



Sullivan County Conservation District

2020 Annual Report





## OUR MISSION

We promote the conservation and responsible use of natural resources through education and by connecting the public to resources, experts and funding opportunities that further our three main goals, which are to:

**SUPPORT** Local Agriculture



**CONSERVE** Natural Resources



**PROMOTE** Place-based Education



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# Dear Friends,

The vitality of the Sullivan County Conservation District was irrepressible in the year of the novel coronavirus. Adjustments were made in the delivery of our programs and services, but in no way did they keep us from advancing our natural resource conservation and education goals.

Sullivan County has provided a stable, supportive environment in which the Conservation District has thrived. In return, we have put the 2200 acres of county-owned farm and forest land to what is arguably its highest and best use – a place where the residents of Sullivan County can experience the diversity these lands encompass, learn how various land uses go hand in hand with the natural environment, and appreciate the splendor of it all.

In the past year, as always, staff built upon our programs' past successes and worked continuously to strengthen connections between the people of Sullivan County and our partner organizations and institutions.

The Conservation District also has a dedicated and expanding group of volunteers helping us with our work. Their efforts were undiminished, and the sense of shared purpose they invariably add is valued as much as the hours they contribute. Many hands make light work, but also create the optimism to set our sights higher. Many thanks to our volunteers and supporters!

We have included a small sample of the District's activities in this report. To get the full picture, please sign up for one of our programs, check out our website, attend a meeting, or contact Lionel, Dawn or your local member on the District's Board of Supervisors with your questions or ideas. Better yet, consider joining us as a volunteer to be part of it all!

With thanks,

*David Grobe*

David Grobe, Chair  
Sullivan County Conservation District



# 2020 HIGHLIGHTS



## PROTECTING AGRICULTURAL SOILS

District staff and volunteers including the Claremont Conservation Commission (pictured here), and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) assisted Fruhlingsfarm owners, John & Robin Wittemann, with planting a **1000' riparian buffer** along Spring Farm Brook in Claremont. Riparian buffers stabilize streambanks preventing soil erosion, provide habitat for wildlife and reduce flood damage. Volunteers put in over **23 hours** of work planting **16 species** of shrubs and trees.



## FRESH PRESSED CIDER

The Sullivan County Public Cidery was still able to open this fall despite added challenges due to the pandemic. Some customers came for the second year in a row and others for the first time. A total of **132 gallons** of cider were made this year. We owe a HUGE THANK YOU to all of our volunteers, including Mary Ferland and Tom Buinicky (pictured here) for helping to make this happen. Cathy McComish, our first Cidery Coordinator, did an excellent job training volunteers, scheduling appointments, and keeping the cidery clean and safe.



## THE FRUIT OF OUR LABORS

The North Charlestown Historic Orchard restoration project started in early spring 2019. More than 40 community members attended a pruning workshop and helped clean up the branches afterwards. The Community School held a Green-up day and planted a pollinator garden, blueberry patch, and a couple of new apple trees.

This spring, Stan McCumber, Jenny Wright, & Vanessa Keith from Unity, NH pruned more of the mature trees. They, along with district staff and Victor St. Pierre cleaned up the branches left from pruning in early April. Over the summer, Victor cared for the blueberries and the pumpkin/sunflower patch in the back field where he has been clearing invasive plants. Stan and Jenny cared for the new, young apple trees. The conservation district cared for the pollinator garden.

The trees blossomed this year and many apples were harvested in the fall!





## DAWN NAMED NHACD'S EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

Dawn, our education specialist, taught **14 lessons** at schools or in the forest classroom at the Eco Ag Center in Unity before the pandemic closed schools. 22 lessons were scheduled for the spring that were cancelled. At that point, we started creating daily Facebook posts highlighting seasonal natural history topics. They have been so well received that we have continued these posts. In September, education at the forest classroom resumed with home school families and a few local schools. **20 lessons** were taught this fall and more are scheduled for the winter months.

## NATURALIST BACKPACKS

The District partnered with the Upper Valley Teaching Place Collaborative (UVTPC), Forestkinder, Inside Outside, and Four Winds Nature Institute this to support teachers in getting their students outdoors to learn. Naturalist Backpacks that contain nature observation and reflection tools were given to teachers that chose to participate in the program.

**1,000 students** received Naturalist Backpacks this fall to support learning in the outdoor classroom at school and at home. Many of the students live in Sullivan County! Thank you to everyone who donated funds to this collaborative project. Grants awarded by New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and Byrne Foundation were our main source of funding and we are grateful.





# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: SUE TAYLOR



Sue is an avid hiker from Unity, NH. She met up with Natural Resources Field Technician, Cathy McComish, in the early summer while hiking the Unity Mountain Trail. She noticed Cathy doing some maintenance on the trail and offered to help out.

Trailwork Thursdays began and our numbers grew as the summer went on. Sue brought her own tools, experience with trail building, and enthusiasm for being outdoors with her every week as we worked on clearing trail corridors, creating new tread, and building water bars (pictured). She logged **49 hours** of trailwork this year!

Sue plans on thru-hiking the Appalachian Trail with her cousin this coming spring, summer, and fall. We wish her the best as she prepares and look forward to hearing about it when she gets back. We are very grateful for all the work she did as part of our team.

## Volunteers served **663 hours** in 2020.

The Conservation District welcomes volunteers to help out with natural resources, conservation, and environmental education projects and programs. We couldn't do the work we do without them! Our board of Supervisors are also volunteers. Supervisors attend board meetings each month and support district goals in their hometowns and throughout the county.

Please contact us if you are interested in volunteering or becoming a board member and we will make sure your skills are well used.



# THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!

Brenda & Steve Cooper

Cornelius Pardy

Dave Gokey

Derek Dextraze

Dustin Dextraze

Duncan McCutchan

Eileen Sullivan

Elise Letizia

Ethan Sweet

Gary Dickerman

Gary Savoie & Zadijah Eisenburg

Thor & Odessa Savoie

Gata Hudson

Glenn & Nancy Walker

Hannah Nilsen

Jan Lambert

Jed Knight

Scott Magnuson

Stan McCumber & Jenny Wright

Steve Wood

Sue Palmer & Norman Sanville

Judi Tatem

June Brunelle

Karen & John Bordalo

Kim Gogan & daughter

Lori Fletcher

Martha Naylor

Marty Castriotti

Mary Ellen Cannon

Mary Ferland

Nancy Andino

Nancy Walker

Noelle Rizzardi

Olivia Uyizeye

Patty Tzyska

Peter Lawry

Russ Davis

Sandy Sonnischen

Tom Buinicky

Vanessa Keith

Victor St. Pierre

**David Grobe, Board Chair**

**Bob Porter, Board**

**Nelia Sargeant, Board**

**John Luther, Board**

**Ernie Dennis, Board**

**Jim Grenier, Board**

**Lee Oxenham, State Rep**

# OTHER PROGRAMS

## SPRING PLANT SALE

Our plant sale features a variety of quality plants at good prices - shade trees, fruit trees, berry bushes, native wildlife plants, and flowering plants. This is an annual fundraiser that supports local conservation activities throughout the year, including public workshops, school education programs, and projects. It is also a service to all those in our community who are growing food for themselves and for wildlife. Thank you to everyone who ordered plants in 2020. It was our best year yet!

We are very thankful to Derek Dextraze and Hannah Nilsen for collectively volunteering **60 hours** to sort and package orders so pick-up would run smoothly.



## HEIRLOOM APPLE TREE SALE

This fall we partnered with Allen Brothers Farms and were able to offer **14 varieties** of heirloom cider apple trees for sale. We sold out within a couple of weeks! **109 trees** were bought and planted in Sullivan County and the surrounding areas.

We hope these apples will be pressed at the Sullivan County Public Cidery in the coming years. Volunteers put in 68 hours of service during the 2 months the cidery was open. Some of the cider was enjoyed at the Glidden Ridge Trail grand opening in October.

# THANK YOU, DONORS & GRANTORS!

## Individuals

Dodi Violette  
Dawn Dextraze  
Anthony Zullo  
Lori Keefe  
Maryellen Dejong  
Jack Hurley  
Patty McGill  
Vicky Prouty  
Susan & Mark Hardy  
Gata Hudson  
Vallerie Allen  
Laura Butson  
Jody Schubert

Michelle Asanowicz  
Andrew & Carolyn Kapchensky  
Nick Argy  
Jim & Susan Borchert  
Lee & Evan Oxenham  
Eileen Sullivan  
Josh Esty  
Scott Poitras

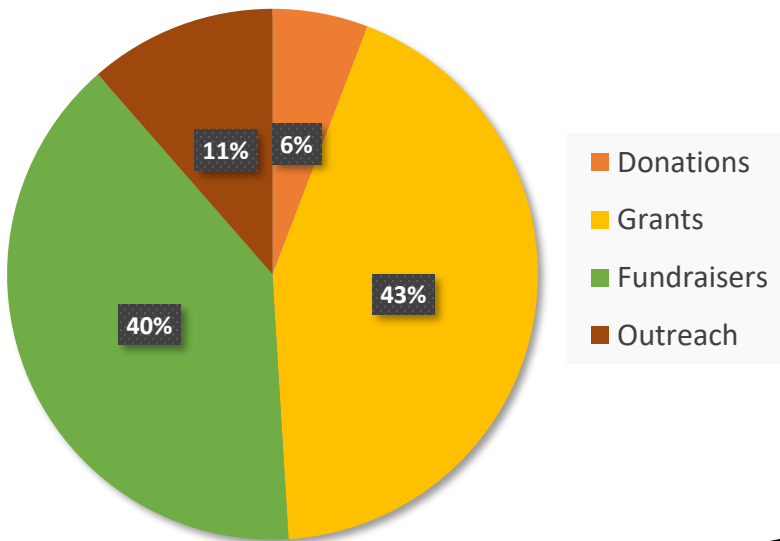
## Organizations

New Hampshire Charitable Foundation,  
Wellborn Ecology Fund  
New England Grassroots Environment  
Fund Inc.  
NH Association of Conservation Districts



## BY THE NUMBERS

### Income



1,384

students and  
community  
members  
participated in  
**Place-based  
Education  
Programs.**

Over 50 community members gave 663 hours of service

On average **3,500** people are  
reached through **Get Outside and Learn**  
posts on our Facebook page.



22 community  
gardeners



**489** trees & shrubs were planted along Spring Brook in  
Claremont to prevent erosion and improve wildlife habitat.

# THANK YOU PARTNERS!

We could not do the work we do without our partners. NH Conservation Districts were established (most in 1946) through a partnership with the Soil Conservation Service and Extension Services. Our work has always been cooperative, including the landowners and residents that we serve. The District's list of partners has grown over the years to include Conservation Commissions, School Districts and teachers, the National Park Service, Grantors (see donors list), Land Trusts and many state agencies. We are grateful for all of our partnerships and want to highlight two that we could not do without.

The Conservation District sincerely thanks Sullivan County for its continued support and encouragement. It is this partnership, more than any other, that allows us to serve Sullivan County residents and protect the natural resources we all depend on. And special thanks to Representative Lee Oxenham for her service as our Delegation Representative. Her participation at our monthly meetings is greatly appreciated.

We also offer sincere thanks to the staff of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly the Soil Conservation Service) for supporting Conservation District projects and helping County residents implement the best conservation practices while managing agricultural and forested lands.



# 2021 VISION

Friends:

As the Conservation District celebrates its 75th year of continuous operation, it's a wonderful time to take stock of who we are, and where we are headed.

We started just after the end of World War II, then, as now, providing information and technical assistance to support sound, sustainable land management. We've worked on many projects and initiatives over these years, but it all comes back to the same four objectives: protecting and improving soil health and water quality, helping people to identify and cultivate plants and animals for food and fiber, supporting and promoting local farms, and providing place-based environmental education to people of all ages. At its heart, SCCD seeks to protect and promote Sullivan County's abundant natural resources.

Looking ahead, we will continue to build on these themes. We're partnering with both NRCS and NHACD to demonstrate and provide technical support for soil and water conservation. We're supporting and encouraging those interested in growing their own food through our plant sale, gardening workshops and wild food field trips. We're providing more trails and guided hikes on County lands to encourage nature appreciation. And we're working with regional partners to conserve critical resources as we welcome growth anticipated from the recent surge in real estate sales.

The Conservation District connects people to the information and resources needed to make the best land-management decisions possible. We look forward to the future, and to serving the environmental needs of our County for years to come.

*Lionel Chute*

Lionel Chute, Manager





## Join us throughout 2021 as NH Conservation Districts celebrate their 75th Anniversary!

### Did you know...?!

SCCD was established on January 24, 1946!

We're excited to invite you to join us in partnership with all 10 of NH's County Conservation Districts to **celebrate 75 years of conservation in 2021!!**

### We'll be celebrating in a number of ways:

- Every Friday in 2021, Conservation Districts across the state will participate in **Flashback Fridays** - a coordinated sharing of old conservation photos, stories, and lessons from Conservation Districts across the state of NH. Follow us on Facebook (NHSCCD) or sign-up for our enewsletter on our website so you don't miss out.
- Every Conservation District in NH will present an organization, farm, family, individual, family forest, business, etc. with our 75th Anniversary **Legacy Awards**. That's 10 awards across the state to honor those who have had a sustained commitment to and practice of conservation over time!
- We'll also be producing and sharing **podcasts** recorded with conservation leaders across the state!

## Stay tuned for more in 2021!!

Leave this for addresses and postage