Summer 2026 Edition

CONSERVATION NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE MERRIMACK COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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

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Mission Statement

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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Annual Meeting and Cooperator of the Year

Eric Orff
Wildlife Biologist

After a six-year hiatus originally brought upon by the Covid pandemic, MCCD had its Annual Dinner on May 20th at Sanborn Mills Farm in Loudon. The locally sourced meal prepared by Sanborn Mills Farm was coupled by a lively and educational presentation on What's Wild in NH by Eric Orff. MCCD presented two awards: the 2024 and the 2025 Cooperators of the Year award.

Our 2024 Cooperator of the Year award went to John Silver of Webster and newly retired manager of the Merrimack County Farm. In honor of his 40 years working for Merrimack County and his role in bringing production back to County farmland, the "County Farm" has not been renamed the Silver Farm. At the MCCD Annual Dinner, John was recognized for his work producing food at the farm where it is providing fresh produce to the Merrimack County Nursing Home and County Jail. When the farm produces more than needed, the Silver Farm donates the remaining to MCCD's own Merrimack County Gleans program. MCCD staff and glean volunteers pick up the produce and then distribute it to food pantries, soup kitchens, senior centers, youth programs, and homeless shelters throughout the county. John was also recognized for his help with MCCD soil programs at the farm and for his help in storing and maintaining MCCD's plastic mulcher, a piece of equipment available for rent for Merrimack County farmers.

John Silver Cooperator of the Year

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New Hampshire Moose Plate Makes a Difference in Merrimack County

Thanks to the New Hampshire State Conservation Committee Moose Plate grant funds, MCCD was able to purchase a Baumalight Brush Mulcher (Model # MP 572).

Currently housed at LaValley Farms, this mulcher is ideal for reclaiming the edges of fields and is available for rent at a cost of $100 per day. A workshop is expected this fall for those interested in learning more.

Our 2025 Cooperator of the Year award went to LaValley Farms in Hooksett. LaValley Farms has been a model of sustainability over the years. As part of their business, they focus on building and sustaining healthy soils through no-till agriculture and use of cover crops. LaValley Farms also successfully completed a 2025 Climate Resilience Grant reclaiming land for agriculture through clearing and mulching trees on the property versus stumping the trees and removing the topsoil in order to eventually use it for field crops. After the trees were mulched on-site, LaValley Farms pastured chickens on the property, which helped take down the organic matter and woody debris while building organic matter. This project inspired this year's Mooseplate Grant project in which MCCD purchased a brush mulcher to allow farms to do much of this work itself, brining contractor costs down. LaValley Farms was also recognized for collaborating with MCCD through their care and storage of our no-till planter and the brush mulcher. LaValley Farms is also a contributor to the Merrimack County Gleans program donating seedlings, eggs, and vegetables, which is distributed to the needy throughout Merrimack County.

LaValley Farms owners; Chris and Danielle with children Blake, Eloise, and Anabelle (not shown)

MCCD is proud to have such good stewards of the land here in Merrimack County as seen in the excellent work of John Silver and LaValley Farms.

We look forward to hosting another Annual Dinner in 2027. Please look out for the invitations coming in the spring of 2027.

MCCD thanks our Annual Dinner sponsors United Ag & Turf (UnitedEquip.com) and Green Wave Electric Vehicles (greenwaveev.com).

UNITED Ag & Turf | UNITED Construction & Forestry

GREEN WAVE ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Check out our Local Food Guide, available online now!

Cover Art by Tessa Rey

For a printed version, email a request to

info@merrimackccd.org

Tessa Rey is a visual artist currently living in Newbury, NH. Her work is created by utilizing her drawing skills as the backbone of each piece. She then combines digital and mixed media tools to achieve saturated hues and compelling textures. A raw appreciation of the arts, combined with her techniques have made her into a multi-faceted artist who finds inspiration in both the gritty & the beautiful bits of life.

tessarey.art
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Gleaning Thrives Through Farm Donations and Volunteers

2025 DONATING FARMS

- Blakeney's Fine Baked Goods
- Boscawen Community Garden
- Brookdale Fruit Farm
- Brookford Farm
- Carter Hill Orchard
- Downtown Winter Market
- Found Well Farm
- Giovagnoli Egg Farm
- Gould Hill Farm
- Grandpas Farm
- GreenHill Farm
- Hackleboro Orchards
- Highway View Farm
- Hop N Hen Farm
- Kearsarge Food Hub
- LaValley Farms
- Merrimack County Farm
- Spring Ledge Farm
- Terra Organics NH
- Turning Mill Farm
- Work Song Farm

There are many ways to help! Grow a Row of vegetables just for your local food pantry. Volunteer with us to help harvest or pick up food. Consider a donation to the Merrimack County Conservation District to help with our gleaning costs.

Want more information?
Please contact the conservation district at:
(603)223-6020 or info@merrimackccd.org.

Not in Merrimack County?
Check out www.nhgleans.org to find a gleaning group near you.

Intern Spotlight

Hello from MCCD's 2026 Conservation Intern, Luke Jackson

My name is Luke Jackson, and I am an environmental science major at Southern New Hampshire University. After I graduate, I will go on to earn a master's degree in conservation biology so that I can help save the natural world, specifically reptiles.

My passion for wildlife and exotic animals started from watching Steve Irwin on TV when I was very little. He showed me that all animals should be respected and not feared no matter how big their teeth are or how many legs they may have. Working for the Merrimack County Conservation District is allowing me to take my first footsteps in his shoes."

2026 Stanley Grimes Conservation Scholarship Recipients

Mason Bolduc

Mason Bolduc, of Loudon, NH, received a $1000 scholarship. He is going into his senior year at Plymouth State University to complete his bachelor's degree in environmental science with a minor in sustainability, with a targeted focus on freshwater systems. Mason is an avid outdoorsman who has found purpose and inspiration in nature. He is driven by the desire to safeguard natural resources and ensure a cleaner, healthier planet for future generations. After graduation in May of 2027, Mason will look to the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services so that he may grow his contribution to meaningful protection efforts and make a positive impact on local ecosystems and the communities that rely on them.

Cole Hubbard

Cole Hubbard, of Henniker, NH, received a $500 scholarship. He is going into his sophomore year at Paul Smiths College to continue his bachelor's degree in fisheries and wildlife. Cole has worked hard, becoming involved with programs that helped inspire him to seek out additional opportunities to work in nature, including volunteer work with New Hampshire Fish & Games Department. Cole's ultimate goal is to become a wildlife biologist.

Mykala McConaghy

Mykala McConaghy, of Loudon, NH, received a $500 scholarship. She is attending Southern New Hampshire University, working toward her bachelor's degree in environmental engineering and sustainability. Makayla is motivated by societal inequities that have led to lack of reliable resources and healthcare for a large portion of the global population. After graduation, she plans to pursue a career that improves accessibility to resources and the overall lives of communities who are underserved.

Holden Turner

Holden Turner, of Penacook, NH, received a $500 scholarship. He is seeking out a four-year college where he plans to attain his bachelor's degree in environmental studies. Cole has been motivated by the decade-long remediation of the drinking water in Merrimack, NH, which remains unresolved. After graduation, he hopes to work with local companies to create and promote sustainable environmental products and standards that could help prevent and treat contamination, whether found in soil, water, or air.

NRCS in New Hampshire Accepting Applications for Conservation Programs

Agricultural producers in New Hampshire should apply by October 16, 2026, to be considered for fiscal year 2027

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) continues to put Farmers First through a historic investment in conservation on agricultural lands through USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as a result of the conservation funding provided by the Working Families Tax Cuts Act.

For more information or to read the complete article visit **nrcs.usda.gov/newhampshire**

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Permit # 1460

HAPPENING NOW: Fall Bulb Sale Fundraiser

The 2026 Fall Bulb Sale Fundraiser helps the conservation district fund important programs like the Grimes Conservation Scholarship, the Veteran Market Dollar Program at the local farmers' markets, our gleaning program, youth programs, and other conservation programs throughout Merrimack County.

Order & Shipping Information:

Priority Order Deadline: September 11, 2026
(late orders will be filled while supplies last)

Orders can be shipped to you at a cost of $12 or 20% of the total order (whichever amount is higher)

Pick Up Information:

Friday, October 2nd from 4-6pm at Merrimack County Conservation District Office

Saturday, October 3rd from 9am-noon at the Contoocook Farmers' Market

Order forms and a full list of available bulbs with pictures and descriptions are available on our website.
Visit http://merrimackccd.org/fundraising-and-sales/