



January
2009

Kennebec & Somerset County Soil & Water Conservation Districts

If you receive more than one newsletter, or the address is wrong, please contact us and we will correct the error. Thanks.

The 2009 tree & shrub sale information is in this issue.
Keep thinking about warm soils....

Conservation Times
Start thinking "spring"....

Included in this issue of the **Conservation Times** is the insert for our 2009 tree and shrub sale. This year's sale still offers plants from Fedco. Prices continue to rise for many plants. However, their quality remains very high and we proudly offer products that from Maine. We try to buy local. See the article inside about the two gentlemen advocating that the White House start growing its own food....

I want to take the opportunity to thank people who filled out the questionnaire from the last edition of the newsletter. We have received about 50 responses and many of those people were willing to receive the newsletter electronically. Every little bit helps. Each person who offers that option saves us about \$2-3 annually on our newsletter costs.

More importantly about the survey, most of you provided us useful feedback on



what types of information you find useful and what you like about the newsletter. The positive feedback from most of you has makes it rewarding to open the mail.

If you would still like to complete a questionnaire or are willing to switch and receive an electronic version of the **Conservation Times**, just contact us or check the website.

The final results of the survey will be in the next edition.

Get ready and order your
2009 trees and shrubs.

Inside this issue:

Kennebec District News	3
Somerset District News	13
Tree Sale information	5-10
Information tid-bits	2
"Off Center" see guest column	4 & 11
Coming attractions—calendar	14

On the web at www.KCSWCD.org



District staff can provide additional information and assistance. We can usually identify other sources of information too. Give us a call at 622-7847 ext. 3

The following are a few items. . .

NMP workshop - rescheduled for March 10 in Skowhegan. Contact Carol at the Somerset SWCD for more information. That workshop will feature. Mark Hedrich and Bill Seekins from the Maine Dept. of Ag, Laura Suomi-Lecker from the Somerset SWCD and Kevin White, NRCS. Mark Hedrick from the Dept of AG will also be at the AG trade show in January.

There will also be a workshop series with Patty Cormier, of the Maine Forest Service focused on woodlot management coming up in the spring. The initial workshop is April 15th. Contact the Somerset SWCD if you have questions or check our websites for details as more plans come together. There will be six workshops.

The Winter MACD meeting in December, 2008 saw new officers elected for the statewide Maine Association of Conservation Districts. The new officers include:

Seated, l to r: Vice President—Stephen Follette, Washington County SWCD; Director at Large—Jeff Merserve, Oxford County SWCD; and Secretary—Marianne Hubert, Kennebec

County SWCD.

Standing l to r: National Delegate and Immediate Past President—Tony Carroll, York County SWCD; Treasurer—Tom Gordon, Cumberland County SWCD; and Director at Large—Arthur Dunlap, Androscoggin Valley SWCD.

Not pictured: President—Dan LaBrie, St. John Valley SWCD.

The Somerset County Farm Service Agency field office would like to announce that Elaine Moceus has been selected as the new County Executive Director in the Skowhegan office.

Elaine has a wealth of experience with FSA. For



the past 16 years, she worked in the Franklin County office administering farm commodity, conservation, price support and disaster programs. These programs are designed to improve the economic stability of the agricultural industry and to help farmers adjust production to meet demand. Economically, the desired result of these programs is a steady price range for agricultural commodities for both farmers and consumers.

Producers are encouraged to call or stop in at the office if they have questions about FSA programs. "I feel fortunate to be working with such a dedicated and knowledgeable team at the USDA Service Center in Skowhegan and I look forward to working with producers in Somerset County."

The Kennebec River Initiative has selected a KRI Council and elected Bill Townsend as its Chairperson. They have had 2 meetings and are preparing to re-initiate the "reach committees" in order to provide local input. Those are currently being scheduled for mid-February. Check the Kennebec District website or call Josh for details.

Attention Foresters - Technical Service Providers are needed to help implement 2008 Farm Bill Programs. Technical Service Providers (TSPs) are individuals, private businesses, nonprofit organizations, or public agencies outside of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that help agricultural producers apply conservation practices on the land. These Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) certified professionals provide for convenient access to technical services, quality work, and professional one-on-one technical assistance to landowners or producers who participate in USDA conservation programs.

Information about becoming a TSP is available online or call your local NRCS office for more details. <http://www.me.nrcs.usda.gov/TSPInfo.html>

We apologize that some of the resources listed here only have internet connections. If alternative contact information is available we include it.

The Kennebec District Supervisor election of last November results — Linda Leotsakos was selected for a three year term. Linda had been serving on the Board of Supervisors for the past few years and has now been elected for a full term. Linda lives in Chelsea and has been serving as either an Associate Supervisor or as an Appointed Supervisor. Linda is an active advocate for conservation and environmental issues in the area. Her background as an educator has been very helpful as the Kennebec District works to provide public and school resources so people are better informed about conservation issues.

The Kennebec District has been selected to present at the National Association of Conservation District (NACD) conference in New Orleans. The District's work with the Kennebec River Initiative is featured at the conference. The District's work with KRI is one of three selected to present at the conference and one of 25 examples of exemplary SWCD conservation around the country. All 25 are presented in a new NACD publication, "Our Land, Our Water" And that publication is available at the internet link below. The KRI project is on page 23.

www.nacdnet.org/resources/reports/our_land_our_water.pdf

Josh will be presenting in New Orleans on February 3rd. Fortunately the Maine Dept. of Ag has already come forward to help sponsor the expense of Josh's trip. The District has also contacted other of our local partners to request sponsorship. While NACD is recognizing our work, they are not able to pay the costs associated with our attendance.

In other KRI news, the KRI Council has been established with Bill Townsend as the Chair and Josh is currently working to re-establish the Reach Committee's to provide the Council with local input from the three regions along the Kennebec Corridor i.e. Tidal from Richmond/Pittston to the river mouth; Central—upstream to and including Skowhegan; and Northern—Norridgewock to Moosehead Lake. These committees will also be a more practical way to coordinate local efforts along the River

In the next issue —

- 2009 trout sale information
- Information about plans for summer 2009 projects
- 2008 Annual report information.

The **Conservation Times** is edited and produced by the Kennebec and Somerset County Soil & Water Conservation District staff with assistance of other conservation partners and guidance of the Board of Supervisors.

Most writing and editing is done by Dale Finseth and Carol Weymouth unless identified otherwise. Frequently information is used from other publications or media sources.

The districts do not necessarily agree with nor endorse all opinions included in the newsletter. We try and offer a variety of viewpoints on conservation issues.

If you take issue with an article or have suggestions and information for a follow-up or future article, please contact Dale at the Kennebec District. Either call at 622-7847 ext. 3 or e-mail him at

Dale@kcswcd.org

Kennebec District Staff:

Dale Finseth
John Blais

Josh Platt
Art Grindle

We have composters for sale again this year. The price remains the same i.e. \$45 per composter. We still have a few left from last season and will order more as needed. Contact either SWCD office to get started.

Kennebec District Supervisors:

Marianne Hubert; Vice-Chair
Clif Buuck
Dan Tibbetts
Linda Leotsakos

took office 1/1999 (appointed starting 1/2005)
took office 1/2008 (elected starting 1/2008)
took office 1/2000 (appointed starting 1/2003)
took office 1/1/2009 (elected starting 1/2009)

Associates currently active:

Chad Arms
Judd Thompson

Ted Sparrow
Melissa Laser

Tom Doore
Rob Mohlar

A Guest “Alternative” Article

Much of this article has been taken from either the Washington Post article by Jane Black [1/7/2009] or the New York Times editorial by Michael Pollan [10/12/2008]

The following include excerpts from “On the Road For Change The Goal: A Farm At the White House By Jane Black; Washington Post Staff Writer—1/7/2009 and “Farmer in Chief” By Michael Pollan; NYTimes Food Supplement Magazine—10/12/2008

While some of you may have read, or at least heard about the Michael Pollan article from the New York Times last October, I recently received the copy of a recent news article from Jennifer McLean. Thinking it was fate, I thought the two reports seemed an excellent opportunity to discuss larger issues of agriculture and conservation along with the specifics of local action and individual decisions.



To start, Michael Pollan’s article, written to the new President is an effort to outline the larger agricultural policy issues that currently confront our government. Mr. Pollan is largely focused on federal policy. He makes the argument that our agricultural policy not only effects how we feed the over 300 million people living in the United States but it also plays an integral part in the progress we hope to make in improving health care, expanding energy options and “energy independence”, and the issue of controlling climate change. The food system and how it produces food, uses approximately 19% of the fossil fuels used in the U.S. Only our transportation system uses more. The methods used to produce our food is argued to produce one-third of the greenhouse gases produced in the U.S. And that is just the impact of food production. Mr. Pollan goes on to argue that the actual food produced in such a system is a serious barrier to efforts devoted to improving the health of our citizens. We do not rely on food of our own production, and the reliance on industrial production methods has generated a heavy reliance on food which helps generate an unhealthy American diet.

Mr. Pollan’s article is thought provoking. It is not all negative but it is sobering. It is up to each reader

One thing that is clear about the new Farm Bill: opportunities for forestry and woodlot management practices will be given much more emphasis. NRCS and the Maine Forest service will continue to work together to make technical and financial assistance for forest-related conservation available to eligible landowners. Stay tuned for forestry focused public meetings coming soon to a Soil & Water District near you.

to determine which of his data you believe or whether you agree with the way he makes his argument. [you can check out his entire thesis on the web. I have posted a 13 page copy on our website at www.kcswcd.org But you need to read it yourself]

Which leads me to the article which Jennifer sent me earlier this month. That Washington Post article re-tells the story of two men, Daniel Bowman Simon and Casey Gustowarow who have made a different journey in their efforts to address how we grow and consume our food. They are less focused on national policy and more focused on face to face examples of how to change each person’s current food consumption model.

They didn’t really have a plan when they set off on a cross-country drive in a topsy-turvy school bus with herbs, greens and root vegetables planted on the roof. But they didn’t think they needed one. They wanted to persuade the next president of the United States to grow food on the White House lawn. In August the days were bright and hot. The largest obstacle to an abundance of spinach and Swiss chard were 60-mph headwinds and highway fumes. By

Continued on page 11

We had an error in the last newsletter regarding the Maine Forest Service Tree ID Book. If you want one you call Arlene at the Maine Forest Service 287-2791. Sorry about that.

December, it was a different story. It became too cold to sleep in the bus, too cold to grow anything on the roof, too miserable for anyone to stop and sign the White House Organic

Farm (WHO Farm) petition. The petition asks that the White House garden become a working organic farm.

Simon, 28, and Gustowarow, 27, aren't the first, or the most famous, to lobby for a White House garden. Others, including Michael Pollan have called on the new president to plant organic fruits and vegetables to feed the first family and stock local food pantries. In February, Maine gardener Roger Doiron launched an online campaign, dubbed Eat the View, with the same goal.

The friends met in 2003 while working in the Philippines for the Peace Corps. After returning home, Gustowarow went to work on a farm; Simon went to New York to help develop green roof projects.

In February, Simon attended a conference at Harvard University. There, Alice Waters was honored and gave a speech in which she said that her two dreams were to create gardens at schools across the country and to see food grown on the White House lawn, as it had been in the past. Simon was inspired: "I thought, this is an idea that deserves a grassroots movement. Alice Waters is someone who deserves to have her dreams come true."

From New York they had three weeks to make it to Slow Food Nation, the country's largest food festival, held on Labor Day weekend in San Francisco.

There, Simon and Gustowarow parked the bus alongside the "victory garden" planted in front of San Francisco's City Hall, where they solicited signatures from thousands of like-minded food lovers. Pollan came aboard the bus for a chat.

From there, they traveled organically across the South. Simon says they set their sights on places "where we would be preaching to the choir, then seeing where the choir led us." They visited schools in Oakland and Berkeley.

In Lubbock, Texas, they hooked up with cheesemaker Nancy Patton of Haute Goat Creamery. "My approach is a little different than theirs," she says. "But I just appreciate what they are doing. My question is: Who would be against this?"

Good question. There is a history of agriculture at the White House. Its first tenant, John Adams, planted a garden shortly after taking up residence in 1800. Woodrow Wilson brought in sheep to mow and fertilize the White House lawn in 1918, an effort to conserve resources for the war effort. In 1943, over the objection of the Agriculture Department, Eleanor Roosevelt planted a victory garden, inspiring millions of Americans to grow their own food. Since then, however, only herbs have been grown at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.

The WHO Farm petition goes further than other similar calls to action. It can be signed at <http://www.thewhofarm.org>. It will remain open, Simon says, until there is a garden on the White House lawn.

Who knows what will become of Agricultural Policy under the new administration. Perhaps "change" really is afoot. These two articles seemed to work so well together that I just had to weave them into the newsletter. Definitely enough to give us something to think about.



Much of the information for this article is attributed to the reporting of Jane Black and her report on Daniel Bowman Simon and Casey Gustowarow

Understanding Your Nutrient Management Plan

Do you have a nutrient management plan for your farm? When was the last time you looked at your nutrient management plan? Is it gathering dust on a shelf in your milk room?

If you have 50 or more animals on your farm, the State of Maine requires you to have a certified plan for the nutrients those animals produce. It is a landowners' responsibility to keep this plan up to date and accurate.

Somerset County Soil & Water Conservation District is hosting a workshop – Understanding Your Nutrient Management Plan – to assist farmers, landowners, and the general public in recognizing the responsibility that goes along with the plan.

We have access to some plant/tree support frames which one of our neighboring SWCD's has. They are the 4 foot mesh tree tubes with 2 bamboo stakes for \$2.50 each. You may want to keep these in mind for your spring tree purchases. We will try to have some of them available for the day of tree & shrub pick-up.

Mark Hedrich, Nutrient Management Coordinator, Maine Dept of Agriculture, will speak about how to stay in compliance with State regulation, rules and mandates and how those apply specifically to your operation. He will further explain the complaint process and penalties for non-compliance. Bill Seekins, Maine Dept of Ag will discuss the importance of catastrophic event planning for farms.

Laura Suomi-Lecker, Technical Director, SCSWCD, will highlight key points of plans and how to interpret them for your operation. Topics covered will include the whole farm budget, record keeping, and spreading rates. She will also answer questions specific to these plans.

Kevin White, District Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will also be on hand to explain the nutrient management requirements necessary for applying for Federal funding assistance programs.

The workshop will be held at the Skowhegan Community Center on Tuesday, March 10th from 1:00 – 3:00 pm. The cost is \$10.00 per person and space is limited. Pre-register by sending check or money order to SCSWCD, 12 High Street, Skowhegan ME 04976. Questions can be directed to Carol Weymouth via email info@somersetswcd.org or call 474-8324 x 102.

More projects in Kennebec County

This late fall and early winter has remained busy in Kennebec County. One of the projects still being worked on is the fishway or fish passage at the

Webber Pond Dam. The Maine Bureau of Marine Resources, NRCS the Webber Pond Association and others have worked hard to arrange the installation of an "Alaskan Steep Pass" fish ladder. This fishway will allow for the passage of sea run Alewives into Webber Pond. Work on the project will continue through January for those who want to drive by Webber Pond and take a look.

The District also finished two of our DEP 319 projects i.e. Cobbosee Lake and East Pond. The Cobbossee Lake project finished up with a large piece of construction with the Maine DOT to improve the causeway which crosses the south end of Cobbossee Lake. It is an erosion site which has been on the priority list in that area for a number of years but never had enough resources.

In the coming year we expect to have DEP grant funds to complete the Tacoma Lakes 319 project early in the summer; complete the second year of our Pleasant Pond 319 and start the stream survey of Cobbossee Stream.

Other promising news is the prospect of having additional Federal funds available as part of the impending "Stimulus Package" to address conservation priorities that have not been funded in the past..



Somerset News

As reported in our last newsletter, SCSWCD applied for a Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund grant to educate lake users and the general public about wildlife lead poisoning through the use of lead fishing tackle, as well as increase angler's demand for non-toxic fishing tackle.

Somerset County SWCD is delighted to announce that MOHF awarded our grant application-Unleaded Loons: Preventing Lead Poisoning in Maine's Water Birds- \$11,825.00. This award will fund three tasks outlined in the original proposal:

- Pilot Lead Tackle Exchange Program
- A SWCD-sponsored, non-toxic tackle fishing derby day
- Lake dives for general lead assessment and public education using SCSWCD's underwater lead metal detector



The Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund conserves wildlife and open spaces through the sale of instant Lottery tickets, such as the popular Big Bucks scratch ticket.

Somerset County SWCD thanks those who support our effort to highlight this issue. Additional thanks to those who purchase the lottery tickets which fund the grant.

Somerset County SWCD will be on hand at the Lake George 17th annual Winter Carnival on Saturday, Feb. 7, to pass out samples of lead free sounders, sinkers, and weights to the first 100 registrants. At this event, SCSWCD representatives will survey Winter Carnival attendees about their awareness of alternatives to lead fishing tackle. For more information about the Lake George Winter Carnival contact Jeff at 474-1292.



Somerset County SWCD is pleased to announce that Rose Caron has joined our team as an Administrative Assistant Trainee. Rose is a National ABL! Network participant, and began working with us in late October.

Rose manages our multi-line phone system, provides assistance with administrative tasks, and file management. Additionally, she helps organize our office and greets people who come in with questions about conservation.

Currently, Rose is undergoing training in conservation practices, BMP's, and event and workshop coordination.



Somerset County SWCD Election Results —

Gabe Clark has been re-elected to a second term on the Somerset County SWCD Board of Directors. Gabe and his wife, Amanda, currently own and operate Cold Spring Ranch in N. New Portland. Their operation consists of 240 acres of pastures and woodlands, which is managed in an environmentally friendly manner raising the highest quality grass fed and grass finished beef.

Somerset County SWCD

Employees—

Carol Weymouth, Executive Director
Laura Suomi-Lecker, Technical Director
Rose Caron, Admin. Assistant

Board of Directors—

Kerry Hebert, Chairperson
Alan Haberstock, Vice-Chair
John Ackley, Treasurer
Gabe Clark, Supervisor
Rob Rowbottom, Supervisor

Contact Information—

(207) 474-8324 x 102 info@somersetswcd.org www.somersetswcd.org

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Another issue of the **Conservation Times**
Brought to you by the Kennebec & Somerset County Soil & Water Conservation Districts

All programs and services of the Soil & Water Conservation Districts are offered on a non-discriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation or marital or familial status.

Upcoming Events

Kennebec District Board meetings—The 2nd Tuesday of each month. Contact the District to confirm the time and place.

If special accommodations are needed at the meeting, please call to arrange them two weeks in advance at 622-7847, extension 3.

Somerset District Board Meetings—The 3rd Thursday of each month. Contact the Somerset District to confirm time and place.

Nutrient Management Plan workshop—
March 10 at the Skowhegan Community Center. Learn to understand and use your Nutrient Management Plan. Contact the Somerset SWCD for details and to register.

Tree Orders due—Friday, March 20th - We need to receive your tree and shrub orders by this date in order to get the bulk order to Fedco by their deadline.

Alternate format available.
Call the District office to request enlarged type, cassette or computer disk.



“Working with your Woodlot” workshops start on April 15th at the Extension office in Skowhegan from 5:30-7:30. There will be six workshops through May. Call Somerset SWCD for info and to register. Or e-mail at info@somersetswcd.org.

Tree pick-up in Augusta, Winslow and Skowhegan—Saturday, April 25th. You will get a reminder the week before pick-up either via e-mail or phone.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ORDERING TROUT THIS YEAR, WE HAVE THE OPTION OF TAKING EARLY ORDERS AT 2008 PRICES. CONTACT EITHER DISTRICT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS.