

Penobscot District News

Penobscot County Soil & Water Conservation District

Summer 2002

www.penobscotswcd.org

2002 Farm Bill What Does It Mean for Penobscot County?

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill) represents the single most significant commitment of resources toward conservation on private lands in the Nation's history. The legislation responds to a broad range of emerging natural resource challenges faced by farmers, including soil erosion, water quality, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and farmland protection. The 2002 Farm Bill places a strong emphasis on the conservation of working lands, ensuring that land remains both healthy and productive.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Penobscot County SWCD are responsible for the implementation of the following programs:

- **Conservation Security Program (CSP)** - This is a new program designed to reward stewardship and provide an incentive for addressing additional resource concerns on agricultural land. Watch for more information this fall.
- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** - Our key conservation program. For details please see the EQIP article in this newsletter.
- **Farmland Protection Program (FPP)** - This program is a voluntary program that helps farmers keep their land in agriculture and prevents conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural use. Watch for more information on this program in the future.
- **Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)** - This program provides technical and financial assistance to eligible landowners to restore, enhance and protect wetlands.
- **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)** - This program encourages creation of high quality wildlife habitats that support wildlife populations. Cost-share funds are provided to landowners to develop upland, wetland, riparian and aquatic habitat areas.

For more information on any of the programs contact us or visit our website for links to NRCS information.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program Changes & Signup



The 2002 Farm Bill has made many changes to the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). EQIP is a voluntary program that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality.

Through EQIP, farmers may receive financial and technical help to install or implement structural and management conservation practices on eligible agricultural land.

Some of the program refinements that were mandated by congress include:

- Producers can receive payments in the same year the contract is approved.
- Total cost-share and incentive payments have been increased to \$450,000 per individual or entity over the life of the 2002 Farm Bill, regardless of the number of farms or contracts.
- Conservation Priority Areas are no longer required. Funds will be allocated to each county by the NRCS State Office.

We are currently accepting applications for EQIP, however we will not be able to approve contracts until the new rules are finalized in August. **Each application will be reviewed for funding on a first come first serve basis.**

Conservation Plans will be prioritized based on the priorities established by the Local Working Group (LWG). The LWG is comprised of representatives from the Penobscot County SWCD Board of Supervisors, Penobscot FSA County Committee, County Commissioners Office and NRCS and District Staff. To sign up for EQIP please stop by the Farm Service Agency. For information on program guidelines and practice eligibility please contact a NRCS staff person at 990-3676 X 3.

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Penobscot District News

District Supervisors

- Joe Chernosky
- Neil Crane
- Dan Kusnierz, Chair
- Bob Fogler, Treasurer
- Mary Wilson, Vice Chair

Associate Supervisors

- Lloyd Bolstridge
- Leslie Bolstridge
- John Fogler
- Simeon Leach
- Keith Parlette
- Larry Smith
- Robert Weeks

District Staff

- Chris Brewer: District Office Coordinator
- Tandy Easler: Watershed Coordinator
- Joe Bertolaccini: District Engineer
- Keith Parlette, Earth Team Volunteer

NRCS Staff

- Dan Schmidt: District Conservationist
- Alice Begin: Soil Conservationist
- Dave Power: Soil Conservationist
- Ken Blazej: Conservation Technician
- Seth Jones: Conservation Technician
- Ron Olson: Area Soil Resource Specialist

Water Quality Projects in the Sebasticook Lake Watershed

The Sebasticook Lake watershed encompasses 54,328 acres. Twenty-five percent (13,582 acres) of the watershed land use is under human development with 8,620 acres attributed to agriculture, 3,950 acres to residential and 1,012 acres to roadways.

The watershed also contains 9 other named lakes and ponds, including two that are public water supplies. Of the 10 named lakes and ponds in this watershed 5 have been identified as threatened or impaired by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP).

Twenty-four years of historical data shows that Sebasticook Lake has had poor water quality. The Penobscot County Soil and Water Conservation District (PCSWCD) in conjunction with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has implemented several programs over the past 19 years to address agricultural sites around the lake. During the 1980's PCSWCD and NRCS implemented a PL-566 Small Watershed Program that provided over \$1 million in cost-share assistance to agricultural landowners to address nutrient management, erosion problems and other water quality issues. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) program has provided another \$100,000 towards this effort over the last 5 years.

During 2002 the District will begin implementing Phase 1 of a new Sebasticook Lake Watershed Project. This project is funded under the Environmental Protec-

tion Agency's (EPA) Section 319 program and was designed to be the first phase of many to address water quality issues. The main goal of Phase 1 is to target a few areas of concern but more importantly to foster a working relationship between the communities, residents and the District to work together and address non-point source (NPS) concerns that affect the entire watershed. NPS pollution includes all storm water runoff related problems, including soil particles, fertilizers, leaking fluids from automobiles and more.

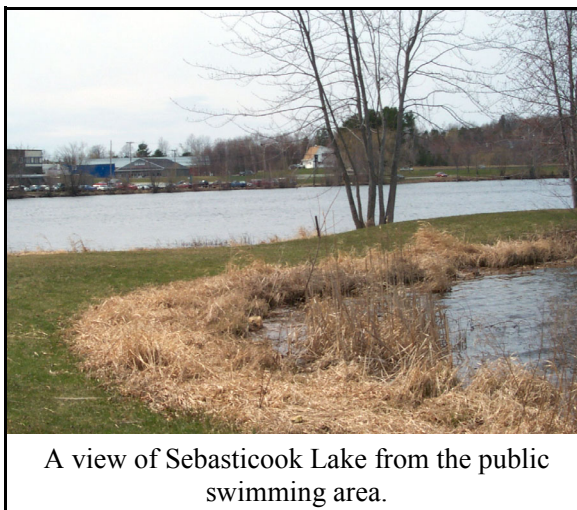
There are many areas that need to be addressed. A recent study completed by the

Maine Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) in conjunction with the 1998 Sebasticook Lake Watershed Assessment identified 96 sites where Conservation Practices should be installed within the watershed. Eleven of the 96 sites were attributed to agriculture. The

majority of the remaining sites are on urban and residential land. Phase 2 will continue working with the entire watershed community to address NPS concerns that affect them all.

Phase 2 will reduce soil erosion and polluted runoff by installing water quality best management practices (BMPs) on 7 high impacting sites, 29 medium impacting sites and 19 low impacting sites, over a two year period. Conservation Practices will be installed with cost share and technical assistance. The reduction of pollutant loads will be estimated by using soil loss avoidance calculations. Outreach to towns will continue to promote watershed restoration activities. The long term

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A view of Sebasticook Lake from the public swimming area.

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Meet the Newest Staff Members



Tandy L. Easler is the District's new Watershed Coordinator. Tandy is from northern Indiana and received a degree in Public Affairs, with a concentration in Environmental Science and Management from Indiana University. Tandy has gained extensive experience in the natural resource field; her first job was with Indiana's Department of Fish and Wildlife as a Naturalist Aide and a Creel Clerk studying walleye populations. She worked with the Howard County SWCD in Indiana as a District Technician and Watershed Resource Technician. That District along with NRCS, trained her in conservation planning, surveying, design and BMP installation. AmeriCorps brought her to Maine where she volunteered with Maine DEP in Presque Isle on watershed surveys and education. Tandy's hobbies include: Cross Country Skiing, hiking, canoeing, camping, gardening, sewing and throwing Frisbees for her hyper-active dog, while petting her laid-back coon cat. She is also a newlywed and resides in Charleston,



David Power is the new Soil Conservationist for NRCS. Dave was born in Kittery, Maine and grew up in New Hampshire, where he met his wife Brenda. Dave and Brenda moved to Maine in 1989. He

attended the University of Maine at Orono and received his bachelor's degree in natural resources in 1995. Dave and Brenda have a nine year old daughter Deanna and own a home in Dedham. He spent the last five years working for the Hancock County Soil and Water Conservation District, and looks forward to his career with NRCS.

Seth Jones is the new Soil Conservation Technician for NRCS. Originally from St. Albans, Seth graduated from Nokomis Regional High School in 1996. In May 2000



he received his Bachelors Degree in Geology from the University of Vermont in Burlington. The following year was spent in Massachusetts producing injectable collagen. Seth enjoys fishing, canoeing and traveling. He's been to Europe and Brazil, and traveled throughout the U.S.

Sebasticook Lake Cont.

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goal of the project is to improve Sebasticook Lake water quality by reducing external total phosphorus loading.

Provided Phase 2 is approved by the EPA and MDEP, the PCSWCD will be managing nearly \$157,000 to be used for Conservation Practices throughout the Sebasticook Lake watershed over the next two years. These practices will range from improving drainage systems on state, town and private roads to assisting private landowners who want to stop NPS pollution on their property. The PCSWCD is looking forward to working with everyone in the watershed to combat NPS pollution and improving the



An example of an eroded road bank.

water-quality throughout the Sebasticook Lake watershed!

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Penobscot County SWCD prohibit discrimination in all their programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audio-tape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Open Farm Day 2002

You are invited to attend a wholesome family adventure that offers hay rides of fun! On Sunday, July 28nd, almost 60 farms throughout Maine will open their doors to the public. There is much to experience at this year's Open Farm Day as well as a chance for you and your family to visit local farms throughout the state. Visiting hours are generally from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. though some farms may extend their hours for special events such as milking.

Maine farms offer displays, farm-raised products, animals and on-site activities to experience. Activities include barn and field tours, milking, hay rides, petting zoos, nature trails, beautiful scenery, and product sampling.

For a list of host farms, directions or additional information you are welcome to contact Jane Aiudi, Maine Department of Agriculture, 28 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333 or phone (207) 287-3702, or visit the Maine Department of Agriculture web site at www.state.me.us/agriculture.

The hosts in Penobscot County are:

- Mapleshade Farm
284 Corinth Road, Garland

- Page Farm & Home Museum
University of Maine
Belgrade Road, Orono
- Treworgy Farm Orchards
3876 Union Street, Levant

Make the connection between the business of farming and what it means to the community and each of us in Maine. Enjoy Open Farm Day 2001!

Maine Farm Days

Maine Farm Days, the Agricultural Trade Show Held On A Working Farm, will be held at the Dostie Farm in Fairfield Center on August 20 and 21. There are many activities scheduled throughout the event including a conservation wagon tour, craft tent and a children's learning center. There will also be pesticide recertification credits available for those who need them. For more information contact the Somerset County SWCD/NRCS at 474-8324.

To contact us for Additional Information on our programs:

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