Incentives at Farmers’ Markets—Honoring Merrimack County’s Veterans

Harry Weiser of Hackleboro Orchard in Canterbury brought a possible new program idea to MCCD. Weiser told MCCD about a very successful and important program in Rochester that provided farmers' market vouchers to Veterans in the area. Their Veterans Matter program provided vouchers of $20 to Strafford County veterans which could be used at the Rochester Farmers' Market. Weiser stated that it brought in area Veterans, many of whom had never been to their local farmers' market. As any farmers' market customer knows, a farmers' market is a true community gathering, and the more the merrier. It's a place to meet your area farmers, learn about healthy eating, listen to local music, and try new foods like celeriac, kohlrabi, garlic scape pesto, or hot mustard made with Guinness. Weiser suggested that this would be a great addition to MCCD's other farmers' market promotion program: Granite State Market Match. MCCD and its Board of Supervisors loved the idea and a program was born.
GRANITE STATE KESTREL PROJECT

The Granite State Kestrel Project is the daughter project of Adirondack Raptors dedicated to the conservation of American Kestrels in New Hampshire. American kestrel populations in NH and the rest of New England/Mid-Atlantic Coast have experienced an 88% decline in the past 50 years. There are multiple factors contributing to the species population decline. GSKP is working to create nesting boxes to provide nesting habitat and to collect data about the kestrel population in NH.

Currently GSKP is in the beginning stages of their project. Their aim is to help increase the American Kestrel population by installing nesting boxes within suitable habitat in Franklin, NH and surrounding towns. They will soon be banding chicks, and potentially adults, as they are using their nesting boxes.

“We are looking for land that consists of fields in agricultural settings. We need areas with poles or tree lines to hang boxes on. The trees need to have bare trunk space, up to 15' or so high to hang boxes, and preferably giving us the ability to face the boxes South-east…we are willing to take a look at prospective areas. I live five minutes from the Daniel Webster Farm and it is somewhere that I would absolutely love to get a box at. Thank you for any help you can give us, it is all very much appreciated!”

Incentives at Farmers’ Markets—Honoring Merrimack County’s Veterans (Continued)

MCCD has received some initial funds to pilot this program, namely a $1,000 sponsorship from the Merrimack County Savings Bank. Other sponsors of our local food programming in 2018 include Farm Credit East, Upton & Hatfield, and the Loudon Lions Club. As the Rochester Farmers’ Market program provided over $36,000 in vouchers to Veterans, mostly from donations left in a World War II helmet on the counter at Benedict’s Grill in Rochester, MCCD is looking for additional sponsors in order to provide vouchers at farmers' markets in Concord, Penacook, Contoocook, Danbury, Franklin, and Wilmot. If interested in sponsoring the program, please contact us at localfood@merrimackccd.org to help us pilot and grow this program in 2018.

Since 2015, MCCD has worked with Granite State Market Match to provide matching incentives to SNAP/EBT families at numerous markets in Merrimack County. Customers who shop with SNAP/EBT get their dollars matched up to $10 at each farmers' market. This program has grown to be at more than 40 farmers' markets state-wide. Merrimack County will be the second location to pilot the veteran vouchers program while continuing our work with the Granite State Market Match and Merrimack County credit/debit token program.

One other way to help! This program doesn't have an official name yet. Have a catchy name? Send us your idea at info@merrimackccd.org.<mailto:info@merrimackccd.org>
2018
STANLEY GRIMES
CONSERVATION
SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship is in memory of Stanley Grimes Sr. for his dedication to conservation in Merrimack County. Mr. Grimes served on the MCCD District Board of Supervisors for 33 years and was active in his community of Pembroke NH.

A $1,000 Scholarship will be awarded to a Merrimack County resident who has been accepted in a 2 or 4-year program of study at a college/university, and will be attending in Fall 2018.

Eligible programs of study include: Agriculture, Forestry, Environmental Science, Horticulture, Wetland Science, Environmental Engineering, Soil Science, or other related Natural Resources program.

APPLICATION FORM CAN BE FOUND ON THE MCCD WEBSITE: merrimackccd.org

Completed applications must be submitted by May 4, 2018. (Applications may be emailed to info@merrimackccd.org or mailed to the MCCD office in Concord)

NH GLEANS PROGRAM

GLEAN: to gather leftover fruits and vegetables that would otherwise go to waste

The NH Gleans program is a network of organizations working together in order to increase the availability of fresh and local produce that is distributed to and through NH food pantries, soup kitchens, community suppers, and schools. To make this happen, NH Gleans harvests produce from local farms and farmers markets that would otherwise not have been consumed, and distributes the food to organizations that can use it.

In 2017, the Merrimack County Conservation District (MCCD) gleaned 35,626 pounds of food, and distributed it to the people of Merrimack County who need it the most. MCCD also established relationships with central kitchens who prepare food for seniors and Community Action Programs, and increased their volunteer base by reaching out to church groups and students.

Across all the participating NH counties, in 2017, 163,592 lbs of food was gleaned and delivered to the citizens of NH with the greatest need.

“Good things did come out of the hail spanked crop at Hackleboro Orchards over the fall this year. Merrimack County Conservation and Belknap County Conservation gleaned 6478 pounds of apples from the orchard. Thanks go to Stacy, Jess, and their band of merry gleaners from Merrimack County and Russ and his crew from Belknap County who picked all those apples and then distributed them to food pantries, soup kitchens, churches and other needy folks in the area. Nice to see the apples put to such good use and the commitment by these people to make it all come about. Kudos to you!”

~Harry Weiser
Hackleboro Orchard

MCCD is looking for volunteers to participate in the NH Gleans program this summer!

Contact us if you are interested!

GROW-A-ROW

Are you interested in growing fresh food for a local food pantry? Join the Grow-A-Row movement, right in your backyard!

Through the NH Gleans program, volunteers can pick and deliver fresh produce. Landowners can check out nhgleans.org to register your glean!
PLANT SALE & PICK-UP

Plant orders are ready to be picked up:
May 4th from 3:00pm-6:00pm & May 5th from 9:00am-12:00pm
We will also be selling extra plants during the above times. Some plants include:

- Strawberries
- Blueberries
- Asparagus
- Red Oak
- White Cedar
- Balsam Fir
- Lily of the Valley
- Gladiolus
- Geranium
- Red Astilbe
- Lilies
- Hosta
- And more!

There will also be some plants for sale which were not advertised in the order form.

TROUT SALE—Orders due May 11th

- Rainbow and Brook Trout available in 6-8” and 10-12”.
- Fish sized 6-8” can be picked up May 20th from 1:00-1:30pm at MCCD Concord office.
- Trout 10-12” will be delivered directly to your pond.

Call 603.223.6020 or visit merrimackccd.org to get an order form.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

MCCD is seeking volunteers for this summer. We have many volunteer opportunities available. Some opportunities include:

- Gleaning Volunteers
- Concord Farmers Market Token Collectors
- Other MCCD Projects!

If you are interested in volunteering please contact MCCD!