, demonstrations and interpretive hikes. The annual full moon hike was a huge success and featured a guest appearance by Smokey Bear who celebrated his 70th birthday at the event.
- New Program in 2014:** The FREC has partnered with the Rutgers Cooperative Extension and the NJ Forestry Association to host the Backyard Forestry in 90 Minutes series. Held every second Thursday of the month starting at 7:00 p.m., the series provides educational programs for adults with an interest in backyard forest management. Registration is required and nearly all of the initial programs were filled to capacity.
- Outreach Programs:** FREC staff lent their expertise at several outreach events. These events included the NJ Envirothon, the Division of Fish & Wildlife's Wild Outdoor Expo, the Duke Farms Maple Sugaring Festival and the NJDEP Take Our Kids to Work Day. These events were attended by close to 10,000 people.
- Meeting Room:** The FREC continues to be a great centrally located facility to hold meetings. 45 meetings and programs were held by over 20 different organizations in 2014.
- Trail Work:** In preparation for a new FREC trails map, staff repaired signs and displays, and repainted most of the trail blazes along the seven miles of trails. The Jackson Pathfinders and the Woodland Stewards continued their support of our programs, events and trail maintenance.
- Volunteers in Forestry:** In 2014, the FREC hosted a number of volunteer groups which provided valuable assistance to our educational programs, our trail system and to the State Tree Nursery. Several volunteers from the Woodland Stewardship program assisted with tree grading and trail maintenance. Once again, Dr. Laura Stone logged more volunteer hours than anyone else, while monitoring the eastern bluebird nest boxes at our facility.
- Project Learning Tree:** NJ Project Learning Tree (PLT) continued to offer professional development workshops in 2014 but will soon be reorganized. The State Park Service and Rutgers University will be instrumental in the restructuring of PLT and its continued existence in New Jersey.
- Trout in the Classroom:** In cooperation with the Freehold and Ocean County Soil Conservation Districts, Jersey Shore Trout Unlimited, and NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife, FREC staff hosted the annual Trout in the Classroom Field Day. The program incorporates environmental education and a trout release into its curriculum. A total of 90 students from local schools participated in a day of interpretive programs and trout release into the Toms River. Additionally, 7 schools with 125 students released trout on separate occasions as part of FREC led interpretive programs.
- Maple sugaring:** The tradition of making delicious maple syrup at the Sugar Shack continued in 2014. FREC foresters tapped sugar maple trees at Monmouth Battlefield State Park in late January and into February and collected over 200 gallons of sap. The sap was then prepared at the FREC and eventually evaporated to become maple syrup. FREC school groups and visitors enjoy seeing the sugaring process and sampling this tasty treat.
- New Projects in 2014:** FREC staff has been busy replacing or refurbishing signs and displays at the facility and along our seven miles of trails. We have installed two new signs for the Forest Resource Education Center and the new State Forestry Services shield at our Don Connor Boulevard entrance. Many of our wooden benches and picnic tables have been rejuvenated utilizing timber salvaged from Super Storm Sandy and milled right here at our sawmill.
- Events in 2015:** We will be hosting the Backyard Forestry series, Winter and Summer Full Moon Hikes, Summer Family Programs and the Fall Forestry Festival. Also look for the FREC to be open on Saturdays for the first time in our history this year!

Rick Dutko — Education Coordinator

Forest Resource Education Center

495 Don Connor Boulevard

Jackson, NJ 08527

732-928-0987

www.forestrycenter.nj.gov



South Jersey RC&D

South Jersey Resource Conservation & Development Council area includes:

Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean and Salem Counties.

The South Jersey RC&D mission to accelerate the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources, to improve the general level of economic activity, and to enhance the environment and standard of living in our designated RC&D areas is ongoing.



In 2014, the Council as restructured as an independent RC&D Council needed to do things differently. So a Coordinator (Ila Vassallo) was hired to organize and carry on the day to day affairs. A new website updated the look and feel for the Council outreach. Participation at various events has broadened the audience of the information the group provides. SJRC&D continues to plan, develop and carry out many programs for resource conservation and development. As a member of the Mid Atlantic Regional Association, the council works with other RC&D councils to enhance our efforts throughout the region in such projects as:

Wildlife Habitat: “Team Habitat” continues to plan for the ongoing job of providing a valued resource to the area, conducting acres of wildlife habitat rehabilitation. The Team Habitat manager coordinated the completion of projects throughout the South Jersey RC&D area and beyond. Visit the website for further information.

Tour des Farms: The eight annual Tour des Farms bike ride in Burlington County was another successful RC&D event. Over 250 riders cycled from farm to farm with “Farm Bucks” (coupons) redeemable at the local farm markets along the route. Tour des Farms educates residents on agricultural topics and practices. We intend to increase ridership and sponsors in 2015. Adding a new farm to the route will be completed in the next ride.

No-Till Pumpkins: The Council continues to promote soil health on farms by renting out a roller/crimper. This tool allows vegetable crops to be planted directly into crimped cover crops. This method reduces soil erosion, pesticide use, and creates a cleaner pumpkin crop. The roller/crimper is available to farmers and is located at the Burlington Soil Conservation District office, which houses the South Jersey RC&D.

Soil Health: The Council promotes soil health through the Soil Health website at www.njsoilhealth.org and the work through the Team Habitat seeding program.

Delaware Estuary Levee Organization: The inventory of 70 aging levees along the Delaware Bay shoreline was completed in 2010 and potential partnerships are being pursued for restoration work on the identified levees, with submittals to the DEP and Army Corp for action.

Water Conservation: The Council wants area people to visit the lawn watering program at Rutgers University climatology program. Newspapers are alerted by email and a website is updated each day during the summer to provide homeowners with accurate information on how much irrigation their lawn needs that day. This is based on an area’s soils; evapotranspiration and rainfall measured at local weather stations. The Council, through its partnership with the State Climatologist from Rutgers, has promoted this program to all New Jersey municipalities.

Michael Hill — SJRC&D Treasurer

Council

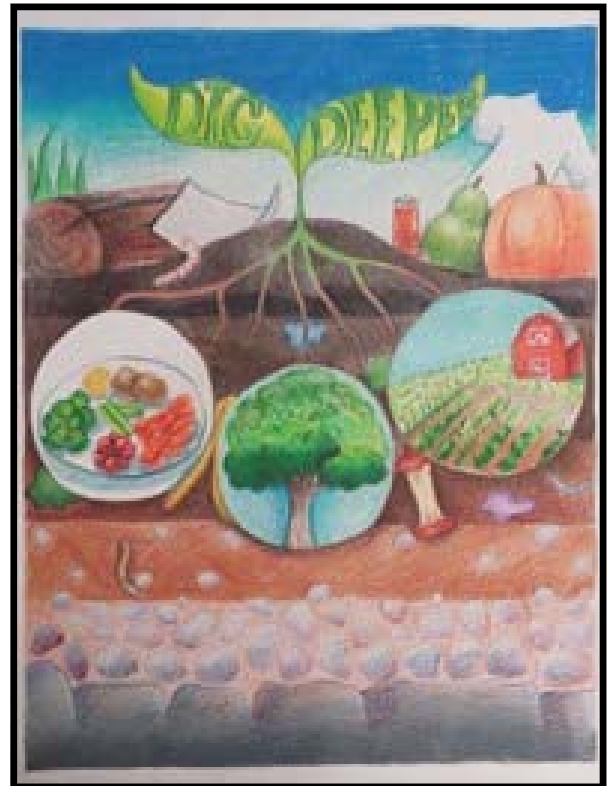
Jack Sworaski— Chairperson
Gina Berg — 1st Vice Chairperson/Secretary
Craig McGee — 2nd Vice Chairperson
Michael Hill — Treasurer

South Jersey RC&D

Columbus USDA Service Center
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Columbus, NJ 08022

609-267-1639 www.sjrkd.org
Email: Coordinator <coordinator@sjrkd.org>

NJ Conservation Poster Contest



This 1st Place Poster Contest entry earned a \$100 prize for Joyce Huang, of Morganville, in the Grades 7-9 Division.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Middlesex County

The Agricultural & Natural Resource Management

Our staff and faculty provide a variety of educational programs and services to Middlesex County residents and beyond. Interest continues among residents to grow food crops, reduce the use of pesticides and conserve water. The EARTH Center offers programs whose topics include: composting, Integrated Pest Management, pesticide safety, lawn care, vegetable gardening and community leadership.

2014 staff accomplishments include:

- Worked with the County Board of Ag and agricultural community on issues of water allocation, nutrient management and pesticide use and safety
- Provided educational opportunities for commercial growers at the *Central Jersey Turf and Ornamental Institute* and *Central Jersey Vegetable Growers Meeting*.
- Supported the efforts of the Board of Agriculture and Fair Association at the Middlesex County Fair. Extension staff and volunteers set-up agricultural and horticultural displays, answered gardening and environmental questions, and collected survey information on Jersey Fresh products and buying habits.
- Provided educational training and crop diagnostics for over 220 farmers comprising a \$42 million dollar agricultural industry in Middlesex County.
- Completed the first in a series of videos *funded by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection with project partners Freehold Soil Conservation District, Monroe Township, Township of Manalapan, Princeton Hydro, Middlesex County Parks and Recreation and Middlesex County Office of Planning*. The video describes the restoration efforts within the Manalapan Brook watershed. Solutions such as naturalizing detention basins, shoreline restoration and floating wetland islands are presented.
- **New Strawberry Variety Developed** Completed the first Patent and release for our Rutgers Scarlet strawberry that Bill Hlubik, Peter Nitzsche and Gokjo Jelekovic that was created for New Jersey and Northeastern Small Farms. The new variety has superior flavor and is designed for local environmental conditions. This will provide a new strawberry cultivar from NJAES to help improve profits for small farms. This variety is the first in a series of varieties that will be released for our area. The variety is available through Nourse farms and KubePak for 2015. Over 50,000 plants have been sold to date.

Master Gardeners

In 2014 there were over 250 active Master Gardeners and 24 MG Graduates.

- Garden helpline volunteers answered over 1,000 calls from residents on a wide variety of gardening and environmental topics. Call them at 732-398-5220.
- Weekend tours of the Butterfly House, (June – August 10am – Noon) teaching adults and children about butterflies and native plants. There were over 1,600 visitors to the site.
- MG Speakers Bureau provided 33 presentations on a variety of topics such as composting, vegetable gardening and container gardening. Over 1,200 residents were reached through these programs.

- Worked with school districts on Gardening programs in New Brunswick and Milltown.

4-H Youth Development

4-H Youth Development focuses on four essential elements when developing positive youth development programming: Belonging, Independence, Mastery and Generosity.

-A sense of Belonging is developed in all 4-H programs based on the need for youth to have a emotionally safe place to learn and grow. Over 135 adult volunteers lead 4-H club programs, where youth experienced success and failure, developing skills to be competent and caring adults.

-Independence is developed through opportunities encouraging leadership skills.

-Mastery was taught through project area work in Middlesex County's 35 4-H clubs. 4-H youth take part in project areas such as fine arts, environmental science, gardening, robotics, shooting sports, and more.

- The essential element of Generosity is displayed through community service and service learning projects. Youth take part in service projects but also assess community needs and develop projects to meet these needs.

SNAP-Ed: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) of Middlesex County assists limited resource adults and youth to improve nutrition and food safety habits, use resources more effectively and increase physical activity for better health. Our grant year ran from October 1, 2013 – September 30, 2014. During that period:

-617 family members benefitted from SNAP-Ed programs

-1,245 youth participated in nutritious food choice workshops

EFNEP: The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program helps limited-resource families with children improve their lifestyle behavior through behaviorally focused nutrition education. The program is supported by USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Smith-Lever funds. EFNEP programming focuses on educating adults in a family situation so that the whole family can benefit from the same.

Our grant year ran from October 1, 2013 – September 30, 2014. During that period:

-355 family members benefitted from EFNEP programs

-1,262 youth participated in nutritious food choice workshops

David Smela—Public Information Assistant

Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Middlesex County

At the Earth Center @

Davidson's Mill Pond Park

42 Riva Ave.

South Brunswick, NJ 08902

www.co.middlesex.nj.us/extensionservices

Main Office: 732-398-5260

Master Gardener Helpline: 732-398-5220

RUTGERS

New Jersey Agricultural
Experiment Station

■ Cooperative Extension
Middlesex County

Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Monmouth County

Agriculture & Resource Management

In 2014, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Cooperative Extension Service in Monmouth County by planting an Ilex ‘Red Beauty’ at our Ag Building. Freeholder Lillian Burry spoke on the importance of the Cooperative Extension in Monmouth County and presented a plaque proclaiming September 16th, 2014, as ‘Rutgers Cooperative Extension Day.’ RCE partners were also in attendance - USDA-NRCS, USDA Farm Service Agency, and Freehold Soil District, all housed within our multi-purpose Agricultural Building.



Department Head Bill Sciarappa, Horticulturist Diane Larson and Program Assistant Vivian Quinn provided technical and educational programs on a regional basis for vegetable, agronomic, fruit, nursery and greenhouse production. 2014 projects focused on specialty vegetables, soil health and basil downy mildew. With our external outreach programs in agrichemical education, water certification and stormwater runoff, we also collaborate with the Monmouth County Board of Agriculture, the Monmouth County Agricultural Development Board, New Jersey Department of Agriculture, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, NJ Farm Bureau and regional watershed committees. A total of sixty-four public demonstration rain gardens and a new pilot maritime forest have been constructed to create water conservation awareness, improve water quality and promote public construction. These activities led to our NJDEP Award for environmental education. Additionally, our new county fair - The Open Space Pace and Festival of Horses - drew 4,000 people to the Freehold Raceway.

Master Gardeners

In 2014, there were over 200 active Master Gardeners (MG) in Monmouth County volunteering a total of over 23,067 hours with a volunteer value of \$599,742. The Plant-A-Row for the Hungry and Junior Master Gardener gardens yielded over 4,000 pounds of produce donated to 10 food pantries. Additionally, MG’s are involved with 15 community and school gardens, rain gardens, the maritime forest, school programs and educational outreach at public venues; such as our two county fairs in Freehold.

Family and Community Health Sciences

Through science based advice, FCHS encourages residents to make personal choices to improve health. This educational outreach spans much of the county with our collaborating partners as local agencies, nearby Hospitals, Senior Centers, the FoodBank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties, Monmouth County Vocational Schools and the SNAP-ED Program. The Department of Family and Community Health Sciences (FCHS) offers educational programs that aim to increase knowledge about food, health and wellness, promote more active lifestyles, encourage the consumption of more fruits and vegetables as well as a plant based diet, while decreasing the intake of foods and beverages high in saturated fat, sodium, and sugar. The “Get Moving Get Healthy” – New Jersey initiative is a primary focus that incorporates a multitude of programming to encourage healthy lifestyles. There is a growing awareness to the benefits of family meals, not only nutritionally but to the advantages for the family unit as well.

4-H Youth Development

The Monmouth County 4-H Program offers youth a hands-on, informal educational environment – a place where they can feel both connected and valued. Participation in the 4-H Program helps youth master life skills and gain a deeper understanding of generosity by becoming active, engaged citizens. There were 32 active clubs in 2014, with a total enrollment of over 616 youth in grades K-13 (the first year of college).

Clubs meet throughout the county in suburban and urban settings, in homes, in schools and at the county Agricultural Building. The goal of 4-H clubs is to engage youth in “learning by doing” – building skills and knowledge by participating in projects related to their area of interest, with an adult leader guiding their way.

Marine Science

The Shellfish Restoration Program is a partnership between Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Division of Fish and Game Bureau of Shellfisheries. Its goals are to educate the Coastal community about the natural cycle and ecology of the Barnegat Bay, to promote environmental stewardship, and to use clams and oysters as the teaching tool to achieve these goals ---including helping people understand they are both part of the problem AND the solution! **The Shellfish Program is award winning!!** Reclam the bay has won the US Environmental Protection Agency Region 2 Environmental Quality Award.

The program has also won two National Extension Awards at the Association for Natural Resource Extension Professionals Meeting, and Two Governor’s Excellence Awards – The Governor’s Excellence Award in Tourism for the Clam Trail, and an Honorable Mention in the Healthy Ecosystems Category of the Environmental Excellence Awards. This is in addition to Agent Gef Flimlin being honored by the Jersey Shore Partnership for his work with the seafood industry and the Shellfish Program including Monmouth, Ocean and Atlantic counties. improve overall well being.

Vivian Quinn - Program Assistant

Rutgers Cooperative Extension Monmouth County

4000 Kozloski Road

Freehold, NJ 07728

732-431-7260

www.visitmonmouth.com/07050coopext

FSCD 2014 Financial Report

Sources of Income (approximate)	Amount
Interest & previous fees	50%
Erosion control fees	49.5%
Monmouth County grant	.5%
Expenses (approximate)	
Salaries, taxes & benefits	74%
Rent, utilities & insurance	12%
Materials, supplies & postage	4%
Professional services	3%
Vehicles expenses	2%
Training & conferences	2%
Scholarships, awards & education	2%
Capital expenditure	1%

The Freehold SCD Board of Supervisors meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of the month at the District office.

April — November at 7:30 pm

December — March at 1:30 pm

Freehold Soil Conservation District Staff



(l-r) Donna Cramer, Sharon Robertson, Ines Zimmerman, Christina LaBianca, Andrea Farparan & Michael Hill



Back: (l-r) Tim Thomas, Michael Hill, Paul Califano, Ben Shotland, Michael Infanti, Mark Alliston & Steve Grosch
Front: Stacy Brady, Courtney Davidson & Holly Reynolds



Brian Governale

Manalapan Watershed Grant



Manalapan watershed floating wetland islands project. As native water tolerant plants grow, they will measurably remove lake pollutants.

Launching the floating wetland islands in Thompson Park of Monroe, NJ.



Islands are protected with goose netting to keep wildlife away until plants establish.

2014 ANNUAL REPORT

Freehold Soil Conservation District

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Freehold, NJ 07728

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Counties Since 1938



Editor: Holly Reynolds

Primary Photographer: Paul Califano

New Jersey Soil Conservation Districts consist of paid staff plus a volunteer Board of Supervisors. The operation of the Freehold Soil Conservation District is supported by the collection of plan review and project inspection fees paid by developers for construction projects.

FREEHOLD SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Charles Buscaglia	Chairman
Robert Dreyer	Vice Chairman
Donald Patterson	Treasurer
Roger Gravatt	Member
Wayne Van Hise	Member

DISTRICT STAFF

Ines Zimmerman	District Manager
Michael Hill	Assistant District Manager
Stacy Brady	Senior Resource Specialist
Timothy Thomas	Resource Conservationist
Ben Shotland	Resource Conservationist II
Paul Califano	Resource Conservationist II
Michael Infanti	Resource Conservationist II
Steve Grosch	Resource Conservationist II
Mark Alliston	Resource Conservationist II
Courtney Davidson	Senior Site Inspector
Brian Governale	Senior Site Inspector
Holly Reynolds	Public Information Specialist
Christina LaBianca	Administrative Services Mgr.
Sharon Robertson	Receptionist — Secretary
Donna Cramer	Application Processor
Andrea Farparan	Secretary

Douglas Widman, Esq.	District Attorney
Suplee, Clooney & Co.	District Accountant

NJ DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Douglas Fisher	Secretary of Agriculture
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STATE SOIL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Nicole Ciccaglione	District Conservationist
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MIDDLESEX COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

Ronal Rios	Freeholder Director
Deepak Matadha PhD	Mosquito Commission Supt.
Richard Wallner	County Engineer, P.E.
George Ververides	Planning Board Office Director
Rick Lear	Parks Department Head

MONMOUTH COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

Gary J. Rich, Sr	Freeholder Director
Victoria Thompson	Mosquito Commission Supt.
Joseph Ettore, P.E.	County Engineer, P.E.
Edward Sampson	Planning Director
James Truncer	Parks Department Secretary-Director

COOPERATING AGENCIES

USDA Farm Service Agency

Gabor Grunstein	County Executive Director
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Rutgers Cooperative Extension Monmouth

William Sciarappa	County Agent
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Rutgers Cooperative Extension Middlesex

William Hlubik	County Agent
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NJ Division Parks & Forestry

Forest Resource Education Center

NJ Department of Environmental Protection