



CONSERVATION NEWS

ATTENTION FRANKLIN COUNTY!! COVID-19 virus **UPDATE**,
The Franklin County Soil and Water Office is **NOW OPEN**.
MASKS ARE REQUIRED until further notice. *Please continue to stay safe and healthy.*

Funding Opportunity through AEM Program

Over the past decade Soil and Water Districts have worked diligently with their farming communities on implementing agricultural environmental management (AEM) best management practices (BMPs) to further farm viability. Due to each party's hard work in 2019 a new component was added to the AEM Program; a cost-share program to aid in funding projects on farms. Districts can receive funding to implement projects within their county with a cap of \$50,000 per farm. **2021 will start the second round of this funding availability.**

What is it?

A grant opportunity to implement small projects on farms. This funding would assist farmers in implementing best management practice systems on their farm. This means that the applying farm must have a conservation plan written before applying, and that, if funded, the farm must upfront the initial cost of the total project, and upon completion of that project, to standard, the district reimburses the farm up to 75% of the total project cost; leaving the farm responsible for at least 25%. Projects must be completed within 2 years.

Don't have a conservation plan or a plan that is up to date? No worries, contact the Soil and Water office, (518) 651-2097, and we can work with you to have a plan written before applications are due, plans are written at no cost.

Examples of eligible projects....

Prescribed Rotational Grazing System

This is for any farm that is currently grazing or wants to livestock: goats, sheep, chickens, pigs, cows, horses, alpacas, etc. A plan would be written with recommendations on rotationally grazing livestock using 5 or more paddocks during the grazing season. Alternating paddocks allows for forage vigor and regrowth, decreases the reliance of supplemental feed, potentially decreasing feed costs, increasing soil health, potentially decreasing fertilizer cost, increasing herd health, and decreasing soil erosion in areas where livestock tend to congregate. The plan would be written based on the current animal numbers that the farm has and a scenario would be included that showed the number of animals the land could support. Cost share funding for implementation of a Prescribed Rotational Grazing plan could be utilized for fencing, watering systems, laneways, etc.

Forest Conservation Management System

This is for any farm with a farm woodlot that you remove firewood from or a maple sugaring operation. Forest Conservation Plan Assistance through this program assists you if your farm has recently had a timber harvest on your property and are now dealing with erosion issues or are planning on a harvest and want to limit the impact of the timber harvest. A Forest Conservation Plan may be of assistance to you to address these concerns. The Forest Conservation Plan will identify erosion concerns, water quality impacts, disease concerns and assist you in managing your woodlot in the most sustainable way possible. Cost share funding could be utilized to assist in implementing forestry best management practices to divert water from trails and roadways such as water bars, culverts, rubber belt deflectors, etc. or to fix ruts or other soft spots that impede access and cause unnecessary erosion. *If you are interested in improving the health of your woodlot through thinnings there are other cost share programs that can address those concerns.*

Soil Conservation System (Cover Crops)

This is for any farm who utilizes cropland, pasture, vegetable and fruit production, orchards and vineyards. Soil Conservation Plans use management-based measures such as crop rotation, tillage, cover cropping, etc. to reduce/control soil erosion, reduce run-off, enhance soil health and improve productivity of land. This plan is utilized to assess risk of water and wind erosion and make specific recommendations for how various practices will work together to address concerns. Farms may rent Soil and Water's 10ft Great Plains No-till drill to implement practices. Cost-share funding could be utilized to assist in cover cropping, contour farming, forage and biomass planting, strip cropping etc.

If you are interested in this funding opportunity, have questions, or need a plan written please contact the Franklin County Soil and Water Office **phone: 518-651-2097** or stop in **151 Finney Blvd. Malone.**

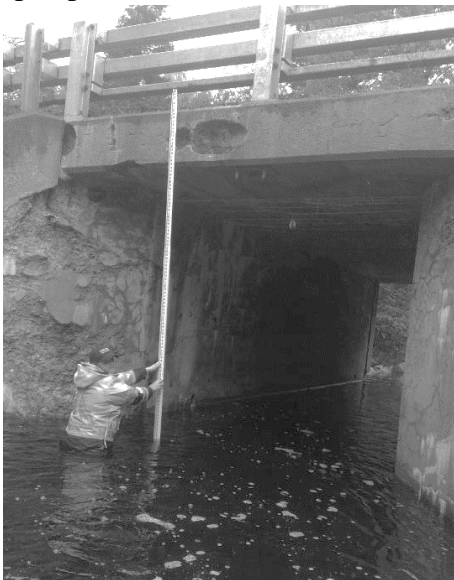
Road Stream Crossing Assessments 2020

Culverts are a major inhibitor for aquatic passage, they also alter habitats and disrupt river and stream continuity. Most of the culverts in Franklin County were designed with the principal objective of moving water across a road. Little consideration was given to ecosystem processes such as the natural hydrology, sediment transport, aquatic organism passage, aquatic habitat or the movement of woody debris. Many of the culverts significantly disrupt the movement of aquatic organisms, are failing and causing additional sediment loading into the watercourses due to being undersized. These road-stream crossings are causing fragmentation of critical habitat for various aquatic species.



The movement of organisms within rivers and streams is an important ecological process that can be significantly affected by road crossings. There are several ways that crossing structures can impede or prevent the movement of animals: inlet or outlet drop, physical barriers, insufficient water depth, absence of bank edge, discontinuity of channel substrate, etc. Unless properly designed and constructed, road stream crossings can hinder or obstruct the upstream movement of fish and other aquatic and riparian-dependent organisms. Re-establishing aquatic organism passage is a key component of restoring ecological conditions by connecting fragmented habitats. Passage is often a first step in restoring watershed condition, which benefits fish and other aquatic and riparian species. Healthy and ecologically viable ecosystems are dependent on the long-term conservation of important aquatic resources. The ecological integrity of river and stream systems have the potential to be undermined by road stream crossings. The productivity and viability of river and stream ecosystems is dependent upon the quality of the physical environment, maintaining intact communities of aquatic organisms, and to ensure not to disrupt critical ecological processes.

Over the past 3 years Franklin County Soil & Water staff have been working throughout the county to conduct road stream crossing assessments utilizing the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAACC) Protocol. These projects identify the areas throughout the county that are having an impact on the aquatic organism habitat and passage. Road stream crossing assessments are conducted to help identify bridges and culverts that are problematic from an aquatic connectivity, aquatic habitat and stream bank stability perspective.



In 2019, staff focused on the Chateaugay-English Watershed. This watershed covers portions of six municipalities including the towns of Belmont, Burke, Chateaugay, Constable, Malone and Westville. This assessment identified the structures that are undersized and are constricting the watercourses causing interconnectedness within and among the system and also for the protection of ecosystem structure, function and key processes. Information was collected on 328 road stream crossing structures. The information collected was compiled in a report and distributed to the municipalities involved. The district is now working with these municipalities to prioritize projects based on this information and obtain grants to replace the highest priority structures.

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views of Stony Brook University or New York Sea Grant.

Need Mosquito Dunks! We have them! What are they? Mosquito Dunks are a safe, non-toxic way to kill mosquitoes. Using a bacterium toxic only to mosquito larvae, they kill mosquitoes within hours and last for 30 days or more. Mosquito Dunks are a highly effective, low impact mosquito killer. Mosquito Dunks are safe to use around people, pets, birds, wildlife and fish. Come on in and get them! We have cases!

LET'S TALK ABOUT BATS; DID YOU KNOW BATS ARE POLLINATORS?!

Yes, bats are pollinators like hummingbirds, bees and butterflies. So many people have an intense fear of bats; however, we need bats. Bats provide two important benefits:

- They drop large amounts of pollen on plant stigmas therefore they are long-distance pollen dispersers.
- They consume 700-1000 insects per hour, which is over 1.25 million insects per year.

They feed on insects such as: rootworms, beetles, mosquitos and flies. In some places in the world bats pollinate their flowers or spread their seeds, while other bats also help control pests by eating insects. Some bats even help pollinate various fruit trees!

What are some of the common species of bats that hang out in our area? There are nine different species of bats that are typically found in New York State, however the most common are the Northern long-eared Bat and the Little Brown Bat. They dwell in caves, under rocks, beneath loose bark or gaps in trees, on bridges or in buildings, etc.

The Northern long-eared Bat appears at dusk to feed and basically fly through the brush of forested areas feeding on moths, flies, leafhoppers, caddisflies and beetles, which they catch while in flight using echolocation or by gathering motionless insects from vegetation. The Little Brown Bat feeds on a variety of small, flying insects such as mosquitos, midges and mayflies or typically whatever insect is available. The Little Brown Bat may migrate hundreds of miles to summer habitats to a place called a hibernaculum, a winter area to hibernate, while the Northern long-eared Bat hibernates in local caves or mines with constant temperatures, high humidity and no air currents.

Bats are pollinators; they are attracted to the insects that feed on our plants. They do so while eating insects on flowers, and an incredible amount of pollen attaches to the bat's face and fur when the bat travels from plant to plant and the pollen can get brushed off, pollinating various plants. To maintain our bat population, plant flowers such as evening primrose, marigolds, asters, buddleia, rosemary, or lavender. Another idea is to purchase or build a bat house. The Franklin County Soil and Water sell these houses. Putting up a bat house around your property can provide variable habitat for our local bats, increase their population and help with pest control and it's all for free.

If you would like to purchase or build a bat house, here are a few things you should know:

- Locate the house 15 feet above the ground
- Place it in a warm location (full sun is best)
- It should be a tight space that mimics the bark on a tree
- Make it rough inside, so the bats can cling to the interior
- Place it close to a water source.



To purchase a bat house, call our office (518) 651-2097; we'll have one waiting for you.



**PLEASE SLOW DOWN AND
OBEY ALL TRAFFIC LAWS.
PLEASE WATCH FOR OUR
STAFF WHILE THEY ARE
HARD AT WORK ON THE
ROADSIDE, HYDROSEEDING
OR MONITORING FOR
INVASIVE SPECIES!!**



FRANKLIN CO SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Ag Service Center
151 Finney Blvd
Malone, NY 12953
518-651-2097

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Malone, NY
Permit No. 6

Board Members

Bill Wood
Steve Gokey
Ralph Child
Tom Derouchie
Paul Lauzon
Edward Lockwood

SWCD Personnel

Chastity Miller
Kristin Ballou
Allycia Leach
Chris Ballou

Office Hours

Monday – Friday
8AM to 4PM

Water Drop off Days

Tuesday & Thursday
by 9AM

Check out our website: www.fcswcd.org or find us on **Facebook**

Board Vacancy

Franklin County Soil and Water Conservation District is currently looking to fill a vacancy on the Board of Directors.

FCSWCD had a Board of Directors' appointment expire on December 31, 2019. This appointment is for the board director At-Large/Farmer Position, this means a current farmer in the county.

District Board members are local citizens appointed to a two-year term of office. For several decades, board members consisted of agricultural landowners. However, the scope of conservation has grown and so has the diversity of board members. Today, district boards can be made up of homemakers, farmers, teachers, doctors, business owners, etc. They represent a variety of local environmental concerns.

Board Members voluntarily assess local conservation needs and encourage cooperative efforts in achieving the district's conservation goals. Members meet to review and approve financial matters of the District, discuss new and current programs, as well as discuss various conservation plans, and current issues. The Board supervises the district staff and authorizes development of grant proposals and use of funding.

The District staff is involved in such programs as the sale of tree seedlings, helping landowners with best management practices for their property, agricultural value assessments, watershed management plans, permits, mining plans and revisions, erosion and sediment control plans, hydroseeding, and water testing. The staff also participate in educational programs such as Conservation Field days for 4th and 5th graders, and the Envirothon, an environmental competition for high school students.

The mission of the Franklin County Soil and Water Conservation District is to promote wise management of our natural resources through a wide variety of quality conservation and educational programs to the landowners, land-users and municipalities of Franklin County. Being a part of the Soil and Water board, you can help goal to maintain and improve the quality of land, nature, and water. Environmental concerns and issues can be brought forth during meetings to aid in reaching all members of the County. We are all trying to reach the same goal of being good stewards of the land created, that our livelihoods depend on.

The Board meets once per month for approximately two hours. This position is for an At Large Farmer. Franklin County Residency is required.

Anyone interested in serving on the Board in this at-large/farmer position should pick up an application at the District office (151 Finney Blvd, Malone). Then submit the application, a letter of interest and brief resume to the Franklin County Board of Legislators, Court House, 355 West Main Street, Malone, NY 12953 by November 16th, 2020. For more information, stop in to the District office at 151 Finney Blvd., send us an email at fcswcd@fcswcd.org, or by phone (518) 651-2097.