

Androscoggin Valley Soil and Water Conservation District

in partnership with
United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service



LONG RANGE PLAN

2017-2021

70th Anniversary of
Making Conservation Work for You

Updated 12/27/2018

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WHO WE ARE

Androscoggin Valley Soil and Water Conservation District is an agency of the State of Maine that cooperates with individuals, property owners, federal and state government agencies, municipal and county government, the business and industry sector, non-profit organizations, and many more, to help manage and protect natural resources on private and public lands.

In May of 1947, Leroy M. Bingham, from the United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service (now Natural Resources Conservation Service), was assigned as a farm planner to get Androscoggin Valley Soil and Water Conservation District started. A petition circulated around Androscoggin and Sagadahoc Counties and expressed an interest and a need from the people for a conservation district. After a certificate of organization was issued by Harold Goss, then Secretary of State, an election was held for the Board of Supervisors. C.F. Hobart (Bowdoinham), Frank Millay (Richmond), and Rockwood Berry (Livermore Falls) were elected as the first Supervisors for Androscoggin Valley Soil and Water Conservation District.

The final step in forming the conservation district was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the United States Department of Agriculture and the Soil Conservation Service and a supplementary Memorandum of Understanding between the Soil Conservation Service and the Androscoggin Valley Soil and Water Conservation District.

The Conservation District's main aim is to promote environmental stewardship in Androscoggin and Sagadahoc Counties by teaching proper land use in order to maintain soil fertility, prevent flooding and erosion, maintain and restore wildlife habitats, and to protect our water supply.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Androscoggin Valley Soil and Water Conservation District is to promote the conservation and stewardship of soil, water, and related natural resources, by providing leadership, technical assistance, and educational programming to the citizens of Androscoggin and Sagadahoc Counties.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We value and respect the diverse members of our team; board members, district employees, contracted services providers, NRCS employees, and volunteers. We value and respect our conservation partners, agencies, groups, and individuals who collaborate with us to effect change. We value and respect our cooperators and clients who request our technical assistance. We strive to use and further develop our technical expertise and human resource skills to provide quality products and services tailored to our customers' needs. We value a flexible work environment and hold standards that contribute to a productive team and satisfied customers. These standards include; reliability, common sense, cooperation, flexibility, accountability, honesty, comradery, trust, honor, diplomacy, and humor.

We value the results of our efforts; soil and water quality improvement, contributions to food availability, viable natural resource-based businesses, quality of life in our environment, enhanced natural environments, and an informed public.

BOARD MEMBERS

Androscoggin Valley SWCD is governed by a five-member Board of Supervisors, of whom three are elected and two are appointed, that are volunteer officials. Supervisor elections are held each year and a full term for a Supervisor is three years. Additional support is provided by a group of Associate Supervisors representing diversified concerns for the natural resources within Androscoggin and Sagadahoc Counties.

Board Members as of January 1, 2017

Supervisors

Paul Roseberry- Chairman
Mark Emmons- Vice Chairman
Katie Carville- Treasurer
Kathy Shaw- Assistant Treasurer
Benjamin Dearnley

Associates

Art Dunlap
Anne Emmons
Shirley Hatch
Sonny Chipman
Bill Hatch

Board Members as of January 1, 2018

Supervisors

Steve Sinisi- Chairman
Mark Emmons- Vice Chairman
Katie Carville- Treasurer
Kathy Shaw- Assistant Treasurer
Benjamin Dearnley

Associates

Anne Emmons
Shirley Hatch
Sonny Chipman
Bill Hatch

Board Members as of January 1, 2019

Supervisors

Steve Sinisi- Chairman
Empty- Vice Chairman
Katie Carville- Treasurer
Kathy Shaw- Assistant Treasurer
Benjamin Dearnley

Associates

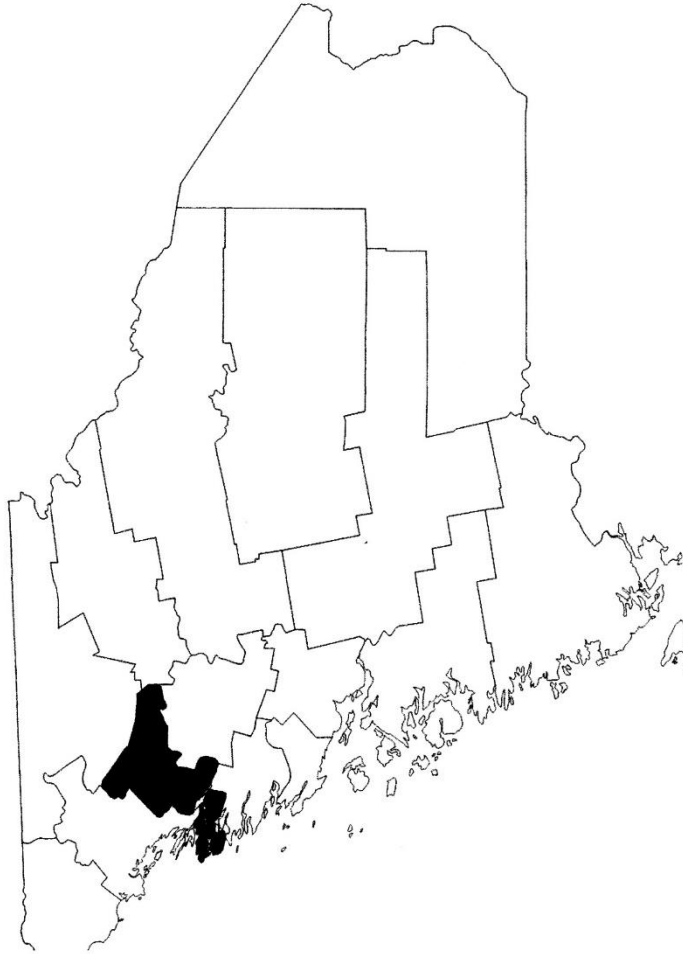
Shirley Hatch
Sonny Chipman
Bill Hatch

OPERATING PRINCIPLES OF MAINE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

These principles express some of the basic beliefs which guide our actions as we solicit cooperation of all people for the purpose of developing and using wisely our natural resources of land and water.

1. Conservation of our soil and water resources is a responsibility of each American. Our population is rapidly increasing and all resources are limited.
2. We believe in the principle of local self-government as provided by Soil and Water Conservation Districts in the administration of soil and water conservation programs.
3. Stewardship of natural resources must be a guiding principle accepted by all people, rural and urban.
4. Conservation education is the right way to encourage people to accept their conservation responsibility. Well informed people recognizing both responsibilities and opportunities, will do what is necessary.
5. Soil and water conservation research is the source of factual information for improving methods of conserving soil and water. Research is the only way to get reliable information fast enough for our changing needs.
6. Each landowner has; a right to legal uses of their land and water, a moral obligation to society to use these resources wisely, and a duty to be a good steward of these resources
7. In the use of all land within its capability and its treatment according to needs, we will need good land even more tomorrow more than today.
8. Conservation of water resources. We need land management to obtain maximum use of rainfall, with a safe disposal of runoff water, plus an adequate number of reservoirs for agricultural, domestic, wildlife, recreation, municipal, and industrial uses.
9. The watershed approach is the best means by which people can act together in solving soil and water conservation problems. Natural action of water on land is always within a watershed area.
10. Forest conservation and improvement can be best achieved on farms through the Soil and Water Conservation District policy of including all land in a Conservation Plan developed by the landowners in cooperation with their Soil and Water Conservation Districts.
11. Wildlife is a natural resource of significant economic, biological, and aesthetic importance, and its conservation is part of conservation of all land. By giving wildlife proper consideration in our programs, future generations will be able to enjoy its benefits.
12. Community and area land-use planning is needed for farm, urban business and recreational use. Taking farm land out of production haphazardly may bring hardships to entire communities.
13. Public support of conservation programs at local, state, and national levels, financial or otherwise, is right and proper.

AREA SERVED



ANDROSCOGGIN COUNTY

Androscoggin County, organized in 1854, has a total area of 497 square miles, of which 5.5% is water. The county has twelve towns and two cities, Lewiston and, the county seat, Auburn. Androscoggin County is home to over 100,000 residents. Androscoggin Riverlands State Park, located along the river in Turner and Leeds, protects twelve miles of river frontage and is part of the Androscoggin Greenway and the Androscoggin River Water Trail. Range Ponds State park is located in Poland Spring on Lower Range Pond.

SAGADAHOC COUNTY

Incorporated in 1854, Sagadahoc County is the smallest county in Maine, in land area, with a total area of 370 square miles, of which 31.1% is water. The coastal county is comprised of eight towns and one city, Bath, the county seat and is home to over 35,000 people. Pond Island National Wildlife Refuge is located in Phippsburg as part of the Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge. Popham Beach State Park is located in Phippsburg and Reid State Park is located in Georgetown.

NATURAL RESOURCE CONCERNS

As determined by the 2018 Local Working Group, the following natural resource concerns have been given a high, medium, or low priority for Androscoggin and Sagadahoc Counties. The potential practices listed beneath each resource description have been selected from the USDA NRCS Conservation Practice Physical Effect chart for their rating as “significantly improve” or “moderately improve” ranking regarding the specific resource concern.

SOIL RESOURCES

HIGH: Soil Erosion: sheet, rill, and wind erosion; irrigation induced erosion; concentrated flow erosion; excessive bank erosion from streams, shorelines, or water conveyance channels.

Potential Practices: critical area planting, road/trail/landing closure and treatment, tree/shrub establishment, forage and biomass planting, windbreak/shelterbelt establishment, grassed waterway, lined waterway or outlet, underground outlet, stream habitat improvement and management, prescribed grazing, mulching, conservation cover, field border, residue and tillage management, stripcropping, cover crop, vegetated treatment area, access control, recreation trail and walkway, riparian forest buffer, watering facility, streambank and shoreline protection.

HIGH: Soil Quality Degradation: subsidence; compaction; organic matter depletion; concentration of salts or other chemicals

Potential Practices: road/trail/landing closure or treatment, critical area planting, conservation cover, forage and biomass planting, deep tillage, prescribed grazing, riparian forest buffer, tree/shrub establishment, windbreak/shelterbelt establishment, field border, access control.

WATER RESOURCES

HIGH: Insufficient Water: inefficient moisture management; inefficient use of irrigation water

Potential Practices: windbreak/shelterbelt establishment, irrigation system improvement, irrigation water management, tree/shrub site preparation

HIGH: Water Quality: excess nutrients in surface and groundwater; pesticides transported to surface and groundwater; excess pathogens and chemicals from manure, biosolids or compost applications; excessive salts in surface or groundwater; petroleum and heavy metals and other pollutants transported to receiving waters; excessive sediment in surface waters, elevated water temperatures

Potential Practices: integrated pest management, agrichemical handling facility, residue and tillage management, conservation cover, forage and biomass planting, riparian forest buffer, filter strip nutrient management, sediment basin, waste storage facility, vegetated treatment area, waste treatment lagoon, critical area planting, water and sediment control basin.

LOW: Excess Water: ponding, flooding, seasonal high-water table, seeps, and drifted snow

Potential Practices: subsurface drain, forage and biomass planting, underground outlet, terrace, road/trail/landing closure and treatment, windbreak/shelterbelt establishment.

PLANT RESOURCES

MEDIUM: Degraded Plant Condition: undesirable plant productivity and health; inadequate structure and composition; excessive plant pest pressure; wildfire hazard (excessive biomass accumulation)

Potential Practices: windbreak/shelterbelt establishment, tree/shrub establishment, prescribed grazing, forest stand improvement, forage and biomass planting, riparian forest buffer, critical area planting, field border, wetland enhancement, wetland and wildlife habitat management, tree/shrub preparation, wetland restoration, conservation cover, upland wildlife habitat management, conservation crop rotation, streambank and shoreline protection, herbaceous weed control, recreation trail and walkway, seasonal high tunnel system for crops, early successional habitat development/management, wetland creation, field border, vegetated treatment area, cover crop, filter strip, prescribed grazing, grassed waterway, brush management, channel stabilization, access control, forest harvest management, heavy use area protection, firebreak, land cleaning.

ANIMAL RESOURCES

MEDIUM: Inadequate Habitat for Fish and Wildlife: habitat degradation

Potential Practices: wetland enhancement, upland wildlife habitat management, early successional habitat development/management, riparian forest buffer, wetland wildlife habitat management, wetland restoration, wetland creation, stream habitat improvement and management, conservation cover, watering facility, pond, spring development, aquatic organism passage, hedgerow planting, prescribed grazing.

MEDIUM: Livestock Production Limitation: inadequate feed and forage; inadequate livestock shelter; inadequate livestock water

Potential Practices: prescribed grazing, forage and biomass planting, brush management, herbaceous weed control, irrigation system improvement, nutrient management, irrigation water management, windbreak/shelterbelt establishment, stream habitat improvement and management, watering facility, spring development, water well, pond, pipeline, dam, pond sealing or lining, pumping plant, diversion.

ENERGY AND AIR QUALITY RESOURCES

LOW: Inefficient Energy Use: equipment and facilities; farming and ranching practices and field operations

Potential Practices: pumping plant, residue and tillage management, building envelope improvement, farmstead energy improvement, lighting system improvement.

LOW: Air Quality Impacts: emissions of particulate matter and particulate matter precursors; emissions of greenhouse gasses; emissions of ozone precursors; objectionable odors

Potential Practices: residue and tillage management, windbreak/shelterbelt establishment, nutrient management, conservation cover, roofs and covers, forest stand improvement, anaerobic digester, forage and biomass planting, tree/shrub establishment, solid/liquid waste separation facility, waste treatment.

LONG RANGE ACTION PLAN FOR ADDRESSING NATURAL RESOURCE CONCERNS

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE- Androscoggin Valley SWCD will provide technical assistance to land users to promote conservation and address priority natural resource issues and concerns.

Objective 1: To provide direct technical assistance to land owners and users.

Strategy: Work with NRCS and other partners to provide conservation planning for cooperators. Work with watershed groups to provide site-specific on the land technical assistance. Work with stream teams to expand assistance and utilize District expertise. Focus on priority natural resource issues. Ensure that technical assistance provided by the District reflects needs in the community and responds to changing landscapes. Foster local information exchange on conservation issues using working groups. Facilitate the implementation of conservation practices by providing easily accessible materials and/or lists of distributors. Follow up with individuals and municipalities to evaluate applied practices. Continue to provide assistance for traditional conservation practices for agriculture. Pursue research opportunities or provide information on non-traditional agriculture conservation practices. Continue to address road erosion problems with technical assistance, demonstrations, and workshops. Encourage and assist watershed groups to develop and implement watershed management plans. Provide local workshops and demonstrations in cooperation with other agencies, e.g., Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Maine Department of Transportation, and Maine Forest Service. Increase staffing to provide more and different assistance to land users. Provide outreach and technical assistance information to municipalities to gain a rapport with Code Enforcement Officers.

Objective 2: To improve the ability of land users to implement conservation practices on the land by using programs and grants to assist with funding.

Strategy: Seek outside funding sources to provide for technical staff for projects with a high level of need and interest. Encourage municipalities to use the development review program by developing a brochure and periodically sending it to municipal planning boards and code enforcement officers; use success stories in the brochure. Use USDA Farm Bill programs to assist cooperators in applying conservation practices on their land.

Objective 3: To identify the natural resource needs of the community to ensure that the technical assistance delivered is appropriate and beneficial.

Strategy: Review service to our counties to see that resource concerns are being met. Use locally led process to continue seeking information on conservation needs from the public. Identify conservation needs in under-served communities. Continue to visit different regions and groups in both Androscoggin and Sagadahoc Counties in order to remain informed of local needs and issues.

PUBLIC RELATIONS- To enhance its tradition of service to the citizens of Androscoggin and Sagadahoc Counties, the District will pursue an effective public relations policy

Objective 1: To provide opportunities for public input

Strategy: Utilize locally led conservation meetings, roundtable discussions, and group meetings to identify local resource issues. Facilitate the exchange of ideas and information among local and regional grassroots conservation groups, and state and federal agency staff. Together with citizens and municipalities, work to identify and strengthen the mechanisms that support community stewardship of our natural resources. Develop a reader-interest form to be included in District newsletters at least one a year. Host the Local Working Group in cooperation with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Objective 2: To increase the District's visibility by timely and effective communications

Strategy: Keep implementing and updating a media plan by establishing a list of appropriate contacts and evaluating the effectiveness of outreach. Adhere to an established schedule of press releases and public notices to promote District activities. Publish a quarterly newsletter and an annual report on a timely basis. Develop a "user friendly" web site that is easy to access and update. Use social media to broaden our viewership. Use boosted posts when acceptable to reach an even wider audience.

Objective 3: To market ourselves more effectively

Strategy: Strive for professionalism in District publications and news releases. Participate in regional events in order to promote awareness of the District's mission and expertise. Increase awareness among municipal officers and citizen boards by providing information on the District's services and activities. Increase participation of planning board and conservation commission members, and code enforcement officers, in relevant workshops and stewardship activities. Provide current information on District services and activities to our funding agencies and foundations. Expand and update our mailing lists for newsletters and public activities. Seek television coverage of special events. Establish a strategic plan to increase the number of cooperators in the District.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION ASSISTANCE- To educate all land users of Androscoggin and Sagadahoc Counties to encourage conservation of natural resources.

Objective 1: Continue to provide quality conservation education assistance and programs

Strategy: Implement Farm Bill educational assistance programs. Maintain library of resource materials. Support conservation education programs in schools by participating, when possible. Participate in the Envirothon program. Invite conservation groups, the public, legislature, and local interest groups to attend District meetings and events. Offer time for staffing booths at natural resource based and agricultural events. Sponsor conservation demonstration projects at public events and farmers markets. Encourage citizen participation in pollution prevention workshops.

Objective 2: Expand educational programs and opportunities

Strategy: Identify areas where conservation programming is needed. Work with students to promote conservation with service-learning projects. Seek input on educational needs from stakeholders and provide workshops as appropriate. Educate non-landowner land users about appropriate uses of private property and impact of activities on the environment. Increase educational programs on issues of interest to municipal officials, e.g., planning boards and conservation commissions. Increase community awareness of District fees-for-service technical assistance program. Offer for-profit conservation related workshops where user need is indicated. Jointly work with other districts and agencies to increase public awareness of the economic benefits of conservation.

Objective 3: To expand the District's ability to provide information and education by increasing financial support

Strategy: Charge reasonable fees to workshop participants to offset costs. Seek sponsors, grants, donations, and advertisers to provide funding for effective educational activities and programming. Investigate funding sources to support a part-time position for natural resource education. Continue to educate legislators on the importance for supporting conservation programs. Partner with private and public resource specialists to assist with District programming. Increase educational programs on issues of interest to municipal official, e.g., planning boards and conservation commissions.

FUNDING- To strengthen our ability to provide programming and services to the citizens and municipalities of Androscoggin and Sagadahoc Counties, Androscoggin Valley SWCD will diversify our sources of funding

Objective 1: To expand our funding from traditional providers

Strategy: Remain informed of funding capacities of County Commissions in light of regional needs. Provide reports to County Commissioners and state agencies, boards, and associations about District services that benefit area resources. Keep state and federal legislators informed of District services and programs that relate to local natural resource problems and issues. With MACD and partnering agencies, support efforts to expand state funding for conservation districts.

Objective 2: To broaden sponsorships

Strategy: Work with District committees and/or interest groups to target funding sources for new programs. Expand the fee-for-service technical assistance and urban development review programs by extending outreach to municipalities and new landowners. With professional advice, establish annual fund drives to be dedicated to District operations. Obtain sponsors for specific programs and activities, such as Envirothon and educational programming. Keep informed of new funding opportunities by attending regional meetings of nonprofit organizations. Remain aware of the programs of cooperating agencies in order to direct services to our interest groups. Solicit financial support from corporations and businesses.

Objective 3: To provide income to enable us to increase our level of service

Strategy: Identify marketable materials that support District programs, serve the needs of citizens, and enhance visibility. Develop seminars, programs, and workshops to generate additional income and expand our level of service. Solicit donations from individuals and citizen groups by including appeals in the annual report and in newsletters; recognize donors in publications. Become informed of the necessary mechanisms and financial guidelines that would enable the District to receive bequests from donors.

PARTNERSHIPS- To improve District effectiveness and capacity, Androscoggin Valley SWCD will strengthen and expand our conservation partnerships.

Objective 1: To communicate better and more frequently

Strategy: Continue to keep community/ partners informed of District activities regularly through press releases, e-mail messaged, public notices, and newsletters. Be aware of community activity and natural resource issues that relate to our mission. Provide open forums where partners can communicate their conservation and stewardship needs. Exchange information from other Districts to learn of effective programs and methods, and to strengthen bonds.

Objective 2: To strengthen partnerships with local people and groups

Strategy: Develop partnerships that will widen our understanding of resource issues and promote our mission. Create a mechanism that will give appropriate recognition and thanks to partners. Increase participation of municipalities in District activities by maintaining regular contact, and by offering programming and technical assistance appropriate to local needs. Remain informed of Maine Forest Service initiatives and goals, and co-sponsor programming that meets shared objectives. Strengthen relationships with nonprofit resource conservations groups such as Thorncrag Bird Sanctuary, Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program, Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission, Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments, Cooperative Extension, land trusts, lake and watershed associations, coastal property groups, and all levels of government. Remain involved with MACD leadership and committee functions. Provide input with Maine Department of Agriculture and Maine Department of Environmental Protection for programs and initiatives relevant to our mission. Continue to work closely with NRCS to meet mutual goals for programming and to understand the natural resources concerns of our counties.

Objective 3: To expand the District's service capacity by implementing the volunteer service program

Strategy: Ensure that volunteers will have meaningful learning in resource conservation. Acknowledge volunteer participation with written thank you notes or press releases as appropriate. Enhance the District's program and service capacity by involving citizens in community action issues. Form a volunteer initiative committee to develop formal recruitment and action plans. Use volunteer agency sources to provide program support.

BOARD AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT- To effectively serve the natural resource conservation needs of the Androscoggin and Sagadahoc Counties, the Androscoggin Valley SWCD will seek to maintain a skilled and diverse board and staff.

Objective 1: To develop and maintained a skill and diverse board

Strategy: Increase the diversity of the Board of Supervisors and Associated by recruiting members reflective of the District and community needs. Adhere to a realistic time frame for agenda items. Allow time at monthly meetings to talk about objectives, ideas, and natural resource issues. Expand representations from Sagadahoc County. Periodically review training needs with in-house and other resource specialists. Plan orientation meeting for new associated and supervisors. Identify needs and provide training program for supervisors and associates using in-house and other resource specialists. Utilize community expertise for training sessions on marketing and outreach methods, public relations, recruitment of new board members, prioritizing activities and programs, networking, fundraising, and strategic planning.

Objective 2: To invest in our management infrastructure

Strategy: Ensure that the board members have adequate training and development opportunities. Keep staff and work targeted to district priorities. Regularly evaluate staff needs, procedures, and policies.

Objective 3: To understand the diverse conservation needs of our constituency

Strategy: Maintain an open line of communications among board, staff, and partners. Keep abreast of current technology and environmental conservation issues. Periodically receive priorities and programming by holding in-house focus meeting of partners, board, and staff in order to increase our understanding of current issues. Attend other partnership meetings and report issues related to District priorities.

Objective 4: To expand and support staff to meet customer needs

Strategy: Periodically reevaluate training needs and staff availability for new positions that will serve demonstrated customer needs and strengthen District capacity.