



ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2020-2021



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OUR VISION

To promote and improve long-lasting and environmentally-friendly practices that protect natural resources such as soil, water, and air.

OUR MISSION

To meet our vision through outreach, education, help with environmental questions, and financial assistance. We work with a variety of people and groups including farmers, landowners, cities, towns, schools, and others in the community.

The ERICD is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, consisting of five voting directors and several associate directors. These local individuals provide administrative guidance and focus on the actions of the Eastern District, which include the Newport and Bristol Counties.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair: Beverly Migliore, Barrington
Robert Carr, Tiverton
Nancy Parker Wilson, Portsmouth
Brenda Mottram, Tiverton
Jessica Freedman, Tiverton

Associate Directors

Lindsay Farbent, Emerson Wildes

STAFF

Sara Churgin - District Manager
Sean Grandy, Dennis Milbourne, Nate Lukas - Agricultural Technicians
Lauren Carson - Stormwater Outreach & Implementation

AGINNOVATION FARM

PORTSMOUTH, RI

The Portsmouth AgInnovation Farm, founded in 2020 the midst of the pandemic, truly blossomed this Spring and Summer.

The kids started growing seeds inside this Spring, which were then planted in the ground at the farm and bore fruit throughout the Summer and into Fall. A team of volunteers diligently weeded and watered in order to make room for vegetables. Each child saw the full process of how food is grown, helping them to appreciate the food chain we each take part in every day. They grew a wide range of produce, including beans, tomatoes, lettuce, squash, pumpkins, and more, which was donated to Lucy's Hearth and St. John's Food Bank.

A seasonal high tunnel was installed, which will extend the growing season and provide a place for the kids to continue learning about agriculture during the shoulder season. A high tunnel is similar to a greenhouse, protecting crops from the elements.

Volunteers constructed a Storage Shed to hold all of the tools for the farm, most of which were donated. A Pollinator Garden is taking shape and will be completed in Spring 2022. The garden will include a path and signage throughout to teach the public about the importance of pollinators.



AGINNOVATION FARM CONTINUED

PORTSMOUTH, RI

Community Farm Plots were offered for the first time and allowed families to come together and take ownership over a small plot for the season. Each family worked together to maintain their plot and benefit from the nutritious fruits and vegetables grown.

Portsmouth AgInnovation Farm is located at Cloverbud Ranch in Portsmouth and is in partnership with Portsmouth Middle School. The farm would not be possible without the support of Margie Brennan, Portsmouth School District's Instructional Science Coach, as well as the army of volunteers who have worked to make the farm a success. The community has come together to make the AgInnovation dream a reality, offering equipment, time, and other resources.



AGINNOVATION BY THE NUMBERS:

HARVESTED

- 30 Bags of Beans
- 20 Bags of Kale
- 19 Pumpkins
- 10 Squash
- 5 Bags of Cherry Tomatoes
- COUNTLESS Sunflowers!

INVOLVEMENT

- 65 Students Participated
- 24 Hoses & Tools Donated
- 15 Summer Students & Families
- 4 Community Plots

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)

NEWPORT & BRISTOL COUNTIES

REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (RCPP)

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) promotes coordination of NRCS conservation activities with partners that offer value-added contributions to expand our collective ability to address on-farm, watershed, and regional natural resource concerns. Through RCPP, NRCS seeks to co-invest with partners to implement projects that demonstrate innovative solutions to conservation challenges and provide measurable improvements and outcomes tied to the resource concerns they seek to address.

RCPP Farm Conservation Planning (FCP) – Rhode Island's farms, forest and other open space provide many benefits to its citizens. Local farms ensure a readily available source of food close to metropolitan areas, while forestland and open space are key natural resources that provide recreational areas and contribute to the welfare and happiness of the state's inhabitants. Because of the economic pressure to convert these lands to development or another more profitable land use, Rhode Island's farms, forests and open spaces are rapidly disappearing. The Farm, Forest and Open Space Act helps citizens conserve these lands for themselves and for future generations.

Rhode Island law (Chapter 44-27) allows property enrolled in the Farm, Forest and Open Space Program to be assessed at its current use, not its value for development. The purpose of the law is not to reduce property taxes, but to conserve Rhode Island's productive agricultural and forest land by reducing the chance it will have to be sold for development.

Once accepted into the farm designation portion of this program, the landowner is required by law to get a full farm conservation plan. The RCPP FCP funding enables district staff members to write plans for the landowners, as no cost to them. In this year, ERICD has completed 13 plans for the district.

REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (RCPP) CONT'D

RCPP Farm Conservation Implementation funding is used to promote and encourage implementation of best management practices (BMP) on statewide agricultural lands, and monitor the impacts on Rhode Island's surface water quality. To date, the following has been done:

- o 4 NRCS applications have been accepted.
- o 2 contracts have been completed.
- o 23 BMPs have been designed.
- o 7 BMPs have been installed.

RCPP CASE STUDY – MAIDFORD RIVER

This funding is to implement suite of natural system-based approaches including floodplain restoration and riparian buffer restoration to reduce flooding impacts, erosion, sediment transport and nutrient loadings along the Maidford River in Middletown, RI. ERICD has \$1,000,000 fiscal assistance money to achieve these goals, awarded by NRCS and Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT). ERICD is working in partnership with the Southern New England Program Network (SNEP) Technical team that is working on designs to alleviate flooding and improve the river's water quality and habitat. The SNEP technical team is also working with the Town of Middletown, the Aquidneck Land Trust and Save the Bay. The RCPP Maidford funding will help to implement some of these designs.

PEOPLES GARDEN

The Peoples Garden grant is a statewide program funded by NRCS. For the past two years, each of the Rhode Island Conservation Districts (Eastern, Southern, and Northern) has sought organizations in urban, suburban, or rural areas to install community gardens or high tunnels and maintain them for a minimum of 18 months (gardens) or 36 months (high tunnels). This project is funded by an agreement between the RI State Conservation Committee (RISCC) and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS). Presently, ERICD has funded 8 of these projects and there will be another year of funding.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

NEWPORT & BRISTOL COUNTIES

ERICD had its biggest year of outreach to date, with a range of virtual and in-person events.



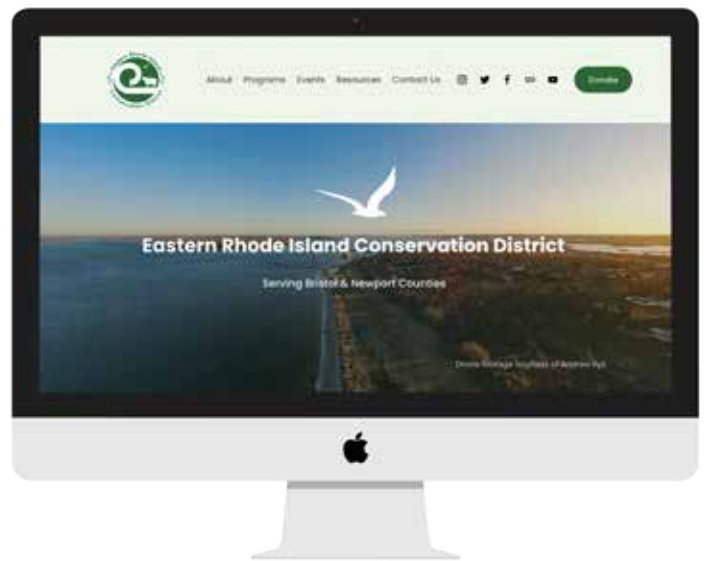
PARK CLEANUPS AT BULGARMARSH PARK IN TIVERTON & MIANTONOMI PARK IN NEWPORT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARKS IN MY TOWN



VOLUNTEERS DISTRIBUTED INFORMATION AT TIVERTON FARMERS MARKET & RAISED FUNDS WITH A RAFFLE FEATURING LOCAL BUSINESSES



BOTH IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL TOURS OF LOCAL FARMS REACHED A WIDE AUDIENCE



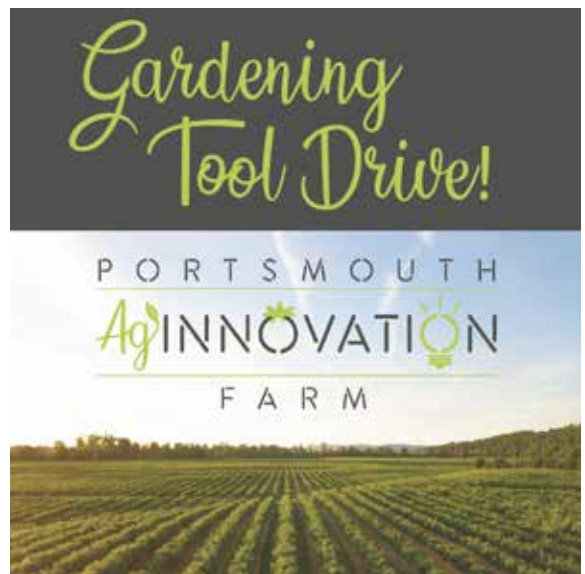
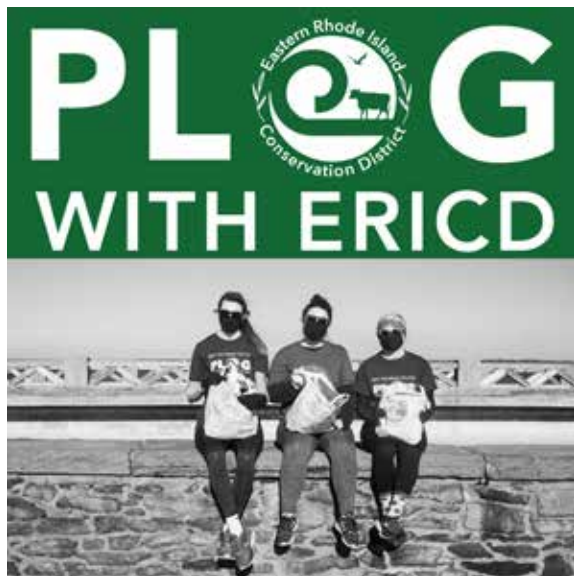
OUR NEW WEBSITE WAS LAUNCHED THIS SPRING, JUST IN TIME TO PROMOTE OUR MANY EARTH MONTH EVENTS.

EARTH MONTH

NEWPORT & BRISTOL COUNTIES

In April 2021, ERICD celebrated Earth Month with a range of events, many inaugural, that we hope will continue to help our environment for years to come!

It has been fifty-one years since the first Earth Day in 1970. At that time, the idea to bring the environment to the forefront of the U.S. political conversation was revolutionary. Today, much has been achieved on helping our environment, yet there is much work to do.



COMMUNITY STORMWATER MITIGATION

NEWPORT, RI

We have been working with the Newport Health Equity Zone (HEZ) and The City of Newport to engage residents to discover nature-based solutions to flooding caused by stormwater runoff due to poor drainage in the area. The North End is vulnerable to stormwater pollution and flooding, a leading cause of water quality impairment such as increased bacteria levels in surface water.

We conducted a survey about the perceived risk of flooding in the North End, the results are available on our website.



A site visit of potential green stormwater infrastructure installation sites was conducted in May 2021 with community members.

FY2020-21 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

EASTERN RHODE ISLAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Support and Revenue

Governmental Grants.....	\$264,324
PPP.....	\$ 21,041
Private Grants & Contributions.....	\$ 30,258
In-Kind Contributions.....	\$ 8,294
Donated Program Services.....	\$ 9,365
Other Fees for Services.....	\$ 1,750
Other Income.....	\$ 19

Total Revenue and Support

Without Donor Rstrictions and Net Assets

Released from Restrictions.....	\$335,051
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Expenses

Program Expenses.....	\$220,705
Supporting Services Expenses.....	\$ 57,717

Total Expenses.....	\$278,422
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Increase in Net Assets Withouth Donor Restrictions.....	\$ 56,629
Net Assets, Beginning.....	\$100,634
Net Assets, Ending.....	\$157,263