



# Waldo County Soil and Water Conservation District Journal 2019

## Table of Contents

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- Accomplishments..... 2-3
- Financials..... 4
- People.....5
- Agriculture/  
Community..... 6-7
- Education..... 8-9
- Water Quality.....10
- Conservation Assistance.11
- Forests for the Future... 12
- Shrub & Tree Sale.....14
- Thank You..... 15
- Our Mission..... 16

## Letter From the Chair

**2019** has been a year of positive changes for Waldo County SWCD. We have been working with the NRCS, FSA and the Extension Service, along with many other non-profits to control the destructive effects of invasive plants and insects within the county (Pg. 11).

The District has also been helping the Friends of Lake Winnecook with LakeSmart and StreamSmart programs to control run off into the lake by doing a road survey. We look forward to working with other lake associations within Waldo County to help them with their concerns. Carol Weymouth, Executive Director and I, as President of the Maine Association of Conservation Districts, accepted the Austin H. Wilkins Forestry Stewardship award for 2019 from Governor Mills, at the Blaine House. It is a prestigious award presented by the Maine DACF and the Maine Tree Foundation.

Our support comes from the DACF, Waldo County Commissioners, our annual shrub and tree sales and grants. We encourage all citizens to use our many services. Waldo County is a diverse area including ocean frontage, farms, forests, coastal islands, lakes, urban and rural lands that give us an opportunity to conserve and protect precious resources and to serve the citizens of Waldo County. --Andy Reed, Chair, Board of Supervisors



## 2019 Accomplishments



- The District held a 4 part workshop series entitled Love Our Lakes which provided training for members of the Swan Lake Association, the Friends of Lake Winnecook and the general public during the summer.
- We worked with the Friends of Lake Winnecook (“Unity Pond”) to complete an assessment of gravel road conditions and potential erosion problems which could affect the water quality of the lake.
- The District implemented hemlock woolly adelgid monitoring in Waldo County using the Take a Stand hemlock pest monitoring program created by the Maine Forest Service.
- The District offered invasive plant learning sessions for the Maine Tree Farmers Association and at Maine Farm Days.
- The District held a Forestry for Maine Birds workshop for area landowners, in partnership with Maine Audubon.
- The District offered free tackle and outreach for the Fish Lead Free program at fishing events at Lake Winnecook.
- The District initiated an statewide online tree conditions reporting tool called Report a Tree, available through the Anecdata website and smart phone app.
- District conservation interns provided 317 hours of service learning, in partnership with several local organizations.
- The District completed invasive plant surveys on area farms as part of a multi-county Conservation Innovation Grant and Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund program to assist farmers with invasive plant management.
- The District provided 297 hours of conservation assistance to 24 partners and landowners in 2019.
- The District assisted the Waldo County Trails Coalition to implement an interpretive and education program for the Hills to Sea Trail which passes through 3 communities and 47 miles of farms and forests in Waldo County.



- We provided conservation skills instruction at two area high schools, and led Belfast Area High School students in completing Project Learning Tree Forest Inventory Growth activities.
- The District partnered with Coastal Mountains Land Trust and the Schoodic Institute to plant 350 trees in 4 research plots for the Future Forests of Coastal Maine project.
- The District partnered with Hunter Green Farm and Top Flower Farms to provide service learning for conservation interns to learn about hemp production.
- We offered a talk on Growing Hemp in Maine at our annual meeting at the MACD statewide winter meeting.
- The District participated in LakeSmart and StreamSmart trainings, and is assisting residents of the Swan Lake Watershed in implementing the LakeSmart program.
- We joined the Belfast Bay Watershed Program to offer a memorial tree program at the City Park Arboretum, and planted a tree to honor local conservationists.



- We partnered with the Maine Forest Service to offer forest pest outreach throughout the year, including browntail moth assistance to municipalities, and ash tree tagging with area high school students and college interns.
- The District provided a Day of Service on the island of Islesboro.
- As a part of our annual non-profit plant sale, we offered native plants and fruiting trees and shrubs to the public.
- We provided invasive plant management assistance to Coastal Mountains Land Trust, the City of Belfast and the Lincolnville Center Library.
- The District offered a seminar on ecological landscaping to the Belfast Garden Club, and helped to create a new educational community garden in partnership with Belfast Parks and Recreation and the Belfast Garden Club.
- The District assisted with the Maine Envirothon at local and state competitions and guided fund-raising efforts.

# 2019 Financial Report

## 2019 Year End Income & Expenses - 2020 Proposed Budget

	As of Dec 31, 2019	2020 Proposed Budget
<b>Income:</b>		
Waldo County	\$ 26,000	\$ 26,000
Maine Dept. Ag	25,000	25,000
Workshop & Project Grants	8,454	8,000
Cty/State Mtngs - Ticket Revenue	420	400
Build. Maint.	12,732	14,000
Tree/Trout Sale	9,088	12,000
Misc. & Interest	74	500
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 81,768</b>	<b>\$ 85,900</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>		
Payroll	18,987	20,000
Taxes	3,322	3,500
Insurance	517	550
Mileage	929	900
Office Supplies/Audit	769	600
Workshops/Education & Outreach	1,721	1,800
County/State Meetings	1,306	1,200
Donations & Dues	2,775	2,500
Build. Maint.	10,954	11,000
Tree/Trout Sale	10,296	9,400
Misc.	-	250
Contracted Services	32,970	33,500
Website	338	350
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 84,884</b>	<b>\$ 85,550</b>
<b>Net Profit (Loss)</b>	<b>\$ (3,116)</b>	<b>\$ 350</b>

## 2019 Staff and Supervisors

### Board of Supervisors

Andrew Reed, Chair  
 Harold Larrabee, Treasurer  
 Susan Hunter, Supervisor  
 Donald Cox, Supervisor  
 Gene Randall, Supervisor  
 Brian Baker, Associate Supervisor  
 Kym Sanderson, Associate Supervisor

### Staff

Aleta McKeage, Technical Director  
 Jenny Jurdak, Administrative Director

### NRCS Staff

Ron Desrosiers, District Conservationist  
 Stephanie Landry, Soil Conservationist  
 Ken Blazej, Resource Conservationist

# People

## New Board Members

In 2019, we welcomed Gene Randall as Supervisor, who has been a great asset to Waldo County Soil & Water Conservation District through his experience with non-profit organizations and finances. He originally started attending meetings as an Associate Supervisor and immediately contributed his knowledge at every opportunity. We look forward to his continued contributions for the district.



Donald Cox, who was previously appointed to finish the term of retiring supervisor, was elected for an additional 2 years. He has been a Supervisor for WCSW in the past and comes to us with a wealth of knowledge in conservation practices and other areas. He has ambitious ideas and is currently initiating the return of The NACD poster contest in order to introduce children to environmental education.



## Thanks to Brian Baker

It has been an honor to work with Brian Baker, who stepped down as a supervisor in 2019. He has served on the Waldo County

Soil & Water Conservation District Board for over 8 years and will remain as an Associate Supervisor. We appreciate all the work he has done to lead our annual shrub and tree sale and his offer to continue to help us in the future. He has an abundance of knowledge of fruit trees and plants, has assisted many customers at our plant sale, and is always willing to reach out to help anyone who has questions. We will definitely miss his ever present sense of humor!



# Agriculture and Community

## 2019 Annual Meeting



The Waldo County Soil and Water Conservation District's Annual Meeting was held in October of 2019 at the Waldo County Technical Center in Waldo. A great meal and dessert were prepared by Jacob Grass and students in the Culinary Arts program.

The dinner and meeting featured a talk on the hemp farming industry, which was presented by

speakers Joe Saltalamachia of Top Flower Farms and Susan Hunter of Hunter Green LLC. They spoke of their successes and challenges during the 2019 growing season on their farm in Unity, and of the changes that are in store for the future of the hemp industry. An informative slide show which showed the full farm conversion process and growing season added to the presentation. This was a very

popular topic which drew in our largest audience in years, and many folks had lots of questions.

During the event, the award for Conservationist of the Year was presented to Richard Kersbergen for his contribution to the conservation practices in the county. Brian Baker retired as an WCSWCD Supervisor and was presented an award for his eight years of service.

## Our Partners

In 2019, we had the privilege of collaborating with many excellent partners in the Midcoast. Once again we worked with the Maine Forest Service to offer outreach and community assistance on invasive forest pests and other topics, and with the Maine Natural Areas Program on invasive plant assessments. We also worked with area land trusts, including Coastal Mountains Land Trust and Midcoast Conservancy. Municipal partners included the City of Belfast, Islesboro and Swanville. We provide outreach and educational workshops for

Swanville Lake Association and Friends of Lake Winnecook. The District worked with area educational institutions, including RSU 71, The Ecology Learning Center, Lincolnville Library and the Waldo County Technical Center. We also partnered with area conservation organizations including Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition, the Belfast Garden Club, Waldo County Trails Coalition, Schoodic Institute, and Maine Audubon. Agricultural partners included UMaine Cooperative Extension, Maine Farm Days, and Hunter Green LLC.

## Hemp Farming in Maine: A 2019 Farm Conversion to Hemp

The excitement of hemp farming in Maine has been a roller coaster for the year 2019. The challenges of weather, labor, abundance of product, lack of infrastructure, and impending new regulations have made it interesting, stressful, and rewarding. My experience growing 17 1/2 acres of hemp with two business partners was a novelty of normal farming. I can say I got quite an education on caring for and producing a plant I have never grown. I was fortunate to have one of the best growers working with me and a very good financial business partner. This compatible business partnership contributed to the success of the crop.

Our hemp operation was one of the most successful in the state of Maine. We were able to produce exceptional plants in an organic environment. We managed plant care from the greenhouse to the field with a lot of time and help, spending numerous hours planting and tending seedlings. When the weather permitted, we planted our seedlings in the prepared fields. Our operation was very diligent with making sure weed control and male plant extraction was a priority, accounting for many summer days. In order to produce the best product, the grower must plan on high labor costs and intensive management.

Harvesting became a challenge due to the lack of processors and drying facilities available. Fortunately, we had at the ready a large amount of labor and equipment that were able to harvest the plants, which posed a problem for some other growers. The production of many



growers in Maine gave us a lot of produce which has become a selling obstacle. I think the industry will settle down and balance itself out after some the newness wears off and the USDA rules are in place.

This industry will certainly not come to a stop but it will have to overcome the stigma it has encountered from the past, just like anything new. If we can focus on the health benefits of hemp products and not the negativity of the past associated with marijuana (not the same product) it will be an alternative for our medicinal future as well as for fiber production. My interest in this crop has stemmed from the experience of six years taking care of my husband who suffered from a blood cancer. The medication and cancer therapies he endured drained away his quality of life. He may have had a better one if we had pursued an alternative approach such as the use of the hemp product CBD oil. We are planning to continue to grow hemp, but like for all agriculture, diversity will

## Education

### Conservation Skills at Waldo County Technical Center

In 2019 we continued and developed our Conservation Skills program for secondary students. For two years, the Outdoor Leadership program at Waldo County Technical Center (WCTC) has participated in this pilot program with enthusiasm. In turn, Waldo County SWCD has been able to help the program add more skills and career exploration as a result of our collaboration. Students in the Outdoor Leadership program explore many careers related to working outdoors, with an emphasis on adventure learning. Through their work with us, students also get a taste of what it is like to be a field biologist, forester, and park manager. In the Conservation Skills program, they learn the basics of a core skill for these professions, the use of GIS (Geographic Information Systems) mapping software, as well as how to use global positioning systems (GPS) to collect information in the field. One of the most exciting new elements of the program this year is development of forest interpretation on a public trail. The WCTC students began two real

life projects, creating maps and interpretive points for their school trail. The students will then create an interpretive project for a major public trail, the 47 mile Hills to Sea Trail. Another exciting part of this work is the 4 way collaboration with WCTC, our District, the Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition, and the Waldo County Trails Coalition (creators of the Hills to Sea Trail). Our Conservation Skills activities go hand in hand with the ecology lessons of the Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition's Natural Literacy program. Students can apply their learning about forest ecosystems to their map making projects. This spring, they will be ready to create their real life materials that the public can use to learn about forests and the history of the land as they walk the Hills to Sea Trail.

The students are also eager to develop another real world project by creating a management plan for the WCTC lands and also begin forest restoration and research through adaptive tree plantings, which they will collect data on over time.

### Conservation Skills and Project Learning Tree at BAHS

In 2019, Belfast Area High School studied the forest growth inventory plots they set up in 2017 as part of the District's high school program that year. The plots are developed as a part of the Maine Tree Foundation's Project Learning Tree program. Each year, the students work with our staff and interns to take measurement to document tree and forest health conditions on permanent plots located on local conserved lands. As a part of our activities, they also studied adaptation forestry in the classroom and learned GIS mapping skills.





## Read ME Ag

Read “ME” Agriculture has reached more than 100,000 Maine students since 2008, and 700 classrooms annually. During Ag Week, volunteers read and give books about agriculture to kindergarten through 4th grade classrooms. They tell the students about their farms, programs or connections to agriculture and leave lessons and information for the teachers to use, all supplied by Maine Agriculture in the Classroom (MAITC).

The book for 2020 is Plant Something for “ME”. Dates for reading are March 16-20 and March 23-27. Our District provides readers for the Red ME Ag program. If you would like to sign up to be a volunteer reader or if you would like a

reader to come to your K-4 classroom in Waldo County, please contact Jenny at 218-5311 or [jenny.jurdak@me.nacdn.net](mailto:jenny.jurdak@me.nacdn.net).



## Pollinators and Life in the Soil: Our 2020 K-12 Programs

During 2020, the District is pleased to offer materials for students and teachers that wish to use the National Association of Conservation Districts’ (NACD) K-12 education programs. The NACD has developed a five-year rotation for stewardship topics: water, soil, habitat, forestry, and a topic of interest – and determines the theme each year. This year, the curriculum theme is “Life in the Soil:

Dig Deeper.” A K-12 curriculum for this theme is available online, along with many themes from the past. Each year, a poster contest is also held. Teachers may wish to enter our regional contest. **The 2020 Poster Contest and Stewardship Week theme is “Where would we BEE without Pollinators?”** Please see our website section Educational Resources to find links to these materials. Please contact us if you would like a set of printed materials, or if you would like your students to participate in the upcoming poster contest. The Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition’s Natural Literacy program is partnering with us to provide classroom instruction for the two 2020 themes as well.



## Water Quality

Lake water quality has been a strong focus for our work for this past year, and is part of a multi-year effort to help Waldo County residents of lake watersheds to protect the quality of water in major lakes. Lake water quality has many implications for quality of life. Increased nutrient load contribute to algal blooms, which can cause toxic effects in humans and decrease water clarity and lake aesthetics. Water quality also affects lake area property values. In addition, pollutants impact fish and wildlife populations, spawning, the fishing experience, and thus the local economy. One significant source of pollutants is erosion of sediment from unpaved roads in proximity to lakes. Over time, sediment from roads also contributes to decreased depth, increased emergent vegetation, and can add

## Love Our Lakes Series

Our water quality work this year also included a workshop series for Waldo County residents called Love Our Lakes. The training included four workshop sessions held over 2 months this summer:

- Lakes 101
- Taking Care of Those Camp Roads
- Septic System Basics
- Introduction to LakeSmart

This year's series was focused on the Swan Lake watershed, and members of the Swan Lake Association and Friends of Lake Winnecook attended. As a result, members of the Swan Lake Association plan to follow in Lake Winnecook's footsteps, assessing their

## Assessing Roads and Water Quality at Lake Winnecook



phosphorus and other nutrients. In 2019, Friends of Lake Winnecook requested that the District assist them in assessing issues with unpaved roads in the Lake Winnecook (Unity Pond) area. We completed a survey of roads adjacent to the lake and made recommendations to repair erosion and sedimentation problems in the area.



lakefront areas with the Maine Lakes Association's LakeSmart certification program, which the District will help them implement in 2020.

## StreamSmart

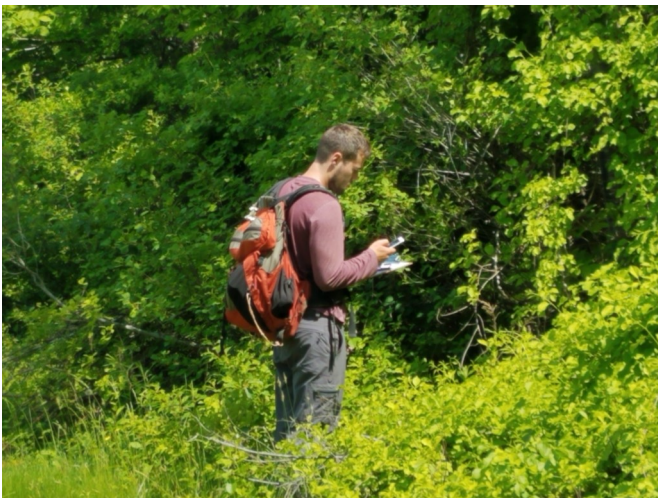
You may have heard the term StreamSmart before. It is actually the name of a program with two main purposes. One is to communicate the principles of creating a modern, environmentally sound road crossing over a stream or river. The other purpose is to provide assistance for municipalities and others to replace outdated, undersized or degraded crossings across the state of Maine. The program is a collaboration between the Maine DEP and other groups including The Nature Conservancy and Maine Audubon. This diverse array of partners are working together because creating a StreamSmart crossing is extremely beneficial to fish and other wildlife. It is also the best way to create a crossing that can withstand flood events without failing, saving towns a lot of money in the long run over basic culverts. The natural bottom culverts, boxes and arches recommended cost more up front, but are much more likely to withstand extreme storm events, which are occurring with greater and greater frequency. Maine has significant

## Conservation Assistance



funds available to implement StreamSmart crossings in 2020. Waldo County contains streams and rivers that provide some of the most valuable habitat for sea run salmon and alewife populations in the state, and so are priorities for StreamSmart crossings. Our District has developed preparations to assist Waldo County towns that are interested in replacing crossings that pose a barrier to fish passage.

## Invasive Plant Management Plans through the NRCS CIG Program



In 2019, we continued our popular NRCS CIG (Conservation Innovation Grant program) collaboration in partnership with the Maine Natural Areas program to provide free invasive plant assessments and management plans for producers throughout the county. This program will continue through 2020. Contact us if you have farm or woodland areas with invasive plants and weeds that you would like to manage, and would like some advice. At left, our intern Gunther Schletter maps invasive plants with a GPS unit.

# Forests for Our Future

## Adaptive Forestry: Preparing for the Future

As many of you know, Maine's forests are facing an onslaught of changes that threaten to change or degrade the diversity and productivity of our forests. Our forests have lost millions of mature elms and chestnuts, and are poised to lose most of their ash trees. Red spruce, balsam fir, birches and hemlock are all likely to face steep declines during this century. Oaks are at risk due to pathogens such as Oak Wilt and Sudden Oak Death. Beech trees, which provided important wildlife food along with chestnuts, are now a shadow of their former selves due to disease. You may have noticed that I've mentioned many of Maine's major trees here. The simple truth is that our forests as we know them are likely to disappear. As conservation minded citizens, we will need to act to shepherd our forested lands into a very different future. Waldo county is 84% forested, and forests and trees are an important part of people's lives and livelihoods here.

Our District has been at the forefront of developing soil and water conservation district leadership in forest resource conservation. Waldo SWCD has decided to make our work about addressing the degradation of forests and



helping our residents find ways to steward forests during this challenging period. Our Forests for Our Future resource protection theme has encompassed stewardship workshops, high school educational programs and conservation technical assistance. We have also partnered with the Maine Forest Service to provide outreach and to monitor for invasive forest insect pests.

In the coming years, we will be spearheading adaptive forestry in Coastal Maine. Beginning with research plantings in 2019 and moving on to a broad program of citizen involvement in forest restoration plantings and scientific research. In 2019, we developed a citizen science tool for reporting on tree conditions called Report a Tree (on the Aneccdata.org platform). This spring, Report a Tree will go into statewide use for reporting on the health of adaptive tree species (native and non-native trees that have the potential to thrive here) and for reporting on forest pests and disease.

Perhaps most exciting of all is the opportunity



## Adaptive Forestry, continued

for Midcoast residents and schools to join us in planting selected adaptive tree species for the purposes of research and to begin the process of reforesting our land. Several area schools will plant and study seedlings as a part of this project, and anyone is welcome to participate. Selected species will be available as seedlings and saplings during plant sales this spring in Waldo and Knox-Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The “adaptive” trees selected are based on their wildlife and ecosystem value, to supplement or replace trees that may not be able to provide wildlife food and habitat due to invasives and disease, such as ash trees. The trees are also species that have been shown to be highly adaptable to drought, various soil



moisture levels and temperature regimes and thus have potential to provide lumber or other forest products in different climate conditions.

## Some Adaptive Tree Species



**White oak:** Lives in southern Maine, provides lumber and high quality acorns for wildlife

**Bur oak:** Rare but lives in our area, with potential to be highly adaptable to a variety of conditions

**Black walnut:** High value as lumber and veneer, adaptable, provides wildlife food

**Tulip poplar (Left):** Grows fast, provides lumber, produces soft seeds like ash trees, supports pollinators

**Shagbark hickory:** Provides high quality nuts, wood products, fuelwood, potential to be highly adaptable to a variety of conditions

**Pawpaw:** Understory tree that produces edible fruits

## 2020 Plant Sale

We are pleased to continue our very popular plant sale, which always offers versatile, disease resistant plants selected by local experts. Our plants are offered at a low price, and the sale is a fundraiser which supports our educational programs. We cover the major types of plants, including large and small trees, fruit trees, shrubs, perennials and vegetables. This year, we are excited to offer native tree seedlings of species that have great potential to restore and maintain forests in Maine. Those that are interested can report back to us how the trees are doing as a part of a citizen science research project (see Adaptive Forestry on pages 12-13 for more information). We will also offer a great variety of inexpensive native perennials carefully selected and grown by Honey Petal Plants. Horticulturalist Astrid Bowlby will be on hand the day of the sale to help buyers select perennials. District Technical Director Aleta McKeage will also be available to help folks select native shrubs and trees.



**Our colorful, informative plant catalog will be online March 1st** and online ordering is available. Let us know if you'd prefer a printed copy! Previous customers will get a copy in the mail. Hope to see you at our plant sale on **April 25th, held at the Waldo County Technical Center!**

### Trees

Redbud  
Pawpaw  
White Oak  
Bur Oak  
Black Gum  
Tulip Poplar  
Shagbark Hickory  
Black Walnut  
Sycamore  
American Chestnut  
Basswood

### Apples

State Fair  
Ribston Pipin  
Sweet Bough  
Red Astrachan

Jonagold  
Empire  
Original McIntosh  
Shisuka  
Haralson  
Somerset of Maine  
Brandywine Crabapple

### Pears

Summercrisp  
Seckel  
Clairgeau

### Plums

Grenville  
Gracious  
Underwood  
Hanska

### Shrubs

Spicebush  
Redosier Dogwood  
Highbush Cranberry  
Virginia Rose

### Berries

York Elderberry  
Adams Elderberry  
Latham Raspberry

### Perennials

Provided by Honey Petal Plants

### Vegetable Seedlings

Vendor to be announced

## A Special Thank You to...

A big thank you to those of you who volunteered your time and resources to our programs. We couldn't have done it without you.

**Morton Mossewilde**

**Kym Sanderson**

**Andy Reed**

**Brian Baker**

**Sue Hunter**

**Harold Larrabee**

**Joyce Larrabee**

**Donald Cox**

**Gene Randall**

**Cloe Chunn and David Thanhauser**

**Jenni Judkins**

**Stacia Hoover**

**Julia Fields**

**Gunther Schletter**

**Darrah Wagner**

**Ruth Huettner**

**Jacob Grass**

**Kevin Michaud**

**Representative Maryanne Kinney**

**Roberta Tatro**

**Robin Marchasi**

**Rachel Jurdak**

Thank you to all the groups and organizations that assisted us and supported our mission in 2019:

**Waldo County Technical Center**

**Waldo County Commissioners**

**Natural Resource Conservation Service**

**Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry**

**Maine Forest Service**

**Maine Natural Areas Program**

**UMaine Cooperative Extension**

**The City of Belfast Parks and Recreation Dept.**

**Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition**

**Maine Audubon**

**Schoodic Institute**

**Coastal Mountains Land Trust**

**Belfast Garden Club**

**Hunter Green LLC**

**Friends of Lake Winnecook**

**Swan Lake Association**

**Town of Searsmont**

**Honey Petal Plants and Farm in the Woods**

## Don't miss out on our 2020 Programs:

- Adaptive Forestry plantings and workshops
- Seminar on planting for a changing world
- Conservation land certification
- Invasive plant management services
- Conservation internships
- Conservation assistance for landowners
- LakeSmart and StreamSmart programming
- Agriculture education programs
- Hills to Sea Trail learning and interpretation
- K-12 Poster contest and Read Me Ag
- Conservation Skills units for high school
- Native plant and fruit tree sale (see pg. 14)

**Waldo County Soil and  
Water Conservation  
District**

46 Little River Dr.

Belfast, ME 04915

207 - 218 - 5311

855 -884 -2284 Technical  
Assistance

[waldocountysoilandwater.org](http://waldocountysoilandwater.org)

Email:

[jenny.jurdak@me.nacdn.net](mailto:jenny.jurdak@me.nacdn.net)

## Our Mission

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

You can support the District's important conservation mission in many ways. We welcome you to volunteer with us (indoors or out), provide input through joining our supervisory board, or to help through donations, which may be earmarked for specific work. Our many services in conservation assistance and education are available to all residents and organizations in Waldo County.



To:

Waldo County Soil and Water  
Conservation District  
46 Little River Drive  
Belfast, ME 04915