



Conservation Connection

Sharing the latest news from the New Hampshire Natural Resources Conservation Service

Folks Coming & Going...

Farewell to Joe Homer ... After 33 years of service with the agency, NRCS says farewell to Joe Homer. A soil scientist with a passion so large he has inspired many. Joe began his career as a volunteer with the Soil Conservation Service in 1977 while he was a student at the University of New Hampshire. He was hired to complete the first round of data for the Natural Resource Inventory. From there, he spent 3 years in the southwest working for the Department of the Interior before coming back to New Hampshire for the remainder of his career.

Joe was a true pioneer to New Hampshire NRCS collecting new soils data and research across the state. He led projects such as soil mapping for the White Mountain National Forest; identifying regional indicators of wetland boundaries; and contributing to the development of the New England-wide soil drainage class criteria for the New England Hydric Soils Technical Committee. Throughout the years Joe has served as a facilitator, team player, leader, trainer and mentor.

Look out for him on the trails—he has decided to retire to a life of adventures and volunteerism. Joe was a true asset to New Hampshire NRCS. We thank him for all of his contributions and wish Joe a long, happy, and fun filled retirement!



Welcome Lindsay Jones ...

Our newest Student Conservation Association (SCA) Intern, Lindsay has returned to the Concord Field Office for the next 10 months providing direct assistance to the Soil Conservationists.

Growing up on a her family's dairy farm, Lindsay has had a life long interest in agriculture and sustainable land management. After graduating with a degree in Environmental Science from Cedarville University in Ohio, she interned at the

New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services with their Volunteer Lake Assessment Program. During her 6 month internship, she traveled across the state and put into practice many things she learned in college. She is looking forward to working alongside professionals learning the conservation planning process through the completion of conservation projects while interacting with land owners and assisting them in carrying out their goals.



Welcome Chelsea Kibbe ...

Chelsea joined New Hampshire NRCS in mid-November as an SCA Intern. She will be working out of the New Hampshire NRCS State Office for the next year on programs and resource technology. Currently, she assists public affairs with social media, the NH NRCS website, and other communications.

Prior to her arrival, she lived and worked for 10 months in Bear Brook State Park as an SCA New Hampshire Corps member, where she coordinated and lead a Conservation Leadership Corps for under-served high school students in Manchester. A true Hoosier at heart; she graduated from Indiana University with a degree in Outdoor Recreation and Natural Resource Management. After spending the past year with her hands in the dirt putting conservation on the ground through trail work across the state of New Hampshire, she is excited to see conservation from a different angle.

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Stories From the Field...

SOCIETY FOR THE
PROTECTION OF
NEW HAMPSHIRE
FORESTS



FRPP Protects 80 Acres from Development in Hillsborough County

After three years in the making, 80 acres in Weare, New Hampshire have been permanently placed into a conservation easement through a partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF), and the Weare Conservation Commission. This easement was funded through a collaboration of conservation organizations, several grants, and local support.

more than 120 agricultural easements in New Hampshire, protecting more than 7,500 acres. "Partnerships like this are critical to ensure protection of prime agricultural land, particularly in Hillsborough County where developmental pressure is high," said Rick Ellsmore, NRCS State Conservationist.

Dale and Barbara Purington will continue to own the land and operate a small beef farm. Since the Purington land abuts the Forest Society's 52-acre Breed Forest, conserving it enlarges the protected lands within the area. The easement will protect important agricultural soil, secure significant wildlife habitat along Breed Brook – a tributary of the Piscataquog River, and offer public access to recreation opportunities such as hiking, hunting, and fishing.

To find out more about the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program [click here](#).

"This property incorporates a lot of conservation value into a relatively small parcel of conserved land," said Brian Hotz, senior director of strategic projects for the Forest Society. "It's difficult to raise funds nowadays, but for this project we were able to piece the funding together to achieve a wonderful outcome."

NRCS contributed \$132,000 of the \$329,000 needed to protect the property. Other funding sources included \$15,000 from the Forest Society, \$65,000 from the Russell Foundation, \$70,000 from Mildred Hall Trust, \$15,000 from the Weare Conservation Commission and \$32,000 from the Emma Sawyer Trust.

A former dairy farm, about two-thirds of the property contains important agricultural soils. This heritage was one of the reasons the project was awarded a Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program grant. Since the start of the program in 1996, the NRCS has funded



Photo Courtesy of SPNHF

Deadline to complete the Agriculture Census is February 4th.

The Census of Agriculture is conducted only once every five years across our country's farmland and agricultural communities. USDA, those involved in agriculture, and many others use the results of the Census to make important policy and business decisions that impact people across our nation.

While the Census is particularly vital for folks in rural America, it's important to remember that well-informed policy decisions have a positive impact for all of us. Even for families in our biggest cities, a strong rural America means an abundant food supply, cleaner water, extraordinary outdoor recreation, and more. That's why it couldn't be more important to make sure that all of our nation's farmers and farmland are accurately accounted for.



10,890 Acres of Conservation

In its two decades of existence, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) has restored more than 2.6 million acres of wetlands habitat across the U.S, creating prime wildlife habitat and helping the environment by holding and cleaning water, including 10,890 acres here in New Hampshire.

NRCS administers the voluntary program that works with landowners to protect, restore and enhance wetlands on private and tribal lands, a mission that helps rural and urban communities throughout the country by reducing flood damage, contributing to groundwater recharge and carbon sequestration, and providing recreational opportunities. Seventy-five percent of wetlands in the U.S. are located on private lands.

In the 20-year history of the program, more than 11,000 landowners across the U.S. have participated in this program. Landowners can receive financial assistance to restore wetlands on the saturated and flooded portions of their property that are difficult to farm, focusing their agricultural efforts on more productive soils.

In New Hampshire, the program has created habitat for migratory waterfowl along the Con-

necticut River. "Waterfowl are declining nationally," said Rick Ellsmore, NRCS State Conservationist. "so wetlands like this that are located in a major flyway for migratory waterfowl are a high priority, especially for WRP"

"The farmers, ranchers and landowners in New Hampshire aren't the only beneficiaries of the Wetlands Reserve Program," Ellsmore said. "The program has led to cleaner water, aesthetic open spaces and abundant habitat for wildlife. New Hampshire will continue to benefit from WRP as more land is set aside for wetland protection."

NRCS attributes WRP's milestone achievements to landowner interest, strong partnerships and effective science-based technical assistance. NRCS technical specialists work cooperatively with landowners, federal and state wildlife agencies, researchers and universities, conservation districts and non-governmental organizations to develop and implement effective hydrologic and vegetative restoration and management techniques.

For more information about the Wetland Reserve Program, please [Click Here](#).

New Hampshire NRCS is Social

New Hampshire NRCS has renewed our social media efforts—stay up to date with the latest news, events, and videos.

Follow our Tweets, share our posts!

Please contact Chelsea Kibbe or Betty Anderson with information to be posted at: chelsea.kibbe@nh.usda.gov or betty.anderson@nh.usda.gov

Notice to Hispanic and/or Women Farmers: COMPENSATION AVAILABLE FOR CLAIMS OF DISCRIMINATION

If you believe that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) improperly denied farm loan benefits to you between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic, or because you are female, you may be eligible to apply for compensation. Read more at: <https://www.farmerclaims.gov/>

New Hampshire NRCS employees are requested to report outreach activities for Hispanic and/or Women Farmers weekly. to Jewel McKenzie at jewel.mckenzie@nh.usda.gov

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Upcoming Events:

January 18 & 19: 17th Annual Vermont Grazing & Livestock Conference at Lake Morey Inn in Fairlee, VT.

January 19: Community Supported Agriculture School Workshop at the Common Man in Claremont, NH.

January 24: New Hampshire Small Family Farm Conference at the Holiday Inn in Concord, NH.

January 25: New Hampshire Association of Natural Resource Scientists Annual Meeting at the Holiday Inn in Concord, NH.

February 7 & 8: Northeast Pasture Consortium Annual Conference & Meeting at the Radisson in Manchester, NH.

February 8: 2013 Women in Agriculture Conference at the Radisson in Manchester, NH.

February 8 & 9: The 2013 New Hampshire Farm & Forest Exposition at the Radisson in Manchester, NH.

February 9: 7th Annual New Hampshire Grazing Conference at the Radisson in Manchester, NH.

February 10: Botanicals and Business Workshop at the McLane Audubon Center in Concord, NH.

March 1 & 2: Northeast Organic Farming Association's 2013 Winter Conference at Laconia Middle School in Laconia, NH.

March 8: 3rd Annual Grazing Conference at the Common Man in Plymouth, NH.

March 5: University of New Hampshire Career and Internship Fair at the Whittemore Center in Durham, NH.

March 13: 28th Annual North Country Dairy Seminar & Trade Show at Mountain View Grand in Whitefield, NH.

March 22 & 23: New England Meat Conference at the Grappone Conference Center in Concord, NH.

Did you know?

By the year 2050, Earth's population is expected to reach 9 billion. Farmers will need to produce as much food in the next 40 years as they have in the last 500.

Log on today to learn more about our planet's life-giving soil.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)