



ST. JOHN VALLEY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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

FALL 2018 NEWSLETTER

END OF YEAR SUMMARY FROM YOUR LOCAL SOIL CONSERVATIONIST

Hello, St. John Valley! I am close to finishing my first year here in the office with Eric, Anthony and Alex. I have been able to meet many producers and see a lot of the Valley, and I hope to meet more of you this winter.

We have heard from many of you about the difficult conditions that your fields and pastures suffered this year, with the unusually warm summer and sporadic precipitation. Though I had not been through a Maine summer previously, it was evident that the crops, forage and hay grasses were stressed. I realize that a lot of you are in a very difficult position right now, especially cattle and hay farmers. Grazing management and improvement was my focus at my previous NRCS office in central Kansas, and ranchers there were also struggling to recover after droughts and wildfires. Though the ecosystem is very different here and I will never know as much as you, the farmer, about your land, I still want to challenge you to use this droughty time as a tool for improvement. Make some notes about how your fields and pastures were left this fall, as elementary as it seems: how many inches tall was the grass after the last bout of grazing or haying? Were any typically wet areas unusually dry for the whole season? Did you graze certain fields for more days, or at a higher level, than you usually would? What percent of the total "average" yield did you get from each pasture or hay field? All of this information will be handy to have in the future, especially as we watch the fields and plants recover in the spring.

Areas that were grazed harder will likely be slower to recover, or will struggle to produce the expected amount of leaf matter next year, even if it is a more typical year. Be ready to take note of the green up in the spring and try to compare that to what you would normally expect. Grasses take many seasons to recover, so they might need some rest to get back to a healthy level of production.

If you would like to talk more about what happens to overgrazed or stressed grasses, what you as the farmer can do to help, and how to avoid traumatic drought stress to your fields in the future, come in and talk to us. We are always here to help, and discussions like this right now could be immensely helpful in the future. I hope to see you this winter!

Kelsey Ramerth
Soil Conservationist

Bats May Be Poised for a Comeback From White-Nose Syndrome

Ever since white-nose syndrome (WNS) began ravaging certain species of hibernating bats in northeastern North America in 2006, there's been a long stream of bad news for the insect-devouring predators. To date, an estimated 6-plus million bats have succumbed to the disease caused by a fungus called *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* (Pd) as it's moved across the United States. Little brown bat populations have been decimated by about 90 percent, while tricolored and northern long-eared bats are suffering losses of around 97 percent.

New research into hibernating bats and the disease, offers some hope. It's the product of a national plan developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) beginning 10 years ago, which pulled together biologists, ecologists, mycologists, biochemists, and other scientists to identify, and eradicate, Pd.

Pseudogymnoascus destructans, unlike similar fungi, was missing an enzyme that lets it repair its own DNA after exposure to UV light. This was a sign of possible weakness. UV light's potential as a treatment is currently being tested at Bucknell University in Pennsylvania. Sixty WNS-infected little brown bats collected in Wisconsin are presently hibernating in humid manmade hibernacula chambers, which look like glass-fronted refrigerators and mimic the bats' natural overwintering hibernation spaces. Inside one chamber, a test group of bats is being exposed to doses of UV light.

More good news, remnant populations of infected little brown bats are now managing to reproduce, and pass on good resistant genes to their offspring. Scientists refer to this as evolutionary rescue.

Source: sierraclub.org

Tree Growth Tax Law Information

The Maine Legislature enacted the Tree Growth Tax Law in 1972 to help Maine landowners maintain their property as productive woodlands, and to support Maine's wood products industry. To enroll your property in the Maine Tree Growth Tax Program, you must have at least ten acres of forest land managed primarily for the production of commercial forest products. By choosing to develop a woodland management plan designed to realize the value of your timber through well-planned harvests over time, your property may be eligible for enrollment. You should be sure you understand all of the benefits and obligations of Maine's Tree Growth Tax Law, as well as the penalties for removing your land from the program.

You may benefit from a reduction in property taxes, making it more affordable for you to own and manage your woodland. The decision to enroll land in the Maine Tree Growth Tax Program is a long term one. The penalties for removing land from the program can be high, so consider all the aspects before enrolling.

For more information on Maine's Tree Growth Tax Program and other "current use" property tax programs, please contact the Maine Bureau of Revenue Services, or the Maine Forest Service. Our local NRCS office may be able to assist with the planning, and implementation of a Forest Management Plan if a landowner decides to enroll.

Maine Bureau of Revenue: 207-624-5600

Maine Forest Service: 207-435-7963

Source: **Maine Forest Service**

THIS ARTICLE IS MEANT FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY, AND IS NOT MEANT TO BE A SUBSTITUTE FOR PROFESSIONAL FINANCIAL ADVICE, OR ESTATE PLANNING.

EMERALD ASH BORER UPDATE

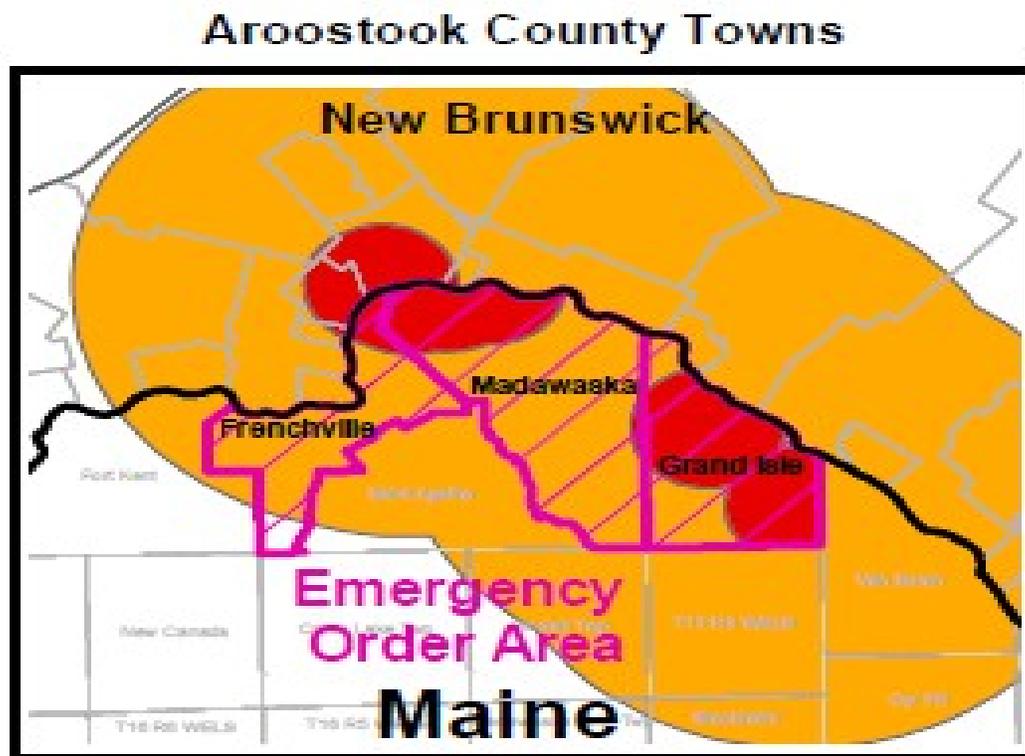
Wasps are already showing great promise in a number of states, especially in terms of protecting young saplings from EAB. Studies indicate that parasitoid wasps, combined with predation by native woodpeckers, has the potential to significantly reduce EAB populations following an EAB outbreak.

Studies have also demonstrated its ability to find EAB in nearby areas as populations decline elsewhere. This suggests that the parasitoid wasps, along with native woodpeckers which are also effective at finding EAB, can help keep EAB populations at low densities and prevent significant ash damage following the pest's spread to new areas. To help save mature ash trees in urban areas, USDA researchers are currently exploring how to integrate the use of insecticides with parasitoid releases. This approach could potentially protect mature trees against EAB until the parasitoid has a chance to establish and control EAB populations.

EMERGENCY STOP MOVEMENT ORDER ON LIVE ASH TREES

The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry's (DACF) Bureau of Forestry Director has issued an Emergency Order to Stop Movement of Ash in response to the detection of emerald ash borer (EAB) in northern Aroostook County and western York County. The Emergency Order restricts the movement of certain ash products and any untreated firewood from emerald ash borer (EAB) infested towns in Maine.

Order Area: Towns of Frenchville, Grand Isle and Madawaska in Aroostook County.





We are now a drop off location for old rechargeable batteries.

* Nickel Cadmium

* Lithium Ion

Keep old rechargeable batteries out of our landfills, and use our drop off service to send them out to be recycled. We currently do not accept alkaline, or general use batteries.



Conservation Mix
Grass Seed

\$2.15 per pound
+ Tax

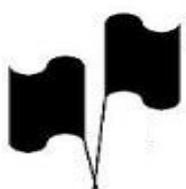
SJVSWCD MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2019

NAME: _____	PLEDGE AMOUNT:
ADDRESS: _____	Valley Friend.....\$25.00
TOWN: _____ ZIP: _____	Valley Steward.....\$50.00
EMAIL: _____	Valley Patron.....\$100.00
	Valley Visionary.....\$250.00+
	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

Marking Flags

**\$12.00/Bundle of 100
plus 66 cents tax**



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."*

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

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.