



*Newsletter of The Merrimack County
Conservation District distributed free to Merri-
mack County residents and others interested in
conservation of natural resources*

Merrimack County
Conservation District
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THE MISSION OF THE
MERRIMACK COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT IS
TO PROMOTE AND ACHIEVE
CONSERVATION OF THE
LANDSCAPE AND HERITAGE
OF MERRIMACK COUNTY.

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CONSERVATION NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE MERRIMACK COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Mooseplate Makes a Difference in Merrimack County

Over the past year, MCCD has been busy improving water quality and aquatic organism passage with the help of two Conservation Mooseplate Grants. The first project funded by the Mooseplate grants replaced failing culverts at the outlet of Rocky Pond in Loudon/Canterbury allowing for aquatic organisms to travel to and from the pond as well as reduced flood risks on Harmony Lane, near Route 106. This project was also funded by the NH Department of Environmental Services Aquatic Resource Mitigation (ARM) funds and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program. In partnership with the landowners of Harmony Lane and the excellent work of local contractors Northpoint Engineering, F.L. Merrill Construction, Inc., and Bryan L. Bailey Associates, Inc., the failing culverts were replaced with an open-bottomed structure that will improve the ecological integrity of the area and create a natural pathway for aquatic organisms.

The second Mooseplate funded project also improved water quality by fencing livestock away from the Merrimack River in Concord. In cooperation with Morrill Farm Dairy and with technical assistance from Mike Lynch of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation **Continued on page 3**

It's Getting Steamy in Merrimack County! MCCD Announces New Rentable Equipment: The Soil Steamer

Merrimack County has a new piece of rental equipment thanks to a grant from the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food's Specialty Crop Block Grant. The Soil Steamer helps steam the soil in high tunnels or small plots of land. Tarps are laid down, weighed down by chains, and then the soil steamer is started pumping hot steam under the tarps. This new equipment will help farmers in killing weed seeds reducing the need for pesticides. Tasha Dunning of Spring Ledge Farm in New London raves about the soil steamer: "The soil steamer has allowed us to better utilize the covered growing spaces we have. It reduces the need for pesticides by cleaning the soil of harmful fungus, bacteria and weed seeds. It enables us to grow crops without using plastic mulch therefore reducing plastic waste. The steamer also enables us to grow more with the same labor input as those above tasks take up a lot of time. The flexibility we now have in crop rotation within the tunnels is a big plus. More food coming out of these growing areas is a win!" Dan Kilrain of Work Song Farm in Hopkinton also believes soil steaming has reduced the amount of jumping worms in his high tunnels. This equipment will help vegetable producers like Work Song Farm increase production and reduce pesticide use through the use of soil steaming.



*Soil steamer in action steaming a high tunnel at
Springledge Farm in November.*

Please see our website www.merrimackccd.org for information on renting this equipment.



Check out our 2024 Local Food Guide, available online now!

We are gearing up for the 2025 Local Food Guide and are looking for sponsors and advertisers.

PLEASE HELP THE GUIDE GROW

You're Invited!

2025 Local Work Group Meeting

April 15, 2025 from 4-6PM

Contoocook Cider Company @ Gould Hill Farm,
656 Gould Hill Road, Contoocook, NH

Help Merrimack County Conservation District and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service decide the conservation priorities for 2026. Your feedback at this meeting helps prioritize conservation efforts and funding in Merrimack County. Refreshments provided.

Please RSVP by calling 603.223.6020 or emailing info@merrimackccd.org. We look forward to your input!

2024 Stanley Grimes Conservation Scholarship Winners

Each year the Merrimack County Conservation District is honored to give out a \$1,000 scholarship to a Merrimack County resident who is enrolled in a two or four-year program of study in fields of Natural Resources such as Agriculture, Forestry, Environmental Science, Horticulture, Wetland Science, Environmental Engineering and Soil Science. *Do you know a high school senior or college student going into the natural resources field? This year's application is due on May 9th. Check out merrimackccd.org for details.*

Abbygail Allen — Webster, New Hampshire

Abbygail attends the University of Findlay and is studying animal science, focusing on both the pre-veterinary track and western equestrian studies. Her schedule keeps her quite busy, both in and out of class. She participates in her university livestock show team, rides rotational horses six days a week in her equine classes learning trail, live driving, counter cantering, horsemanship and more, learning the ins-and-outs of veterinary and livestock procedures in her Animal Handling Class, and working a night shift job at the Universities Western Farm every other week. She is excited to give back as much as possible to her communities and the state she calls home once she finishes her studies.



Hayden Gardner — Loudon, New Hampshire

Hayden attends SUNY Cobleskill where he will be graduating in 2025 with his bachelors degree in Agri-Business, after already receiving his associates degree in Agricultural Technology. Upon graduation, he intends to work with those in the agricultural community to assist them in new ideas or equipment that will allow them to have better crop and livestock yields to better feed their community. He hopes the skills he's learning in school will allow him to better help the family farms that have been operating for generations to continue this lifestyle and pass down the work to future generations.



Lauren Gardner — Loudon, New Hampshire

Lauren attends SUNY Cobleskill where she plans to study wildlife management. Once she graduates from this highly recommended program, she plans to apply to be a Fish and Game officer in New Hampshire. While farming is ingrained in her blood, she is passionate about conserving the forest, waterways and wildlife. She hopes that being a conservation officer she will be able to make a difference in the environment and help farmers and wildlife be harmonious.



Caroline Allen — Warner, New Hampshire

Caroline attends Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts, where she is pursuing a degree in Environmental and Sustainability Sciences. She has been an active member in her hometown of Warner, during high school she worked on a community service project with the Town of Warner Conservation Commission where she gained immense knowledge of conservation easements, property deeds, and the importance of land conservation in Warner. Caroline is excited to pursue a career in sustainability and help implement large-scale changes to reduce the impact of climate change.



Farmers Take on Climate Change in Merrimack County

Thanks to the NH Conservation District Climate Resiliency Grants, Merrimack County farmers are making their farms more resilient to climate change through innovative practices and improved technologies. Now in its fourth year, local farms have applied for and received funding for projects to make their farms more energy efficient, utilizing solar energy, improving flood prone roads, improving soil health, and switching to perennial crops such as berries versus annual crops. These on-going funds help farmers try out new ideas to strengthen their farms for the future.

2023-2025 Climate Resiliency Grant Awardees

Brookford Farm, Canterbury
Kearsarge Gore Farm, Warner
Nalla Farm, Wilmot
Spring Ledge Farm, New London
Warner River Produce, Webster

Greenhill Farm, Sutton
Lavalley Farm, Epsom
Off the Wall Farm, Concord
Terra Basics, Chichester
Windswept Maples, Loudon

The 2026 application should be available in November. Please contact MCCD if you have a project idea.

Thank You Farms Who Donated to MCCD's Gleaning Program

As part of the NH Gleans network, MCCD collaborates with local farms and gardens to collect excess or slightly damaged produce, baked goods, eggs, and other food items. MCCD staff and volunteers then distribute the food to food pantries, schools, senior centers, soup kitchens, and youth programs. In 2024, MCCD collected over 35,000 pounds of food from over 15 farms and gardens. Find a full list of participating farms and gardens online. Thank you to all of those who grew and donated food to the food insecure families in Merrimack County.



Gleaning volunteers posing for a photo while picking apples

Mooseplate continued from page 1

Service, a fence was constructed along the Merrimack River excluding livestock from access to the river or eroding the banks.

Mooseplate grants and the drivers of the cars who proudly display their Mooseplates help fund on-the-ground conservation projects throughout New Hampshire. Learn more about the great work they accomplish at their website www.mooseplate.com.



Two of four failing culverts at the output of Rocky Pond in Loudon/Canterbury, before and after the culvert was replaced, thanks to the help of one Conservation Mooseplate Grant completed this past year.

Mooseplate Magic: Other Merrimack County Projects Funded in 2024-2025

- Sweatt Headwaters Conservation Project in Hopkinton awarded to Five Rivers Conservation Trust
- Harkness Conservation Easement in Epsom awarded to Bear-Paw Regional Greenways





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MERRIMACK COUNTY WINTER FARMERS' MARKETS

Downtown Concord Winter Farmers' Market at Eagle Square

November-April, Saturday, 9-noon,
7 Eagle Square, Concord, NH

Contoocook Farmers' Market

November-April, Saturday, 9-noon,
Maple Street School, 194 Maple St,
Hopkinton, NH

Danbury Blazing Star Grange Winter Market

November-May, 1st Saturdays, 9-noon
Blazing Star Grange, 15 North Road,
Danbury, NH



SPRING CONSERVATION FUNDRAISER



Order Form Inside

Barefoot Trees and Shrubs | Perennials | Small Fruit Trees

*Additional information and color sheets for the
Spring Conservation Fundraiser available on*

merrimackccd.org.

Please call for more information at

603-223-6020