



Crop Consultant Program
Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District
Ottawaquechee Natural Resources Conservation District
FY2002 Report

Goals

The Crop Consultant Program was a new service offered by the Windham Conservation District and Ottawaquechee Conservation District and was established with the help of an EPA 319 grant funded through the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation that started work on November 1, 1999, and ended on January 1, 2002.

The goal of the program was to provide farms with Nutrient Management Plans, and Crop Record-keeping systems to promote clean water and conservation. Important components of the program were soil and manure tests, simple effective record-keeping system; record-keeping booklets and farm maps. By applying proper levels of nutrients based on soil tests and identifying proper buffers around environmentally sensitive areas the program helped farmers keep water clean and saved the farms money.

Accomplishments

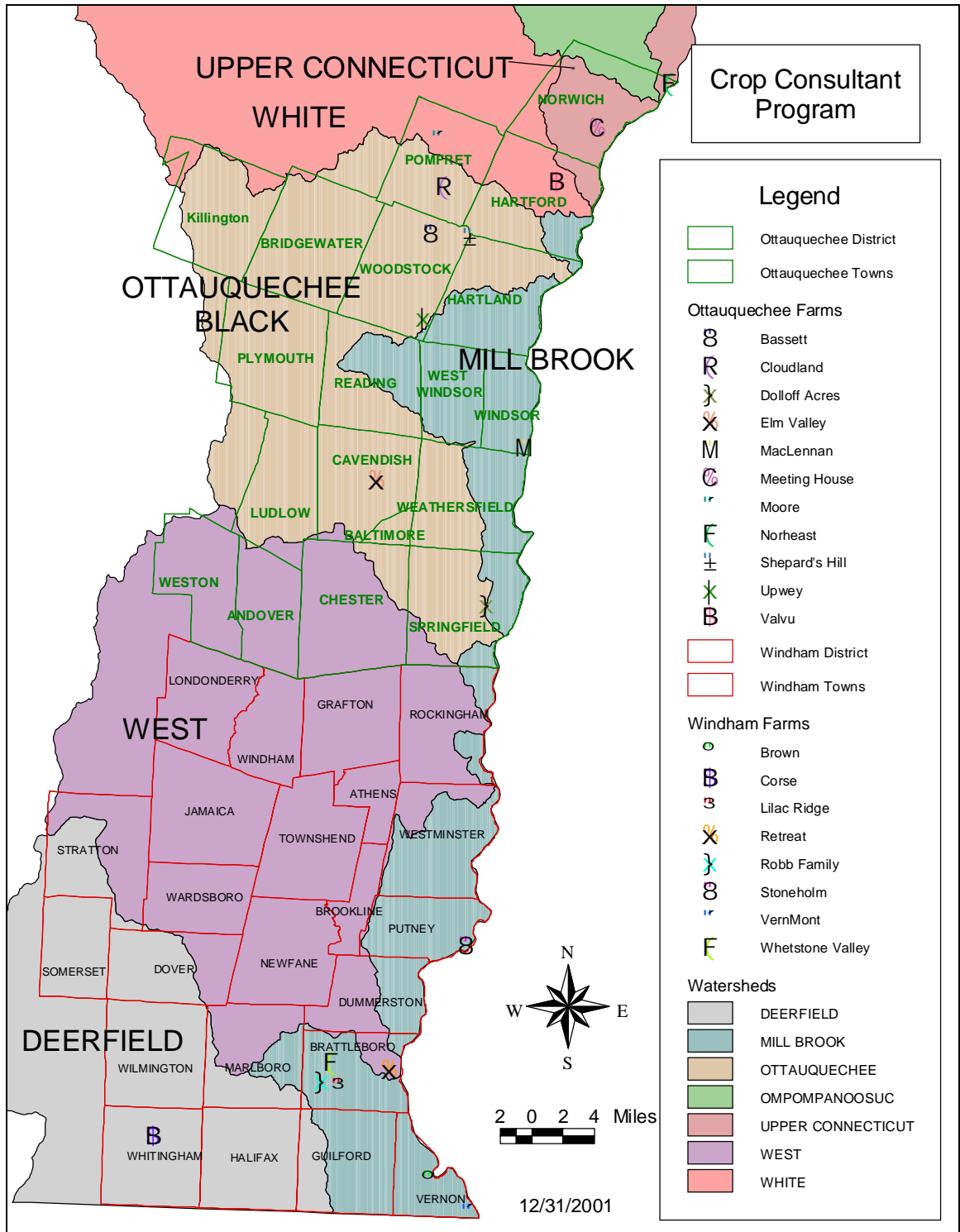
Grant goals were fifteen farms and 2000 acres out of an identified need of 500 farms covering 48,000 acres. The Crop Consultant Program worked directly with 19 farms (see map) with approximately 3700 acres completing plans for 18 farms on 3600 acres or reaching 4% of the farms and 7.5% acres of the identified need. Other grant goals were to do 100 soil tests, 30 PSNT's, and 40 Manure Analyses. The program took 107 soil tests, 21 pre-sidedress nitrogen tests and 9 manure tests. Also used 78 new test results, one PSNT and one manure test for farms that had them done by their fertilizer company and other recent soil and manure tests where appropriate. Several farm were persuaded to change to UVM soil lab, which allows use of UVM recommendations and UVM P Index.

Nutrient reductions were achieved in corn by reducing manure and starter and in all fields by grouping of fields to receive more precise nutrient applications. Environmentally sensitive areas such as wells, houses, and streams were identified and appropriate buffers and setbacks were delineated on GIS maps (see farm map) and farms were educated about the benefits of incorporating them into their farm practices.

To continue the program the Ottawaquechee District was able to secure an EPA 319 grant funded through the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation for one more year to continue to work with current client farms to implement their plans as well as new farms to develop and implement plans. During the extension period the District plans to collaborate private industry to implement plans that will be able to be maintained beyond the end of the grant.



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