

Penobscot District News

Penobscot County Soil & Water Conservation District

Spring 2004

www.penobscotswcd.org

2004 Envirothon Winners Announced

Chris Brewer

On a warm and sunny May 19, seventy students from 9 high schools descended on the Maine Forestry and Logging Museum at Leonard's Mills in Bradley to compete at the Penobscot County District hosted Central Maine Envirothon.



Hampden Academy Envirothon Team: Jim McCabe, Greg Jones, Shaun Briggs, Paul Wilson, Megan Worcester & Chris Hawkins

Envirothon is Maine's largest high school environmental program, and it is an international program with over 500,000 students participating throughout the United States and Canada.

Each spring, 6 regional competitions are held all over Maine. The top three teams from each regional competition compete at the State Envirothon Finals.

The objective of Envirothon is to provide opportunities for students to acquire and increase their outdoor skills and scientific knowledge about Maine's natural resources so they can make informed, educated decisions about our environment. At each competition the teams are tested on their knowledge in forestry, wildlife, soils, aquatics and a current issue which was "Natural Resource Management in the Urban Environment" this year.

Fourteen teams, with 5 students each, competed from Bangor High School, Bucksport High School, Central High School, Greenville High School, Hampden Academy, Jonesport Beals High School, Nokomis Regional High School, Old Town High School and Upper Kennebec Valley High School.

The members of the Hampden Academy Team were the Central Region Envirothon Champions this year with a score of 427 out of 500 points. The team consisted of Jim McCabe, Paul Wilson, Greg Jones, Megan Worcester, Shawn Briggs and Chris Hawkins who replaced Shawn because he couldn't stay for the whole competition. Old Town's Team #1 placed a close second with 371 points. Their team consisted of Tiger Huang, Rachel Bay, Kristen Paul, Sharon Fuller and Mike Swett.

Central High School Team #1 members Andrea LaFlamme, Daniel Kekacs, John Shaw, Abby Arena and Andrew Nevells, finished in third



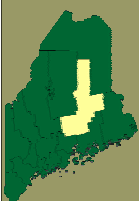
Old Town Team 1: Tiger Huang, Rachel Bay, Kristen Paul, Sharon Fuller, Mike Swett

place with a total of 367.5 points. These teams then went on to compete in the State Competition which was held at the Pine Tree State Arboretum in Augusta

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- Dan Kusnierz, Treasurer
- John Simon
- Mary Wilson, Chair

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- Joseph Chernosky
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- Joe Bertolaccini: District Engineer
- Chris Brewer: District Office Coordinator
- Kate Pond, District Soil Conservationist
- Sam Wright: Watershed Coordinator

NRCS Staff

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

2004 Soil Survey Update

David Turcotte, NRCS Soil Survey Project Leader

Dover-Foxcroft based soil scientists continue their update of the Southern Penobscot County Soil Survey, which is part of the National Cooperative Soil Survey. This survey is the first update in the state of Maine by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (in cooperation with the Penobscot SWCD, Maine Agriculture and Forest Experiment Station, and Maine Department of Agriculture). Seventeen percent of the survey has been completed to date, and the forecast for completion is 2009. The survey area extends to the north as far as the town of LaGrange.

In May two new soil scientists were added to the project's staff: Suzy Park and Tim Dalbert. Suzy and Tim worked in Wyoming as entry level soil scientists for about a year and a half before transferring to the Dover-Foxcroft soil survey office. Suzy has a B.S. in natural resource management from the University of Maryland, and Tim has a B.S. from Penn State University in environmental science. Both emphasized soil science in college, and both have experience in geographic information systems and global positioning systems. I am pleased to have these two bright, ambitious people on staff.

In addition to Tim & Suzy, I am also pleased to have another soil scientist working on the soil survey this field season on a detail from Georgia. His name is Bob Evon, and he will be with us for 16 weeks. Though Bob has been working in Georgia for a few years, he spent many years soil mapping in northern Michigan, which is a plus because that part of the country is comparable to central Maine in terms of having been glaciated ~ 12,000 years ago, and in terms of climate and forest cover types.

2002 Farm Bill Update

Chris Brewer

As we begin the 2004 field season it seems like it's a good time to review the status of the 2002 Farm Bill. This spring we submitted 75 requests for funding through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), 17 requests were funded for a total of \$1,213,324 out of the total state allocation of \$5,213,070.

Signup for EQIP began in 2002 and has been an ongoing process. To date we have received 125 requests for assistance, with 90 requests processed, and 32 contracts funded to date. This translates to \$2,220,557.65 of conservation practices to be installed on agricultural land throughout Penobscot County through the new Farm Bill. The Penobscot Nation also received a \$69,750 EQIP contract this year that will be used on 3,000 acres of tribal lands in Alton.

So far this year has also been successful for the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) we received \$60,650 in funds to date, \$27,000 have been obligated to the Sebec River Restoration Project, the remaining \$33,650 will be used at the Leavitt Wildlife Management Area in Garland for upland habitat practices. Individual contracts with land owners may be available during the current 2004 fiscal year, if Maine receives additional allocations. If you are interested in learning more about these programs, please contact our office or go to the NRCS website at www.me.nrcs.usda.gov/programs.



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Envirothon Continued

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on May 27th, with 17 other teams that were successful in their regional competitions.



Central Team 1: Andrea LaFlamme, Daniel Kekacs, John Shaw, Abby Arena, Andrew Nevells

By an amazing 1½ points Hampden Academy placed first at the Maine Envirothon, besting Easton High School. Bonny Eagle Team #1 placed third. The Hampden team will now compete at the Canon Envirothon which will be held in Buckhannon, West Virginia from July 26 through August 1, 2004.

We would like to congratulate the Hampden Academy team and wish them luck at the national competition. We would also like to thank the Maine Forestry and Logging Museum, Wal-Mart, Broadway Pizza Hut, Hannaford, Crane Brothers, Inc., Merrill Merchant's Bank, and everyone who volunteered their time and effort to make the Central Maine



These students are taking their aquatics exam on the earthen dam.

Regional Competition a success.

For more information on Envirothon please contact the District or visit www.envirothon.org.



Tree identification is part of the Forestry Test

New District Staff Member



Meet Kate Pond, our newest District employee. Kate is our District Soil Conservationist and will be assisting NRCS with the implementation of Farm Bill Programs. Kate is originally from Dixmont, and graduated from N-

komis Regional High School in 2000. She then went on to the University of Maine in Orono, and received her bachelors degree in Ecology and Environmental Science, with a concentration in Soil and Water Sciences. She currently lives in Newburgh and enjoys canoeing, camping, gardening, traveling and most of all playing with her little dog Wyatt.

The Penobscot County Soil and Water Conservation District provides leadership, information, education and technical assistance to conserve, improve and sustain our natural resources through partnerships with individuals, businesses, organizations and government.

Penobscot River Restoration Project

Lia Morris

The Penobscot River is the largest watershed in Maine, draining a full third of the state. It was once vibrant with life - millions of alewives, shad and other river herring, prehistoric looking sturgeon, rainbow smelt, tomcod, and – certainly most famous- the leaper: wild Atlantic salmon. This rich fishery provided for the cultural sustenance of the Penobscot Indian Nation and also, later the European settlers who depended on the fishery for both commercial and recreational purposes. Today, the river is nearly devoid of its native fish and much of the cultural and recreational traditions are limited.

In an unprecedented collaboration that has inspired hope in many who love the Penobscot, diverse interests that have fought for decades over its future have agreed on a path of recovery of its native fisheries. Penobscot Partners, including the Penobscot Indian Nation, American Rivers, Atlantic Salmon Federation, Maine Audubon, Natural Resources Council of Maine, and Trout Unlimited in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service, the State of Maine, and PPL Corporation, the dam's owners, have reached an agreement for river recovery that includes:

- the purchase, decommission and removal of Veazie and Great Works Dams;
- the purchase, decommission and proposed by-pass of Howland Dam;
- the opportunity to increase power generation at several dams, maintaining more than 90% of the company's current generating capacity, and;
- the improvement of fish passage at four other dams.

The Penobscot River Restoration Trust, a not-for-profit formed to implement the restoration, will have a five year option period to raise funds and purchase the Veazie, Great Works and Howland Dams for \$25 million dollars. In addition the preliminary estimate for project implementation, including dam removal and modifications, economic development and mitigation, is also approximately \$25 million. Removal of the dams will likely occur between 2006-2010 and after all the necessary regulatory approvals have been received.



This agreement restores access to virtually all historic habitat for several species, such as striped bass and sturgeon, and significantly improves access to over 500 miles of habitat for others that historically migrated beyond the first major falls in great numbers, including American shad and Atlantic salmon. Other wildlife, such as osprey and bald eagles will have enhanced foraging opportunities, as their food supply throughout the river will be enhanced. Benefits of this project will reach beyond the di-

More information on the Penobscot River Restoration Project can be found on their website at penobscotriver.org

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rect benefit to fish species and wildlife, providing opportunities to revive cultural, recreational, and social traditions. This project balances the river back in favor of migratory fish and wildlife, people, culture, and recreation that rely on a healthy free-flowing river.

Since the announcement last October all parties to the agreement have been actively engaged in getting out and talking with communities, providing details of the project and answering specific community concerns. Penobscot Partners is working closely with the State and communities to assure community involvement in the economic development potential this project brings. Thus far the communities have been granted a \$10,000 Community Development Block Grant from the State of Maine to begin economic development planning efforts around the project and Senator Snowe has secured \$30,000 for further work on community interests.

There is still much work that needs to be done to make this project a reality but we can all find hope that sometime in the future the Penobscot River will run strong with migratory fish, wildlife will be in greater abundance, and people who have chosen to or been forced to turn away from the river can return to paddle, fish, watch wildlife, or just simply sit on the banks and relish knowing the river is running freer than it has in well over a century.

If you would like further information about the project please contact Lia Morris at (207) 622-3101.



Water Quality Program Update

Sam Wright

The Districts Water Quality programs have been picking up momentum as we approach the summer work season. Phase One of the Sebasticook Lake Watershed Project will be closed out following the Town of Corinna's completion of projects at the Lincoln Mills E. Branch crossing, a culvert on the Ervin Rd. and Town Line Rd. crossing.

Phase Two currently has eight sites in progress with landowners around the lake and we are looking to complete as many as possible this summer.

Projects slated for construction include culvert replacements, grass and rock waterways, buffers and shoreline stabilization. Landowners in the watershed who are interested in installing lakeside buffers, or eliminating erosion problems should contact the district for information on participating in the project.

The District has received notification that a Phase Three for the Sebasticook Watershed Project will be awarded, this will continue the Districts conservation endeavors in the Sebasticook Watershed.

Aside from 319 Programs the District has been actively participating in various conferences over the winter. Recently the district partnered with the Penobscot Indian Nation's Water quality division and assisted with a Non-Point Source Water Conference for the people of Indian Island. The day was a huge success

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For more information on any of our programs visit us online at penobscotswcd.org.

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Water Quality Continued

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with 110 people in attendance to hear Jason Mitchell and Dan Kusnierz speak on NPS Pollution and then receive hands on demonstration through a watershed model, a buffer dunk tank and an NPS Pollution ramp.

Also the District attended the Maine



These children are learning about Non-Point Source Pollution..

Water Conference in Augusta. The conference consists of a morning plenary session introducing the days topics and features speakers such as Governor Baldacci and Senator George Mitchell. The afternoon is broken into five sessions on topics such as lakes management tools and Maine's salmon rivers. Several breaks throughout the day allow professionals with different water quality backgrounds and experiences to discuss the topics of the day and their experiences in the various regions around the state.

To contact us for Additional Information on our programs:

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