



SOMERSET COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2017 ANNUAL REPORT



Somerset County SWCD
70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976
Phone (207) 474-8324 x 3
info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

District Board - Supervisors

Kerry Hebert, Board Chair
PO Box 582
Starks, ME 04911
(207) 696-3756
Cell (207) 578-0342
Kabear582@gmail.com

Term ends: 12/31/2019
Years of Service: 20 years

Alan Haberstock
Vice Chair & Advisory Council Rep
1392 Hill Road
Canaan, ME 04924
(207) 487-3328 x248
Cell 207 399-0385
Alan.Haberstock@KleinschmidtUSA.com

Term ends: 12/31/2018
Years of Service: 16 years

John Ackley, Treasurer
50 Elm Street
Skowhegan, ME
(207) 474-0025
Cell (207) 242-1963
Marshall Yard (207) 663-4406
John.Ackley@plumcreek.com
moonpie@beeline-online.net

Term ends: 12/31/2017
Years of Service: 12 years

Gabriel Clark
PO Box 194
New Portland, ME 04954
Cell (207) 628-4272
gclark004@yahoo.com

Term ends: 12/31/2017
Years of Service: 10 years

Ann Mefferd
300 Beckwith Road
Cornville, ME 04976
(207) 858-3033
farmers@onedropfarm.com

Term ends: 12/31/2018
Years of Service: 1 year



Somerset County SWCD
70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976
Phone (207) 474-8324 x 3
info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

District Board – Associate Supervisors

Positions are currently vacant. Board is actively looking for new individuals to volunteer.

District Employees

Executive Director

Joe Dembeck
1184 East River Road
Skowhegan, ME 04976
C 474-9789
joseph.dembeck@me.nacdnet.net

Date of employment 5/11/2015

Technical Director

Laura Suomi-Lecker
PO Box 45
Liberty, ME 04949
H 589-3018
C 975-4873
laura.lecker@me.nacdnet.net

Date of employment 1/2/2007

Administrative Assistant

Pamela Guerin
PO Box 184
Skowhegan, ME 04976
H 858-4324
pamela.guerin@me.nacdnet.net

Date of employment 7/29/2013
Date employment ended 3/24/2016



Somerset County SWCD

70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976

Phone (207) 474-8324 x 3

info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

A brief summary of the programs currently in place, program changes and/or new programs SCSWCD plans to implement.

Future And On Going Projects & Plans

- Continue participation in Envirothon, a natural resource science based competition for high school aged students, at county and state levels. Also participate in regional Field Day, which prepares Envirothon teams for the event. Coordinate with area high schools, groups, and home schoolers plus assist as requested.
- Continue annual trout sale fundraiser. Investigate additional options for fundraisers that would promote conservation practices.
- Spotlight and recommend products and Best Management Practices to encourage conservation enhancements and erosion control.
- Participate in continuing education plus applicable certifications and staff development.
- Continue to provide education and technical assistance on issues including buffer planting, camp road maintenance, erosion control, nutrient management, conservation enhancements, water quality, and forestry management issues.
- Support and expand outreach and education programs to help farmers in such areas as cover crops, marketing, organic transition, and soil quality, to name a few.
- Continue partnership with Maine NRCS, FSA, Somerset County Cooperative Extension, plus private, state and federal agencies and organizations.
- Produce and/or obtain, plus distribute informational materials (i.e.: brochures, booklets, worksheets) focusing on conservation.
- Identify and obtain funding, grants, donations, or partnerships for conservation projects and outreach.
- Expand mailing/contact list to include more participants, and update current list. Develop electronic newsletter in order to replace paper newsletter.
- Contribute press releases and articles to local newspaper highlighting SWCD issues and events, conservation topics, and completed projects.
- Continued reports to Board Supervisors, County Commissioners, and Local Working Group as scheduled.
- Continued attendance and outreach at area fairs, events, and meetings.
- Continue work to update and improve web presence.
- Continue to provide technical assistance in areas of nutrient management, erosion control, aquatic organism passage, and water resource management to farmers, landowners, lake associations, road associations, and towns.



Somerset County SWCD

70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976

Phone (207) 474-8324 x 3

info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

- Continued participation in the “Improving Soil Health through Cover Cropping and Reduced Tillage in the Dairy Belt of Maine” state CIG grant.
- Yankee Woodlot Demonstration Forest– Continue collaboration with the Maine Forest Service (MFS) to implement workshops at the forest and start implementation of harvest activities.
- Forestry/Wildlife Education/Workshops – Continue collaborations with MFS, Maine Woodland Owners, other Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and NRCS to host outreach events on topics pertinent to private woodland owners.

Highlights of Proposed 2017 Activities:

- Complete and Implement Five Year Strategic Plan (2017-2022) for the District
- Timber Harvest Planning Workshop @ Yankee Woodlot Demonstration Forest (Collaboration with MFS, University of Maine Extension)
- Picture Post Project @ Yankee Woodlot – Post harvest monitoring of succession.
- Site Evaluator Workshop
- Regional Envirothon (Collaboration with Somerset County School Districts and other regional Soil and Water Conservation Districts)
- Assist DACF with Water Use Survey on Somerset County Farms
- Continuation of CIG Soil Health Project (Collaboration with UMaine Extension, NRCS, Waldo and Kennebec County SWCDs)
- Spring Trout Sale
- Agricultural Allies - Grassland Bird Protection and Management Project - MOHF
- Maine Farm Days
- Nutrient Management Plans for Dairy Farmers
- Assistance to NRCS through Contribution Agreement Grants
- Assistance to NRCS & TNC with Statewide Aquatic Organism Passage Project
- Assistance to other Districts (Pond Management and Invasive Forest Pest Workshops)



Somerset County SWCD
70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976
Phone (207) 474-8324 x 3
info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

**Conservation Priorities of Somerset County
Recommended to the NRCS Somerset County Field Office
By the Local Working Group for FY 2017 and FY 2018**

The Somerset County Local Working Group met on December 17, 2015 and determined the EQIP funding allocations for FY 2017, Table 1. Recently the Local Working Group at their December 15, 2017 meeting, has recommended to allocate the available EQIP funds as follows for FY 2018, Table 2. It was decided to increase the allocation for Forestry to 16% given the number of active Forestry Management Plans in the county and the interest by landowners for conducting work activities recommended in their plans. Cropland and Grazing were decreased due to the lower number of applications submitted for these categories. The attendees at the Local Working Group meeting felt that review of applications for forestry FY 2018 activities at the December 2017 meeting will allow for the group to determine if the objective of the allocation change was met.

Table 1. FY 2017 EQIP Funding Allocations

Resource Category	% of Local Allocated Funding
Animal Waste	74%
Forestry	8%
Cropland (incl. hayland)	10%
Grazing	8%

Table 2. FY 2018 EQIP Funding Allocations

Resource Category	% of Local Allocated Funding
Animal Waste	74%
Forestry	16%
Cropland (incl. hayland)	5%
Grazing	5%



SOMERSET COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT ANNUAL PLAN OF OPERATION (APO) 2017

This plan identifies the major objectives, actions, and goals that will be emphasized in calendar year 2017 to help Somerset County address soil and water conservation needs as well as focus the public education and outreach efforts of the District.

District work plan for addressing priorities.

I. WATER QUALITY

To reduce erosion and non-point source pollution on cropland, woodland, construction sites, roadsides and other areas.

A. Work with units of government and community organizations to;

1. Provide technical assistance to lake associations, watershed associations, conservation groups, etc.
2. Partner with NRCS to provide technical assistance for nonpoint source pollution surveys
3. Expand working relationships with municipalities or municipal road crews
4. Create a working relationship with landowners of forestland within the Kennebec River Basin to identify forestland erosion and implement practices to control it.
5. Provide technical assistance on Nutrient Management planning.
6. Provide outreach and educational materials to the public

Who: Executive Director (ED) / Technical Director (TD), Supervisors When: As needed

B. Municipalities

1. Provide assistance/ permit reviews (LUPC and DEP)
2. Provide technical assistance for construction site (erosion control certification) inspections.
3. Provide outreach and educational materials to municipalities and towns

Who: NRCS/ ED

When: As needed

C. Encourage proper management of wastes

1. Agriculture
 - a. Provide technical assistance – nutrient management plans to area producers at the current technical assistance rate



Somerset County SWCD

70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976

Phone (207) 474-8324 x 3

info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

- b. Encourage proper management of agricultural waste through manure storage, manure testing (with use of manure management program, nutrient management program, etc.) and land spreading to meet crop nutrient needs
- c. Promote integrated crop management through workshops and Nutrient Management
- d. Pursue funding for surveys, assessments, and implementation projects.
- e. Provide outreach and educational materials to the agricultural community.
- f. Work with Maine Department of Agriculture to share information, needs, and record updates.

Who: ED/TD

When: Ongoing

II. SOIL EROSION CONTROL / BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

A. Gravel Road Maintenance

- 1. Provide public educational workshops on BMP implementation to road and lake associations
- 2. Road Side Ditch Demonstrations
- 3. Gravel Road training sessions
- 4. General Outreach
- 5. Partner with Department of Environmental Protection to maintain updated information and training.

B. Proper Forest / Woodlot Management

- 1. Continue Forestry Program, and educate the public regarding good forest management practices
- 2. Promote and present developing forestry demonstration areas at the Yankee Woodlot, and work with towns/ local school departments.
- 3. Award for outstanding Woodlot Owner of the Year (reinstitute at 2018 Annual Meeting)
- 4. Pursue or expand forestry funding
- 5. Provide outreach and educational materials to the public and forestry community
- 6. Partner with Maine Forest Service/SWOAM to assist with education programs

C. Crop and Grazing Land

- 1. Provide public educational workshops on BMP implementation
- 2. Pasture walks Workshop
- 3. General Outreach of Cover Crop
- 4. Provide technical assistance and cost sharing opportunities for farmers through the “Improving Soil Health through Cover Cropping and Reduced Tillage in the Dairy Belt of Maine” state CIG grant.

Who: ED /TD, Supervisors

When: As needed



Somerset County SWCD
70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976
Phone (207) 474-8324 x 3
info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

III. WILDLIFE HABITAT

- A. Hold wildlife Workshops (pond building and maintenance, pollinator plantings, etc.)
- B. Proceed with Year 2 of Agriculture Allies (grassland bird) Project
- C. Assess Wildlife Habitat Needs
- D. Provide technical assistance to cooperators
- E. Seek wildlife habitat funding
- F. Promote participation in appropriate current NRCS programs (CSP, EQIP, etc.)
- G. Provide outreach and educational materials to the public

Who: ED/TD/NRCS/IF&W/UMCE/USFWS

When: As needed

IV. CONSERVATION EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

- A. Ongoing Educational Projects
 - 1. Involvement with Regional Envirothon
 - 2. Assist with State Envirothon
 - 3. Pond Workshops
 - 4. Nutrient Management Plan (technical assistance)
 - 5. Award Outstanding Conservation Farmer of the Year (reinstitute at 2018 Annual Meeting)
 - 6. Award Outstanding Woodlot Owner of the Year (reinstitute at 2018 Annual Meeting)
 - 7. Provide outreach and educational materials to the public

Who: ED/TD/MFS

When: As needed

V. COORDINATE AND IMPLEMENT DISTRICT OPERATIONS

- A. Assign committees to plan Annual Report, budget, education and forestry program
 - 1. Budget- Supervisors
 - 2. Annual Report- Supervisors and Executive Director
 - 3. Forestry- Maine Forest Service, Kerry Hebert, John Ackley and others.
 - 4. Education- Supervisors, Executive Director, Technical Director
 - 5. Personnel Policy- Supervisors and Executive Director

Who: ED/ TD/Supervisors/ NRCS

When: Throughout the year

- B. Advise public of district meetings, elections, newsletters, conservation/ education, booths or programs, workshops, and contests (Envirothon, Woodlot Owner of the Year, etc.) through public newspapers, Webpages, quarterly newsletters and annual report

Who: ED/TD

When: As scheduled, or needed



Somerset County SWCD
70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976
Phone (207) 474-8324 x 3
info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

C. District Fundraising
1. Trout Sale

Who: ED

When: Annually in Spring

D. Interact with state, county, and township officials to integrate their programs with the services the District offers to their communities.

1. Contact towns and legislators by letter, explaining district programs, service available and make personal follow-up
2. Provide outreach and educational materials to State, County and township officials.

Who: ED/ Supervisors

When: Once/twice a year

VI. CURRENT GRANT PROJECTS

A. Grants – Agricultural Allies – Grassland Bird Protection & Management

1. Continue Year 2 of Project in 2017 with MOHF funding
2. Conduct farmer and landowner outreach efforts
3. Develop demonstration areas for practices
4. Determine the need for securing additional funding for project

Who: ED/ TD/Supervisors

When: Throughout 2017

B. Future Grant Projects

1. Stay “up-to-date” with upcoming grant projects available through Internet, mailings, and other sources for future grant projects (which will promote beneficial conservation practice) such as:
 - a. EQIP
 - b. AOP – Focus on Eastern brook trout, sea-run Atlantic salmon, and diadromous fish species
 - c. SARE
 - d. Small Foundation and Capacity Grants
 - e. Other applicable opportunities

Who: ED/ TD/Supervisors/ NRCS

When: Throughout the year



Somerset County SWCD
70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976
Phone (207) 474-8324 x 3
info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

Benefits of District Programs

- Solve statewide problems by providing local solutions to many local natural resource problems (one size does not fit all)
- Assistance to agricultural producers in maintaining farming as a viable career and business option
- District provides local leadership as part of a cooperative team to find solutions to problems for residents, businesses, and landowners
- Opportunities which provide education and hands-on training for natural resource issues and concerns
- Technical assistance to landowners that will enhance and improve soil and water quality, plus maintain appropriate certifications and comply with State regulations (i.e.: Nutrient Management Plans)
- Technical assistance and education to reduce non-point source pollution to a target audience of gravel and camp road users. Also work with private road owners to establish a road review and individualized plans for erosion control and road maintenance
- Address the need for agricultural and forestry professionals in Somerset County to maintain necessary certifications, continuing education credits, and training to comply with industry requirements
- Work with schools, groups, and committees to promote soil and water conservation through the awareness and use of Best Management Practices.
- Identify agricultural and forest related priorities and concerns to address issues that could benefit both the landscape and industry needs
- Technical assistance and education to help landowners to better understand and manage their individual woodlots
- Manage and promote the Yankee Woodlot Demonstration Forest in cooperation with MFS, UMCE, and IF&W.
- Promote programs which generate local cash flow for Somerset County residents and landowners through federally funded contracts. Continue to assist Federal and State agencies in working to ensure programs are efficiently managed



Note - Somerset County Soil & Water Conservation District has changed its budget year from January – December to July – June to better correspond with State funding, County funding, and Federal grant cycles.

**Somerset County Soil & Water Conservation District
 2016 Six Month Budget (January – June)**

Expenses

	PROPOSED	ACTUAL
Payroll [including taxes]	\$33,810.00	\$28,639.71
Workers Comp	\$0.00	\$0.00
Office Supplies	\$200.00	\$442.23
Sales - Item Costs	\$4,000.00	\$4,433.60
Postage/Printing	\$300.00	\$0.00
Dues	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Payroll Service	\$600.00	\$424.02
Travel/Mileage	\$750.00	\$467.72
Meetings/Events/Workshops	\$500.00	\$463.38
Election Expense	\$0.00	\$0.00
Training	\$250.00	\$0.00
Licenses/Permits	\$150.00	\$80.00
Grant Payments to Participants	\$4,000.00	\$4,501.17
Total:	\$45,560.00	\$40,451.83

Income

Somerset County Funding	\$12,250.00	\$12,250.00
State of ME - Dept. of Ag.	\$0.00	\$0.00
USDA- NRCS Contribution Agreements	\$7,000.00	\$4,956.30
USDA-NRCS CIG Soil Health Project	\$5,000.00	\$14,441.48
2016 Natural Resource Assessment	\$3,000.00	\$1,000.00
Sales (trees, trout)	\$5,000.00	\$5,569.32
Invasive Forest Pest Grant	\$725.00	\$120.00
Workshops/Education	\$200.00	\$0.00
Interest Income	\$0.00	\$0.00
MEMIC Dividend	\$0.00	\$0.00
Tech. Assistance/Evaluations - Billable	\$500.00	\$500.00
Grants and/or Additional Fundraising	\$2,000.00	\$0.00
Total:	\$35,675.00	\$38,837.10



Somerset County SWCD
 70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976
 Phone (207) 474-8324 x 3
info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

**Somerset County Soil & Water Conservation District
 FY 2017 Budget (July 2016 – June 2017)**

Expenses

	PROPOSED	YEAR TO DATE
Payroll [including taxes]	\$58,500.00	\$26,494.00
Workers Comp	\$500.00	\$422.00
Office Supplies	\$400.00	\$170.76
Sales - Item Costs	\$4,000.00	\$0.00
Postage/Printing	\$500.00	\$23.50
Dues	\$2,000.00	\$1,120.00
Payroll Service	\$1,200.00	\$459.48
Travel/Mileage	\$1,500.00	\$887.53
Meetings/Events/Workshops	\$1,000.00	\$614.63
Election Expense	\$150.00	\$0.00
Training	\$500.00	\$0.00
Licenses/Permits	\$250.00	\$80.00
Grant Payments to Participants	\$25,000.00	\$15,266.77
Envirothon	\$0.00	\$11.00
Total:	\$95,500.00	\$45,549.67

Income

Somerset County Funding	\$26,000.00	\$13,000.00
State of ME - Dept. of Ag.	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
USDA- NRCS Contribution Agreements	\$9,980.00	\$5,764.51
USDA-NRCS CIG Soil Health Project	\$32,000.00	\$9,005.28
2016 Natural Resource Assessment	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
Sales (trees, trout)	\$5,000.00	\$230.00
Invasive Forest Pest Grant	\$725.00	\$1080.00
Workshops/Education	\$500.00	\$0.00
Interest Income	\$30.00	\$0.00
MEMIC Dividend	\$45.00	\$206.52
Tech. Assistance/Evaluations - Billable	\$500.00	\$0.00
Grants and/or Additional Fundraising	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total:	\$99,780.00	\$56,286.31



Somerset County Soil & Water Conservation District
DRAFT FY 2018 Budget (July 2017 – June 2018)*

Expenses

	PROPOSED
Payroll [including benefits and taxes]	\$86,287.00
Workers Comp	\$800.00
Office Supplies	\$1,500.00
Sales - Item Costs	\$4,000.00
Postage/Printing	\$250.00
Dues	\$2,000.00
Payroll Service	\$1,200.00
Travel/Mileage	\$1,800.00
Meetings/Events/Workshops	\$1,000.00
Election Expense	\$250.00
Training	\$500.00
Licenses/Permits	\$300.00
Grant Payments to Participants	\$6,000.00
Envirothon	\$200.00
Total:	\$106,087.00

Income

Somerset County Funding	\$26,000.00
State of ME - Dept. of Ag.	\$25,000.00
USDA- NRCS Contribution Agreements	\$5,800.00
USDA-NRCS CIG Soil Health Project	\$8,000.00
TNC Contract for Technical Services	\$36,400.00
Sales (trees, trout)	\$5,000.00
Workshops/Education	\$250.00
Interest Income	\$30.00
MEMIC Dividend	\$45.00
Tech. Assistance/Evaluations - Billable	\$500.00
Grants and/or Additional Fundraising	\$0.00
Total:	\$107,025.00

*The FY 2018 District Budget is currently under development by the Board Supervisors and Executive Director. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is in discussions with the District regarding District staff providing technical services for a Regional Conservation Partnership Program in Maine focused on Aquatic Organic Passage Projects (i.e. culvert replacements).



Somerset County SWCD
70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976
Phone (207) 474-8324 x 3
info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

Somerset County Soil and Water Conservation District

2016 Accomplishments

For decades, Somerset County SWCD has been a leading local resource for agricultural producers, the forestry industry, and water resource concerns. With the ability to respond quickly to issues as priorities evolve, SCSWCD helps Somerset County participants stay current and updated with state and federal regulations, emerging technology, and options for project/program funding.

Whether providing the agricultural community with state required nutrient management plans, or partnering with local, state, and federal agencies to expand conservation opportunities for area land and business owners, we are proud to provide valuable assistance to the citizens in this unique and diverse county.

2016 Natural Resource Assessment (APO Priorities I, II, III, IV): Ever 5 years each of the Conservation Districts in the Maine with assistance from the Maine Office of the USDA-NRCS develop a Natural Resource Assessment Report for each district. This document is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of all natural resource conditions in the District. However, it is a snapshot of current issues and conditions which are significant to the Somerset County Soil & Water Conservation District in its work with NRCS and other conservation partners.

Somerset County SWCD gathered feedback through MACD's web-based survey and through one public meeting held in the towns of Skowhegan. Input, responses, and feedback were collected from federal, state, and local departments and agencies, conservation organizations working in our area, county and town representatives, local leaders, and concerned residents. Data and input was also collected from partners, county committees, and through public events. The 2016 Somerset County Natural Resource Assessment can be found at:
<http://somersetswcd.org/reports-links/>.

In addition to developing the report, Joe Dembeck (Executive Director) coordinated the development and implementation of the statewide electronic survey that was utilized by all districts.

Yankee Woodlot Demonstration Forest (APO Priorities II-B, III, IV): Working in collaboration with the Maine Forest Service and the UMaine Extension Somerset Office, the District implemented a number of workshops at the Yankee Woodlot Demonstration Forest located in Skowhegan. The 4 workshops held at the Yankee Woodlot in 2016 were: 1) Reviving and Managing Wild Apple Trees in February; 2) Invasive Forest Pests and Plants (with Maine Natural Areas Program) in May; 3) Tape, Paint and Signs (*Pre-Harvest Marking*) in November; and 4) Harvest Planning (*Think Before You Cut*) in December. The Small Woodland Owners



Somerset County SWCD
70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976
Phone (207) 474-8324 x 3
info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

Association of Maine (SWOAM) has been another valuable partner in advertising these workshops to the public. In preparations for timber harvests in 2017 and 2018 on the woodlot the District assisted MFS in planning and marking of forest stands, trails, tote roads, and waterways.

2016 Workshops/Education/Outreach (APO Priority IV):

Reviving and Managing Wild Apple Trees Workshop (Collaboration with MFS, UMaine Extension Somerset Office, SWOAM) – Held in February at the Yankee Woodlot in Skowhegan.

Trees in Transition – Succession Planning for Woodland Owners (Collaboration with Piscataquis County SWCD, SWOAM, MFS, and Forest Society of Maine) – Held in March in Parkman.

Reviving and Managing Wild Apple Trees Workshop (Collaboration with Oxford County SWCD, SWOAM) – Held in April in Norway.

Invasive Plants and Forest Pests Workshop (Collaboration with MNAP, UMaine Extension Somerset Office, SWOAM, and MFS) – Held in May at the Yankee Woodlot in Skowhegan.

Invasive Forest Pest Outreach (Collaboration with MFS, MACD) – Held in June at Maine Highway Congress in Skowhegan.

Invasive Forest Pest and Plant Outreach (Collaboration with MFS, MACD) – Held in August at Maine Farm Days in Clinton.

Grassland Bird Habitat Education/Outreach as part of Agriculture Allies Project funded through Davis Conservation Foundation Grant. Activities in 2016 included 9 presentations, 4 displays, surveys at 9 properties (farm and nonfarm), and outreach articles posted/printed in separate 12 social media locations. – Activities held from April through October.

Tape, Paint and Signs (*Pre-Harvest Marking*) Workshop (Collaboration with MFS, UMaine Extension Somerset Office, SWOAM) – Held in November at the Yankee Woodlot in Skowhegan.

Harvest Planning (*Think Before You Cut*) Workshop (Collaboration with MFS, UMaine Extension Somerset Office, SWOAM) – Held in December at the Yankee Woodlot in Skowhegan.



Somerset County SWCD

70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976

Phone (207) 474-8324 x 3

info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

Fundraisers (APO Priority V):

The District conducted its annual Trout Sale to Somerset County residents interested in stocking their ponds. The sale was very popular with sales increasing 40% from 2015. As in past years the trout provided by Mountain Spring Trout Hatchery (Frenchville, ME) were of excellent condition. This annual sale is the largest fundraiser that the District currently conducts.

In conjunction with the Kennebec County SWCD, the District conducted its annual Tree and Shrub Sale. Unfortunately this sale has seen greatly decreased orders in recent years. This trend is likely due to a combination of factors: 1) increase in nurseries that provide mail order delivery; 2) numerous large nurseries and greenhouses in southern Somerset County; and 3) FEDCO's new distribution facility in Clinton provides much better storage and pick-up for orders. The Board voted in late 2016 to suspend the Tree and Shrub Sale for the foreseeable future given that expenses were greater than revenue generated.

Technical Development of Staff (APO Priority V):

In 2016 the Board of Supervisors continued to invest in the District's technical staff professional development in order to maintain quality consultation and technical services to the residents of Somerset County. Specific technical development activities included:

- Seminar on QuickBooks Accounting Software
- Stream Rehabilitation Workshop
- Maine Forest Service Flume Table Training
- Maine Sustainability & Water Conference
- Certified Crop Advisor In-Service Training
- NRCS Technical Trainings
- National Cover Crop Conference
- Maine Forest Service Invasive Forest Pest Training
- Maine Natural Areas Program Invasive Plant Training

Aquatic Organism Passage (APO Priorities I, III):

Somerset County contains some of the most intact wild Eastern brook trout populations in the United States and the Kennebec River system maintains a small population of federally endangered sea-run Atlantic salmon which is the focus of state and federal restoration efforts. Habitat quality and complexity is the key to maintaining and managing these species and by focusing on providing passage at road crossing structures (culverts and bridges) we can insure that these fish species and others can move throughout waterways to access spawning habitat, rearing habitat, cold water refugia, etc. By working with the NRCS, USFWS, Maine IF&W, and



Somerset County SWCD
70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976
Phone (207) 474-8324 x 3
info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

Maine DEP the District can assist municipalities and private landowners with road crossing projects. In 2016 the District assisted the Towns of Madison and Starks in their State Culvert Bond grant proposals to repair culverts that impair fish passage. District staff also worked with NRCS on several culvert evaluation and replacement projects.

Expanding Partnerships and Collaborations (APO Priorities – ALL):

By working with other agencies and groups the District is able to diversify and expand education and outreach opportunities for Somerset County residents. In 2016 the District significantly expanded its partnerships and collaborations with other agencies and groups. Examples of projects/activities with partners include:

- 2016 Natural Resource Assessment – Partners: MFS, IFW, MACD, NRCS
- Invasive Forest Pest Project – Partners: DACF, MACD, Franklin County SWCD, SWOAM, DOT
- Agricultural Allies – Grassland Bird Project – Partners: Davis Conservation Foundation, IFW, Avian Haven, MACD, Knox-Lincoln SWCD, Waldo County SWCD, Kennebec County SWCD
- Yankee Woodlot Demonstration Forest Workshops – Partners: MFS, Somerset County Office of UMaine Cooperative Extension, MNAP, SWOAM
- CIG Soil Health Project – Partners: NRCS, DACF, Kennebec County SWCD, Waldo County SWCD, UMaine Cooperative Extension, Farmers (8)
- Succession Planning Workshop for Woodland Owners – Partners: Piscataquis County SWCD, SWOAM, MFS, and Forest Society of Maine

Technical Assistance to Landowners & Community (APO Priorities I-IV, VI):

Throughout the year the District receives, calls, emails, or office visits from county residents, towns, and resource professionals. In 2016 there was an increase in requests for assistance. Many could be directly handled by District staff, while others were forwarded on to other agencies that could provide further assistance.

Examples of technical assistance provided:

- Landowner requests for soil health/vegetation management assistance
- Landowner requests for forestry information or site visits



Somerset County SWCD

70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976

Phone (207) 474-8324 x 3

info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

- Landowner requests for wildlife habitat information, ex. grassland birds, early successional habitat
- Landowner requests for pond management assistance, ex. algal blooms, fish health, site visits
- Landowner requests for erosion control assistance via site visits
- Erosion control technical assistance to Town of Skowhegan
- Culvert Bond Grant Proposal assistance to Towns of Madison & Starks
- Site visits, communications with affected landowners, and coordination with other agencies (Somerset County Emergency Management Agency, USDA-FSA, USDA-NRCS, IFW) in regards to the June 28, 2016 rain storm that cause significant damage to private roads in Upper Enchanted, Johnson Mountain, and Parlin Pond Townships.

Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) - Soil Health (APO – Priority II-C):

In 2014, SCSWCD partnered with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Service (UMCE) and Kennebec and Waldo County SWCD offices and was awarded funding for a State NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) project. The goal of this three year project is to help silage corn based dairy producers in Kennebec, Somerset, and Waldo Counties improve the soil health and quality on their farms through the innovative use of proven soil health conservation practices including cover crops, reduced/no-till farming, and crop rotations. This year brought the continuation of summer interseeding trails and winter cover cropping with farmers that are collaborating on this project. The Districts and UMaine Cooperative Extension continued the targeted outreach for the program with a general soil health educational component. A CIG soil health display were again featured at local fairs and agricultural events this past summer and fall. Presentation was also conducted, detailing key soil health principles as well as challenges and lessons learned to date through this project. Both presentations and displays will be used at events throughout 2017. Given the timing of 2017 planting schedules, lab analysis by the UMaine Cooperative Extension, and final report preparation, this project is being extended for 1 more year. The new completion date will be June 30, 2018.



Somerset County SWCD

70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976

Phone (207) 474-8324 x 3

info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org



Pictured above is a winter cover crop trial on a corn field in Saint Albans.

Soil Health – Non-CIG Activities (APO Priority II-C):

Laura Suomi-Lecker continues to participate in a University of Maine Cooperative Extension SARE three year Soil Health professional development program. The program is focused on protecting and improving soil health, and the goal is to increase sustainable agriculture educators' ability to help farmers make informed decisions about issues including cover cropping, reducing tillage, and improving soil health. Core members are more actively involved in on-farm demonstrations and educational programming. Laura-Suomi Lecker is serving as a core member for the central Maine Dairy Team.

The SARE group continues to move forward promoting soil health in a variety of ways this year. The program thus far has been a success, in having increased knowledge, skills, and confidence of team members in making soil health recommendations to farmers; particularly in the areas of soil health test measures and interpretation, opportunities to incorporate cover crops in crop rotations, and local trials of cover cropping, reduced tillage, and rotations to improve/maintain soil health. This vitalization of our Ag service provider soil health 'toolbox' translates to better education and service to our local farmers.



Somerset County SWCD
70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976
Phone (207) 474-8324 x 3
info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

To date, programs as part of this project have reached a total of 630 farmers throughout Maine, with new soil health management practices affecting approximately 5070 acres.

Specific Dairy Team activities this past year included a no-till planter clinic (Hewett Farm, April 22); a no-till corn and cover crop field day (Stoneyvale Farm); a July cover crop twilight meeting; and a Cover Crop Species Demonstration site at Maine Farm Days' Misty Meadows Farm in Clinton, where Rick Kersbergen and Caragh Fitzgerald seeded 30 different cover crop species and mixes. At this site, they also inter-seeded different clover species and rye into silage corn. Lauchlin Titus gave a Maine Farm Days cover crop talk in these demonstration areas. The second annual SARE Maine Soil Health Conference was held in December in Bangor. It was well-attended and team meetings held after the conference were focused on planning activities for the 2017 field season.

Davis Grant – Grassland Birds (APO Priorities III, VI):

Throughout recent years the District has provided education and outreach on the topic of grassland bird conservation.

Unfortunately, the populations of many of these iconic birds are in sharp decline. In Maine, hayfields are cut once and often twice during the grassland bird nesting timeframe, resulting in total nest failure. In December 2015 the District was pleased to receive grant funding from the Davis Conservation Foundation for our new *Agricultural Allies Project*, so called because in addition to being a delight to see and hear, bobolinks and other grassland birds are true agricultural allies to the farmers of central Maine. The District had a very successful 1st year of the project.



Activities in 2016 included 9 presentations on grassland birds; 4 displays about the project at area fairs and conferences; and outreach articles posted/printed in 12 social media locations. Grassland bird surveys were completed at 9 properties (farm and nonfarm), providing delayed mowing payments to 3 farms to demonstrate nesting success on approximately 86 acres, resulting in the successful fledging of an estimated 90-100 bobolink nestlings.



The District has been awarded a Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund grant for continuation of the Agricultural Allies project for 2017. We are happy to report that we have maintained the support and involvement of project collaborators, and are looking forward to another successful year of activities.

Nutrient Management Plans (APO Priority I-C):

The District continued writing State Nutrient Management Plans (NMPs) for local producers in Somerset County this year.

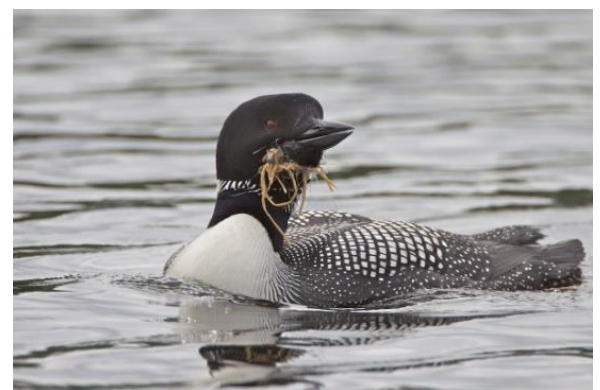
NMPs written by the District satisfy the requirements for the State of Maine Nutrient Management Law and protect producers under [Maine's Right to Farm Law](#). Plans help farmers with the proper storage, management and utilization of both on and off farm nutrients. The District's technical director, Laura Suomi Lecker, certified Crop Advisor (International) and state licensed Nutrient Management Planner, is currently working with 6 farmers to either update their existing NMP or to develop their initial NMP.

Envirothon (APO Priority IV):

The Maine Envirothon is an international science competition with a focus on natural resources. SWCDs statewide have held the events since the program came to Maine, and the event has grown annually. Somerset County SWCD, as part of the Mid-Maine region, provides assistance and support to the host District. The 2016 Mid-Coast regional Envirothon was held in Unity and District staff were present to assist with the Aquatic Resources tests, score team activities, and participant in event oversight.

"Unleaded Loons" (APO Priority III, VI):

The District continued with education and outreach through the on-going project ***UNLEADED LOONS: PREVENTING LEAD POISONING IN MAINE'S WATER BIRDS***. Lead ingestion is a death sentence for Maine's loons, other water birds, and even predatory birds, such as bald eagles, that feed on lead-contaminated prey. Lead sinkers and jigs are accidentally swallowed by loons when they are foraging for gravel they need for their digestion or when feeding on fish attached to lead fishing gear. This year the District continued angler and lake-user targeted education on this important conservation issue, providing a number of presentations for the public in school classes and for lake and conservation organizations. The District continued their 9 District





Somerset County SWCD
70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976
Phone (207) 474-8324 x 3
info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

Unleaded Loon partnership to provide unleaded tackle exchange opportunities for residents and lake users in towns covered by these Districts. The tackle exchanges provide an opportunity for anglers to turn in their lead tackle in exchange for their choice of un-leaded options to try.

CSP/EQIP Activities with NRCS (APO Priorities – ALL):

Somerset County SWCD maintains a close partnership with **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** at the Skowhegan Service Center. Through operational agreements, as well as contribution agreements, we often work in tandem to better serve the natural resource needs of Somerset County. In 2016, we worked on a multi-purpose contribution agreement with NRCS to provide both administrative and technical program assistance. These agreements provide additional conservation assistance to Somerset County participants, and provide SCSWCD with supplemental operational funding.



District Contribution Agreement Assistance to NRCS programs this year was with the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Agricultural Management Assistance Program (AMA) and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Twenty-five Somerset County producers (approximately \$1,000,000 in funds) in the three programs were assisted through this cooperative agreement in 2016.

