



ST. JOHN VALLEY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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

SPRING 2017 NEWSLETTER

With the arrival of spring, our focus here in the field office has switched to on-site visits for conservation planning. As planners, we meet with customers on their property with the objective of identifying primary resource concerns. To aid with the planning process, we take a comprehensive approach when completing the initial field visit to assess the following resource areas: **Soil, Water, Air, Plants, Animals and Energy.**

Soil

The main focus in soil conservation is building soil health and quality by reducing soil erosion and increasing soil organic matter levels and vegetative cover. As planners, we look for evidence of erosion, compaction and deposition on cropland, hay fields and pastures. We assess existing vegetation and residue on the soil surface that help to reduce erosion. We often ask that a soil test be taken to assess the existing fertility of the soil.

Water

Preventing excessive nutrients and pathogens from entering groundwater is a high priority in conservation planning. Identifying the location of your well and its proximity to a septic system, livestock production facility or crop field assists the planner with developing technical recommendations to address the source of a water quality problem, not just the symptom. Identification of surface water quality issues requires a more comprehensive approach to planning. Topography data is collected to determine how runoff travels across a land unit. We also identify where surface water concentrates and enters into a perennial water body. The planner locates the intersections of field gullies, roads and trails with perennial and intermittent streams. These are areas where soil loss due to erosion can create a larger problem as sediment and nutrients enter surface waters.

Plants

Resource concerns associated with crop productivity can stem from low soil quality/health, rotation management, nutrient management and pest management. Much of the data we collect is associated with how crops are raised on the farm. Most plant productivity issues in forestry are tied to soil type, stand type and species composition of the woodlot. As conservationists, we encourage the woodlot owner to have a comprehensive forest management plan developed by a licensed private forester. The plan will assist the landowner with future management decisions related to forestry conservation.

Animals

Adequate water, forage and physical space are key components to domestic animal health. In addition, manure management can be tied to disease issues, insect pest pressure and foot health. One of the first steps in the planning process is the development of a comprehensive nutrient management plan for the barnyard and associated fields where manure will be spread. Future planning under a CNMP takes interactions between soil, water, plants and animals into account when conservation practices are recommended. Conservation planning for wildlife is associated with the baseline habitat on and around the property. We encourage the landowner to consider having a wildlife or pollinator habitat management plan written prior to moving forward with conservation planning.

Air Quality and Energy Conservation

Conservation planning for air quality is often tied to odors and emissions from headquarters facilities and dust particulates created by wind erosion. These resource concerns are often identified during the development of a CNMP for a livestock operation or a whole farm conservation plan for cropland. Planning for energy conservation is also focused on the headquarters of an operation. We ask general questions about existing electricity use, insulation, ventilation and lighting in farmstead structures. We encourage the landowner to consider having an agricultural energy management plan written to take an inventory of current energy use and make recommendations that would produce savings within the operation.

Enrolling in Conservation Programs

Investing in resource conservation may be difficult for a landowner to “cash flow”. NRCS conservation programs are designed to provide financial assistance for conservation practice implementation that will eventually yield long-term gains in productivity for the landowner and the public. As planners, we take the time to discuss how these voluntary conservation programs work, starting with the application process through practice implementation and landowner reimbursement. We prefer to talk about these issues early in the planning process to help prepare the landowner for a potential conservation contract in the future. If you would like to schedule a planning visit for your property, please call or stop by the Fort Kent Field Office.

Eric Giberson, District Conservationist



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.



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.



COMMUNITY GARDEN OPPORTUNITY

If you have an interest in taking part in a Community Garden in Frenchville, please contact the District today!! 207-834-3311 X-3
E-mail sjvswcd@gmail.com



The Lake Volunteer Monitoring Program is looking for volunteers. VLMP requires someone to go out every other week during the summer (or ice free period) and collect a secchi disc reading (Transparency) and in some lakes dissolved oxygen and temperature. VLMP provides all the equipment and training. The following lakes are in need of volunteers: Mud Lake, Cross, Square, Eagle, Black, Daigle, and St. Froid. If anyone is interested in becoming a volunteer, please use the contact information below.

The Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program
24 Maple Hill Road
Auburn, Maine 04210
Phone: 207-783-7733
Email: vlmp@mainevlmp.org

SJVSWCD MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2017

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

Marking Flags

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

**Fluorescent Orange, white,
Blue, or
Green**



2016 DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT

INCOME CATAGORIES

Accumulated Interest
Cooperator Dues
Grass Seed Sales
Marking Flag Sales
State Support
Town Support
County Support
Natural Resource Assessment Project

Total 2016 Income: \$31,298.19

EXPENSE CATAGORIES

Advertising
Accounting Services
Staff Mileage Expenses
Dues Expenses: MACD
Field & Office Supplies
Newsletter Printing
Supervisor Mileage Expense
Marking Flags
Natural Resource Assessment Expense
Postage Expenses
Website Development
Taxes: Payroll
Workers Comp.
Staff Wages
State Sales Tax
Grass Seed

Total 2016 Expenses: \$30,800.74

HIGH TUNNEL WORKSHOP 2017

On Saturday April 15th, 2017 the St. John Valley SWCD held a Free High Tunnel Workshop. Environmental Studies professor Kim Borges, and the UMFK campus administration volunteered the use of the University's high tunnel for our workshop. Thank you UMFK!



Workshop instructor Julie Trudel teaching workshop participants about growing produce in a High Tunnel.

THE GARDEN SOCK – A SELF CONTAINED GARDEN

Originally invented to be used in erosion control, Garden Socks are now being used for gardening. The garden sock is basically a fabric tube that is filled with soil and compost. Garden socks are great in urban areas with very limited soil access and/or growing space such as on a patio. When placed down on the ground, it can be bent into desired shapes that fit a specific area. The placement can be changed during the day to give it maximum sunlight. The garden sock can be used individually as a raised bed, as edging along a garden border, in window boxes, or deck railing planters.

Weeds are not a problem since they don't have a way to get into the soil. In fact the only soil that is exposed to the sun, or light is the hole cut out in the fabric when seeding, or planting. As the plants grow they gradually cover the sock so it's hard to tell the plants are growing out of a raised soil area. The Sock lets in water and air, but is sturdy enough to hold soil and plants. If the sock is sitting on a solid surface, such as a patio, moisture will be slower to evaporate out of the bottom. If it's sitting on soil, the excess moisture will be absorbed by the soil which should stay moist compared to the surrounding soil. As the sock dries out, water will be "wicked" back up by osmosis. Drip irrigation systems are also available to keep the sock well watered. Over watering can reduce oxygen supply, and promote pest or mold issues. Garden socks provide great aeration making it difficult to over water.





St. John Valley SWCD
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Prepared by: St. John Valley SWCD

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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OFFICE STAFF

Anthony Tardif

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

USDA Natural Resources
 Conservation Service (NRCS)
 Eric Giberson – District Conservationist
 Greg Cironi – Soil Conservationist

Contact the District

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

The Upper St. John River Organization (USJRO) and the Aroostook County Conservation Association (ACCA) are again volunteering to distribute 11,000 Northern White Cedar seedlings donated by CedarWorks of Rockport Maine.

Please contact any of the following (email preferred) for seedlings:

Steve Young, One World Artisans, 9 Skyway Avenue, Frenchville, Maine, 207-543-5050
mail@habitatplanning.com

Jerry McLaughlin, JM Guide Service, 41 Hedman Road, New Sweden, 207-592-2516
jmguideservice49@gmail.com

Anthony Tardif, Saint John Valley Soil & Water Conservation District, 139 Market Street Fort Kent, 207-834-3311x3 sjvswcd@gmail.com

INVASIVE FOREST PESTS

If you think you have seen any of these pests, please report your findings to bugwatchme.agr@maine.gov or (207) 287-2431

What is an invasive species?

Under Executive Order 13112, a species is considered invasive if it is not native to the ecosystem in question and its introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.



BROWN SPRUCE LONGHORN BEETLE



EMERALD ASH BORER



ASIAN LONGHORNED BEETLE

