

SOMERSET COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2019 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

Ann Mefferd, Board Chair *Term ends: 12/31/2021*
300 Beckwith Road *Years of Service: 3 years*
Cornville, ME 04976
(207) 858-3033
farmers@onedropfarm.com

Alan Haberstock *Term ends: 12/31/2021*
Vice Chair & Advisory Council Rep *Years of Service: 18 years*
1392 Hill Road
Canaan, ME 04924
(207) 399-0385
alanhaberstock@gmail.com

John Ackley, Treasurer *Term ends: 12/31/2019*
50 Elm Street *Years of Service: 14 years*
Skowhegan, ME
(207) 242-1963
John.Ackley@weyerhaeuser.com
moonpie@beeline-online.net

Gwen Hilton *Term ends: 12/31/2019*
8 Olde Ferry Road *Years of Service: 1 year*
Starks, ME 04911
(207) 399-9866
gwenhilton88@gmail.com

District Board – Associate Supervisors

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



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District Employees

Executive Director

Joe Dembeck
1184 East River Road
Skowhegan, ME 04976
(207) 474-9789
joseph.dembeck@me.nacdnet.net

Date of employment 5/11/2015

Technical Director

Laura Suomi-Lecker
PO Box 45
Liberty, ME 04949
(207) 589-3018
laura.lecker@me.nacdnet.net

Date of employment 1/2/2007

Outreach Coordinator

Jennifer Brockway
PO Box 2475
Waterville, ME 04903
(207) 679-7306
somersetswcd.outreach@gmail.com

Date of employment 5/8/2018
(New District position)



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A 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.
- Continue annual trout sale fundraiser, if a supplier of trout can be teamed with. 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 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 and social media presence.



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- 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.
- Yankee Woodlot Demonstration Forest– Continue collaboration with the Maine Forest Service (MFS) to implement workshops at the forest, improve the recreational trail system, and implement other forestry-related 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.



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Highlights of Proposed 2019 Activities:

- Workshops:
 - Apple Tree Pruning Workshop – Skowhegan (February)
 - Apple Tree Pruning Workshop – Pittsfield (March)
 - Legacy Planning Workshop (April)
 - Spring Wildflower Identification @ Yankee Woodlot (May)
 - Pond Design and Management Workshop (June)
 - Forestry for the Birds @ Yankee Woodlot (June)
 - Invasive Plant Identification and Maintenance @ Yankee Woodlot (July)
 - Old Bridge Removal @ Yankee Woodlot (August)
 - Wild Edibles – Foraging Walk and Talk @ Yankee Woodlot (September)

- Yankee Woodlot Management and Activities
 - Picture Post Project – Post-harvest monitoring of succession
 - Initiate Yankee Woodlot Blog
 - Big Tree Contest at Yankee Woodlot
 - Yankee Woodlot Photo Contest
 - Trail Maintenance and Improvements
 - Update Trail Map and Brochure

- Host Mid-Coast Regional Envirothon @ Lake George Regional Park on May 21st
(Collaboration with Somerset County School Districts and other regional Soil and Water Conservation Districts)

- Spring Trout Sale – Attempt to reinstitute this annual sale by working with the Maliseet Hatchery.

- Agricultural Allies - Grassland Bird Protection and Management Project – Year 4
 - Signs and Forage Information Sheets (Blake-Nuttall Fund Grant)
 - 2019 Field Surveys (William P. Wharton Trust Grant)
 - 2019 Delayed Mowing Payments (Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant and William P. Wharton Trust Grant)
 - Land Trust Outreach (Cornell Lab’s - Land Trust Alliance Small Grants Program Grant)
 - Public Outreach and Education efforts through presentations, social media, and news releases



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- Invasive Plant Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) Project in partnership with the Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP)
- Attendance at MACD Meetings (Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter)
- Rebranding District for stronger community recognition through social media, website, and new logo development (partnership with WesArts).
- Maine Farm Days
- Participate at MACD Event at Hall of Flags
- Assist Lake George Regional Park with Gravel Road Management Workshop
- Highway Congress – Assist with MACD Training Booth
- Reinstigate District Annual Dinner and Awards (Farmer and Woodland Owners of the Year)
- Nutrient Management Plans for Farmers
- Assistance to NRCS through Contribution Agreement Grants
- Assistance to NRCS on development of Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans through Cooperative Agreement
- Collaboration with other Districts (staff development, technical services, outreach, project collaborations)



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**Conservation Priorities of Somerset County
Recommended to the NRCS Somerset County Field Office
By the Local Working Group for FY 2019 and FY 2020**

The Somerset County Local Working Group met on December 21, 2017 and determined the EQIP funding allocations for FY 2019, Table 1. Recently the Local Working Group at their January 24, 2019 meeting, has recommended to allocate the available EQIP funds as follows for FY 2020, Table 2. For FY 2020 it was decided to combine the Cropland and Pasture categories and provide a slight increase to the percent of funds allocated to the Forestry category.

Table 1. FY 2019 EQIP Funding Allocations

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

Table 2. FY 2020 EQIP Funding Allocations

Resource Category	% of Local Allocated Funding
Animal Waste	74%
Forestry	15%
Cropland & Pasture	11%



SOMERSET COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT ANNUAL PLAN OF OPERATION (APO) 2019

This plan identifies the major objectives, actions, and goals that will be emphasized in calendar year 2019 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. Work with municipalities to:

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



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- a. Provide technical assistance – nutrient management plans to area producers at the current technical assistance rate
- 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, Conservation & Forestry 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. Roadside 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/MWO to assist with education programs

C. Crop and Grazing Land

1. Provide public educational workshops on BMP implementation
2. Pasture walks Workshop



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3. General Outreach on Cover Crop and No Till Practices

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 4 of Agricultural 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 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
 - 2. Annual Report- Supervisors and Executive Director
 - 3. Forestry- Maine Forest Service, Supervisors
 - 4. Education- Supervisors, Executive Director, Technical Director



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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, Web pages, quarterly newsletters and annual report

Who: ED/TD/OC

When: As scheduled, or needed

C. District Fundraising

1. Trout Sale (*if hatchery is available to team with*)

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, services available and make personal follow-up
2. Provide outreach and educational materials to state, county and township officials

Who: ED/OC/Supervisors

When: Once/twice a year

VI. CURRENT GRANT PROJECTS

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

1. Continue Year 4 of Project in 2019 with Cornell, Blake-Nuttall Fund, MOHF, and William P. Wharton Trust 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/OC/Supervisors

When: Throughout 2019



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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



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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, MWO, UMCE, and IF&W
- Promote programs that 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



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

Expenses

	PROPOSED	ACTUAL
Payroll [including taxes]	\$50,000.00	\$57656.36
Workers Comp	\$800.00	\$402.00
Office Supplies	\$1,500.00	\$1231.34
Postage/Printing	\$250.00	\$56.08
Sales – Item Costs	\$4,000.00	\$65.00
Dues	\$2,000.00	\$1810.00
Payroll Service	\$1,200.00	\$985.29
Travel/Mileage	\$1,800.00	\$1039.06
Meetings/Events/Workshops	\$1,000.00	\$1171.61
Election Expense	\$250.00	\$0.00
Training	\$500.00	\$0.00
Licenses/Permits	\$300.00	\$200.00
Grant Payments to Participants	\$6,000.00	\$10725.86
Envirothon	\$200.00	\$58.97
Total:	\$69,800.00	\$75,401.57

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	\$5,800.00	\$4,540.83
USDA-NRCS CIG Soil Health Project	\$8,000.00	\$8,769.46
USDA-NRCS CNMP Cooperative Agreement	\$0.00	\$2,346.00
Sales (Trout)	\$5,000.00	\$305.00
Workshops/Education	\$250.00	\$1620.00
Interest Income	\$30.00	\$69.90
MEMIC Dividend	\$45.00	\$172.90
Tech. Assistance/Evaluations - Billable	\$250.00	\$347.00
Grants and/or Additional Fundraising	\$0.00	\$9,918.68
Total:	\$70,375.00	\$79,089.77



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Somerset County Soil & Water Conservation District
FY 2019 Budget (July 2018 – June 2019) (as of Jan. 14, 2019)

Expenses

	PROPOSED	YEAR TO DATE
Payroll [including taxes]	\$71,576.00	\$33,585.64
Workers Comp	\$600.00	\$341.00
Office Supplies	\$2,000.00	\$386.73
Postage/Printing	\$500.00	\$372.07
Dues	\$2,400.00	\$1,500.00
Payroll Service	\$1,500.00	\$491.68
Travel/Mileage	\$2,300.00	\$1,479.36
Meetings/Events/Workshops	\$1,500.00	\$377.46
Election Expense	\$300.00	\$240.00
Training	\$2,000.00	\$0.00
Licenses/Permits	\$500.00	\$280.00
Grant Payments to Participants	\$7,000.00	\$8,000.00
Envirothon	\$200.00	\$178.00
Total:	\$92,376.00	\$47,231.94

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	\$6,000.00	\$1,442.14
USDA-NRCS CNMP Cooperative Agreement	\$15,000.00	\$5,535.06
Maine DACF Invasive Forest Pest Project	\$0.00	\$1,512.84
Workshops/Education	\$1,500.00	\$0.00
Interest Income	\$30.00	\$136.70
MEMIC Dividend	\$45.00	\$48.13
Tech. Assistance/Evaluations - Billable	\$500.00	\$0.00
Grants and/or Additional Fundraising	\$8,000.00	\$15,950.00
Total:	\$82,075.00	\$62,624.87



Somerset County Soil & Water Conservation District
***DRAFT* FY 2020 Budget (July 2019 – June 2020) ***

Expenses

	PROPOSED
Payroll [including benefits and taxes]	\$74,000.00
Workers Comp	\$350.00
Office Supplies	\$1,000.00
Sales - Item Costs	\$1,700.00
Postage/Printing	\$500.00
Dues	\$2,500.00
Payroll Service	\$1,500.00
Travel/Mileage	\$2,500.00
Meetings/Events/Workshops	\$1,000.00
Election Expense	\$300.00
Training	\$1,000.00
Licenses/Permits	\$300.00
Grant Payments to Participants	\$10,000.00
Envirothon	\$200.00
Total:	\$96,350.00

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
Trout Sale	\$2,500.00
Workshops/Education	\$500.00
Interest Income	\$30.00
MEMIC Dividend	\$45.00
Tech. Assistance/Evaluations - Billable	\$1,000.00
Grants and/or Additional Fundraising	\$22,000.00
Total:	\$98,075.00

*The FY 2020 District Budget is currently under development by the Board Supervisors and Executive Director.



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Somerset County Soil and Water Conservation District

2018 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.

Outreach Coordinator Position (APO Priorities I - IV): The District created a new part-time position in 2018. The Outreach Coordinator position was created to improve upon the District's outreach efforts, which included: District Web site, Facebook page and other social media sites, outreach efforts to towns and residents, promotion of District activities and events, press releases, and technical assistance to the Executive and Technical Directors. The District undertook an extensive candidate search for the position and was fortunate to have several very qualified candidates apply. The District hired Jennifer Brockway who started the position in May. Besides an exceptional outreach and social media skillset, Jennifer also brings significant technical skills in the areas of grant writing and natural resource management. This new position has strengthened the overall abilities of Somerset County SWCD.

Community Outreach Surveys (APO Priorities I - IV): The District conducted two outreach surveys over the course of 2018. One survey (*Town Survey*) was directed to the 33 Towns and Plantations in Somerset County. The second survey (*Resident Survey*) was directed to residents and landowners in Somerset County. The intent of each of the surveys was to: 1) understand needs of each group as it pertained to District activities; 2) gather contact information (especially for towns); 3) increase awareness of the District's new Web site and social media platforms; and 4) gather information on environmental concerns from each group. The Town Survey was directly mailed to all town offices, with instructions and pre-paid return envelope. Additionally, the District Outreach Coordinator visited several the town offices to explain the survey and increase outreach efforts. A total of 15 towns returned completed surveys. The Resident Survey was advertised to the public through multiple avenues: 1) press release in Somerset Express; 2) District Web site; 3) District Facebook page; 4) attendance at farmers' markets in Somerset County; 5) informational posters placed at town offices, and other public venues; and 6) direct mailing (with instructions and pre-paid return envelope) to 70 farms. A



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total of 79 completed surveys were received by the District. The District is currently summarizing the results from each of these surveys.

District Website and Social Media (APO Priorities I - V): The District completely rebuilt its Web site to be more user friendly and provide current information. Also, District Facebook page and Instagram accounts were developed and are being kept current with new information and event postings. All these activities would not have been possible without the Outreach Coordinator position. The District will continue efforts to increase recognition of the organization by the Somerset County community (residents, municipalities, and groups).

District Annual Retreat (APO Priority V): District Supervisors and staff held a one-day retreat that was focused on a review of the District's Strategic Plan and current operations. This meeting allowed for a comprehensive review of goals stated in each section of the Strategic Plan.

Yankee Woodlot Demonstration Forest (APO Priorities II-B, III, IV): The second year of timber harvesting at the Yankee Woodlot Demonstration Forest in Skowhegan occurred during January and February. Approximately 90 acres were selective cut during the harvest. Working in collaboration with the Maine Forest Service and the UMaine Extension Somerset Office, the District implemented 4 workshops at the Yankee Woodlot in 2018: 1) Pruning and Managing Apple Trees in February; 2) Harvest Planning and Site Visit in February; 3) After Harvest Tour in July; and 4) Hand Tools of the Woodland Owner in August. Maine Woodland Owners (MWO) has been another valuable partner in advertising these workshops to the public. The District renewed its lease of the woodlot with the State for another 25 years. A 10-year plan for the Yankee Woodlot was completed by the District that highlights proposed improvements, activities, and workshops, most of which are focused on providing education to woodland owners.

2018 Workshops/Education/Outreach (APO Priority IV):

Pruning and Managing Apple Trees Workshop #1 (Collaboration with MFS, UMaine Extension Somerset Office, MWO) – Held in February at the Yankee Woodlot in Skowhegan.

Pruning and Managing Apple Trees Workshop #2 (Collaboration with Balfour Farm, MWO) – Held in March at the Balfour Farm in Pittsfield.

Invasive Forest Pests Workshop - Held in June NRCS Office in Skowhegan for MNAP summer seasonal staff.

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



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

Oosoola Days (Town of Norridgewock) – District had an informational booth highlighting invasive forest pests and District services. Held at Central Maine Airport in Norridgewock.

Grassland Bird Habitat Education/Outreach as part of Agricultural Allies Project funded through John Sage Foundation Grant. Activities in 2018 included 10 presentations, surveys at 17 properties (farm and nonfarm), and outreach articles posted/printed in various media locations. Activities were held from April through October.

Harvest Planning/Operations Workshop (Collaboration with MFS, UMaine Extension Somerset Office, MWO) – Held in February at the Yankee Woodlot.

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

Hand tools of the Woodland Owner Workshop (Collaboration with MFS, UMaine Extension Somerset Office, MWO) – Held in August at the Yankee Woodlot.

Stream Crossing Workshop (Collaboration with MFS, Town of Starks, MWO) – Held in October in Starks.

National Webinar on Public Outreach (Collaboration with MACD, NACD) – District’s executive director was co-presenter in a national webinar that discussed the development and results of the statewide survey conducted as part of the 2016 Natural Resource Assessment.

Technical Development of Staff (APO Priority V):

In 2018 the Board of Supervisors continued to invest in the District’s technical staff professional development to maintain quality consultation and technical services to the residents of Somerset County. Specific technical development activities included:

- Maine Sustainability & Water Conference
- Maine Invasive Species Network Meeting
- Certified Crop Advisor In-Service Training
- NRCS Technical Trainings
- National Cover Crop Conference
- Grassland Bird Habitat Assessment Training with Cornell Lab of Ornithology



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- Maine Natural Areas Program Invasive Plant Training
- Improving Conservation Outreach to Female Landowners training with the Women, Food, and Agriculture Network

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. Examples of 2018 projects/activities with partners include:

- Invasive Forest Pest Project – Partners: DACF, MACD, Franklin County SWCD, MWO, MNAP, MDOT
- Agricultural Allies – Grassland Bird Project – Partners: John Sage Foundation, MDIFW, Avian Haven, MACD, Knox-Lincoln SWCD, Waldo County SWCD, Kennebec County SWCD, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, University of New England, Damariscotta River Association, Landowners (15).
- Yankee Woodlot Demonstration Forest Workshops – Partners: MFS, Somerset County Office of UMaine Cooperative Extension, MWO
- National Webinar on Public Outreach – Partners: MACD, NACD
- CIG Soil Health Project – Partners: NRCS, MDACF, Kennebec County SWCD, Waldo County SWCD, UMaine Cooperative Extension
- Pond Design and Management Workshop – Partners: Androscoggin Valley SWCD, NRCS
- Stream Table Demonstration at Franklin County Fair Youth Ag Day - Partners: Franklin County SWCD, Maine Audubon

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

Throughout the year the District receives, calls, emails, Facebook inquiries, or office visits from county residents, towns, and resource professionals. 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:



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- 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

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

In 2018 the District completed this four-year project that was to assist 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. The project was funded through a State NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) and involved a partnership between SCSWCD, the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Service (UMCE) and Kennebec and Waldo County SWCD offices. The project's final report can be found at <https://www.somersetswcd.org/reports-links/>. In the spring of 2018, the District completed the CIG final report, featuring findings and results from the three-year soil health project, a collaboration with Kennebec and Waldo County SWCDs and the University of Maine Cooperative Extension. Included in the report is a farmer profile, detailing Skowhegan farmer Tim Hewett's, no-till and cover crop experimentation and soil health journey. This profile is posted on the University of Maine's Cooperative Extension's soil health page.

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

The District supported our Technical Director's enrollment and participation in a No-Till Intensive Training program through the University of Vermont. The program includes 8 webinar trainings, the No-till and Cover Crop Symposium, and an in-field intensive training session to take place summer/fall of 2019.

Classes will discuss common obstacles to implementing a successful no-till program, address these issues through field-proven technical knowledge, and follow a training plan that will best enable the TSP (technical service provider) to support the farmers in the no-till practice transition. Topics include: an introduction to no-till; fertility and manure management; herbicide and pest management; soil and water management; economics of no-till and record keeping; equipment and no-till application tools; precision agriculture for no-till; and a conclusion on adapting to a new management style.



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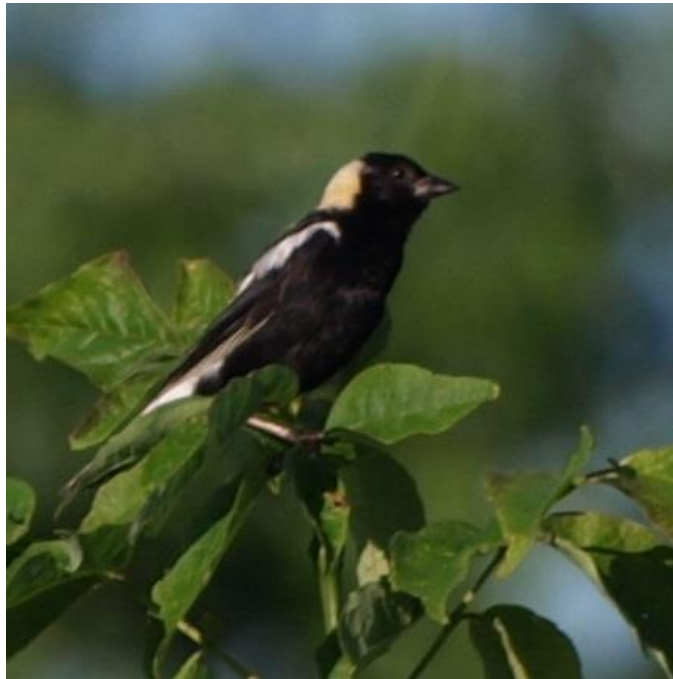
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John Sage Foundation Grant – Grassland Birds (*APO Priorities III, VI*):

Since 2015 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 April 2018 the District was pleased to receive grant funding from the John Sage Foundation to allow for continuation of the ***Agricultural Allies Project***.



Ag Allies 2018 had another successful year, with more than 450 acres enrolled in the program and 15 participants including land trusts, dairy, beef, horse, and sheep farmers, as well as non-ag landowners across central Maine. This resulted in the fledging of an estimated 1500 bobolinks, 450 Savannah sparrows and the confirmed fledging of five meadowlarks. The Damariscotta River Association, one of the participants in the MOHF-funded 2017 program, became a full-fledged Ag Allies partner in 2018, co-sponsoring a 2018 Cornell Land Trust Bird Conservation Initiative funded project (<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/landtrust/about/>) to provide technical and financial assistance to help land trusts add grassland bird management practices to fields within their stewardship.

Over 140 acres on six different properties (including DRA) were enrolled in the 2017 program and are now managing for grassland birds without further need for financial assistance. For our 2018 program participants, nine of the 15 received only technical assistance. Flexibility to work with a variety of landowners in the way that works best for each individual allows us to have the greatest success protecting grassland bird habitat. Outreach and education provided in 2018 has generated a list of landowners interested in participating in Ag Allies project 2019.

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The District has been awarded the following grants for continuation of the Agricultural Allies Project for 2019: 1) Cornell-Land Trust Alliance Grant; 2) Blake-Nuttall Grant; 3) Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund grant; 4) William P. Wharton Trust grant. We are extremely happy to see the



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continued success of this project and that the support and involvement of project collaborators has continued to increase. The District is 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, a certified Crop Advisor (International) and state licensed Nutrient Management Planner, is currently working with four 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 2018 Mid-Coast Regional Envirothon was held in Damariscotta and District staff were present to assist with the Aquatic Resources tests, score team activities, and participate 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 agreements, we often work in tandem to better serve the natural resource needs of Somerset County. In 2018, 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 County



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producers (approximately \$1,019,000 in funds) in the three programs were assisted through this cooperative agreement in 2018.

Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) Activities with NRCS (*APO Priorities – I-A, I-C*):

In 2017 SCSWCD entered into a five-year Cooperative Agreement with the NRCS to provide technical services focused on the development of Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMPs) for producers in counties throughout Central Maine. As the District's Technical Director is certified in nutrient management planning this agreement is a direct result of the professional staff employed at the District and the Supervisors' focus on continuing technical development for staff. This agreement fully reimburses the District for all staff time and mileage associated with the development of CNMPs, which includes: farm site visits, soil tests, plan development, and project administration. In 2018 the District's Technical Director worked on five different CNMPs.



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Northern Somerset County, Laura Suomi-Lecker 2013