



ST. JOHN VALLEY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

...Working for you to help sustain Maine's abundant natural resources since 1942

2015 SUMMER NEWSLETTER

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 Conservation Service (NRCS)
SETH JONES, District Conservationist

**Meetings of the SJVSWCD are
 Generally held on the first Tuesday
 of each month at 6:30pm in Madawaska.**

**The public is welcome to attend.
 Please contact the District if special
 Accommodations are needed.**

Contact the District

**If you have any questions about how the
 SJVSWCD can help you with conservation
 concerns, please contact the District office in Fort
 Kent.**

**Phone: (207) 834-3311, x-3
 E-Mail: sjvswcd@gmail.com**

District Board Seeks Input

The District is exploring the possibility of some new services/projects and would greatly appreciate any and all feedback or comments on the following ideas:

- ❖ Collection of compostable material
- ❖ Current use tax program landowner evaluations
- ❖ Marketing of farm and forest carbon credits
- ❖ Collection and marketing of woody biomass to serve community scale projects
- ❖ Management services for Co-ops
- ❖ Marketing & transportation support for small wood lot owners (local mills)
- ❖ Wood on rail market development
- ❖ Conduit for State surplus property to land owners/managers
- ❖ Fresh produce supply coordination for local markets
- ❖ Acquire a bale mulcher & rent to contractors, landowners, etc.
- ❖ Management services for municipally owned land
- ❖ Seek direct contributions from federal agencies for specific activities
- ❖ Small woodlot owners forum to determine needs and interests
- ❖ Encourage landowners to donate land or easements to SJVSWCD
- ❖ Track the type and availability of State surplus property
- ❖ MDOT erosion control structures and funding

WHAT IS THE ST. JOHN VALLEY SWCD?

The St. John Valley SWCD is one of thousands of SWCD's around the country, each governed by a volunteer Board of Supervisors. Our purpose is to use and coordinate all available technical, financial, and educational resources to address the needs of local land owners and users for the conservation of soil, water and other natural resources. In addition, we work with and assist governmental agencies and non-profit organizations.

Our Mission: *"To provide local landowners, land users, and other individuals and organizations with the information, education, and technical assistance they need to help protect and enhance Maine's natural resources and to use them wisely. The St. John Valley Soil and Water Conservation District seeks to foster and encourage the development of an enduring land stewardship ethic among residents of the St. John River Valley."*

We strive to accomplish this by hosting conservation field days, workshops and related demonstrations throughout the Valley. In addition, we provide a link to the invaluable technical services provided not only by the Districts themselves, but also by such federal agencies as the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and Maine DACF (Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry).

As part of the Maine Association of Conservation Districts (MACD), we also enjoy working with the next generation by hosting the Envirothon, and making classroom presentations to students of all ages in an effort to engage them in the wise use of the nation's natural resources. We can do even more with your help! As a volunteer, a supporting member, or a sponsor of a soil and water conservation project, every step you take toward conservation is one step forward to a more sustainable future!

The St. John Valley SWCD is working for you and your community! Let us know how we can better serve you.

PROVIDING LOCAL ASSISTANCE

- Field days, workshops, demonstrations
- Educational Programming for adults and children on natural resources
- Grant development
- Watershed surveys
- Resource assessments
- Information Sharing
- Link to other governmental agencies and programs
- Topographic maps, aerial photographs, marking flags, tree and shrub sale
- Rental items including: skidder bridge, grass seeder, no-till seeder, tree marking gun (with paint) and other forest measurement tools.



The field season is in full swing and it has been a very busy season to date.

As many of you know, Bob Bills, NRCS Soil Conservationist, has moved on from the Fort Kent Field Office. He accepted a position as a Resource Conservationist in New York and left Northern Maine in the middle of May. Bob is doing well in his new position and always appreciated the support he received from the residents in the Saint John Valley.

As a result of Bob leaving, I have taken over his responsibilities as well to keep the office and our work moving forward. I am sure many of you have seen me driving by or taking photos of fields for documentation for practice completion. The Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has brought in Anthony Tardif to assist with the workload in the office, and the help is greatly appreciated.

I recently sent out letters to participants with active program applications in our files to get the applications updated. If you received a letter and got in contact with the office, thank you. If you have decided this is a path you no longer would like to pursue, we thank you for your past inquiries. Please feel free to call the office in the future should you have any new resource concerns you think NRCS may be able to assist you in addressing. We accept applications on a continually throughout the year.

The cutoff date for applications for assistance for Fiscal Year 2016 program applications was August 14, 2015. There are going to be some changes as to how practices are applied for during the FY 2016 funding cycle. Seasonal High Tunnels will no longer be funded from the local fund pool, a result of them being funded at the State wide level with money from the Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) program. This means that funding that comes to the St. John Valley through our largest program, Environmental Incentives Quality Program (EQIP), will all be directed towards Cropland, Agricultural Waste, Grazing and Forestry.

Keep in mind, if you would like to have input on how money is directed in each of the categories mentioned above during FY 2017, look for information on the Local Working Group (LWG) meeting in the SWCD newsletter. There is a copy of the membership form included in the newsletter if you like to be part of this important group. You can also stop by the office and request a membership form to serve on the LWG so you can have input on how NRCS program dollars get directed in the St. John Valley.

As I wrap up this field season in the St. John Valley, it will be my first full field season here, and will also be my last for now. I have accepted the District Conservationist position in Presque Isle, Maine. Darol Wilson, the current District Conservationist there is retiring. I will move to that office, and you will have the opportunity to work with a new person in this seat. It's been a brief stay this far north, but I've truly enjoyed being here. It's a beautiful part of the state, and one filled with many wonderful and welcoming people with a true sense of community not found in many places. Thank you all for your support.

Sincerely,

Seth Jones.

Attention Conservationists

If you are interested in conserving the natural resources in your community, we invite you to participate in District activities. Whether as an observer, volunteer, or Associate Supervisor, we'd love to have you join us!

Please contact the District today at 834-3311, ext. 3 or send an email to:

sjvswcd@gmail.com

Available at the District Office

Aerial Photographs 1947-1996, 7.5" Topographical Maps, Conservation Mix Grass Seed, Fluorescent Marking Flags, No-Till Seeder Rental, Paint Gun Rental (for marking trees), Skidder Bridge Panel Rental, Also available: Water Test Kits and Soil Test Boxes.

FOR RENT

- No-Till Seeder (0-10 acres = \$13.00/acre, 10+ acres = \$10.00/acre)
- Portable Skidder Bridge (\$100.00/month)
- Paint Gun Rental for Marking Trees



Marking Flags

\$12.00/Bundle of 100
plus 66 cents tax



*Fluorescent Orange, white,
Blue, or
Green*

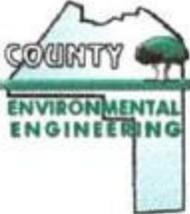
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County Environmental Engineering, Inc.
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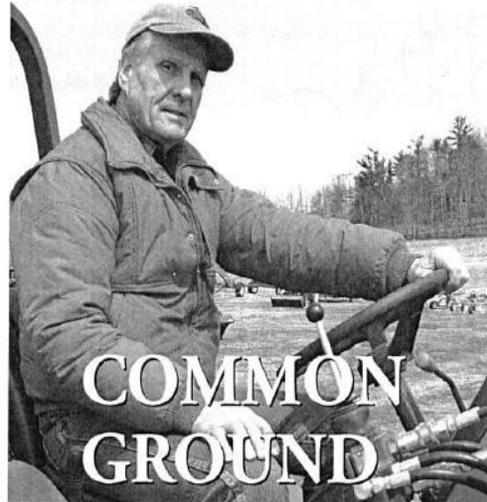
400 Main St., Madawaska, ME 04756

Andrew_Daigle@farmfamily.com



All coverages are subject to the terms and conditions of the policy in the year of its issue. Products may vary by state. Certain products may not be available in all states. Property/casualty products offered by Farm Family Casualty Insurance Company and United Farm Family Insurance Company. Life products offered by Farm Family Life Insurance Company. Home Offices: Glenmont, New York.

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- Livestock
- Farm Machinery
- Tools & Equipment
- Business Inventory
- Inland Marine
- Business Income
- Residences and Household Contents
- Personal Property
- Personal Auto

Life Insurance Products:

- Disability Income
- Life Insurance
- IRAs/Annuities
- Products to Fund Retirement & Estate Plans

Spruce Budworm Update...



Spruce Budworm Prognosis:

- Noticeable defoliation in Maine in 2-4 years
- Will kill trees and reduce growth
- Perhaps not as severe as last outbreak
 - Trees are younger
 - Not as contiguous across the landscape
 - Infestations may be shifting north

The projected *total volume loss* over the next 40 years following an outbreak that began in 2013 is 12.7 million cords from a severe outbreak to 6.4 million cords for a moderate outbreak 50% of that intensity. The *maximum annual volume loss* during the next outbreak was projected to be 494 thousand cords per year for a severe outbreak (similar to the one in the 1970s-80s) and 247 thousand cords per year for a moderate outbreak 50% of that intensity. This volume loss, without any forest management mitigation effort, was projected to have a total economic impact of **\$794 million per year during a severe outbreak and \$397 million per year for a moderate outbreak**. Estimated annual job loss in the forest products sector would translate to 1,196 jobs and 598 jobs for severe and moderate outbreaks, respectively. Higher total job losses would be expected due to the multiplier effect of forest products jobs.

Protection Options

As the outbreak develops in the coming years, forest landowners with high-risk and high-value stands, especially those that have received thinning and contain high proportions of balsam fir and white spruce, may choose to protect them. Foliage protection using aerially applied insecticides has been shown to be very effective in reducing tree damage from SBW. Twelve insecticide products with three active ingredients (B.t.k., tebufenozide, and carbaryl) whose labels specifically address aerial application to control SBW over naturally regenerated forests are registered with the Maine Board of Pesticides Control. Additional insecticides are also registered for controlling SBW under special circumstances, including forest plantations, Christmas trees, tree nurseries, and seed orchards.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT

http://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest_health/insects/spruce_budworm_2014.htm



WHAT CAN I RECYCLE?

Car Battery: When you replace your car battery, return the old battery to the store where you bought your new battery.

Ink Jet Cartridges: Some manufacturers include a free mailer with each new inkjet cartridge so you can send your used cartridges in for recycling. You can also bring them to office supply stores to recycle; some stores will give you credit toward the purchase of new cartridges.

Medical Sharps: Used medical sharps are the single leading cause of workplace injuries for workers managing solid waste. To help avoid such injuries, household consumers should put their used sharps into sealed rigid, leak and puncture proof containers, and take them to a local collection site. Contact your local hospital to find out if they accept sharps from their patients.

Medications: Contact your local police department, sheriff's office, or hospital to find out where to bring your unused medications for proper disposal (medications can't be recycled). Do not flush your unused medications down the toilet or throw them in the trash because this causes pollution and poses health hazards to people and animals. Be sure to keep the medications in their original containers so that they can be easily identified for proper handling and disposal by the collection site, but cross out your name and address to protect your privacy.

Plastic Bags: Most grocery stores have collection kiosks for plastic bags, and plastic film.

For more information on what can be recycled go to:

<http://www.maine.gov/dep/waste/recycle/whatcanirecycle.html>



ROAD-STREAM CROSSING DESIGNS INTERFERE WITH FISH MIGRATION

Thousands of miles of streams flow through Maine, but incorrectly sized, and poorly placed culverts can prevent fish from accessing food, and breeding areas. Historically crossing designs were based on standards to only protect roads. Safe, stable fish friendly stream crossings however can protect stream health while reducing expensive erosion, and structural damage.

Box and pipe culverts are not as effective at allowing fish to migrate in comparison to bridges, or open-arch culverts.

Simple steps to make crossings friendly to fish:

Avoid installing culverts that are 60 feet or longer.

Include secondary culverts on floodplains to pass high flows.

The width and depths of the culverts should match the natural banks and stream channels.

Ensure they are level and that the streambeds are flat.

Embed the culverts into the natural streambed to at least 20 percent of the culvert height at the down stream end.

Choose corrugated pipe over smooth bore.

Structures based on today's designs require fewer repairs, help wildlife access, and handle a wider range of flows.

NOTICE

**If anyone knows of any broken/defective culverts in the Saint John Valley that may be interfering with fish migration, please contact the District Office at 834-3311 X-3
Thank you for your help**



SAFE SOLUTIONS TO HANDLE THE RING - BILLED SEAGULL POPULATION IN THE SAINT JOHN VALLEY

Almost every populated area has a ring-billed seagull population. Although you may see them around water, they are mostly inland birds. They can be identified by a large black ring around their bill. The ring-billed seagull lives among humans usually in parking lots, garbage dumps, and around restaurants in order to feed. They nest near fresh water, usually on low terrain, and tend to use bare shore lines absent of vegetation.

The Saint John Valley population migrated from the Saint Lawrence River in Quebec Canada. They are attracted to the barren edges of the islands in the Saint John River for nesting. The Ring-billed gull is considered a medium sized gull, that is roughly 17-21 inches in length, with a 41-46 inch wing span. It takes a Ring-billed gull up to three years to reach adulthood. The Ring-billed gull breeds across the northern regions of the North American continent, and in the winter migrates as far as Mexico, and Cuba. The gulls nest can have two to four eggs, and both parents incubate the eggs and both feed the hatchlings. The young chicks will usually learn to fly in about four weeks. The gulls are considered to be omnivores, since they will eat just about anything. Their diet consists of fish, small birds, eggs, rodents, insects, and whatever they can scavenge.

The gulls population plummeted during the late nineteenth century due to humans hunting the gull for their feathers as a decoration for hats. Since 1966 however populations are on the increase, due to government protection.

Although many area residents may find the gulls to be a nuisance, the gulls are a protected species under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Residents attempting to kill, injure or pester gulls may be in violation of the law, and subject to prosecution.

If a resident can prove that a gull population is causing a legitimate hardship, they can contact Fish & Wildlife for assistance on how to discourage gulls from being in a particular area. Some measures used are to never leave discarded food on the property, use sturdy garbage containers to store refuse, and the use of devices made up of pointed spikes placed on lamp posts, and edges of roof tops in order to discourage the gulls from hanging around the area. When all possible safe, and legal means have been utilized, and the resident is still incurring a hardship from the gulls, Fish & Wildlife in some cases can issue permits to dispose of the gulls. These permits will usually only be issued when the resident can prove they attempted all reasonable safe methods of discouraging the gulls from being in the area, and have worked with Fish & Wildlife in these efforts.

Want To Know When Our Board Meetings Are Held....

Check our new "Board Meeting" Tab on our website.



Just go to our website address at <http://www.sjv.me.nacdn.net/org/> and then click on our "Board Meeting" tab to get the next time, and place of our next meeting.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO NOMINATE A LOCAL LANDOWNER OR RESOURCE MANAGER FOR NEXT YEAR'S "OUTSTANDING CONSERVATION PERSON OF THE YEAR" AWARD, PLEASE CALL THE DISTRICT AT 834-3311, EXT. 3

WE VALUE YOUR INPUT AND NEED YOUR SUPPORT

Your membership is vital to our programming. If you have an idea for a workshop topic or educational program; require assistance in grant writing; or have other conservation needs or concerns, let us know how we can better serve the community. Please provide your support of the District by submitting your membership dues for the 2015 calendar year using the enclosed form. We thank you in advance.

**SAINT JOHN VALLEY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
SKIDDER BRIDGE RENTAL**



\$100.00 per Month



BAT THREATENED

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has listed the Northern Long-Eared Bat as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. This species resides in thirty seven states, the District of Columbia, and 13 Canadian provinces. The Northern Long-Eared Bat is a medium-sized bat with a body length of 3 to 3.7" and a wingspan of 9-10". Their fur can be medium to dark brown on the back, and tawny to pale-brown on the underside.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determines if a species is endangered, or threatened based on five factors.

1. The present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range.
2. Habitat overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes.
3. Disease or predation.
4. The inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms.
5. Other natural, or man made factors affecting its continued existence.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has determined that White-Nose Syndrome is the predominant threat to the species.

White-nose syndrome (WNS) is an emerging infectious wildlife disease that poses a considerable threat to hibernating bat species throughout North America. WNS is responsible for unprecedented mortality of insectivorous bats in eastern North America. The first evidence of the disease (a photo of bats with fungus) was documented at Howe's Cave in Schoharie County, New York, 32 mi (52 km) west of Albany, on February 16, 2006, but WNS was not actually discovered until January 2007, when it was found at four additional caves around Schoharie County. Since that time, WNS has spread rapidly throughout the Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, and eastern Canada. As of February 2015, WNS has been confirmed (meaning one or more bats in the State have been analyzed and confirmed with the disease).

White-nose syndrome is caused by the psychrophilic (cold-loving) fungus *Pd*, which is likely exotic to North America, and only recently arrived on the continent. The fungus grows on and within exposed soft tissues of hibernating bats. The resulting mycelium (vegetative part of fungus) is the white filamentous growth visible on the muzzle, ears, or flight membranes (wings and tail) of affected bats that is characteristic of WNS. Skin erosions that are filled with branching, filamentous structures of fungi are the diagnostic standard for WNS. *Pd* grows optimally at temperatures from 5 to 16 °C (41 to 61 °F), the same temperature range at which North American bats typically hibernate. The temperature in caves that serve as bat hibernacula ranges from 2 to 14 °C (36 to 57 °F), permitting year-round persistence and growth of the fungus in caves, allowing such hibernacula to serve as a reservoir for maintaining the fungus through summer months in the absence of bats. Growth is relatively slow at optimal temperatures (5 to 16 °C (41 to 61 °F)), and no growth occurs at temperatures above 21.4 °C (75 °F). Although *Pd* does not grow above 21.4 °C, it is known to remain viable for extended periods of time above that temperature.

Many States in the Northeast stated that white-nose syndrome continues to impact the northern long-eared bat in their respective States and have witnessed post-WNS confirmation of mortality and severe declines. Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine all commented that the species was considered a common species in the State prior to white-nose syndrome confirmation and is now considered rare.

Conservation Measures

- Avoid cutting or destroying known, occupied roost trees (3" or more in diameter) during the pup season (June 1–July 31)
- Avoid clear cuts (and similar harvest methods, e.g., seed tree, shelter wood, and coppice) within 0.25 mile (0.4 kilometer) of known, occupied roost trees during the pup season (June 1–July 31)

Activities that do not use these conservation measures may still be done, but only after consultation with the Service. This means that, while the resulting take from such activities is not excepted, the take may be authorized through other means provided in the Act (section 7 consultation or an incidental take permit). Prevent the cutting of known occupied roost trees, reduce the cutting of secondary roosts used by maternity colonies during the pup season from clear cutting activities, and protect some habitat for some known maternity colonies at least to some degree. Further, because colonies occupy more than one maternity roost in a forest stand and individual bats frequently change roosts, in some cases a portion of a colony or social network is likely to be protected by multiple 0.25 mile (0.4 km) buffers.

Pine plantations are densely planted and are comprised of single-age or similar age class timber. They are typically managed for timber production with a planned endpoint. Maximum stocking rates and short rotations result in the forfeiture of structural diversity in exchange for elevated rates of wood productivity. Plantation productivity may be

further enhanced through the use of genetically improved stock, fertilization, extensive site preparation, and reduction of competition. These management actions prohibit variably stocked stands, layers of understory and mid story vegetation, and longer rotations that enhance and maintain habitat traits required by many forest-dependent wildlife species. Activities that remove an acre or less of forested habitat are expected to have little or no impact on the ecological value and function and, therefore, will be considered to be “minimal” as defined by this rule. Examples of activities that might fall within this category are firewood cutting, shelterbelt renovation, removal of diseased trees, culvert replacement, habitat restoration for fish and wildlife conservation, and backyard landscaping. These ongoing activities can occur throughout the northern long-eared bat’s range, but not materially affect the local forest habitat for this species and in some cases increase habitat availability in the long term.

Tree Habitats

Northern long-eared bats have been documented to roost in many species of trees, including: black oak, northern red oak, silver maple, black locust, American beech, sugar maple, sourwood, and shortleaf pine. Northern long-eared bats most likely are not dependent on certain species of trees for roosts throughout their range; rather, many tree species that form suitable cavities or retain bark will be used by the bats opportunistically. Structural complexity of a habitat, or available roosting resources are more important factors than the actual tree species. In the majority of northern long-eared bat telemetry studies, roost trees consist predominantly of hardwood. Hardwood trees most often provide the structural and microclimate conditions preferred by maternity colonies, and groups of females, which have more specific roosting needs than solitary males. One reason deciduous snags may be preferred over conifer snags is increased resistance to decay, and consequently roost longevity. Studies have found tree roost selection to differ slightly between male and female northern long-eared bats. Some studies have found male northern long-eared bats more readily use smaller diameter trees for roosting than females, suggesting males are more flexible in roost selection than females.

In general, northern long-eared bats arrive at hibernacula in August or September, enter hibernation in October and November, and emerge from the hibernacula in March or April. Northern long-eared bats hibernate during the winter months to conserve energy from increased temperature demands and reduced food resources. To increase energy savings, individuals enter a state of torpor, when internal body temperatures approach ambient temperature, metabolic rates are significantly lowered, and immune function declines.

Reproduction

Mating occurs from late July in northern regions to early October in southern regions and commences when males begin to aggregate around hibernacula and initiate copulation. Hibernating females store sperm until spring, exhibiting delayed fertilization. Ovulation takes place near the time of emergence from hibernation, followed by fertilization of a single egg, resulting in a single embryo. Gestation is approximately 60 days, based on like species. Males are generally reproductively inactive from April until late July, with testes enlarging in preparation for breeding in most males during August and September.

Forest Management

Continued forest management and silviculture is vital to the conservation and recovery of the northern long-eared bat. Forest management and silviculture activities that promote the long-term stability and diversity of forests, when carried out in accordance with the conservation measures, will not be prohibited. Forest management is the practical application of principles to the regeneration, management, utilization and conservation of forests to meet specific goals and objectives. Silviculture is the art and science of controlling the establishment, growth, composition, health, and quality of forests and woodlands to meet the diverse needs and values of landowners and society on a sustainable basis. In addition to the conservation measures above, forest management and silviculture activities should also adhere to any applicable State water quality best management practices, where they exist, and the retention of snags and trees with characteristics (e.g., cavities and cracks) favorable for the establishment and maintenance of maternity roosts.

SJVSWCD MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2015

NAME: _____

PLEDGE AMOUNT:

ADDRESS: _____

Valley Friend.....\$25.00

Valley Steward.....\$50.00

Valley Patron.....\$100.00

TOWN: _____ ZIP: _____

Valley Visionary.....\$250.00 and higher

EMAIL: _____

Other

Please return this form with your check payable to St. John Valley Soil and Water Conservation District, 139 Market Street, Suite 106, Fort Kent, ME 04743



St. John Valley SWCD
139 Market Street, Suite 106
Fort Kent ME 04743



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Prepared by: St. John Valley SWCD

All programs and services of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the USDA are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political belief, gender identity, sexual orientation, or marital and familial status.

Maine Local Work Group Membership Application

Local Working Groups assist the USDA in matters relating to the implementation and technical aspects of conservation programs under Title II of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (the 2014 Farm Bill). The Local Working Group may be composed of the local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), agricultural producers representing the variety of crops and livestock or poultry raised within the local area, nonindustrial private forest land owners, and other professionals representing relevant agricultural and conservation interests and a variety of disciplines in the soil, water, plant, wetland, and wildlife sciences who are familiar with private land agricultural and natural resource issues in the local community.

View the following document for more information: [What is the USDA Local Working Group?](#)

Name: _____

Organization: _____
(Ag producer for crops, livestock or poultry, owner of nonindustrial forestland, member of agricultural organization, member of environmental organization, etc.)

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Please share your agricultural and natural resource interests and how your interests will make you a good candidate for membership to provide recommendations to the United States Department of Agriculture on local and state natural resource priorities and criteria for conservation activities.

Please submit completed form to:

139 Market St. Suite 106
Fort Kent ME 04743