

MEMORANDUM

January 20, 2021 DNREC Conservation District Operations



Joint Legislative Oversight
& Sunset Committee

Drainage Program Realignment Update

In Fall of 2019, the Drainage Program began a realignment of its units to function as two separate programs within the Conservation Programs Section of the Division of Watershed Stewardship: the Tax Ditch Program and the Public Ditch Program. Under the realignment, an Environmental Program Manager II leads each unit and reports to the Administrator of Conservation Programs Section.¹ The Tax Ditch Program focuses on tax ditch organization support and the survey and construction of those related projects. The Public Ditch Program focuses on the design and planning of Resource, Conservation & Development (“RC&D”) drainage projects and small projects management.

Tax Ditch Working Group Update

In Spring of 2020, the Tax Ditch Program staff partnered with the Office of the Secretary in the creation of an internal working group to study current tax ditch processes outlined in statute and performed by DNREC staff on behalf of tax ditch organization. The working group has made the following improvements:

- Court Order Change process: Streamlined the signature process so these changes are approved and enacted more efficiently.
- Modernized 40 processes and organizational charts.
- Identified missing procedures and required documentation moving forward.
- Final outputs now available in various formats include online ARIS platform, printed reports, and printable diagrams.
- Developed a list of commonly used terms and acronyms for universal use across the program.
- Finalized necessary updates to the Tax Ditch Land Development Review and Pre-Application Meeting processes.

Tax Ditch and RC&D FY21 Appropriation Update

In the FY21 Bond Bill, the Drainage Program received the following appropriations: \$900,000 for Tax Ditches and \$3M for RC&D project implementation (down from \$5M in the Governor’s recommended bill). Drainage Program metrics are continuously measured for concerns received and resolved, audits, Court Order Changes, and technical assistance.²

RC&D Project Tracking

The Drainage Project established an RC&D Project Dashboard, which includes geographic views of approved projects, project status, plans, photos, and other information. The Dashboard allows program managers, planners, and other partners to find and report on the 1000+ approved projects. To date, all projects in Kent and Sussex have been mapped with work on the 600+ projects in New Castle County continuing.³

¹ See page 1 of the attached reference document for a detailed staffing report.

² See page 2-4 of the attached reference document for the Drainage Program metrics and RC&D Project updates.

³ See page 5 of the attached reference document for additional information and a screenshot of the Dashboard.

REFERENCE

January 20, 2021 DNREC Conservation District Operations



Joint Legislative Oversight
& Sunset Committee

Staffing Updates 2019-2020

Fall 2019

- Program Manager II was hired to oversee the Drainage Program.
- Program Administrator was hired.

Spring 2020

- Engineering Program Manager I who manages the Engineering and Technical Support Team. This team is responsible for surveying, designing, engineering (when needed) tax ditch and RC&D Projects.
- Kent Conservation District (KCD) contractual Planner II position with the primary responsibility of assisting in the process improvement efforts for both the Tax Ditch and Public Ditch Programs.
- Environmental Program Manager II who will manage the Public Drainage Branch which includes the RC&D Program, Small Projects Crew and the staff with primary responsibilities under both of those Programs.

Summer/Fall 2020

- Program Manager I was hired into the Drainage Program's Tax Ditch Branch with oversight and assistance from the Tax Ditch Program Manager II. The Drainage Program Tax Ditch Branch is comprised of eight full time staff members designated to provide administrative and technical assistance to the 234 tax ditch organizations across the State.
- Engineer IV was hired.

Current Vacancies/Reclassifications

- The Drainage Program requested two positions to be reclassified - an Engineer position and an EPS Technician IV. If approved, these positions will be reclassified to Planners and will better facilitate the new working relationship with the Conservation Districts and the implementation of RC&D projects.

THIS SPACE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Drainage Program Metrics and RC&D Project Updates

RC&D Projects are dedicated to improving the health of communities by addressing a variety of State-wide watershed and drainage issues. The fund is implemented by a partnership between the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) and Delaware’s three Conservation Districts. The NCCD takes the lead on projects located in New Castle County. Historically, DNREC has taken the lead on projects in Kent and Sussex Counties with assistance from KCD and SCD. Beginning Mid-FY2020 Kent and Sussex Conservation Districts have become leads on a portion of the prioritized projects lists as assigned by DNREC to increase the number of projects constructed. The table below lists FY21 spending plans. Each County is provided a percentage of the total allocation. Those percentages are listed below and are determined by the number of projects, cost per county based on the RC&D List and considerations for FY21 projections. DNREC maintains a percentage of funding, for projects, in Kent and Sussex Counties. For a specific breakdown of FY21 proposed projects, see the [Proposed FY 2021 RC&D Projects](#) report dated June 1, 2020.

FY21 Capital Budget - RC&D - \$3,000,000			
	New Castle	Kent	Sussex
Percentage allocated by County	60%	15%	25%
Amount by County	\$ 1,800,000	\$ 450,000	\$ 750,000
DNREC retains (25%)	\$ -	\$ 112,500	\$ 187,500
Amount Allocated per Conservation District	\$ 1,800,000	\$ 337,500	\$ 562,500

DNREC and the Conservation Districts work to assure the implementation of projects designed to alleviate drainage concerns are appropriately administered and utilized for planning, surveying, engineering and construction of Joint Legislative Committee approved funding. All projects are approved annually by the Bond Bill Committee and prioritized by DNREC and the County Conservation District. For the comprehensive list of prioritized projects, see the [RC&D Prioritized Approved Projects](#) list dated June 1, 2020.

The metric tracking table on page 3 demonstrates the FY2020 progress and current fiscal year’s progress of the Drainage Program. The RC&D projects table on pages 4 and 5 shows the progress of projects following the submission of the [FY 20 Completed RC&D Project](#) report on June 1, 2020. Programmatic metrics are measured for concerns received/resolved, audits, Court Order Changes, and technical assistance.

THIS SPACE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Metric Tracking		
Drainage Program Performance Measures	FY2020	FY 2021 as of Dec. 2020
Drainage Concerns Received (Statewide)	265	321
Drainage Concerns Assigned to Drainage Program	140	192
Drainage Concerns Resolved by Drainage Program	75	80
VOP Projects Complete	7	0
Linear Feet of VOP Channel Debris Removal	14,725	0
Tax Ditch Court Order Changes Completed	49	30
Tax Ditch Audits Completed	82	18
Tax Ditch Annual or Special Meetings Attended	28	0
Tax Ditch Technical Assistance (Permits, Engineering, Inspections)	24	50

THIS SPACE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

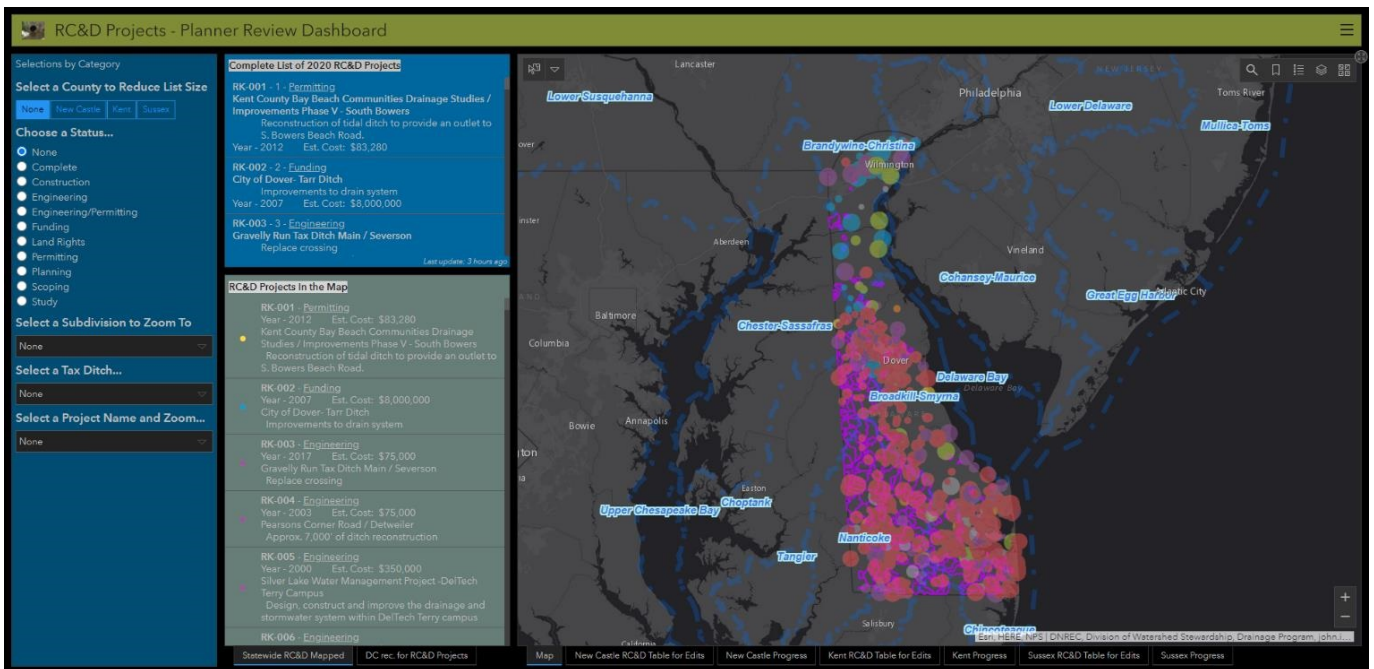
Project	County	Status	Senator District	Rep District	Project Description
Bethel/Snake Rd Drainage Improvements Phase 2	Sussex	Complete	21	40	Ditch Maintenance and Water Quality Improvement Project
Dukes Job Tax Ditch / MorrisBank Stabilization	Sussex	Complete	21	40	Bank Stabilization and Ditch Maintenance
Trap Pond Road / White Drainage Improvements	Sussex	Complete	21	40	Floodplain restoration
Dukes Job Tax Ditch / MorrisBank Stabilization	Sussex	Complete	21	40	Bank stabilization and ditch maintenance
Little Hill Road/ Leonard Drainage	Sussex	Complete	21	40	Road culvert replacement dipout of existing ditch
Pepper Creek TD Bank Stabilization	Sussex	Complete	20	41	Bank stabilization and sediment bar removal
Bear Hole TD/Johnson	Sussex	Complete	20	38	Bank Stabilization sediment bar removal
Raccoon Tax Ditch Bank Stabilization	Sussex	Complete	21	40	Road culver replacements and bank stabilization
410 Hollets Corner Road / Thorstenson	Kent	Complete	15	11	Ditch maintenance
Woodland Beach Road / Richards	Kent	Complete	14	28	Ditch maintenance
Marydel Fire House Drainage Improvement	Kent	Complete	15	11	Ditch maintenance
Bush Drive / Morris	Kent	Complete	17	29	Construction of open ditch with pipe crossing
Town of Houston Phase 1 / Bush Drive	Kent	Complete	18	33	Improved drainage outlets for low areas
Ardencroft – Harvey/ Upper Greenbrier Intersection	New Castle	Complete	5	7	Remove and Replace Curb
Timber Farms - Timber Wood Blvd	New Castle	Complete	11	26	Install underdrain and grade
Weldin Park – 4600 Weldin Road	New Castle	Complete	5	6	Sink hole / Cistern
Sherwood Forest – 39 Stature Drive	New Castle	Complete	9	24	Re-grade yard to drain
Fox Hunter Crossing – 401 Draper Drive	New Castle	Complete	10	8	Install catch basin and re-grade
Beech Hill – 47 Beech Hill Drive	New Castle	Complete	8	22	Install closed drainage system

Project	County	Status	Senator District	Rep District	Project Description
Westwoods – 311 Blue Jay Drive	New Castle	Complete	4	12	Install underdrain
Old Cooches Bridge Road Drainage	New Castle	Complete	10	25	Replace pipes and ditch
Brack Ex – 117 Exmore Avenue	New Castle	Complete	7	13	Installed closed drainage system
Four Seasons – Autumn Horseshoe	New Castle	Complete	10	25	Install closed drainage system
Monterey Farms – 841 Reybold Drive	New Castle	Complete	13	5	Clean Ditch and install driveway pipes
Yorklyn Ridge – 3 Yorkridge Trail	New Castle	Complete	4	12	Install cutoff swale
Great Good Place – 2 Great Circle Road	New Castle	Construction	8	22	Stabilize with riprap
Westover Hills – Hopeton Road	New Castle	Construction	4	4	Clean ditch
Brack Ex - 117 Exmore Avenue	New Castle	Complete	7	13	Installed closed drainage system
Alban Park 1 Tax Ditch Improvements	New Castle	Under Construction	3	2	Install closed drainage system
Brandywood – 2133 Brandywood Dr	New Castle	Under Construction	5	10	Install closed drainage system
Heather Woods - 5 Pine Court	New Castle	Under Construction	11	26	Install closed drainage system
Brookmeade - Redstart Court	New Castle	Under Construction	7	4	Install closed drainage system
Kirkwood Garden – 2414 Hammond Place	New Castle	Under Construction	7	19	Stabilize slopes
Melody Meadows – Misty Court	New Castle	Under Construction	10	27	Clean ditch and install driveway pipes
Oak Hill School Road - Ditch	New Castle	Under Construction	14	11	Clean and regrade ditch
Pike Creek Road and Pennock Road	New Castle	Under Construction	9	21	Install closed drainage system
River Ridge – Villa Road	New Castle	Under Construction	1	6	Install closed drainage system
Caravel Farms – 31 Clipper Court	New Castle	Under Construction	12	27	Clean and regrade ditch
Melodys Meadows – 14 Lullaby Lane	New Castle	Under Construction	10	27	Regrade existing ditch
Stone’s Throw – 225-235 Cobble Creek	New Castle	Under Construction	10	25	Install inlet with underdrain
Whethersfield- 67, 69, 71 Dasher Ave	New Castle	Under Construction	13	18	Install closed drainage system

RC&D Project Tracking

The Drainage Program has developed an RC&D Project Dashboard. A dashboard is a view of geographic information and data that allows a user to monitor events, make decisions, inform stakeholders, and see trends. The RC&D Project Dashboard includes geolocated projects approved on the RC&D list, project status, plans, photos and other useful reports.

To date, the Program has mapped all projects in Kent and Sussex counties. Work continues to map projects in New Castle County with 50 of the 600+ projects geolocated. This application is a tool for program managers, planners, and partners to find and report on the 1000+ projects approved by the Bond Bill Committee. This tool provides a virtual map of the projects with access to other geographic information to effectively manage the program for drainage assistance. All partners who share this application can contribute to the entire GIS database and share in the benefits. The application especially provides new program managers the location of projects they are responsible for in their new roles. Below is a screen shot of the RC&D Project Dashboard.



JLOSC 2020 Final Report: DNREC Conservation District Operations

For additional information and detail, please refer to the [2020 DNREC Conservation District Operations Report](#).

THIS SPACE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.