



Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development celebrated its 49th year as a leader in rural and agriculture community planning and resource resilience in Connecticut.

CTRC&D operates as a non-profit program accelerator fostering sustainable economic growth in Connecticut's communities, and rural economic innovation while also protecting Connecticut's valued natural resources. CTRC&D hosts networking and quick project implementation between all levels of government to implement grassroots innovation on the part of residents, communities, conservation organizations, land trusts, small businesses, and agriculture producers.

Without a consistent source of funding, CTRC&D currently works to leverage grant funds toward the programs listed in this 2017 Annual Report. CTRC&D also has an eye toward the future and new programs, possibilities, and projects suggested by our members and partners.

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ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017



JOB JUMPSTART

Providing paid apprenticeships and internships to foster career development in conservation, agriculture and rural business development. This past year, CTRC&D was fortunate to receive a grant for \$400,000 to hire and train two soil technicians and two conservation planners for two years. Through dedicated CTRC&D funding, three college interns were hired and trained in agriculture business management, environmental resource assessment, and grants management.



SOIL HEALTH INITIATIVE

A long running workshop series to promote education and practice through hands-on demonstrations and field exercises on rolling cover crops, soil pit investigation, and rainfall simulation on healthy and not-so-healthy soils. Healthy soils, rich in organic matter, drain better, have greater disease resistance, and better water holding capacity in times of drought. CTRC&D holds two workshops per year in partnership with NRCS staff, who provide valued expertise and instruction to attendees. Just when we think we've reached everyone with this program, the next workshop is filled to capacity.



CT FARM ENERGY PROGRAM

With support from USDA Rural Development RBDG Grant, CFEP provides one-on-one grant application and project construction support to farmers and agriculture producers interested in renewable energy infrastructure and energy efficiency improvements. Over seven years, the CFEP program has been instrumental in helping Connecticut farmers receive \$2.4 million in funding assistance which equates to over \$9.5 million of sustainable energy infrastructure projects. This year, CFEP assisted sixteen agriculture producers with grants submittals with a 100% success rate for awards. The program produced four farm energy videos with partners from UCONN Extension.



ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW TEAM PLANNING SERVICES

A 30 year program, ERT continues to provide resource evaluations and planning services to Connecticut municipalities and land trusts. CTRC&D has funding to provide two free limited ERT's each year. Over the last year, CTRC&D completed ERT Reports for Naugatuck and the Avalonia Land Trust in Preston. CTRC&D is also working with Durham and Essex toward a long range management plan for two parcels of open space. Additional professional planning and resource services are available on a limited basis to municipalities and land trusts for a small fee as requested.

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CACEE CENTER STUDY

A \$20,000 in grant funds to evaluate four properties in central Connecticut to build a conservation agriculture education center and rural business incubator space. The CACEE Committee did a preliminary evaluation of the sites in Spring 2017. Once the top site is selected, CTRC&D will host a community outreach workshop and produce a proposed concept plan for the property. The goal is to foster conservation, agriculture and rural business growth with sustainable principles of resource conservation, agriculture & conservation partnerships, education, and support services for grassroots business concepts.



CONNECTICUT RURAL LAND RURAL TOWNS WORKSHOP

Continued tradition of an annual workshop to highlight the role of rural lands and rural towns as dynamic resources for a healthy and sustainable Connecticut. This year's workshop hosted over 60 attendees and guest presenters focused on rural land use and economic innovation, new technology for conservation, agriculture business innovation, and how urban centers & rural lands support one another. We also sampled delicious homemade donuts for breakfast at Freund's Market pie after lunch.

REGIONAL AGRICULTURE PLAN TEMPLATE

CTRC&D supported regional partners via a Connecticut Agriculture Viability grant, contracting with the state's singular and successful Regional Agriculture Commission in the Lower Connecticut River Valley. The goal was to develop a series of workshops and a regional plan for agriculture. This project will provide a template for other regions in Connecticut who seek to organize and create Regional Agriculture Commissions.



COMPOST HEAT RECOVERY PROJECT

With assistance provided by a CT DEEP/ U.S. DOE SEP Grant, CTRC&D started the first compost heat recovery pilot project at Collins Farm in Enfield. This innovative project works to recover energy and heat from composted material while also reducing or eliminating pollutants from composting manure from adjacent streams and watersheds. The project also seeks to explore the economic value and potential for affordably replicating the process on other Connecticut farms.



FIDUCIARY SUPPORT FOR GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS

CTRC&D has the capacity to provide a staff support for organizations without non-profit status who are in need of non-profit fiduciary oversight as well as shared bookkeeping for non-profits who seek to share bookkeeping costs and minimize overhead. Currently, CTRC&D provides fiduciary management support to the Salmon River Watershed Partnership.



CT FOOD HUB CAPACITY STUDY

A USDA funded study to map and inventory existing food hubs & market capacity and economic demand for additional facilities in Connecticut. CTRC&D is working with partners at the University of Connecticut and the Northwest Hill Council of Governments to help ensure the report represents current conditions and options both regionally and statewide.

