

Penobscot District News

Penobscot County Soil & Water Conservation District

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www.penobscotswcd.org

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Nutrient Management Planning

Sarah Kron, Soil Conservationist, NRCS

NOW is the time to start developing your Nutrient Management Plan, if you haven't done so already! All farms with more than 50 animal units or those that utilize more than 100



John & Marie Ford installed a new stacking site at their farm in Eddington.

tons of imported manure must have a certified plan by **January 1, 2001!** These plans must then be fully implemented by October 1, 2007. In order to prepare for your Nutrient Management Plan, you will need the following information:

1. **Current Soil Samples** - *take soil samples this fall* in all fields to allow time for processing by the lab – the sooner the better
2. **Manure sample(s)** - you should have a separate sample for each type of manure system you have on your farm – *take these samples when you empty your storage*
3. **Number of animals and their average weight**
4. **Field Information** – you will need to have the crop history (rotations) and manure application history for the past three years

Landowners and/or operators that have existing conservation plans, either EQIP or LTC, MUST have an approved nutrient management plan as

part of the contract agreement. NRCS staff will be available to assist these individuals in developing their plans *ONLY* if we have all of the above information. It is the responsibility of the individual requesting assistance to take all required samples!

You may write your plan yourself, however, you must have it certified by an approved nutrient management planner. The Maine Department of Agriculture has a current listing of approved planners available to assist you in writing and certifying your plan. If you would like to obtain a copy of this list, please contact Melissa Schultz-Nielson at the Maine Department of Agriculture at (207) 287-1132.

Promoting Wild Turkey Habitat

You may have noticed the return of wild turkeys to our county. Many landowners are interested in helping this reintroduction to be successful. The following recommendations were made by Vasco Carter, a biologist with the Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, to help provide adequate habitat. Following are some specific practices to enhance the wild turkey habitat on your property.



Dairy farmers should leave some silage corn standing for turkeys to utilize in winter. A block of corn, or several rows, left adjacent to a wooded margin of the field can pro-

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New Items Available for Sale

Bluebird Boxes	\$12.00
Duck Nesting Boxes	\$24.00
Bird Feeders	\$25.00

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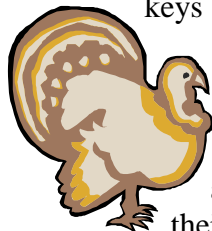
NRCS Staff

- Daniel Schmidt: District Conservationist
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vide feeding opportunities. Choose a wooded border containing roosting trees if possible. Preferred roosting trees are large open crowned softwoods such as pine. If annual rye is inter-seeded with the corn, the turkey poults (young) can forage for insects around the corn field and have some protection afforded from the rye. Mature seed heads of the rye are available in late summer and they also provide foraging opportunities. Another advantage to this practice is the drawing of turkeys away from other food sources associated with dairy farming.

Enhance winter foraging for wild turkeys by planting various shrubs around field margins, such as highbush cranberry, crabapple, barberry and shrubs that retain their fruits. Mast trees, such as beech and oak, provide food for fall, winter and spring foraging. Planting these varieties and managing existing individual trees on your property can benefit turkeys as well as other wildlife.



Renovate old growth in fields by plowing, harrowing, liming and fertilizing then seeding with legumes such as clover and herbaceous forbes. Forbes produce seeds and attract and produce many insects for young turkeys. Maintain these fields, but delay mowing until August 1 to protect young wildlife using the field.

Landowners interested in providing wild turkey habitat should contact for assistance. There may be some funds available for farmers to reimburse them for the initial costs to create turkey habitat (contact the District for more information).

Sebasticook Lake Demonstration Projects

This has been a busy summer on Sebasticook Lake. The District, in cooperation with NRCS, Penobscot Valley Council of Governments, the Town of Newport and the Sebasticook Lake Association installed several Best Management Practices around the lake. All of the work completed this year was done by the Conservation Corps.



Keith Parlette surveying the future site of a Vegetative Buffer Strip

The Conservation Corps is made up of 6 students from Nokomis Regional High that were hired to install structural and vegetative sediment control projects. These projects included vegetative buffer strips, plunge pools, etc.

Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program the District and NRCS funded the installation of a vegetative buffer strip demonstration behind the American Legion Hall in Newport. The buffer strip was designed by Keith Parlette our Earth Team Volunteer. Keith also supervised the Conservation Corps as they installed the buffer.



A newly established demonstration vegetative buffer strip on Sebasticook Lake.

Attracting Birds to Your Yard

With fall approaching, now is a good time to begin planning for spring. Here are some tips for attracting birds to your yard next spring.

Food and cover are essential for the survival of all species. Loss of suitable nesting sites is a major factor in the decline of some bird species. In the wild, many species nest in the cavities of dead trees. With the loss of hedgerows in some parts of the country and the removal of dead trees in town, natural nesting sites are often limited. Also, some highly competitive, non-native species of birds have taken over some of the existing nesting sites once occupied by native birds.

Bird species are extremely variable in their habitats. Some like deeply wooded areas; others prefer open fields and meadows. Many species are year-round residents, while others such as the cedar waxwing appear only for a few days a year during migration. Other species such as sparrows, blue jays, cardinals, robins, juncos and chickadees are highly adaptable and found in many environments.

Many people are not aware of the value of dead, dying and hollow trees, as well as logs on the ground, for birds, and other wildlife. Dead trees provide homes to more than 400 species of birds, mammals, and amphibians. Consider leaving standing dead and dying trees in your yard unless they pose a human safety or property hazard, and use old logs and stumps in gardens and landscaping.

Few yards will be able to supply sufficient food for a variety of birds all year long. However, you can improve shelter and food supplies by building or purchasing feeders and houses, and by setting out cer-

tain foods.

Most bird species have specific nesting requirements. Because of these requirements, your yard may not accommodate certain species. For instance, Eastern Bluebirds prefer nesting sites that border open fields or lawns with a tree or fence post nearby to provide feeding perches. Chickadees prefer to nest in more wooded areas.

Before setting out nesting houses, find out which species are common in your area and can be encouraged to nest in your yard. Make or buy a bird house specifically designed for the bird you wish to attract.

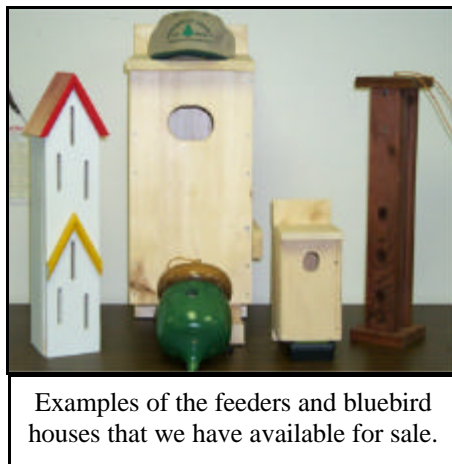
Many species of birds can be attracted by a variety of feed in different styles of feeders. There are many styles of feeders available, from window-

mounted feeders to those that hang from branches and stands. Many birds will readily eat right off the ground. Bird feed comes in a variety of choices; however, sunflower seeds appeal to many birds, as well as small mammals. Woodpeckers, nuthatches, and chickadees are especially attracted to suet. Citrus fruit, chopped apples,

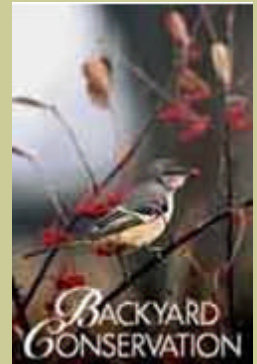
bananas and raisins will be eaten by numerous species, including robins, titmouse, nuthatches and mocking birds.

Unlike many other species of birds, hummingbirds rely on nectar as their source of food. Hummingbirds are typically attracted to red and yellow tubular flowers, although they frequently visit others. Hummingbird feeders can be purchased and filled with a sugar water solution. Every 3 to 4 days wash the feeder with soap and water, rinse thoroughly, and add new sugar water.

The District has bluebird nesting boxes, duckboxes, and bird feeders for sale.



Examples of the feeders and bluebird houses that we have available for sale.



The information in this article came from our Backyard Conservation Campaign. For years, farmers and ranchers have used conservation practices to save natural resources and improve wildlife habitat. For more information on how you can use some of these practices in your own backyard—whether you have acres, feed or a few flower pots... contact the District of visit our web site at www.penobscotswcd.org.

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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.

Nutrient Management Grant Program

The Nutrient Management Grant Program is a new program developed by the Maine State Department of Agriculture, to facilitate the construction of new or retrofitting of existing manure storage and handling facilities on Maine farms. The purpose of the program is to help farm operations comply with the Nutrient Management Law.

Sign-up for this program closes on November 21, 2000. There will be two information meetings. The first will be held on October 5, 2000 from 10:00 to 12:00 p.m. in the Somerset Room at the Augusta Civic Center. The second will be held in the Red Room at the Northeastland Hotel in Presque Isle October 20, 2000 from 10:00 to 12:00 p.m. Interested parties are invited to come and learn more about the program, pick up an application and discuss the program with representatives from the Department.

For an application packet you may contact the District. Questions should be directed to Paryse Turgeon at the Maine Department of Agriculture at 207-287-7548.

Join Us On The Web

The District recently launched a web site. The address is www.penobscotswcd.org. Please join us online for the latest information on our programs, news events and fundraisers!

Continuous CRP Signup

Changes have recently occurred in the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) which could make it more enticing for farmers to enroll certain acreage under 10-15 year contracts. Marginal pastureland that is immediately adjacent to streams or other water bodies may be eligible for enrollment under the new and improved Continuous CRP. Eligible marginal pastureland must be devoted to riparian buffers by natural regeneration or by planting trees. Cropland may also be enrolled under this program under certain practices. Not only will farmers receive annual rental payments on CRP acreage and 50 percent cost-share to complete conservation practices, a signing incentive payment and practice incentive payment will also be made. The practice incentive payment will be paid at the time a practice has been completed and will equal an additional 40 percent of the total eligible cost of practice installation. **Farmers could receive 90 percent cost-share payments to implement planned practices.** If this sounds like something you might be interested in, please contact the Farm Service Agency at 990-3676 X 2.

To contact us for Additional Information on our programs:

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