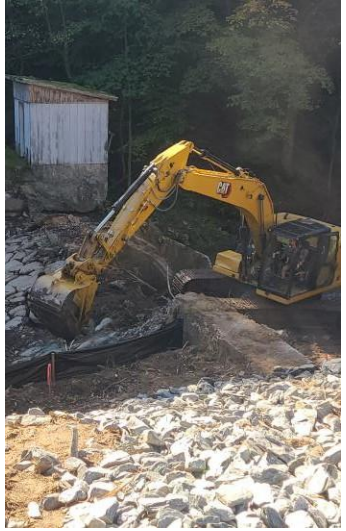






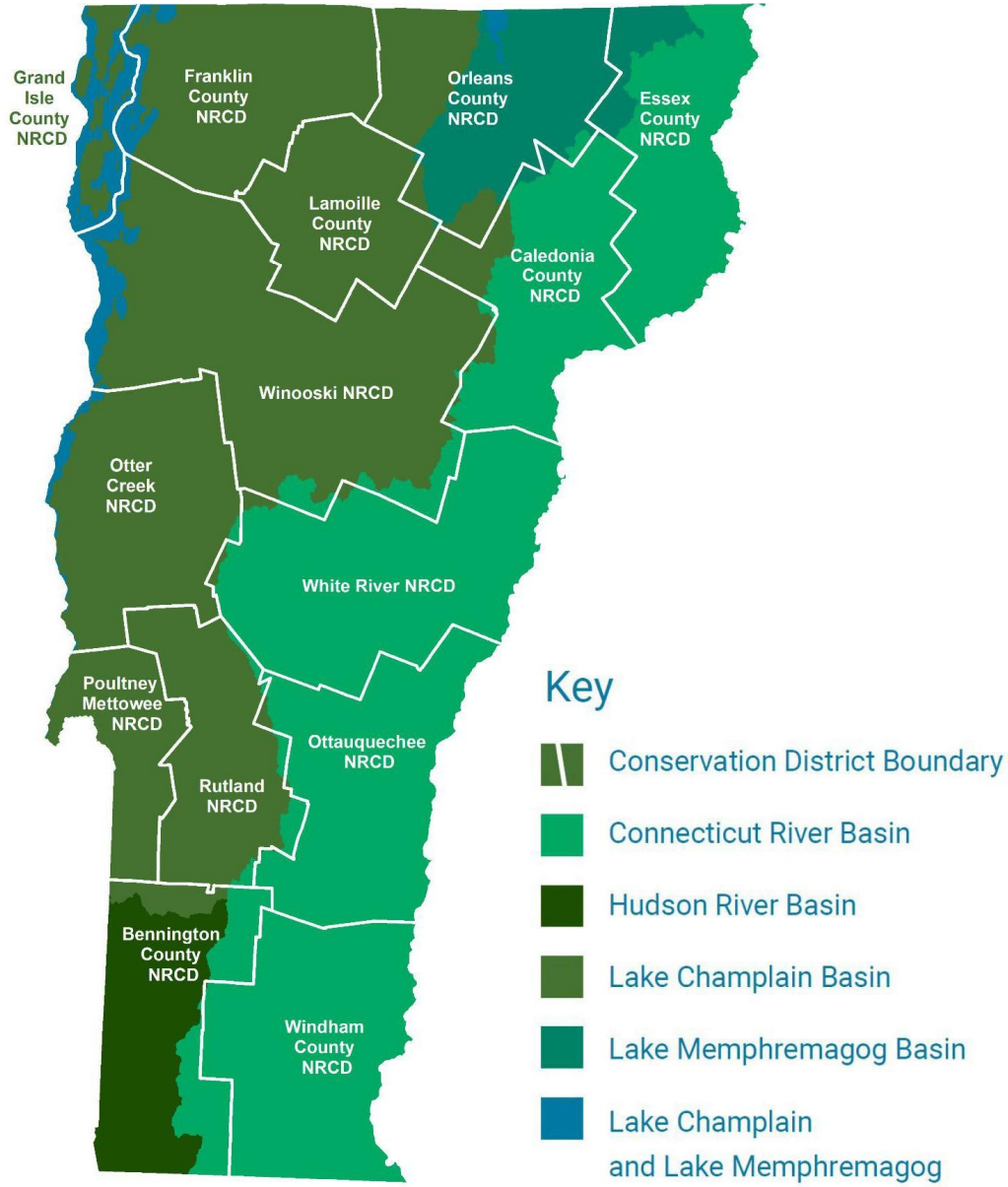
Funding Vermont's Natural Resources Conservation Districts

NASCA Annual Meeting

October 2025

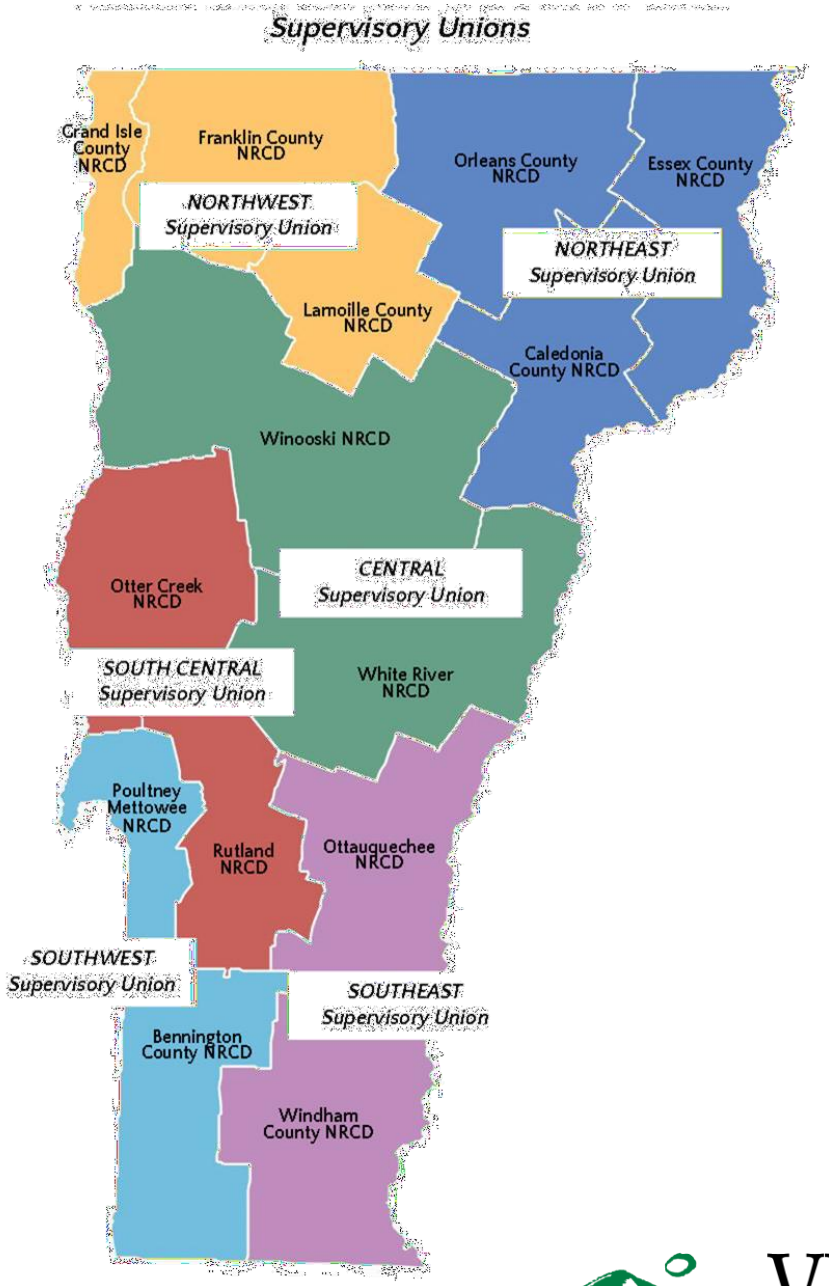
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Vermont's 14 Natural Resources Conservation Districts



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Vermont's 14 Natural Resources Conservation Districts



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Vermont's 14 Natural Resources Conservation Districts



Core Services Funding

Vermont's NRCDs have no dedicated source of funding.

- No county government, no % of state or county tax, no statewide fund, no power of taxation or fees, etc.
- Single line item in state budget to fund NRCC & 14 NRCDs.
- "Core Services" grant through Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, & Markets.

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Core Services Funding

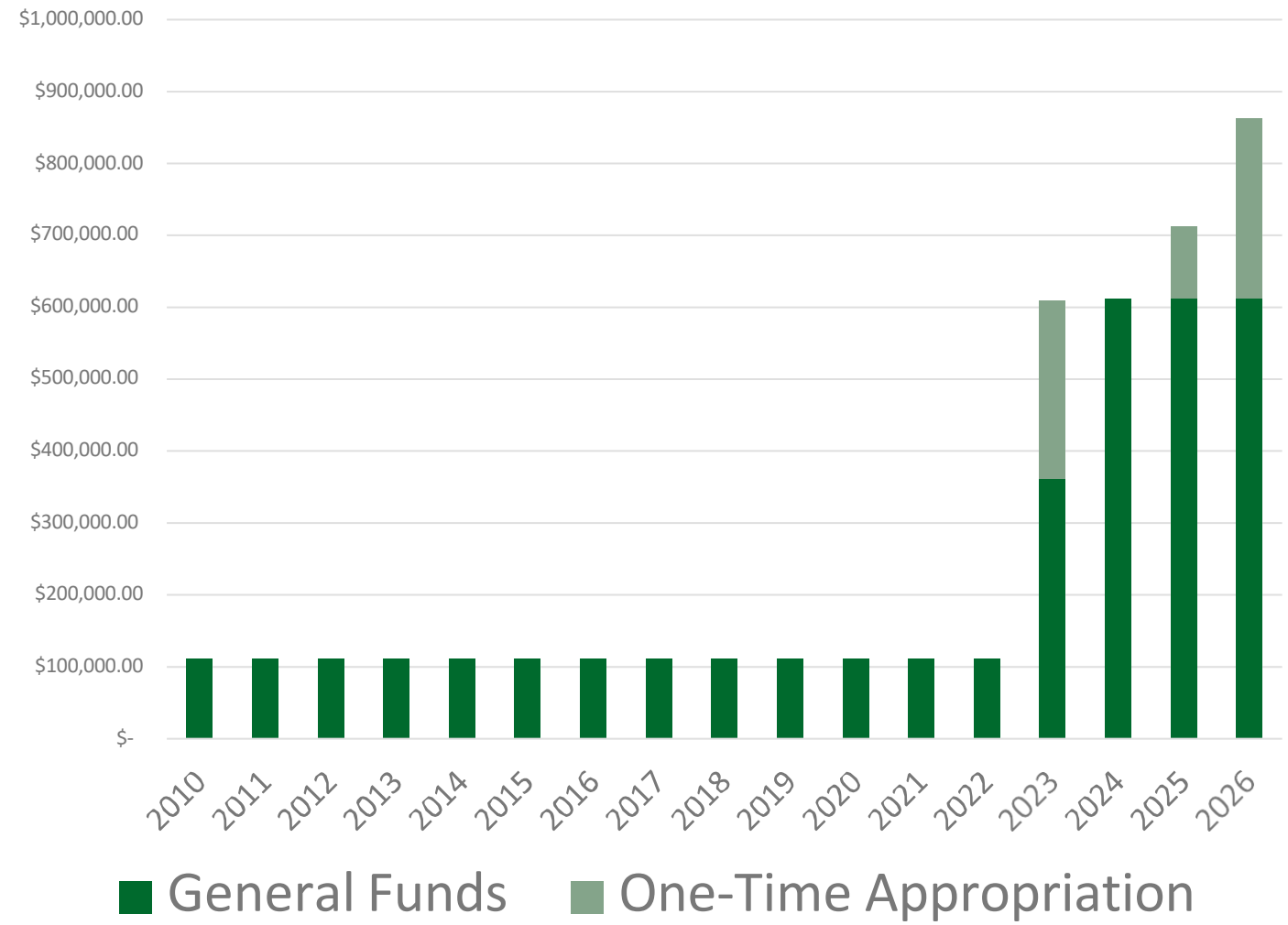
Core Services 2010 - 2025

- Flat budgeted at $112,000 from 2010 to 2022:
  - $6,000 to $8,000 per district
  - $0 to $28,000 for Council
- State association began advocacy in 2022, with increases year over year.
- FY26 budget is $862,000:
  - $53,357 per district
  - $74,200 for Council
  - $40,800 in shared expense (DM Reps & Contract Services)

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Core Services Funding

Core Services 2010 - 2025



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Core Services Funding



Successes:

- NRCDs have been able to add staff and leverage more federal funding.
- NRCDs have been able to add employee benefits and improve staff retention.
- NRCDs have more ability to respond to constituent needs and develop localized programming.
- NRCC has been able to begin developing a state website and processes that align with state agency standards.

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Core Services Funding



Challenges:

- Core Services budget is in a zero-sum balance with Agency of Agriculture budget.
- With greater visibility in statehouse, more need to align with state standards.
- Funding does not yet meet our goal of funding 1 FTE per district and for Council.
- Supervisor recruitment and retention

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Core Services Funding



For FY27:

- Adding Local Work Group as deliverable under Core Services:
  - Assure consistent Locally Led process statewide
  - Tie base funding to federal dollars leveraged
- Will explore moving NRCC budget out of VAAFM budget
- Will review NRCC and NRCD statute for updates
- Some interest within legislature to identify a dedicated funding mechanism for districts beyond the General Fund.

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Core Services & Locally Led Funding Pools



Conservation District	Amount	Locally Led Conservation Plan
Bennington County NRCD	$250,000	Implement agroforestry and complementary conservation practices to restore the county's agricultural resilience.
Caledonia County NRCD	$200,000	Improve the agricultural resilience and economic sustainability of small family farms in the county by offering financial assistance for agronomic practices that will improve soil health, and crop productivity.
Franklin County NRCD	$1,500,000	Implement infrastructure improvements that reduce runoff, support manure management, and ensure long-term farm viability through conservation practices.
Grand Isle NRCD	$300,000	Advance soil health and water quality by supporting local landowners in adopting sustainable conservation practices.
Lamoille County NRCD	$200,000	Support forest landowners in Lamoille County through targeted funding and technical assistance to enhance forest health, biodiversity, and economic resilience.
Orleans County NRCD	$200,000	Address the rapidly growing threat of invasive plant species across the county. They hope to protect and restore native biodiversity, enhance aquatic and terrestrial habitats, reduce erosion, and improve water quality.
Orleans County NRCD	$200,000	Improve water quality and manage high flows in Orleans County by restoring wetlands, reducing erosion, and implementing conservation practices.
Orleans County NRCD	$200,000	Support small family farms in the county by enhancing their sustainability and viability through conservation practices.
Rutland NRCD & Poultney Mettowee NRCD	$500,000	Improve soil health and plant productivity, control invasive species, reduce erosion and limit runoff impacts to surface waters through NRCS-approved conservation practices.
White River NRCD	$75,000	Expand access to conservation planning in Vermont through the use of technical assistance, workforce development and assessment-based practices.
Windham County NRCD	$25,000	Increase the number of forest management plans in the county so that threats to forest health such as pests, changing weather patterns, and increased fire risk can be reduced.
Windham County NRCD	$350,000	Improve forest health by combating invasive species, improving wildlife habitat and building climate resilience in the county.
Windham County NRCD	$200,000	Address the growing challenges small farmers in the county encounter such as poor soil quality, plant degradation, erosion, and pest pressure.
Winooski NRCD	$200,000	Establish riparian buffer zones to naturally filter runoff, reduce erosion, and create wildlife habitat.
Total	**$4,400,000**	







Questions?

Rick Hopkins, NRCC Board Chair

Clare Ireland, NRCC Administrator

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