

August 2010

Massachusetts Cranberry Growers and Partners

Problem statement

In the office:

Brian- Hi Gary, I'd like to introduce you to Len, district conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Linda, farm planning coordinator for the Plymouth County Conservation District.

Gary – Hi Len, Linda. As Brian probably told you, I just bought an old cranberry bog and I'd like to bring it back into production. I think this is a great opportunity to use technology and sustainable design as a model for environmentally responsible cranberry farming.

Linda- Why don't we go out and take a look at the bog to get an idea of what might work on this property?

Gary- Great idea. Let's meet there tomorrow afternoon, say, around two o'clock.

At the bog:

Gary- As you can see, we've got serious problems here- weeds, even a few small trees. This is an old style cranberry bog with a peat bottom. The source of water is a nearby pond. There's a large ditch that meanders through the bog and there are several side ditches that empty into the main ditch. The sections have been graded to slope down to the main ditch so the bog is 2 to 3 feet out of level. This means it takes a lot of water to flood the bog in the winter and at harvest time. There's no way to hold water on the property after chemical applications, so fertilizers and pesticides drain out into the neighboring property.

Linda- Have you got have a farm plan for this property?

Gary- No, I hoped you would help me with that.

Len- So you're looking for a way to deliver water and chemicals at just the right time and in just the right amount without causing problems for the folks downstream.