

# Penobscot District News

## Penobscot County Soil & Water Conservation District

Summer 2006

[www.penobscotswcd.org](http://www.penobscotswcd.org)

### Pushaw Lake Project Off to a Big Start

Chris Brewer & Grace Nelson

The long awaited Pushaw Partners Watershed Project begins this summer! Over many years Pushaw Lake has experienced dramatic increases in Phosphorus levels. In an effort to contain the problem, the District has received approval for the first phase of the Pushaw Lake Watershed project. The District is working through a partnership with the Greater Pushaw Lake Association, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, NRCS and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. To kick off this project the Partners worked with the Maine Lakes Conservancy Institute to bring their floating classroom the "*Melinda Ann*," to Pushaw Lake. On July 4th and 5th lake residents joined us on cruises where they learned about what is going on below the surface of the water.

On the cruises, children and the young at heart were able to take part in many



*Hands-On demonstrations were a big part of the MLCI Boat Tours. This net is used to sample the plankton in the water.*

(Continued on page 2)

### 2006 State Envirothon Winners Announced


Elaine Tremble, USDA—NRCS

The rain held off as the State Envirothon finals were held on May 24 at the McDougal Orchards in Springvale. The Maine Association of Conservation Districts awarded plaques to the top three scoring high school Envirothon teams. The first, second and third place winning teams respectively were: Cony High School Team A, Hampden Academy, and Bonny Eagle High School. Fifteen teams representing 13 high schools from around the state competed at this event.

**Envirothon, Maine's largest high school environmental education program,** is an international program representing over 500,000 high school students in the United States and Canada. First place Cony High School will represent Maine at the international Canon Envirothon competition to be held at the University of Winnipeg in Manitoba in late July. The international Canon Envirothon, organized by local conservation districts and other conservation agencies, is sponsored by Canon USA, in partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA Forest Service, National Association of Conservation

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# Penobscot District News

## District Supervisors

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Bob Fogler, Vice  
Chair  
Dan Kusnierz,  
Treasurer  
John Simon  
Mary Wilson, Chair

## Associate Supervisors

Leslie Bolstridge  
Joseph Chernosky  
John Fogler  
William Michaud  
Larry Smith

## District Staff

Joe Bertolaccini:  
District Engineer  
Chris Brewer:  
District Office  
Coordinator  
Grace Nelson,  
Watershed  
Coordinator  
Kate Pond, District  
Soil Conservationist

## NRCS Staff

Ken Blazej:  
Conservation  
Technician  
Seth Jones:  
Conservation  
Technician  
Ron Olson: Area Soil  
Resource Specialist  
Dan Schmidt:  
District  
Conservationist

## Pushaw Lake Continued

*(Continued from page 1)*

hands on demonstrations. A benthic dredge was used to take a sample of the bottom of the lake. Water samples were also taken near the surface and the bottom of the lake to



*The Cooperative Extension's Buffer Brigade provided the labor for installing the buffer demonstration at Lakeside Landing.*

show the differences in the water temperature. A Secchi disk was used to measure the transparency of the water. The big hit of the day was the Ken-a-Vision projector, a microscope attached to a monitor, that allowed participants to see the samples they took up close and personal.

Another big project that we completed is a Vegetative Buffer Demonstration at Lakeside Landing in Glenburn. The buffer was planted with low growing plants and shrubs that will help stabilize the soil and will take up nutrients flowing towards the lake in storm-water.

If you have property on Pushaw Lake and you are wondering how you can help the lake, give us a call. Through our grant we were allocated over \$40,000 for cost share assistance available to residents of Glenburn and Hudson to install Conservation Best Management Practices (BMPs). Examples of BMPs that can be

installed are shoreline stabilization, gravel road repair including crowning, ditching and culvert installation, as well as vegetative buffers and rain gardens. Old Town and Orono residents can receive technical assistance to get their land management questions answered.

Native plant buffers are also available at a 50% match for the first twenty interested individuals. Any **landowner within Pushaw's Watershed** may be eligible to receive one of these grants. For more information on the Pushaw Lake Project, please contact Grace Nelson at the District at 990-3676 X 3.

## Staff Changes at the District

As we begin a new field season we welcome a new Watershed Coordinator Grace Nelson. Grace comes to us most recently from the Northwestern most tip of Washington State, where she was working under a branch of NOAA



called National Marine Fisheries Services. She spent 2 ½ years on fishing vessels in Alaska and Washington state waters protecting and assessing the ground fish population. Before which, she worked for the Washington County SWCD as a ICM Blueberry Technician and performed a soil erosion survey while still in College. Grace received a BS in Marine Biology with a Biological concentration and Chemistry minor from the University of Maine at Machias. Originally from Houlton, Grace decided to move back to Maine and is currently living in Bangor, while taking soil and plant biology classes at the University of Maine to help supplement her knowledge as a watershed coordinator.

## Penobscot District News

### Envirothon Continued

Districts, Mead Westvaco Corporation, American Electric Power, Inc., and Alcoa Foundation.

The major objective of Envirothon is to provide opportunities for high school students to acquire and increase their outdoor skills and scientific knowledge about Maine's natural resources so that they can make informed, educated decisions about the environment. It provides students with reference materials, workshops, and hands-on, outdoor, real life experiences in five areas including Forestry, Wildlife, Soils, Aquatics and a current issue--this year being the Water Stewardship in a Changing Climate.

Other high schools competing in the State Envirothon finals included: Bucksport, Central, Dirigo, Easton, Edward Little, Hodgdon, Jay, Nokomis, Old Town and The New School. Other schools who were eligible for the State Envirothon but unable to attend were



*Second Place Team from Hampden Academy—Paul Wilson, Chris Cowin, Stanley Abraham and Katie Haenn*

Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and the Maine Department of Agriculture.

Maine's 2005 State Envirothon was funded by grants, sponsorships and contributions from the Maine Potato Board, Wild Blueberry Commission, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Maine Association of Site Evaluators, Maine Association of Professional Soil Scientists, Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Association of Wetland Professionals, Hanaford Groceries, Sebago Technics, New England Organics, and Canon North American Envirothon.



*First Place Team from Cony High School—Kurtis Briggs, Dylon Lim, Travis Mitchell and Tyler Weir*

Ashland, Greeley, Washington Academy and Westbrook. These teams represented the top three winning teams from six regional competitions held around the state earlier in May.

Resource specialists who cooperated in the 2006 Envirothon included: Maine's Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Maine Forest Service,



*Third Place Team from Bony Eagle High School—Joe Bailey, Kara Lombardo, Jake Brink, Claire Bastille, and Josh Talbot*

**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.**

**The District has an Aerway Aerator available for rent at a reasonable rate of \$3.00 per acre. The aerator can be used anywhere soil compaction is resulting in reduced growth in pastures or hay ground. For more information contact the District and speak with Chris.**

### Eagle Scout Project Protecting Bangor's Water Resources

*From the NonPoint Source Times*

Stormwater is the largest source of water quality problems in the United States, and we all contribute to it, maybe without even realizing it. Up to 70% of the rain that falls on our property leaves our property taking with it



hitch-hiking pollutants. This polluted stormwater flows untreated into our rivers, lakes, streams, creeks, and the ocean. These pollutants kill sensitive aquatic life and harm the overall beauty and recreational appeal of the water body. Polluted stormwater can cause beach closures, swimming bans, algal blooms, decline in shorefront property values, and even contaminate drinking water sources.

Douglas Farrell and a fellow Eagle Scout candidate, Adam Kearns both of Troop 301 in Bangor jointly applied to the KAC Eagle Board to do a stormdrain stenciling project for their

Eagle Scout project to help protect Bangor's water resources. Just like every other city or town, storm drains in Bangor flow directly into the streams and rivers. The Scouts diligently stenciled storm drains and put out door hangers throughout the west side of Bangor, using the ThinkBlueMaine storm drain stencils and hangers. Additionally, they were able to get several scouts from their troop to help complete the project in a timely fashion. Final tally is 392 drains stenciled and 1,513 door hangers delivered. This covered an area encompassing the neighborhoods west of Union St (all the way over to the golf course) and south of I-95 down to 3rd Street. Their total contributed hours is around 190. Greg Farrell, Douglas's father said: "It was a pleasure to see them do something that could have impact on our environment."

This project was coordinated through Michael Dennett, an Eagle Scout himself and an Americorps volunteer for the Bangor Area Stormwater group and University of Maine Cooperative Extension.

To top off this effort, one of the residents in the targeted neighborhoods felt compelled to contact the Cooperative Extension whose logo appeared on the door hanger. The resident stated:

"I want to pass along how happy I was to see the "Keep Our Water Clean" "Think Blue" campaign come through my neighborhood on West Broadway in Bangor recently. Not only were the gutters/drains painted adorably with Duckies, but I had a fantastic door hanger on my door to provide further information and to further make the point. Because of the campaign, I have decided to forego the pesticides/fertilizers that we were planning to get from the lawn service and instead to live peaceably with my little community of dandelions. Please give my thanks to the folks involved in this FABULOUS campaign."

## Penobscot District News

### Support the Maine Agricultural License Plate

Just over 200 more signatures are needed to make our agricultural license plate a reality! Please tell your friends and family members, and feel free to share our sign-up form with them or to direct them to the web site. If you know of a good location for a poster with sign-up sheets, let us know and we can send that to you. Also, as you may know, we have a funding source to cover the remaining expense of the Maine agricultural license plate, which means purchasers of the specialty plate now have the option of paying for them at the time the plates become available. Paying in advance, however, is still greatly appreciated and will likely

allow you to receive your plates faster once we have reached the required goal of 2,000 signatures. So, our challenge now is simply to obtain --with no deadline--our remaining number of signatures from people willing to purchase the license plate. Please use our sign-up form to help make our dream a reality!

**Remember \$10 from the annual fees goes to the MAITCA education fund. This fund will help to support the Maine Envirothon and other District Education Programs!**

**Looking for a local Farmers Market? Visit [www.getrealmaine.com](http://www.getrealmaine.com) to find one near you.**



#### Information for supporters who intend to purchase the Agricultural Specialty License Plate

I understand by signing this form and paying the \$20 fee per set of license plates, that I agree to purchase the agricultural specialty license plate. A voucher will be issued to me by the Secretary of State's Office when the plates are available.

Print Name:	_____	Mailing Address:	_____
Signature	_____	Town & Zip:	_____
Current Plate #:	_____	E-mail Address:	_____

*Please mail with check made payable to Maine Agriculture in the Classroom Assn. (MAITCA) 28 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333. For more information call the MAITCA office at (207) 287-5522 or e-mail [maitca@maine.gov](mailto:maitca@maine.gov)*

**Attention Seabasticook Lake and Pushaw Lake Certified Front Runner Operators. Penobscot County SWCD has a Front Runner that you can rent and it is kept in Bangor. The Front Runner is available to you at a rental rate of \$50/week. If you are interested please contact Chris.**

### USDA Secretary Extends EQIP Energy Incentives

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Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns recently announced the deadline for completing environmental projects to qualify for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) energy costs assistance will be extended to September 1, 2006.

**“Farmers and ranchers have put various conservation practices on hold because of the recent increases in the cost of energy,” said Johanns. “As part of our commitment to help mitigate the impact of high energy costs on agricultural producers, this cost adjustment and time extension will lessen the impact of energy prices on farmers and ranchers, while protecting our natural resources.”**

Prior to the announcement, the deadline for completion of the EQIP projects was June 30th to receive the incentive payment for EQIP projects that have been delayed due to increasing energy costs.

The one-time payment adjustment applies only to participants who signed EQIP contracts in 2004 or earlier and will only be paid for practices that are completed between March 1 and September 1, 2006. Projects must be completed before payments can be made. The 15 percent payment increase will focus on a select list of specific practices that have escalated in price by 20 percent or more because of rising energy costs and to practices most affected by increased costs in construction materials such as concrete, steel and plastic pipe.

For more information on this program please contact an NRCS staff person.

### Two Lincoln Lakes Down 11 to Go..

*Laura Wilson, UMCE*

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A year ago, the University of Maine Cooperative Extension (UMCE) held its Watershed Stewards Program in Lincoln. Lincoln boasts thirteen lakes within the town boundary. Setting our sights high, we (UMCE, the Stewards, and the Penobscot County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)) have decided that the only thing to do is to conduct watershed surveys on all thirteen lakes over the next few years!

The first targets of our efforts are the **Big and Little Narrows (if you're not local, you may know them as the 'Upper Cold Stream Ponds')**. These are pretty little lakes, ringed with seasonal and year-round homes. In May, a group of enthusiastic locals paired with SWCD and UMCE staff and AmeriCorps volunteer leaders began investigating the watersheds.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of erosion issues in these small watersheds. The usual suspects are at work again, and camp roads and residential lakefront buffers will compete to be the largest problem source. No matter which type of site wins, we all lose unless we do our best to fix these issues.

The good news? Help may be on its way. The Penobscot County SWCD has applied for funding to continue the string of watershed surveys, with three more watersheds targeted for next spring. As well, UMCE will work with the SWCD to identify and apply for funding to start to remediate as many of the eroding sites as possible.

### Backyard Conservation Spotlight Rain Gardens

*Adapted from the Conservation Practices for Homeowners Factsheet*



Rain gardens are attractive and functional landscaped areas that are designed to capture and filter stormwater from roofs, driveways, and other hard surfaces. They collect water in bowl-shaped, vegetated areas, and allow it to slowly soak into the ground. They reduce the potential for erosion and minimize the amount of pollutants flowing from your lawn into a storm drain, and eventually into our streams and lakes.

Rain gardens can vary in size, but are most effective when built to 20-30% of the drainage area. Rain gardens for single-family homes will typically range from 150 to 300 square feet, but even a smaller one will help reduce water pollution problems.

Other factors to consider when designing your rain garden are:

The garden should be bowl-shaped, with the lowest point of the garden **no more than 6" below the** surrounding land.

The sides should be gently sloping towards the center to prevent sudden drop-offs that could lead to erosion problems or walking hazards.

Rain gardens are often placed in a preexisting or created depression within a lawn, or in a location that receives roof runoff from a downspout.

To avoid flooding improperly sealed foundations, build your rain garden **10' away from existing**

structures, and direct water into the garden with a grassy swale, French Drain, gutter extension or other device.

Rain gardens can be placed in sunny or shady areas, and plants should be chosen accordingly, with the lowest point plants being wet tolerant species,

the sides closest to the center planted with moist tolerant species and the edges of the garden should be planted with moist to dry or dry tolerant plants. It is also important to check the permeability of your soil. Sandy soils only need composted added, but clay soils should be replaced with a mixture of 60% sand, 20-30%

topsoil and 20-30% compost. After construction of the garden is complete, the entire area should be covered with a thick layer of mulch.

Once your plants mature, the maintenance of a rain garden is very low. Watering is important during the first growing season, and some weeding is necessary after planting. As the garden matures, some of the perennials may need to be divided if plantings become too crowded.

For more information on rain gardens visit these great websites:

University of Maine Cooperative Extension Water Quality: [www.umaine.edu/waterquality/](http://www.umaine.edu/waterquality/)  
University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension: [clean-water.uwex.edu/pubs/](http://clean-water.uwex.edu/pubs/)  
Maine DEP: [www.maine.gov/dep/blwq/docwatershed/materials.htm](http://www.maine.gov/dep/blwq/docwatershed/materials.htm)



*This demonstration rain garden at the UMCE Offices at 495 College Ave, Orono, is open to the public.*

**Whether you have acres in the country, an average-sized suburban yard, or a tiny plot in the city, you can help protect the environment and add beauty and interest to your surroundings. This new series will show you how.**

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### Fall Bulb Sale Information Enclosed!

## Upcoming Events

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, audiotape, 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**—On Sunday, July 23, 2006 over 80 farms throughout Maine will be open to the public. Visit a farm and see what farm life is all about. Watch farm activities and demonstrations from milking to felting; pet farm animals, pick berries, tour a barn or go on a hay ride. There will be farm-raised products for sale, displays to see and samples to taste. A list of participating farms can be found at [www.getrealmaine.com](http://www.getrealmaine.com). Farms in Penobscot County include:

Windkist Haven Farm, 158 La-grange Road, Bradford

Ash Hill View Deer Farm, 89 Swett Road, Carmel

Double L. Ranch, 483 Nokomis Road, Corinna

Mapleshade Farm, 248 Corinth Road, Garland

Page Farm & Home Museum,  
University of Maine Campus

The Curran Homestead Living  
History Farm & Museum, Fields  
Pond Road, Orrington

To contact us for Additional  
Information on our programs:

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