



# BERKSHIRE CONSERVATION DISTRICT FY 2008 ANNUAL REPORT

## DISTRICT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

During the past year, the District has undergone some changes to the Board of Supervisors. Sadly, long time supervisor, Arthur "Sonny" Williams passed away unexpectedly. This left us with a huge slot to fill. Also, Fred Turner, another long time member of our board and former Chairman, did not seek re-election last year and became an associate supervisor. We welcomed a new supervisor at our last annual meeting, Tony Boyer, who filled one of these slots. Tony is a retired science teacher from Lanesboro Elementary School. We are still looking for someone to fill the last opening. Anyone interested in helping to oversee the programs and direction of the Berkshire Conservation District may apply for the volunteer position by contacting Deb Burke at [deborah.burke@ma.usda.gov](mailto:deborah.burke@ma.usda.gov)

Ideally we are looking for someone who:

- Has a willingness to volunteer (3yr term)
- Is available for the monthly meetings: (3rd Wednesday of the month at 4pm.)
- Understands conservation issues
- Has fundraising ability and/or
- Grant writing skills

## ANNUAL FUNDRAISING SALES

The Berkshire County Conservation District had record breaking sales with over 400 packages of bulbs sold to 90 customers at the **Fall '07 Bulb Sale** and over 9000 seedlings to over 230 customers at the **Spring'08 Seedling Sale**. The number of customers served and gross sales were up by one third. We attribute the increase to the addition of a pickup site at Lakeview Orchard in Cheshire. The Master Gardeners again helped us out with soil testing on pickup day. Thank you to all the volunteers who help make our fundraisers successful and the loyal customers who keep returning each year. The '09 spring sale brochure will be mailed out by February. Proceeds from these sales go towards providing technical assistance to landowners, workshops, BCC scholarship and environmental educational materials to schools in Berkshire County.

*As the Berkshire Conservation District has no direct state funding, any suggestions of potential sponsors would be greatly appreciated.*

## MASSACHUSETTS ENVIROTHON

Massachusetts Envirothon is a statewide competition that tests students' knowledge of aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and environmental issues. Congratulations to **Lexington High School**, the overall first place winner, of the 2008 Massachusetts Envirothon. In this year's MA Envirothon, a field competition was held on May 6th and 7th at Hopkinton State Park, after which the top four teams went on to compete in the final competition held May 17th at the Doyle Conservation Center in Leominster. The topic was "Outdoor Recreation and the Environment." In preparation, teams were asked to identify a key recreational issue or opportunity and make recommendations for how their community should address it.

## BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE 2008 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Congratulations to **Gabrielle Graham** and **Mark Bushey**, this year's recipients of the Berkshire Conservation District Environmental Science Scholarship at Berkshire Community College. Guidelines for this scholarship require that the student be a second year environmental studies student at BCC.

<b>BOARD OF SUPERVISORS</b>	
Robert Lear	Chairman
Dave Jurczak	Vice-Chair
Aimee Thayer	Treasurer
Dennis Mareb	
Ned Kirchner	
Tony Boyer	
<b>ASSOCIATE SUPERVISORS</b>	
Fred Turner	
Daniel Galusha	
Frances Turner	
Jeff Jourdain	
<b>STAFF</b>	
Deborah Burke	Administrator
Gabrielle Graham	Intern

## **NRCS ACCOMPLISHMENTS** by Kate Parsons



NRCS, with the assistance from the Berkshire Conservation District had another successful year increasing participation among farmers and other landowners. Conservation plans addressed resource concerns such as water and soil quality, plant production, invasive species, oak regeneration and fish and wildlife habitat for declining species.

Below is a summary of the major NRCS activities and accomplishments from 2008:

- Land users were aided in planning approximately 4097 acres of crop, hay and grazing land.
- Comprehensive nutrient management plans (CNMPs) were developed for 6 farms.
- CNMPs, particularly manure and fertilizer recommendations were updated for 8 other farms.

- Conservation practices were applied to improve:
  - Grazing land on 1081 acres
  - Soil quality on 4048 acres
  - Water quality on 4542 acres
  - Fish and wildlife habitat on 427 acres.



- Financial assistance was provided to 1 landowner with the construction of an agrichemical facility, 1 with a waste storage facility, 2 with fencing for grazing systems, 1 with a livestock watering system for pasture, 14 with implementing nutrient management, waste utilization, prescribed grazing, cover crop, residue management and/or transition to organic production, 2 with pasture and hay planting, 1 with oak regeneration, 1 with early successional habitat and 4 with invasive species control.

- 15 EQIP applications were accepted, planned and ranked against others across the state and 13 were funded for a total of \$919,391.

- 13 WHIP applications were accepted, planned, ranked against others across the state and funded for a total of \$365,997.



- USDA through the Farmland and Ranch Protection Program (FRPP), in co-operation with the State of Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources' (MDAR) Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program, permanently preserved 154 acres of farmland including more than 79 acres of prime farmland.

- 1 EWP contract was completed, protecting the Hoosac Water Quality District's wastewater treatment plant in Williamstown.