

July 2011-September 2011

Message From *R. Phou Vongkhamdy, State Conservationist*

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Greetings from the Rhode Island Natural Resources Conservation Service State Office. During the July to September 2011 period, NRCS staff diligently worked to implement conservation practices throughout Rhode Island.

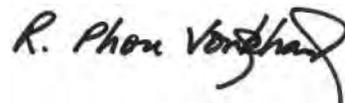
Regarding outreach events, NRCS attended the Washington County Fair with an exhibit both to inform attendees on financial and technical assistance available to farmers and forest land owners. In addition, NRCS staff visited several farmers' markets throughout Rhode Island to distribute program information to vendors. The Pawtuxet River Falls dam removal project was successfully completed in September with a well attended restoration commemoration event where several dignitaries spoke to commend the numerous conservation partners who collaborated to make the project a success. Speakers at the event included Governor Chafee, Senators Reed and Whitehouse, Congressman Langevin, and Cranston Mayor Fung among others. Now migratory fish such as river herring and American shad are allowed to migrate upstream for the first time in well over 100 years!

The field staff concentrated on obligating the remaining Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 conservation funds for various projects throughout the three conservation districts. Final figures are presented in this report under the Conservation Districts section.

As part of the National Rapid Carbon Assessment, the soils staff completed the remaining portion of the field sampling in Rhode Island. This project will result in a better understanding of how land use and soil type affect the amount of organic carbon stored in our soils.

Although FY 2011 appropriations bill eliminated funding for the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program, RC&D will function as an independent entity where NRCS will stop work on agreements and cannot incur any costs associated with RC&D activities including providing coordinators for the RC&D Council.

Lastly, State Resource Conservationist Eric Scherer and Civil Engineer Frank Vogel retired from NRCS after working for the federal government for over 36 and 31 years, respectively.



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Administrative - Happenings

by Jackie Pashnik, Assistant State Conservationist for Operations



NRCS staff from left to right includes Kevin Framer, Joe Bachand, Reena Shaw, Peter Bonome, Melissa Hayden, Mike Moorman, Diane Riessen, Mike Kenyon, Eric Boettger, Chris Modisette, David Gold, Stew Taffe, Nina Bhattacharyya, Matt Richardson, Gary Casabona, Hilary Phillips, John Richard, Nicole Bernier, Frank Vogel, R. Phou Vongkhamdy, and Kanseese Xiong.

On September 30, 2011, the Rhode Island NRCS wished the following folks a “happy retirement”:



J. Eric Scherer, State Resource Conservationist, after 36 Years of Dedicated Service to the Federal Government. Addition information on Eric’s career can be found at www.ri.nrcs.usda.gov/news/Scherer_Retirement.html



Frank C. Vogel III, Civil Engineer, after 31 Years of Dedicated Service to the Federal Government. Additional information on Frank’s career can be found at www.ri.nrcs.usda.gov/news/Vogel_Retirement.html

Once again, continuing resolutions will be norm for a while as our budget is funded only until November 18, 2011. Advertising and filling positions will be on hold until we receive our FY2012 budget for the year.

Conservation District Happenings:

Conservation District - Eastern District (Bristol and Newport Counties)

by Melissa Hayden, Eastern District Conservationist

The Eastern District has been working with local land trusts on several pollinator and NE cottontail habitat projects. We met several times with the Conanicut Island Land Trust and the Aquidneck Land Trust to look at properties and discuss options. We have also been working with landowners around Long Pond in Little Compton, as well as with the Nature Conservancy, to develop a Fish and

Wildlife Management Plan that would provide an inventory and propose management strategies for managing the invasive plant, *Phragmites australis*.

We completed funds obligation for fiscal year 2011 and the Eastern District obligated a total of \$576,961 in EQIP, \$108,973 in WHIP, and \$8,800 in AMA. We obligated 33% more contracts to Historically Underserved clients in Eastern District in fiscal year 2011 than we did in fiscal year 2010. Through the Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program, we placed conservation easements on Pagano Farm in Bristol, Fales Farm in Bristol, and Kee Farm in Warren. We have an appraisal underway for the Jerome property in Tiverton for an evaluation for perpetual easement through the Grassland Reserve Program.

Through EQIP, we installed the first solar pump for livestock water in Little Compton. We completed an Emergency Watershed Protection project in Bristol at St. Mary’s Cemetery by stabilizing an outlet along Silver Creek. We are also working on updating our Highly Erodible Land determinations and we completed a Highly Erodible Land Compliance Plan for Maplewood Farm in Portsmouth.

FY 2011 Program Application Information Totals – Eastern District

County	Program	Applications Received	Estimated Cost Requested	Application Acres	Contracts Obligated	Obligation Amount	Contracted Acres	Contracted Percent
Bristol	EQIP 2008	5	\$0.00	109	5	\$39,860.00	109	100.00%
Newport	AMA 2008	5	\$6,600.00	27.6	2	\$8,800.00	6.5	40.00%
Newport	CSP 2008	4	\$1,337.00	128.4	2	\$1,337.00	128.4	50.00%
Newport	EQIP 2008	46	\$183,000.00	1015.3	39	\$537,101.20	1011.9	84.78%
Newport	WHIP 2008	8	\$7,725.00	75.2	5	\$108,723.00	75.2	62.50%
Bristol & Newport County Totals		68	\$198,662.00	1355.5	53	\$695,821.20	1331	77.94%

Conservation District - Northern District (Providence County)

by Justin Tuthill, Northern District Conservationist

NRCS worked in cooperation with the Northern RI Conservation District to provide assistance to 100 applicants in the Northern District (Providence County) during fiscal year 2011. NRCS was able to obligate a total of 76 contracts and provide over \$1.5 million to address a wide variety of resource concerns including over \$300,000 for Forestry Related practices. The FY 2011 year end program summary is as follows:

FY2012 Program Updates

Currently NRCS has received a total of 51 applications for fiscal year 2012 programs. Four National Initiatives (Air Quality, Organic, High Tunnel and Energy) were announced for FY 2012 and program ranking deadlines have been set for February 3rd, March 30th and June 1st 2012. NRCS planners have been working hard to service all applications by these dates.

Success Story – Pawtuxet Falls Dam Removal

After several years of planning and design, deconstruction of the Pawtuxet Falls Dam in Cranston, RI began in early August, 2011. The project includes the removal of the concrete dam and restoration/stabilization of the surrounding river banks, including plantings of grasses and shrubs to allow anadromous fish like River Herring and American Shad to migrate from Narragansett Bay up the Pawtuxet River to spawn.

The Pawtuxet falls dam was built in 1924, replacing an older timber dam most likely built for water control related to mills in operation during the industrial revolution. The creation of dams like these blocked access to historic spawning habitat causing a decline in Herring and Shad populations during the 19th and 20th centuries.

NRCS in partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Coastal Resources Management Council, Pawtuxet River Authority, Narragansett Bay Estuary Program and US Fish and Wildlife Service as well as several other State and local agencies and special interest groups has provided over \$400,000 in technical and financial assistance for the dam removal and wetland restoration project, the total cost of which is in excess of \$600,000. It is estimated that more than 100,000 herring and shad will return to the Pawtuxet River annually starting next spring.



Pawtuxet Falls before dam removal



Pawtuxet Falls after dam removal

FY 2011 Program Application Information Totals – Northern District

County	Program	Applications Received	Estimated Cost Requested	Application Acres	Contracts Obligated	Obligation Amount	Contracted Acres	Contracted Percent
Providence	AMA 2008	3	\$34,880.00	14.7	1	\$34,880.00	8	33%
Providence	CSP 2008	6	\$1,000.00	20	1	\$1,000.00	20	17%
Providence	EQIP 2008	75	\$1,034,999.00	2312.7	61	\$1,307,148.40	2302.1	81%
Providence	WHIP 2008	16	\$123,063.00	688.1	13	\$188,716.50	688.1	81%
Providence County Totals		100	\$1,193,942.00	3035.5	76	\$1,531,744.90	3018.2	76.00%

Conservation District - Southern District (Kent and Washington Counties)

by John Richard, Southern District Conservationist

Fiscal year 2011 was a great year in the SRICD! We have worked with our forestry and farming community to obligate \$1,294,624 in the EQIP program and \$95,654 in the WHIP program within the Southern District. We obligated \$11,502 in the AMA program. In total, there were 73 contracts obligated in the Southern District in FY 2011.

We currently have two applications for the FRPP program for FY 2012. For the WRP program, appraisals are underway for the Rebecca Corbett property of West Greenwich and the Anthony Pelloni property of Ashaway. For the GRP program, appraisals are underway for the Thomas Couseneau property in Richmond and for the Roy Dubs property in Hopkinton.

We have been busy implementing conservation contracts in the Southern District. We have been working with contract holders to install forestry practices such as forest trails and landings as well as conducting forest stand improvement. We are installing a waste storage facility that will improve water quality. Our aquaculture oyster restoration program participants have been growing out their oysters and will be putting the cultch to enhance the habitat reefs this fall.

We have been actively working on a newly contracted fish passage - dam removal project. The dam at the Shady Lea Mill is located on the Mattatuxet River and is 1.5 miles above the fish ladder at the Gilbert Stuart Birthplace on Cards Pond. This river system is a significant anadromous fish run with approximately 50,000 to 100,000 fish reported yearly. This dam removal will open up a half mile of riverine spawning habitat for the alewives and blueback herring and will leave only one impoundment before gaining access into Silver Spring Lake. We have completed a bathymetric survey and ground penetrating radar survey (that shows the original stream bed route). Renderings have been completed that will show what the riverine system will look like after the dam is removed.



The photo above depicts the Mattatuxet River before dam removal and the photo below depicts a

rendering of the river with cribbing after the dam removal.



FY 2011 Program Application Information Totals – Southern District

County	Program	Applications Received	Estimated Cost Requested	Application Acres	Contracts Obligated	Obligation Amount	Contracted Acres	Contracted Percent
KENT	AMA 2008	1	\$0.00	0	0	\$0.00	0	0.00%
KENT	CSP 2008	1	\$14.00	1	0	\$0.00	0	0.00%
KENT	EQIP 2008	25	\$10,000.00	4759.5	20	\$381,283.00	4759.5	80.00%
KENT	WHIP 2008	1	\$0.00	15	1	\$7,592.00	15	100.00%
Washington	AMA 2008	3	\$0.00	8	1	\$11,502.00	8	33.33%
Washington	CSP 2008	2	\$0.00	0	0	\$0.00	0	0.00%
Washington	EQIP 2008	70	\$870,500.00	2035.97	41	\$913,341.00	1728.97	58.57%
Washington	WHIP 2008	17	\$13,500.00	205.2	10	\$88,062.00	205.2	58.82%
Kent & Washington County Totals		120	\$894,014	7024.67	73	\$1,401,780	6716.67	60.83%

Engineering

by Kevin Farmer, State Engineer

In the last quarter of FY 2011, NRCS completed three EWP projects with our local sponsors.

Tiverton, RI

The Town of Tiverton did emergency repairs to an eroded streambank.

The repairs helped to protect a critical infrastructure such as a sewer main.

Bristol, RI

The Town of Bristol repaired a drainage line and water control structure below the Saint Mary's Cemetery. NRCS assistance was used to stabilize the soil adjacent to the water control structure.

Pawtucket, RI

The City of Pawtucket made temporary repairs to stabilize the severely eroded streambank along the Blackstone River near the City Hall and the Main Street Bridge.

Outreach, Communications, and Recruitment

by Walter Marshall, Public Affairs Specialist

During the July 2011 to September period, NRCS sponsored an exhibit booth at the Washington County Fair where staff informed attendees about the financial and technical assistance available to farm and forest land owners throughout Rhode Island. In addition, staff attended several farmers markets throughout the State to inform farm vendors on NRCS programs including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP). There was only one outreach event held at the University of Rhode Island where engineer Lakelle Pritchett and soil conservationist Nina Bhattacharyya conducted a natural resources seminar presentation on employment and internship opportunities with NRCS. There were no other recruitment events since high schools, colleges, and universities were on their summer break.



State Conservationist R. Phou Vongkhamdy speaks at the Pawtuxet River Restoration Commemoration where several dignitaries attended the event.

The Pawtuxet Falls Dam Removal at Pawtuxet Falls received considerable media coverage during the summer months where NRCS provided financial and technical assistance throughout the project. NRCS invested over \$500,000 towards the planning, design, and construction of the project including construction costs for dam removal and planting native wetland plants and trees along the Pawtuxet River. Several partners participated in the project which was led by the Pawtuxet River Authority and Narragansett Bay Estuary Program. NRCS provided well over half of the funding under the Wildlife habitat Incentives

Program (WHIP) whose purpose is to implement conservation practices that create, restore, or enhance fish and wildlife habitat.

The purpose of the project is to improve the ecosystem of the Pawtuxet River watershed and Narragansett Bay by restoring populations of native migratory fish such as river herring and American shad which have been blocked from fully accessing their natural spawning habitat for hundreds of years. Herring and shad are important components of marine and freshwater ecosystems providing abundant food for bluefish, striped bass, and largemouth bass which are an integral part of Rhode Island's \$200 million recreational fishing industry.

Throughout August, contractors used excavators fitted with hydraulic hammers to break up the 150 foot concrete spillway of Pawtuxet Falls Dam. The project restored seven miles of free-flowing

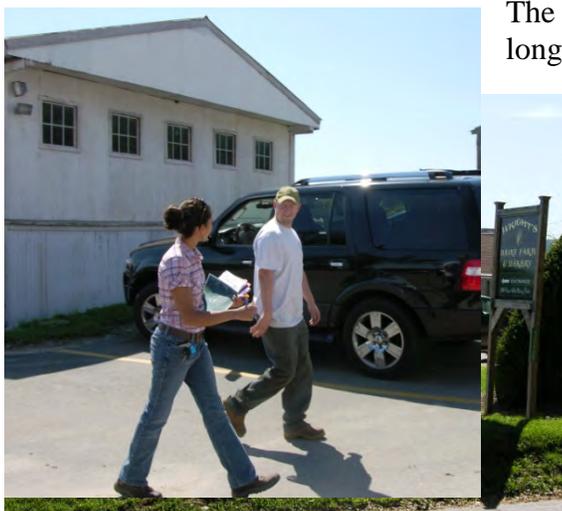
river habitat to one of the State's largest and most historic rivers and reduced the depth of the river by two to three feet along its lower reach. It is estimated that more than 100,000 herring and shad will return to the Pawtuxet River annually starting next spring. Fish will naturally find their way upstream once the dam is removed.

A Pawtuxet River Commemoration was held on September 30, 2011 where several dignitaries spoke including NRCS State Conservationist R. Phou Vongkhamdy. The event was well attended with television media coverage where prominent speakers included Governor Chafee, Senators Reed and Whitehouse, Congressman Langevin, and Cranston Mayor Fung among others.

Conservation Success Story: Historic Dairy Farm Wins Rhode Island's 2011 Outstanding Dairy Farm of the Year Award By Rhode Island Green Pastures Committee; Wright's Dairy Benefits From Technical and Financial Assistance Provided by NRCS

Wright's Dairy Farm in North Smithfield, Rhode Island has been named Rhode Island's 2011 Outstanding Dairy Farm of the Year by the Rhode Island Green Pastures Committee. The award recognizes a dairy farm each year based on its quality animal care, implementation of conservation practices, and high quality dairy products. The Rhode Island Green Pastures Committee is led by DEM's Department of Agriculture and includes the R.I. Farm Bureau, R.I. Dairy Farm Cooperative, R.I. Farm Service Agency, and Agri-Mark Cooperative.

Wright's Dairy Farm is a fifth generation family farm where 10 family members actively run the operation which includes approximately 70 full- and part-time workers. Clayton Wright and his three sisters Ellen, Jen, and Elizabeth along with their husbands Steve, David, and Paul conscientiously oversee the entire operation which includes a milking parlor, dairy processing plant, bakery, and retail store. The farm consists of the main property on 100 acres with 160 Holstein cows which were specifically selected for the quality and quantity of milk they produce. In addition, the family rents 160 acres of additional land to grow corn silage and hay used to feed the animals.



field
NRCS Soil Conservationist Nina Bhattacharyya consults with Clayton Wright on the conservation plan.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has a long history working with the Wrights to implement several conservation practices on the farm. Such technical and financial assistance was funded under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). For over 20 years, NRCS staff has worked closely with the Wrights to address several natural resource concerns including soil erosion, water quality, plant health, and water quantity.

Among the numerous conservation practices implemented, NRCS provided cost share assistance to design and install a waste storage facility which is particularly beneficial when it is difficult to access the during wet or cold weather. In addition, NRCS designed and installed a composting facility where the

composted manure is used on the farm and also sold to residential homeowners. Other conservation practices implemented include a highly erodible land plan for fields that they own and operate and a filter strip and catch basin that address drainage and water quality issues on the property. A comprehensive nutrient management plan was completed for Wright's Dairy Farm in 2004 and is currently being updated to reflect changes made to the operation. Additional NRCS practices planned for the future include addressing waste utilization to increase the amount of compost produced and sold, installing roof runoff structures that divert water from the barns, and building a temporary manure storage area to help with the management of waste from the milking parlor and heifer barn.

Wright's Dairy is a prime example of how a successful partnership with NRCS promotes conservation of natural resources while creating local, high quality dairy and bakery products which can be enjoyed by local consumers.

Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D)

by Chris Modisette, Former RC&D Coordinator

RC&D is here to stay!

As many of you have heard, the recent budget agreement between Congress and the Administration eliminated USDA NRCS RC&D funding in the FY 2011 budget. This means, that as of April 18, 2011, that the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) no longer provides a coordinator to the RI RC&D Council.

I want to take the opportunity to tell you that the RI RC&D Program is here to stay! To our partners, to the cities and towns we serve, to the state and federal agencies we serve, to our old friends and old partners, to our potential new friends and new partners, let me assure you that we are here to stay. While we will no longer have a federal coordinator to assist us, we are still an established non-profit entity that can and will continue to exist.

The RC&D Program has been operating at the same funding level since FY 2003; we have a proven track record of doing more with less. This is just one of the RC&D Program's many attributes and this will not change.

Personnel News

- a. **New Council Manager** – To address the loss of our federal RC&D Coordinator, J. Eric Scherer was recently hired to be the new Council Manager. Mr. Scherer was formerly employed as the State Resource Conservationist for USDA NRCS in RI. Eric retired from federal employment in September 2011.

- b. **New Urban & Community Forestry Project Coordinator** - Frank Mastrobuono was selected for the U&C Forestry Coordinator position candidate replacing Peter Lockwood who left this past May. Mr. Mastrobuono started his employment with RC&D in August 2011.
- c. **New Project Associate** – Amy Mocarski has been hired as a new Project associate for the Council. Amy will be focusing her efforts on the RI River & Stream Continuity Project which is working to identify and improve stream continuity and aquatic organism passage on private lands.
- d. **USDA NRCS Liaison** - Chris Modisette, who was our former NRCS RC&D Coordinator, has been appointed as a NRCS Liaison to the RI RC&D Council.

New Projects & Agreements

- a. **USDA RD Rural Energy Assistance Program – RI Rural Energy Partnership**
Through this agreement, USDA Rural Development is providing funds to the RI RC&D Council to design and implement an outreach and technical program to provide technical assistance and support in grant writing proposals for agricultural producers and agricultural based small businesses within rural areas in the State of Rhode Island. The goal is to help qualified applicants apply for USDA Rural Development REAP Grants (Rural Energy for America Program). The Rhode Island Rural Energy Partnership is also being created to be a tool and resource to those in the state who are in agriculture and looking for more information on Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency.
- b. **USDA NRCS - NE/NY Forestry Initiative**
The RC&D Council will be hiring a forester to promote USDA Farm Bill programs and accelerate technical support for forestry, wildlife habitat, and water quality practices in existing NRCS contracts. Specifically, assistance will be provided to private landowners through the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to conduct site evaluations, provide forestry technical assistance for planning and implementation on eligible sites, check completed projects, and conduct site monitoring as cooperatively agreed to by NRCS and RIRC&D.
- c. **USDA NRCS - RI Coverts Project**
USDA NRCS is providing funds through Cooperative Agreements to increase NRCS technical capacity. Funds will be provided to RI RC&D for continued implementation of Rhode Island Coverts Project to Improve the Delivery of Farm Bill Programs to private woodland owners to promote development of early successional habitat necessary for species of greatest conservation need.

The goal of the Project is to educate forest landowners and the general public about the importance of disturbance in the forest for maintaining keystone species, ecological diversity, and the health and productivity of southern New England forests and its associated wildlife.

- d. **Stream Continuity Project**

USDA NRCS is providing funds through Cooperative Agreements to increase NRCS technical capacity. Funds will be provided to RI RC&D for continued implementation of Rhode Island Stream Continuity Project to Improve the Delivery of Farm Bill Programs to private woodland owners to promote development of early successional habitat necessary for species of greatest conservation need.

Since 2006, a partnership of RIRC&D, TNC, (TU) and the WPWA volunteers have been surveying the bridges and culverts in various watersheds across the state. The results of these surveys have resulted in the location of potential habitat restoration projects. In the future, the project partners and other watershed partners are interested in expanding the assessments to other watersheds in the state.

e. **Agroforestry Project**

Funds will be provided to RI RC&D for implementation of Rhode Island Agro-forestry Project to Improve the Delivery of Farm Bill Programs to help sustain small farms and private woodland productivity.

f. **New England Cottontail Initiative**

USDA NRCS is providing funds through Cooperative Agreements to increase NRCS technical capacity. Funds will be provided to RI RC&D for continued implementation of the Rhode Island - New England Cottontail Initiative to Improve the Delivery of Farm Bill Programs to private woodland owners to promote development of early successional habitat necessary for species of greatest conservation need. The New England Cottontail (NEC) is a candidate species for listing as a Federally Endangered Species.

The goal of the Project is to reach out to individual woodland owners and improve wildlife habitats for NEC and other species.

URI and RI Coverts Project

URI is working with NRCS, RC&D and the Coverts Project to conduct a study of forest/wildlife management by private landowners in Rhode Island. The findings of the study will help plan more effective forestry outreach programs. The 2009 survey of Coverts participants found that 63 percent of the respondents had implemented some forest/wildlife activities. We are particularly interested to learn more about activities which have already been implemented. However, we would also like to find out why other landowners have decided not to implement forest/wildlife management activities.

RI RC&D Council Received Prestigious Circle of Diamonds Standards of Excellence

Recognition from the National Association of RC&D Councils on August 25, 2011. The Circle of Diamonds program recognizes the Council's achievements in good management, effective community involvement, and best non-profit management practices.

Wool Mulch Study- To deal with the byproduct of the sheep shearing process, the RI RC&D Council and the RI Sheep Cooperative came up with a potential solution: using waste wool as mulch that can keep down weeds and help irrigate potted plants. The Resource Conservation and Development Area applied for and received a USDA rural development grant for the project that allowed participants to explore two avenues for the possible distribution of the waste wool: the development of wool mulch in

the residential realm — i.e. community gardens — and in the commercial area — i.e. garden centers, greenhouses and farms.

Resources

by Gary Casabona, *State Biologist*

NRCS states in New England (including New York) have formed a strong partnership with the US Fish & Wildlife Service and state agency wildlife biologists to address population declines of the New England cottontail (*Sylvilagus transitionalis*).

Rhode Island NRCS has entered into two cooperative agreements for outreach to landowners to identify parcels of suitable size and habitat potential for cottontail restoration projects. The Conservation Districts are one partner, and Dr. Numi Mitchell will also be working with us to identify quality project sites. Dr. Mitchell is well known for her work in GPS tracking of coyote populations on Aquidneck Island.

On November 7th, Gary Casabona met with biologists from state agencies and the US Fish & Wildlife Service at their regional office in Hadley, Massachusetts. This Land Protection working group for cottontails is charged with identifying prime areas for protection, either through NRCS WRP easements, or direct acquisition as federal wildlife refuge properties.

The Roger Williams Park Zoo has begun a captive breeding program which has produced four New England cottontails this year, and is expected to produce 40 or more cottontails each year in the future. These captive-bred rabbits will be released at sites in Rhode Island with the hope that new populations will be established in the wild.

In other Resources/Soils news: Maggie, Eric, and Gary attended the Northeast Arc GIS Conference in Saratoga Springs, NY. There were around 350 other professionals from around the region in attendance. Cutting-edge topics this year included: use of LiDAR data in natural resource applications; free GIS apps for smartphones; use of the free ArcGIS online mapping functions; mapping of threatened and endangered species habitats.

Soils Program

by Jim Turenne, *Assistant State Soil Scientist*

The National Rapid Carbon Assessment field work complete: After only one year of work in the field, all of the 379 points assigned to the northeast region for sampling for the national effort to assess carbon pools in soils have been sampled. With a concerted effort by all soil scientists in the region, these points were all visited, 5 pits dug and sampled at each site, and samples sent to the University of Rhode Island pedology lab for analysis. Through this effort, we have sampled and described 1895 pedons and approximately 9500 soil horizons. The laboratory

analysis will be carried out at URI over the coming year and results will be sent to the National Soil Survey Center where national soil carbon estimates will be made. This project will result in a better understanding of how land use and soil type affect the amount of organic carbon stored in our soils.



NRC State Conservationist R. Phou Vongkhamdy analyzes soil samples on the Northeast Regional Soil Pedology Tour.

RI Soil Survey Program: Northeast Regional Soil Pedology Tour – during the week of Aug 9 to 10th the Soil Survey Program assisted the URI Pedology Department with a soil tour for graduate students and their Professors to learn about the soil formation, classification, and use of the soils of Rhode Island. The tour of over 40 people travelled to locations throughout the state looking at our soils and current research being conducted. Stops included George Washington State Forest, Ninigret Pond to observe our Coastal Zone Soil Survey, Tucker Pond, and Alton Jones Campus.

Rhode Island Hosts Regional Soil Judging Contest: The week of October 4th, teams of undergraduates

from various northeastern Universities visited RI for the regional soil judging competition. During the week the students travelled to various practice pits throughout the state the fine tune their skills on our soils. The contest was held on a cold day at Alton Jones Campus where students spent 12 hours competing in the individual and group judging. The winning team was University of Maryland with the URI team coming in 2nd! University of Maryland, University of Rhode Island, and Pennsylvania State teams will travel to West Virginia in the spring to compete in the National Soil Judging Competition. At last year's National contest team URI placed 1st.

Farewell Adrian and Carlisle Soils!

The two organic soils mapped in RI were the Adrian and Carlisle series. These soil series names were brought in many years ago from Minnesota during a time when there was not much emphasis in these wetland soils. Now, due to the great importance in organic soils for carbon pools, filtering of nutrients, nitrate reduction, and wetland protection, the organic soils have now been re-correlated to Swansea – map unit SwA (counter-part to Adrian, map unit Aa) and Freetown – map unit FeA (counter-part to Carlisle, map unit Co) soils. If you use the latest version of the RI soils data you will see these soils have replaced the old map units and series.