

National Conservation Planning Partnership



New! Employee Spotlight

The National Conservation Planning Partnership (NCP) would like to recognize the hard-working, highly-skilled and creative field employees who are critical to the conservation planning process. If you know someone who has gone above and beyond that you would like to feature in an upcoming NCP update, let us know.

We are asking that you share the following details:

- Employee name, position, location and length of service
- Partnership involvement
- Current projects/activities completed
- What makes this employee's approach to planning effective?
- Why should this employee be highlighted?

Please send your submission, along with their photo, to Holly Miller at holly.miller2@usda.gov. There is no limit on the number of submissions. (You are encouraged to notify employee of submission.)

The first employee feature below highlights a Hugh Hammond Bennett Award for Conservation Excellence nominee. In addition to the requested employee spotlights above, NCP will also highlight HHB award nominees periodically throughout the year--all in an effort to shine light on the men and women dedicated to conservation.

NCPP Employee Spotlight - Kate Sayles, Rhode Island



Hugh Hammond Bennett championed conservation planning as the process to sustain and improve our soil and other natural resources. Decades later, the National Conservation Planning Partnership (NCP) is intent on reinvigorating conservation planning for that reason—not only for today but to leave a signature of stewardship for future generations.

As an homage to his work, NCP created the Hugh Hammond Bennett Award for Conservation Excellence to recognize both a producer and a conservation planner selected from within the NCP and its partners. Recipients will have exemplified outstanding service through development and implementation of sound conservation planning and by putting conservation measures into practice.

Since its inception in 2017, NCP has received dozens of award nominations of exceptional planners. And while there can only be one “official” winner, NCP

recognizes that each nomination describes a champion in his or her own state.

This first feature highlights Kate Sayles, Forestry and Agricultural Program Manager, with the Northern Rhode Island Conservation District (NRICD). Sayles has crafted personal and professional relationships with farmers, forestland owners and partners throughout Providence County.

In her partner-employee position with NRCS, Kate has acted in the capacity of a soil conservationist, working with landowners to successfully address resource concerns on their land. She has planned and facilitated numerous workshops highlighting innovative conservation techniques and NRCS practices on the ground, shepherding eligible landowners through the application process, providing technical assistance, and managing landowner contracts.

Up until January 2020, Kate managed state-owned Snake Den Farm for NRICD, a 190-acre historic farm located in Johnston. This property is made up of a diverse group of six individual farms with a commitment to conservation (snakedenfarm.com). Snake Den provides land and basic infrastructure to conservation-minded farmers who manage their farming operations, while cooperating on full-farm projects. In this role, Kate worked directly with RI Department of Environmental Management Chief of Agriculture on conservation standards to maintain the integrity and quality of the farmland.

Kate’s superb written and verbal communication skills have contributed to the receipt of several grants for NRICD and the RI Woodland partnership, which provided technical

assistance for landowners with specific conservation, forestry or wildlife needs. These include:

- The 2015-2017 CIG Regional Compost Facility Pilot Project Grant, which provided small-scale livestock owners located on the Scituate Reservoir Watershed with assistance on removing and properly storing their manure;
- The Small-Scale Forestry Grant (2013-2014), providing landowners with 5-10 acres of land with technical assistance on implementing forestry practices;
- The Forestry for RI's Birds grant, adapting Vermont Audubon's program to RI, and
- The Southern New England Heritage Forest RCPP, working with landowners on Healthy Forest Reserve easements, and managing their forests through planning and implementing projects through EQIP with birds in mind.

NCPP would like to thank Kate Sayles for all the work that she has contributed to the conservation planning effort and recognizes the impact it has made to farmers, landowners and others throughout Rhode Island and across the nation.

Now Accepting Hugh Hammond Bennett Awards Nominations

Nominations are open for the 2020 Hugh Hammond Bennett Award for Conservation Excellence. These annual awards honor an outstanding producer and an outstanding conservation planner for their dedication to conservation planning and implementation.

To make a nomination, notify your respective state conservation partner leader regarding your planned submission. (Note: NCPP recommends taking this step to reduce duplication of efforts between the conservation partnership agencies within your state –NRCS, NACD, NASCA, RC&D and NCDEA.)

Submit nominations at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2020HHBAward> no later than Oct. 1.

To review the details of the nomination packet and award criteria, visit the [NCPP Hugh Hammond Bennett Awards](#) page.

If you have questions, please contact NCPP Coordinator Stacy Koch at Stacy.Koch@usda.gov or 570-925-5531.

We're always open to new ideas to improve conservation planning!

NCPP's primary goal is to reinvigorate conservation planning at the local level. Whether you have a direct planning role or a support role, you may be in a position to make observations, recommendations, or suggestions that will contribute toward achieving this goal.

Please visit www.ncpp.info to make a suggestion. We will pass it on to the appropriate person or group to respectfully consider and take the appropriate action. (We are unable to address personnel matters.)

Thank you in advance for taking the time to improve the conservation planning process.

Stay in Touch with NCPP

Check out the new NCPP website for updates, resources and to sign up for direct emails. Visit www.ncpp.info.

NCPP was established in 2015 to emphasize the critical role that conservation planning plays in advancing voluntary conservation efforts on private lands. NCPP represents the efforts of five key national conservation partners working together to reinvigorate conservation planning by enhancing and strengthening the effectiveness of planning and our partnership workforce. As NCPP efforts grow, we are looking to expand the partnership to leverage all of the possible resources in the conservation planning arena.

NCPP Partner Agencies



USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.