



In Memory of Kerry D. Hebert

SOMERSET COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2018 ANNUAL REPORT



Somerset County SWCD
70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976
Phone (207) 474-8323 x 3
info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

Loss of Board Chairman, Kerry Hebert



It is with heavy hearts that we at the SCSWCD say goodbye to our friend and board chairman, Kerry Hebert. Kerry passed away unexpectedly on November 14, 2017.

Kerry volunteered to be on the District board back in 1999. He served as a faithful member for several years and then accepted the position of chairman back in 2002. Throughout the years, Kerry has been a true steward of conservation, both in his own work as a consulting forester and as a representative for the District.

He was a mentor and friend to District staff. As employees, we could not have asked for a better or more supportive supervisor. Though busy with the demands of family life and his own business, Mt. Hunger Forestry, he was always available to listen and advise and ready to pitch in and help when he was needed.

Kerry had a wealth of conservation knowledge and experience which served the board and the District in many endeavors. He truly cared about the land and the people of Somerset County. For so many years, he lead the way for the District to provide assistance to local landowners, helping them work their land using best management practices to sustain and protect our natural resources. He was quick to endorse and facilitate a wide variety of conservation projects undertaken by District staff.

Kerry always brought his all to District activities, and not one meeting went by when we didn't all share a laugh over one of his humorous stories or comments.

We as District Staff and board members will never forget our friend, mentor and colleague. Kerry will be sadly missed.



Somerset County SWCD
70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976
Phone (207) 474-8323 x 3
info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

District Board - Supervisors

Kerry Hebert

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

Term ended: 11/14/2017
Years of Service: 19 years

Deceased

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: 17 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: 12/31/2018
Years of Service: 13 years

Gabriel Clark

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

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

Did not run for reelection

Ann Mefferd, Board Chair

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

Term ends: 12/31/2018
Years of Service: 2 year



Somerset County SWCD
70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976
Phone (207) 474-8323 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



Somerset County SWCD

70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976

Phone (207) 474-8323 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. Coordinate with area high schools, groups, and home schoolers plus assist as requested.
- 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, wildlife, and forestry management issues.
- Support and expand outreach and education programs to help farmers in such areas as cover crops, nutrient management, 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.
- Complete Final Report for the “Improving Soil Health through Cover Cropping and Reduced Tillage in the Dairy Belt of Maine” state CIG grant.



Somerset County SWCD

70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976

Phone (207) 474-8323 x 3

info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

- 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 2018 Activities:

- Forestry Workshops @ Yankee Woodlot Demonstration Forest (Collaboration with MFS, Maine Woodland Owners, University of Maine Extension)
- Picture Post Project @ Yankee Woodlot – Post harvest monitoring of succession.
- Regional Envirothon (Collaboration with Somerset County School Districts and other regional Soil and Water Conservation Districts)
- Completion of Final Report on CIG Soil Health Project (Collaboration with UMaine Extension, NRCS, Waldo and Kennebec County SWCDs)
- Agricultural Allies - Grassland Bird Protection and Management Project (Continuation with partners)
- Maine Farm Days
- Nutrient Management Plans for Dairy Farmers
- Assistance to NRCS through Contribution Agreement Grants
- Assistance to NRCS through Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) Cooperative Agreement
- Assistance to NRCS & TNC with Statewide Aquatic Organism Passage Project
- Assistance to other Districts (Invasive Forest Pest Workshops)
- Pond Management and Biology Workshop – Spring 2018
- Apple Tree Pruning Workshops: 1) Somerset County Extension Office – February 2018 and 2) Balfour Farm, Pittsfield – March 2018



Somerset County SWCD
70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976
Phone (207) 474-8323 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 2018 and FY 2019

The Somerset County Local Working Group met on December 15, 2016 and determined the EQIP funding allocations for FY 2018, Table 1. Recently the Local Working Group at their December 21, 2017 meeting, has recommended to allocate the available EQIP funds as follows for FY 2019, Table 2. The participants in the Local Working Group felt it was appropriate to modify the % allocation of funds for the FY 2019 in order to better reflect where farmer/landowner interest is currently focused. Specifically Cropland was increased to 10% of the allocated funds.

Table 1. FY 2018 EQIP Funding Allocations

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

Table 2. FY 2019 EQIP Funding Allocations

Resource Category	% of Local Allocated Funding
Animal Waste	74%
Forestry	13%
Cropland (incl. hayland)	10%
Grazing	3%



SOMERSET COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT ANNUAL PLAN OF OPERATION (APO) 2018

This plan identifies the major objectives, actions, and goals that will be emphasized in calendar year 2018 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) 474-8323 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 2019 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/Maine Woodland Owners 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.



Somerset County SWCD
70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976
Phone (207) 474-8323 x 3
info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

Who: ED /TD, Supervisors

When: As needed

III. WILDLIFE HABITAT

- A. Hold wildlife Workshops (pond building and maintenance, pollinator plantings, etc.)
- B. Proceed with Year 3 of Agriculture Allies (grassland bird) Project
- C. Assess Wildlife Habitat Needs
- D. Provide technical assistance to land owners
- 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 2019 Annual Meeting)
 - 6. Award Outstanding Woodlot Owner of the Year (reinstitute at 2019 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 and Executive Director
 - 2. Annual Report- Supervisors and Executive Director
 - 3. Forestry- Maine Forest Service, John Ackley and others.
 - 4. Education- Supervisors, Executive Director, Technical Director
 - 5. Personnel Policy- Supervisors and Executive Director

Who: ED/ TD/Supervisors

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



Somerset County SWCD
70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976
Phone (207) 474-8323 x 3
info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

Who: ED/TD

When: As scheduled, or needed

C. 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. GRANT PROJECTS

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

1. Continue Year 3 of Project in 2018
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 2018

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) 474-8323 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



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

Expenses

	PROPOSED	ACTUAL
Payroll [including taxes]	\$58,500.00	\$58,365.77
Workers Comp	\$500.00	\$422.00
Office Supplies	\$400.00	\$777.37
Sales - Item Costs	\$4,000.00	\$1,381.35
Postage/Printing	\$500.00	\$176.00
Dues	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Payroll Service	\$1,200.00	\$989.96
Travel/Mileage	\$1,500.00	\$2,607.45
Meetings/Events/Workshops	\$1,000.00	\$1,075.89
Election Expense	\$150.00	\$0.00
Training	\$500.00	\$416.00
Licenses/Permits	\$250.00	\$200.00
Grant Payments to Participants	\$25,000.00	\$20,078.25
Envirothon	\$0.00	\$11.00
Total:	\$95,500.00	\$88,501.04

Income

Somerset County Funding	\$26,000.00	\$26,000.00
State of ME - Dept. of Ag.	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
USDA- NRCS Contribution Agreements	\$9,980.00	\$11,690.88
USDA-NRCS CIG Soil Health Project	\$32,000.00	\$21,588.66
2016 Natural Resource Assessment	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
State of ME – DACF – Farm Water Use Survey	\$0.00	\$2,727.27
Sales (trees, trout)	\$5,000.00	\$1,858.40
Invasive Forest Pest Grant	\$725.00	\$2,575.08
Workshops/Education	\$500.00	\$766.20
Interest Income	\$30.00	\$32.00
MEMIC Dividend	\$45.00	\$206.52
Tech. Assistance/Evaluations - Billable	\$500.00	\$185.00
Grants and/or Additional Fundraising	\$0.00	\$8,100.00
Total:	\$99,780.00	\$102,730.01



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

Expenses

	PROPOSED	YEAR TO DATE
Payroll [including taxes]	\$86,287.00	\$28,056.92
Workers Comp	\$800.00	\$402.00
Office Supplies	\$1,500.00	\$141.11
Sales - Item Costs	\$4,000.00	\$0.00
Postage/Printing	\$250.00	\$56.08
Dues	\$2,000.00	\$1,175.00
Payroll Service	\$1,200.00	\$426.66
Travel/Mileage	\$1,800.00	\$547.36
Meetings/Events/Workshops	\$1,000.00	\$653.56
Election Expense	\$250.00	\$0.00
Training	\$500.00	\$0.00
Licenses/Permits	\$300.00	\$200.00
Grant Payments to Participants	\$6,000.00	\$10,225.86
Envirothon	\$200.00	\$0.00
Total:	\$106,087.00	\$41,884.55

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	\$5,800.00	\$2,826.42
USDA-NRCS CIG Soil Health Project	\$8,000.00	\$8,769.46
Invasive Forest Pest Grant	\$0.00	\$1,145.96
TNC Contract for Technical Services*	\$36,400.00	\$0.00
Sales (trees, trout)	\$5,000.00	\$240.00
Workshops/Education	\$250.00	\$1,620.00
Interest Income	\$30.00	\$0.00
MEMIC Dividend	\$45.00	\$69.90
Tech. Assistance/Evaluations - Billable	\$250.00	\$347.00
Grants and/or Additional Fundraising	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total:	\$106,775.00	\$53,018.74

*The anticipated technical services contract with the The Nature Conservancy (TNC) was anticipated to start in July 2017 but the overall project has been delayed and now anticipated to start in early 2018.



Somerset County Soil & Water Conservation District
DRAFT FY 2019 Budget (July 2018 – June 2019)*

Expenses

	PROPOSED
Payroll [including benefits and taxes]	\$106,100.00
Workers Comp	\$1,000.00
Office Supplies	\$2,000.00
Sales - Item Costs	\$4,000.00
Postage/Printing	\$250.00
Dues	\$2,400.00
Payroll Service	\$1,500.00
Travel/Mileage	\$2,500.00
Meetings/Events/Workshops	\$1,500.00
Election Expense	\$300.00
Training	\$2,000.00
Licenses/Permits	\$500.00
Grant Payments to Participants	\$0.00
Envirothon	\$200.00
Total:	\$124,250.00

Income

Somerset County Funding	\$26,000.00
State of ME - Dept. of Ag.	\$25,000.00
USDA- NRCS Contribution Agreements	\$6,000.00
USDA-NRCS CNMP Cooperative Agreement	\$15,000.00
TNC Contract for Technical Services	\$44,000.00
Sales (trees, trout)	\$5,000.00
Workshops/Education	\$750.00
Interest Income	\$30.00
MEMIC Dividend	\$45.00
Tech. Assistance/Evaluations - Billable	\$500.00
Grants and/or Additional Fundraising	\$0.00
Total:	\$122,325.00

*The FY 2019 District Budget is currently under development by the Board Supervisors and Executive Director.



Somerset County SWCD
70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976
Phone (207) 474-8323 x 3
info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

Somerset County Soil and Water Conservation District

2017 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.

Five Year Strategic Plan (2017-2022) for the District (APO Priority V):

District Supervisors and staff completed a Five Year Strategic Plan in June 2017. This plan will provide a framework for District planning and decision making. Though the development process for the plan was involved and took 8 months to complete it provided the unique opportunity to evaluate the District's current activities and our plans for the coming years. The goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan will be reviewed annually by the Supervisors.

Update of District Personnel Policies (APO Priority V-A):

During development of the Strategic Plan it became apparent that the existing District Personnel Policies were out of date and in need of revision. The policies were updated and will be reviewed annually by the Supervisors to determine the need for updates.

Survey on Water Use by Somerset County Farms (APO Priorities I-A and V-C):

The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry reached out to many Conservation Districts in the state to assist with the conduct of a farmer water use survey. The survey was designed to determine water use at a diversity of farm types, i.e. dairy, cattle, vegetable, berry, orchards, especially supplemental water use from wells and surface water sources. In Somerset County 70 surveys were sent out to farmers and 23 completed surveys were returned which represented a 33% reply rate, one of the highest for any county surveyed in 2017. The high return rate is likely a result of the 2016 drought that impacted much of the state and was still on the minds of area farmers.



Somerset County SWCD
70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976
Phone (207) 474-8323 x 3
info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

Yankee Woodlot Demonstration Forest (APO Priorities II-B, III, and IV):

Working in collaboration with the Maine Forest Service and the UMaine Extension Somerset Office, the District implemented two workshops at the Yankee Woodlot Demonstration Forest located in Skowhegan. The 2 workshops held at the Yankee Woodlot in 2017 were: 1) Harvest (*The Change Begins*) in February; and 2) After the Harvest in May. The Maine Woodland Owners (MWO) has been another valuable partner in advertising these workshops to the public.

In addition to the workshops District staff also:

- Assisted the MFS with harvest monitoring and documentation.
- Conducted a trail clean-up event with teachers and students from the Marti Stevens School in Skowhegan in May.
- Assisted Maine Natural Areas Program Staff with cutting and herbicide treatment of invasive plant species throughout the area that was harvested the previous winter.
- Coordinated a trail clearing and improvement day with volunteers from Farm Credit East in July.

2017 Workshops/Education/Outreach (APO Priority IV):

Invasive Forest Pests Workshops (Collaboration with MFS and other Conservation Districts) – Presentations were conducted in Houlton, Farmington, Lewiston, Topsham, and Lincoln by Joe Dembeck in support of this statewide program. (*Note – As a trained IFP presenter, Joe Dembeck assists other Conservation Districts throughout the state with this program.*)

Invasive Forest Pest and Plant Outreach (Collaboration with MFS, MACD):

- 1) Maine Agricultural Tradeshow in Augusta – January
- 2) Maine Highway Congress in Skowhegan - June
- 3) Maine Farm Days in Clinton - August.
- 4) Kennebec Valley Community College – Lecture and field discussion for 2nd year agriculture students – October
- 5) Forestry Day at Hidden Valley Nature Center, Jefferson - October

Grassland Bird Habitat Education/Outreach as part of Agriculture Allies Project funded through a Maine Outdoor Heritage Foundation Grant. Activities in 2017 included 10 presentations, 2 displays, surveys at 15 properties (farm and nonfarm), and outreach articles posted/printed in separate 9 social media locations. – Activities held from April through October.

Harvest (*The Change Begins*) Workshop (Collaboration with MFS, UMaine Extension Somerset Office, MWO) – Held in February at the Yankee Woodlot in Skowhegan.



Somerset County SWCD
70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976
Phone (207) 474-8323 x 3
info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

After the Harvest Workshop (Collaboration with MFS, UMaine Extension Somerset Office, MWO) – Held in May at the Yankee Woodlot in Skowhegan.

Pond Construction and Biology Workshops – The District collaborated with the development and conduct of two workshops: 1) Held in Rockport with Knox-Lincoln District and NRCS; and 2) Held in Dover-Foxcroft with Piscataquis District and NRCS. Events were co-sponsored and drew attendees from throughout the state.

Site (Septic) Evaluator Training (Collaboration with DEP) – Held in March in Skowhegan

Erosion and Sediment Control Training (Collaboration with DEP) – Held in October in Skowhegan

Flume Table Demonstrations – The District provided demonstrations on proper stream crossing techniques and streambank protection measures through the use of the Flume Table at Marti Stevens School Field Day (May) and the Franklin County Youth Ag Day (September).

Fundraisers (APO Priority V):

The District conducted its annual Trout Sale to Somerset County residents interested in stocking their ponds. Sale numbers were down this year considerably as the hatchery (Mountain Spring Trout Hatchery (Frenchville, ME)) supplying trout only had brook trout available for purchase.

As Mountain Spring Trout Hatchery has gone out of business in June 2017, the District is uncertain about future trout sales as there is currently only one private hatchery currently producing trout in the state and is unlikely to work through the Districts for trout sales. There is the potential that the Maliseet Tribe in northern Maine may have brook trout available (no rainbows) for sale in the Spring of 2018. They will be reviewed as a potential supplier of brook trout for a Spring Sale.

Technical Development of Staff (APO Priority V):

In 2017 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:

- HY-8 Training (Stream Crossing Design Software)
- Maine Sustainability & Water Conference
- Certified Crop Advisor In-Service Training
- NRCS Technical Trainings
- National Cover Crop Conference



Somerset County SWCD

70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976

Phone (207) 474-8323 x 3

info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

- Forestry Management Practices for Bird Habitat
- Grassland Bird Habitat Evaluation Techniques
- Agricultural Practices to Improve Pollinator and Beneficial Insect Populations

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 Maine DEP the District can assist municipalities and private landowners with road crossing projects. In 2017 the District assisted the Town of Starks in the evaluation of a culvert that is impairing 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:

- Invasive Forest Pest Project – Partners: DACF, MACD, Franklin County SWCD, Southern Aroostook SWCD, Androscoggin Valley SWCD, Penobscot SWCD, MWO, 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, MWO
- CIG Soil Health Project – Partners: NRCS, DACF, Kennebec County SWCD, Waldo County SWCD, UMaine Cooperative Extension, Farmers (8)
- Pond Construction and Biology Workshops – Partners: Piscataquis County SWCD, Knox-Lincoln SWCD, and NRCS



Somerset County SWCD
70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976
Phone (207) 474-8323 x 3
info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

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 2017 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
- 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

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. 2017 was the final season for 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. The project's final report is currently being worked on and will be completed by June 30, 2018.



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

The District continued with a second year of grassland bird outreach, education, and delayed mowing activities in 2017. In October 2016 the District was pleased to receive grant funding from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund for the 2nd year of the *Agricultural Allies Project*. Activities in 2017 included 10 presentations on grassland birds; 2 displays about the project at area fairs and conferences; and outreach articles posted/printed in 9 social media locations. Grassland bird surveys were completed at 15 properties (farm and nonfarm), providing delayed mowing payments to 3 farms to demonstrate nesting success on approximately 700 acres, resulting in the successful fledging of an estimated 500-600 bobolink nestlings.



We are happy to report that we have increased the support for this program by adding more project collaborators and are actively pursuing multiple grant opportunities in order to continue the program in 2018.

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 5 farmers to either update their existing NMP or to develop their initial NMP.



Somerset County SWCD
70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976
Phone (207) 474-8323 x 3
info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan Cooperative Agreement with NRCS (APO Priorities I-C, V-C, and VI):

The District signed a 5 year cooperative agreement with the NRCS to provide technical services related to the development of comprehensive nutrient management plans (CNMPs) for producers in Somerset and neighboring counties. CNMP activities include: 1) professional services in developing and finalizing CNMP; 2) on-site meeting(s) with producer to review land base and operations; 3) collection of soil samples; 4) communications with NRCS District Conservationist for region where the producer is located; 5) communications with producers throughout plan development. In addition to developing CNMPs Somerset SWCD staff may assist NRCS staff by providing training in writing a CNMP or the development process of the CNMP.

Somerset SWCD Technical Director, Laura Suomi-Lecker, is a certified Nutrient Management Planner who has 20 years of experience in developing Nutrient Management Plans (NMPs) and Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMPs) for livestock operations in the state of Maine. Her technical expertise is the specific reason behind the District being awarded this grant.

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 2017 Mid-Coast regional Envirothon was held in Readfield and District staff were present to assist with the Aquatic Resources tests, score team activities, and participant in event oversight.

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 and cooperative agreements, we often work in tandem to better serve the natural resource needs of Somerset County. In 2017, 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). Thirty-eight Somerset



Somerset County SWCD

70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976

Phone (207) 474-8323 x 3

info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

County producers (approximately \$1,514,000 in funds) in the three programs were assisted through this cooperative agreement in 2017.



Ledge Brook in the Yankee Woodlot, Skowhegan.

(Photo credit – Patty Cormier)