



# ANNUAL REPORT

2020



## District Board - Supervisors

**Ann Mefferd**, Board Chair

300 Beckwith Road  
Cornville, ME 04976  
(207) 858-3033

[farmers@onedropfarm.com](mailto:farmers@onedropfarm.com)

*Term ends: 12/31/2021*

*Years of Service: 4 years*

**Alan Haberstock**

Vice Chair & Advisory Council Rep  
1392 Hill Road  
Canaan, ME 04924  
(207) 399-0385

[alanhaberstock@gmail.com](mailto:alanhaberstock@gmail.com)

*Term ends: 12/31/2021*

*Years of Service: 19 years*

**John Ackley**, Treasurer

50 Elm Street  
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[John.Ackley@weyerhaeuser.com](mailto:John.Ackley@weyerhaeuser.com)  
[moonpie@beeline-online.net](mailto:moonpie@beeline-online.net)

*Term ended: 12/31/2019*

*Years of Service: 15 years*

**Gwen Hilton**

8 Olde Ferry Road  
Starks, ME 04911  
(207) 399-9866

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*Term ends: 12/31/2022*

*Years of Service: 2 year*

**Jon Doty**

75 Bagley Road  
Madison, ME 04950  
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*Term ends: 12/31/2022*

*Years of Service: Newly elected*

## 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

(207) 474-9789

[joseph.dembeck@me.nacdnet.net](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:somersetswcd.outreach@gmail.com)

*Date of employment 5/8/2018*



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

**Future And Ongoing 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 homeschoolers 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, water quality protection, 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 health, to name a few.
- Continue partnership with USDA- NRCS, USDA-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 attendance and outreach at area fairs, events, and meetings.
- Continue Web and social media presence, assess user metrics, and modify presented information as necessary.
- 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



SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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

[info@somersetswcd.org](mailto:info@somersetswcd.org) [www.somersetswcd.org](http://www.somersetswcd.org)

- 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.



## Highlights of Proposed 2020 Activities:

- Workshops:
  - Apple Tree Pruning Workshop #1 – Skowhegan (March 1st)
  - Apple Tree Pruning Workshop #2– Skowhegan (March 14th)
  - Forestry Tax Workshop – Skowhegan (March 4th)
  - Spring Wildflower Identification and Walk (May)- *planning*
  - Wild Edibles – Foraging Walk and Talk @ Yankee Woodlot (June 6th)
  - Invasive Plant Assessment and Management Workshop @ Yankee Woodlot (July)
  - Enhancing Biodiversity in Your Woodland @ Yankee Woodlot (August 1st)
  - Wildlife Habitat in Your Woodland - *planning*
  - Forestry for the Birds @ Old Canada Road Property (Robbins Hill) – (June 13<sup>th</sup>)
  - Drones – Land Management Applications – *planning*
  - Ash and Beech Management Workshop – Cornville - *planning*
  - Tracks, Scat and Habitat – Wildlife in Your Woodland - *planning*
- Yankee Woodlot Management and Activities
  - Picture Post Project – Post-harvest monitoring of succession
  - Trail Maintenance and Improvements
  - Update Trail Map and Brochure
  - Update Trail Signage
- Assist with Mid-Coast Regional Envirothon @ Unity on May 20<sup>th</sup> (Collaboration with regional School Districts and other regional Soil and Water Conservation Districts)
- Spring Trout Sale – Provide Brook Trout (May) and Rainbow Trout (June) sales for private pond owners to purchase for stocking.
- Agricultural Allies - Grassland Bird Protection and Management Project – Year 5
  - Signs for participants and Forage Information Sheets to livestock owners
  - 2020 Field Surveys (Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant)
  - 2020 Delayed Mowing Payments (Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant)
  - Public Outreach and Education efforts through presentations, social media, and news releases
- Invasive Plant Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) Project in partnership with the Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP) – Year 2. Conduct surveys and develop management reports for 7-10 Somerset County property owners.





- Attendance at MACD Meetings (Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter)
- Maine Farm Days
- Participate at MACD Legislative Event at Hall of Flags (February 13<sup>th</sup>)
- Maine Highway Congress – Assist with MACD Training Booth
- 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)



**Conservation Priorities of Somerset County  
Recommended to the NRCS Somerset County Field Office  
By the Local Working Group for FY 2020 and FY 2021**

The Somerset County Local Working Group met on January 24, 2019 and determined the EQIP funding allocations for FY 2020, Table 1. Recently the Local Working Group at their January 9, 2020 meeting, has recommended to allocate the available EQIP funds as follows for FY 2021, Table 2. For FY 2021 it was decided to keep categories and associated funding levels unchanged.

**Table 1. FY 2020 EQIP Funding Allocations**

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

**Table 2. FY 2021 EQIP Funding Allocations**

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





## SOMERSET COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT ANNUAL PLAN OF OPERATION (APO) 2020

This plan identifies the major objectives, actions, and goals that will be emphasized in calendar year 2020 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

- 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. Gravel Road training sessions
3. General Outreach
4. 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.
3. Award for outstanding Woodland Owner of the Year (reinstated at 2019 Annual Meeting)
4. Pursue or expand forestry funding
5. Provide outreach and educational materials to the public and forestry community
6. Conduct invasive terrestrial plant surveys and develop management reports for woodland owners as part of the Maine Natural Areas Program's CIG Project during 2019-2021.



SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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7. 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
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 5 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 (reinstated at 2019 Annual Meeting)
  6. Award Outstanding Woodland Owner of the Year (reinstated 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
- 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 (*brook trout and rainbow trout for private pond stocking*)

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 5 of Project in 2020 with Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund grant
- 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 2020

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



## 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



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

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>PROPOSED</b>	<b>ACTUAL</b>
Payroll [including taxes]	\$71,576.00	\$60,996.00
Workers Comp	\$600.00	\$341.00
Office Supplies	\$2,000.00	\$1,523.00
Postage/Printing	\$500.00	\$379.00
Sales – Item Costs	\$0.00	\$2,522.00
Dues	\$2,400.00	\$3,575.00
Payroll Service	\$1,500.00	\$1,180.00
Travel/Mileage	\$2,300.00	\$2,154.00
Meetings/Events/Workshops	\$1,500.00	\$512.00
Annual Meeting/Dinner	\$0.00	\$1,660.00
Election Expense	\$300.00	\$240.00
Training	\$2,000.00	\$380.00
Licenses/Permits	\$500.00	\$85.00
Grant Payments to Participants	\$7,000.00	\$8,655.00
Envirothon	\$200.00	\$812.00
District Logo Design	\$0.00	\$500.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$92,376.00</b>	<b>\$85,514.00</b>

### 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	\$6,000.00	\$2,955.00
USDA-NRCS CIG Soil Health Project	\$0.00	\$1,089.00
USDA-NRCS CNMP Cooperative Agreement	\$15,000.00	\$8,573.00
USDA-NRCS CIG Invasive Plant Project	\$0.00	\$319.00
Maine DACF – Forest Pest Project	\$0.00	\$1,512.00
Sales (Trout)	\$0.00	\$2,530.00
Workshops/Education	\$1,500.00	\$0.00
Annual Meeting/Dinner	\$0.00	\$222.00
Interest Income	\$30.00	\$137.00
MEMIC Dividend	\$45.00	\$48.00
Tech. Assistance/Evaluations - Billable	\$500.00	\$0.00
Envirothon	\$0.00	\$502.00
Grants and/or Additional Fundraising	\$8,000.00	\$28,300.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$82,075.00</b>	<b>\$97,187.00*</b>





*\*Note - \$11,000 of FY2019 grants received were not used and moved to FY2020 in agreement with grantor.*

**Somerset County Soil & Water Conservation District**  
**FY 2020 Budget (July 2019 – June 2020) (as of Jan. 10, 2020)**

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>PROPOSED</b>	<b>YEAR TO DATE</b>
Payroll [including taxes]	\$70,132.00	\$35,103
Workers Comp	\$400.00	\$374
Office Supplies	\$250.00	\$533
IT	\$300.00	\$0
IT – Web Hosting	\$225.00	\$308
Postage/Printing	\$500.00	\$13
Dues	\$2,000.00	\$150
Payroll Service	\$1,350.00	\$565
Trout Sales- Item Costs	\$3,000.00	\$0
Travel/Mileage	\$2,550.00	\$943
Annual District Meeting/Dinner	\$2,000.00	\$0
Meetings/Events/Workshops	\$1,000.00	\$432
Election Expense	\$300.00	\$240
Training	\$1,000.00	\$425
Licenses/Permits	\$300.00	\$90
Payments to Landowners – Ag Allies Project	\$16,000.00	\$11,000
Envirothon	\$200.00	\$0
District Promotional Items	\$1,200.00	\$1133
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$102,707.00</b>	<b>\$51,309</b>
<b>Income</b>		
Somerset County Funding	\$28,500.00	\$14,250
State of ME - Dept. of Ag.	\$25,000.00	\$25,000
USDA- NRCS Contribution Agreements	\$6,000.00	\$3096
USDA-NRCS CNMP Cooperative Agreement	\$10,000.00	\$2338
USDA-NRCS CIG Invasive Plant Project	\$3,000.00	\$1989
Trout Sales	\$4,000.00	\$0
Workshops/Education	\$1,000.00	\$20
District Annual Meeting/Dinner	\$750.00	\$0
Interest Income	\$100.00	\$
MEMIC Dividend	\$45.00	\$59
Tech. Assistance/Evaluations - Billable	\$500.00	\$0
Grants and/or Additional Fundraising	\$19,000.00	\$19,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$97,895.00</b>	<b>\$65,752</b>



## Somerset County Soil & Water Conservation District

### **DRAFT** FY 2021 Budget (July 2020 – June 2021) \*

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>PROPOSED</b>
Payroll [including benefits and taxes]	\$71,000.00
Workers Comp	\$350.00
Office Supplies	\$300.00
IT	\$300.00
IT – Website Hosting	\$250.00
Sales - Item Costs	\$3,000.00
Postage/Printing	\$200.00
Dues	\$2,400.00
Payroll Service	\$1,300.00
Travel/Mileage	\$2,000.00
Meetings/Events/Workshops	\$1,000.00
Election Expense	\$300.00
Training	\$1,000.00
Licenses/Permits	\$300.00
Payments to Landowners – Ag Allies Project	\$8,000.00
District Annual Meeting/Dinner	\$1,500.00
Envirothon	\$350.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$94,050.00</b>

### **Income**

Somerset County Funding	\$28,500.00
State of ME - Dept. of Ag.	\$25,000.00
USDA- NRCS Contribution Agreements	\$6,000.00
USDA-NRCS CNMP Cooperative Agreement	\$15,000.00
USDA-NRCS CIG Invasive Plant Project	\$3,000.00
Trout Sale	\$4,000.00
Workshops/Education	\$1,000.00
Interest Income	\$100.00
MEMIC Dividend	\$45.00
District Annual Meeting/Dinner	\$1,000.00
Tech. Assistance/Evaluations - Billable	\$500.00
Grants and/or Additional Fundraising	\$10,000.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$94,145.00</b>

\*The FY 2021 District Budget is currently under development by the Board Supervisors and Executive Director.



## Somerset County Soil and Water Conservation District

### 2019 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.*

**District Website and Social Media (APO Priorities I - V):** The Outreach Coordinator continuously monitors use and updates with new information and event postings on the District's Web site, Facebook, and Instagram accounts. Since the start of the District Outreach Coordinator position in May 2018, the District has greatly increased interaction with the Somerset County community (residents, municipalities, and groups). This has led to more electronic and in-person public interactions and has led to greater involvement in District programs and events.

**District Annual Retreat (APO Priority V):** District Supervisors and staff once again 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 recent activities and the goals stated in each section of the Strategic Plan. All involved felt that this review and planning session is extremely valuable in the operation of the District.

**Yankee Woodlot Demonstration Forest (APO Priorities II-B, III, IV):** The District has started to implement its approved 10-year management plan for the Demonstration Forest. Working in collaboration with the Maine Forest Service, Maine Woodland Owners, and the UMaine Extension Somerset Office, the District implemented 5 workshops at the Yankee Woodlot in 2019: 1) Pruning and Managing Apple Trees in February (2 workshops); 2) Legacy Planning Workshop for Landowners in April; 3) Mapping Apps for Woodland Owners in May; and 4) Forestry for the Birds Program with Maine Audubon and Forest Stewards Guild in June. In October a field crew from the Maine Conservation Corp spent a week at the property installing new bog bridging and replacing bridges along sections of the hiking trail. The District coordinated the efforts of the crew through assisting with materials and logistics.



### **2019 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 MFS, UMaine Extension Somerset Office, MWO) – Held in March at the Yankee Woodlot in Skowhegan.

**Legacy Planning for Landowners Workshop** (Collaboration with MFS, UMaine Extension Somerset Office, MWO) – Held in April at the UMaine Extension Office in Skowhegan.

**Mapping Apps for Landowners Workshop** (Collaboration with MFS, UMaine Extension Somerset Office, MWO) – Held in May at the UMaine Extension Office in Skowhegan.

**Forestry for the Birds Workshop** (Collaboration with Maine Audubon, Forest Stewards Guild, MFS, UMaine Extension Somerset Office, MWO) – Held in June at the Yankee Woodlot in Skowhegan.

**Gravel Roads Maintenance and Management Workshop** (Collaboration with Maine DACF and Lake George Regional Park) – Held in August along Whittemore Hill Road in Skowhegan.

**Grassland Bird Habitat Education/Outreach** as part of Agricultural Allies Project funded through the Blake-Nuttall Fund Grant, William P. Wharton Trust Grant, Cornell Lab's – Land Trust Alliance Small Grants Program Grant, and Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant. In 2019 Educational presentations on grassland birds and their habitat were given to the general public, farming community and local land trusts to help them understand the needs of grassland birds and possibilities for integrating those needs into working landscapes: 13 presentations, including 3 for land trust boards/audiences, 1 for Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife field personnel, and a bobolink and pollinator walk and talk sponsored with Georges River Land Trust and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Facebook, Instagram and Web site postings of the Ag Allies program ran throughout the summer, both on the SWCD sites and that of Avian Haven Wild Bird Rehabilitation Center.

### **Technical Development of Staff (APO Priority V):**

In 2019 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 Invasive Species Network Meeting
- Certified Crop Advisor In-Service Training
- NRCS Technical Trainings



- National Cover Crop Conference
- Soils and Site Evaluator Field Training
- Grassland Bird Habitat Assessment Training with University of New England
- Maine Natural Areas Program Invasive Plant Training
- Maine Association of Nonprofits Communications Conference
- Story Maps and digital communications training, Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve
- LakeSmart Program training with Maine Lakes Society

### **Expanding Partnerships and Collaborations (*APO Priorities – ALL*):**

By working with other agencies and groups the District can 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: William P. Wharton Trust, Blake-Nuttall Trust, Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund, Cornell Land Trust Bird Conservation Initiative, MDIFW, Avian Haven, MACD, Knox-Lincoln SWCD, Waldo County SWCD, Kennebec County SWCD, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, University of New England, Maine Cooperative Extension, Maine Land Trusts (8), Landowners (22).
- Invasive Terrestrial Project – Partners: MNAP, DACF, Kennebec, Waldo, and Knox-Lincoln SWCDs, Landowners (5).
- Yankee Woodlot Demonstration Forest Workshops – Partners: MFS, BPL, Somerset County Office of UMaine Cooperative Extension, MWO, Forest Stewards Guild, 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:

- Landowner requests for soil health/vegetation management assistance
- Landowner requests for forestry information or site visits.
- Landowner/public requests for invasive terrestrial plant information and site visits.
- Landowner/public requests for invasive forest pest information and site visits.
- Landowner/public 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) – Invasive Terrestrial Plant Management (APO – Priority II-B):**

The District has teamed with the Maine Natural Areas Program and the Kennebec, Knox-Lincoln, and Waldo Districts for a three-year project (2019-2021) that provides invasive plant surveys and reports, with focused management recommendations to landowners in an effort to provide assistance with control of invasive terrestrial plant species in woodlands. Invasive terrestrial plant species in woodlands have a negative impact on the regeneration of native plant and tree species as well as wildlife habitat. Examples of invasive plant species found in Somerset County are shrubby honeysuckles (*Lonicera* spp.), Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), and Asiatic bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*). The District surveyed five woodland properties in 2019 and will be surveying 7-10 new properties in 2020. The program has been well received by landowners in all counties that are participating in the project.

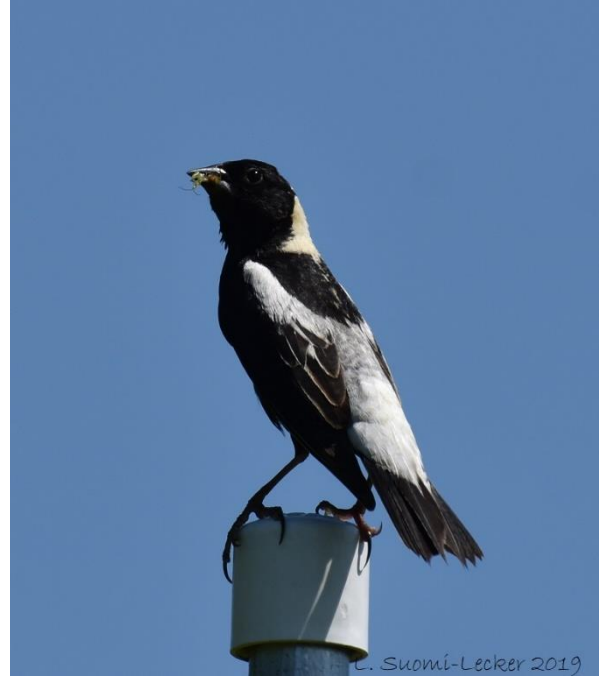




### Ag Allies – Grassland Bird Project (APO Priorities III, VI):

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 2019 the District was pleased to receive grant funding from the Cornell Land Trust Bird Conservation Initiative, William P. Wharton Trust, Blake-Nuttall Foundation, and the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund to allow for continuation of the **Agricultural Allies Project**.

Ag Allies 2019 had another successful year. We worked with interested field managers across the state to make best-fit management changes for grassland bird habitat. This involved on-farm assessments to identify fields in use by bobolinks, followed by discussion of options for management changes. Farmer incentive payments were used as needed to encourage the use of the program



and help offset the cost of management changes. Twenty-one (21) individual landowners and 18 land trusts were involved with the program, receiving technical and/or financial assistance for grassland bird habitat protection. **This resulted in 580 acres delayed for habitat by local landowners and another 250 delayed for habitat by land trusts.** An additional 200 acres (not counted in 2019 acreage tally) on 8 different properties enrolled in previous years are now managing for grassland birds without further need for assistance.

Educational presentations on grassland birds and their habitat were given to the general public, farming community and local land trusts to help them understand the needs of grassland birds and possibilities for integrating those needs into working landscapes: 13 presentations, including 3 for land trust boards/audiences, 1 for Maine Department of





Inland Fisheries and Wildlife field personnel, and a bobolink and pollinator walk and talk sponsored with Georges River Land Trust and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Facebook, Instagram and Web site postings of the Ag Allies program ran throughout the summer, both on the SWCD sites and that of Avian Haven Wild Bird Rehabilitation Center. Handouts discussed above were available at all presentations and for download at the District Web site. District Facebook page posts were shared and linked by project partners and supporters.

We are extremely happy to see the 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 in 2020.

#### **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 event. The District hosted the 2019 Mid-Coast Regional Envirothon in Skowhegan at Lake George Regional Park. The event was comprised of 120 students plus teachers, staff from Lake George Regional Park, staff from 3 other Districts, and volunteers.

#### **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 2019, 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-eight Somerset County producers (approximately \$320,000 in funds) in the three programs were assisted through this cooperative agreement in 2019.

**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 2019 the District's Technical Director worked on five different CNMPs.