

Farm Bill Accomplishment Report Template

Farm Bill Midyear Accomplishment Report

Year:	FY2015
State:	Maine
Cooperative Agreement Name:	Forest Pest Outreach and Survey Project
Cooperative Agreement Number:	15-8223-0662-CA
Project Funding Period:	9/20/2015 – 9/19/2016
Project Report:	Farm Bill FPOSP Midyear Report
Project Document Date:	2/5/2016
Cooperators Project Coordinator:	State Survey Coordinator
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Quarterly Report	<input type="checkbox"/>
Semi-Annual Accomplishment Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Annual Accomplishment Report	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. Approach

a. Describe specific activities and accomplishments...

The cooperator will accomplish the following goals by the end of the agreement period:

1. Contract with one of more entities that will be chosen through a competitive RFP Process...

The Department is inviting proposals for projects that will enhance the State's current outreach efforts of dangerous invasive forest insects, specifically Asian longhorned beetle, emerald ash borer, hemlock woolly adelgid, winter moth, and others. (To read more about this project and the Department's efforts, access the annual accomplishment reports here... <http://www.maine.gov/dacf/php/caps/ALB/AnnualReports.shtml>) Successful outreach and education would result in increased public understanding of the economic and environmental threats associated with invasive forest pests, increased support for management and mitigation efforts, and increased reporting of potential pest sightings to federal or state authorities.

Proposed outreach should address, but not be limited to, one or more of the following targets:

- *Campground owners, visitors to campsites and state parks, and other users, transporters and sellers of firewood;*
- *Industries engaged in the trade of plants, plant products, and plant services such as arborists, landscapers, foresters, nurserymen, public works personnel and employees at distribution centers and warehouses;*
- *Municipalities and local government officials (to help prepare communities for invasive tree pest introductions); and*
- *Underserved communities, particularly in urban areas that are determined to be high-risk pathways for invasive pests and pathogens.*

Proposed outreach efforts should include metrics for assessing impact and/or effectiveness.

Proposals outlining outreach efforts with the highest public impact will be viewed more favorably.

Due to the retirement of Maine's FOSP's Volunteer Coordinator, Lorraine Taft, DACF decided to take a different approach and contract with organizations that have been trained to conduct invasive forest pest outreach. Two organizations were awarded funds to enhance the state's outreach of invasive forest pests. The Saco River Recreational Council (SRRC) located in Fryeburg, ME, runs a campground at the head of the Saco River in Maine. The educational coordinator of the SRRC attended FOSP training, and since 2011 has conducted outreach and firewood checks as an FPO volunteer. The Maine Association of Conservation Districts Employees Committee (MACD) is devoted to educational awareness of invasive species and natural areas conservation. Many on the committee have attended FOSP training and have been conducting outreach. ***The proposals and midyear reports for both organizations are attached.***

- Maintain a list of outreach and training activities, tabling events, media contacts and targeted audience participants and report on these per reporting requirements in the cooperative agreement.

A database is maintained by the cooperator that tracks all events related to FPOSP outreach. Although we are no longer building up a volunteer base through the Department (due to the change in direction by contracting with SRRC and MACD), we continue to solicit activity reports from our previously trained volunteers, and continue to participate in various outreach activities. Below is a list of events by MDACF staff and/or volunteers for the reporting period.

Date	Location	Event	Type	# Impacted	Notes
9/25/15	Unity	Common Ground Fair	Staffed FPO display booth	500	3-day fair; Environmental Concerns Tent, which did not get much traffic.
10/24/15	Camden	Merryspring Nature Center	Invasive Forest Pest Presentation	3	Small but enthusiastic crowd.
11/10/15	Charleston Correctional Facility	FPOSP Training	Training	27	Lorraine's last training before retiring and moving to Florida.
11/20/15	Waterboro	Massabesic Middle School Invasive Species Forum	Staffed FPO display booth	150	Also, expert backup for the students. <i>Pics attached</i>

- Develop and/or maintain an in-state electronic list of citizen volunteers for present and future pest detection communications as well as requests for assistance.

We continue to maintain a database of all trained volunteers from 2009 to 2015, plus additional citizens who have expressed interest in staying involved with invasive forest pest issues. We currently have over 600 names in the database. These names have been added to the subscription list of our electronic newsletter, *Invasive Pest Outreach News*, which currently has 1345 subscribers and is delivered electronically 4-6 times a year. One newsletter was delivered during this reporting period ([Invasive Pest Outreach News – Winter I](#))

We've also developed social media pages, [Facebook](#) (441 likes) and [Twitter](#) (176), called Maine Bug Watch that not only inform followers of pest updates, but help to solicit volunteers and set up new outreach events.

Maine DACF-FPOSP Social Media Metrics

9/20/15 - 12/31/15		# subscribers prior	# subscribers in report per.	% increase	# posts	engagement
Type	Name					
Newsletter	Invasive Pest Outreach News	1218	1307	7	1	29% "unique opens rate"
Facebook	Maine Bug Watch	430	436	1.4	46	166 "avg post reach"
Twitter	Maine Bug Watch	170	174	2.4	37	119 "impressions per day"

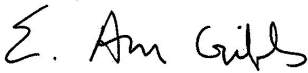
4. Coordinate FPO Events with National Outreach efforts, including Earth Day (4/22/16) and National Invasive Species Awareness Week (2/21/16 – 2/27/16).

We are coordinating with SRRC and MACD to bolster outreach and event development coinciding with these two national events. We will likely do extra outreach during Emerald Ash Borer Awareness Week (May 2016) and Maine Arbor Week (5/15/16- 5/21/16), although nothing has been formalized yet.

5. Cooperate with other agencies, contractors, and NGOs to develop and coordinate outreach specified in the RFP (above).

We have shared all our materials, including posters and presentations to SRRC and MACD so that the technical information and message for forest pest outreach remains consistent. We continue to develop, print and distribute outreach materials to these groups and our trained volunteers.

Approved and signed by



Cooperator

Date: 2/8/2016

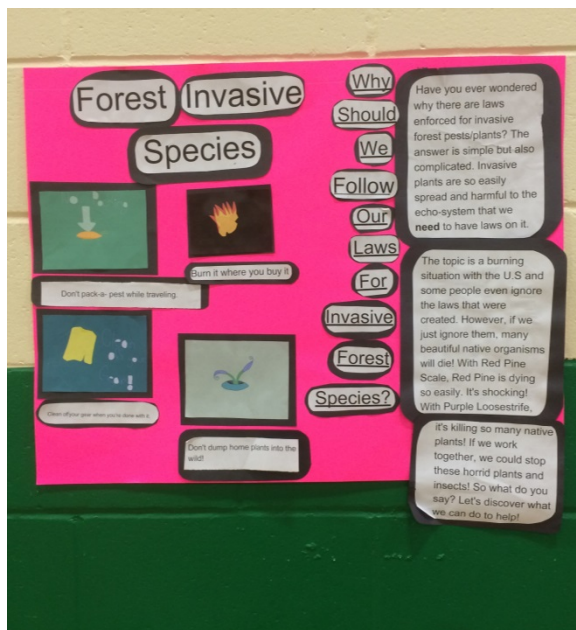
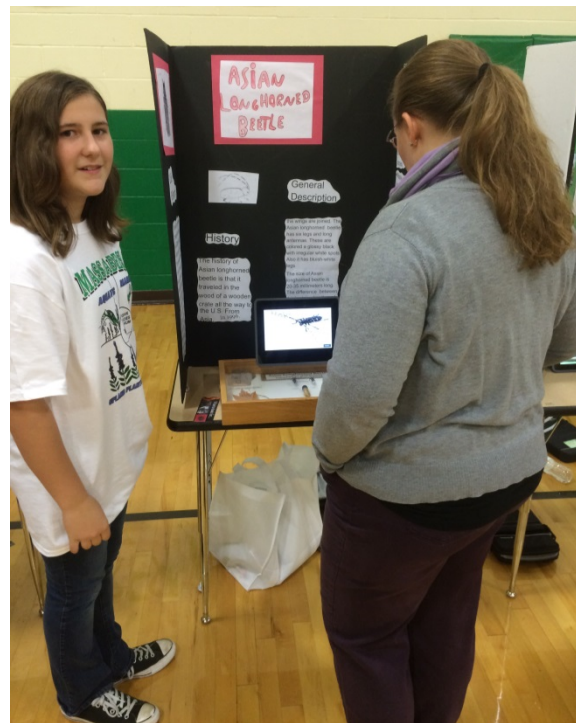
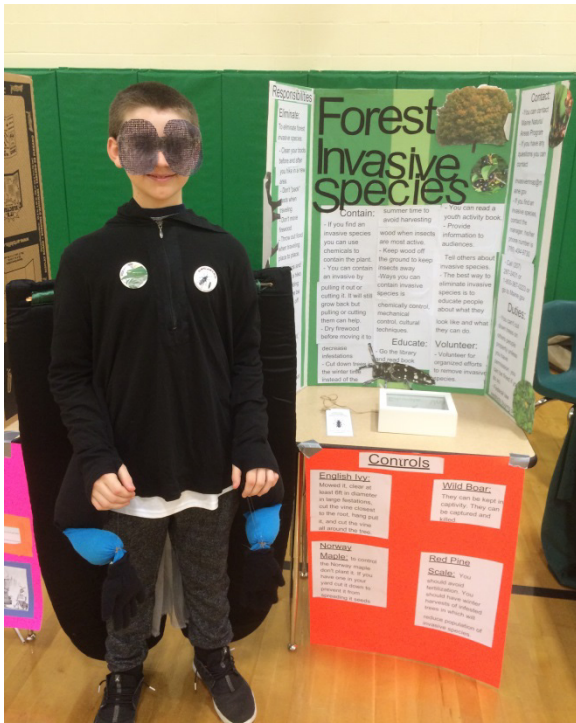
ADODR

Date:

Attachments:

- Massabesic Middle School Invasive Species Forum photos
- Saco River Recreational Council (SRRC) Proposal
- SRRC Semiannual Report
- Maine Association of Conservation District (MACD) Proposal
- MACD Semiannual Report

Photos: Massabesic Middle School Invasive Species Forum 11/20/15



SRRC Proposed Services

1. Services to be Provided

SRRC will include in all of the conferences, fairs and etc displays for the FPOSP and educate people about ALB, EAB, HWA, Winter Moth and other invasive pests that are on the radar and the importance of not moving firewood. The Swans Falls educational facility, which is currently housed in a small visitor center/camp store, will have FPOSP displays set up throughout the season from May through October with the goal of educating visitors on a daily basis about these invasives and much more. The educational facility is the hub for educating youth groups (e.g. scouts and schools groups) and the general public on invasive forest pests. With assistance from this grant, the educational facility can be expanded and upgraded with the intention of becoming a training facility for FPOSP and other important environmental concerns. SRRC often does impromptu forest pest outreach, including showing the “Lurking in the Trees” documentary, handing out tattoos, pencils, references materials and asking for their help with educating others by taking this project as a science project to help us spread the word and educate others. A new expanded training facility will allow for larger numbers of people to be educated. SRRC staff, including management, as well as stakeholders along the Saco River corridor (e.g. canoe liveries, other campground owners) have been educated through SRRC on invasive forest pests and will continue to disseminate outreach materials to their customers and constituents. SRRC will post posters provided by FPOSP at all take out location bulletin boards and campgrounds on the upper Saco River in Fryeburg and Brownfield to keep visitors informed.

2. Implementation - Work Plan

SRRC will continue with invasive forest pest outreach at all fairs, conferences, schools and any other yet to be organized outreach events throughout the year. With funding from this grant, SRRC will be able to employ a summer intern to dedicate more hours to outreach and education, and to have a bigger presence at more events. Additional funding will help to expand SRRC’s educational facility that will be able to accommodate trainings and workshops year-round, as well as house permanent displays that FPOSP has developed for invasive forest pest outreach. Metrics for assessing impacts will include the numbers of events and trainings that focus on invasive forest pest education, the numbers of people that attend trainings and events, and the number of visitors that bring out-of-state firewood.

SRRC Semiannual Report

SRRC EVENT DETAILS ~ Sept. 2015 – Dec. 2015

EVENT COORDINATOR, Michelle Broyer

DATE	EVENT	# PARTICIPANTS	ORGANIZATION	CONTACT	NOTES
9/23/15	Education program/outreach 8-9:30 @ Swans Falls education facility - FPOSP	9 students; 2 teachers	Fryeburg Academy Outdoor Learning Resource Class	Joel Rhymer, Teacher	Introduced class to SRRC showing pp, talked about invasives and EAB, ALB, and HWA and much more. Made folder for each person. <i>Pic. 1</i>
10/4/15– 10/11/15	Fryeburg Fair	hundreds	Natural Resources building/ Partners booth	Elbridge Russell	8 Days of outreach and education of thousands of fair goers. Included diorama and lots of FPOSP handouts and tattoos!! <i>Pics. 2 + 3</i>
10/16/15	Swans Falls Impromptu Outreach	12	Gordon College Environmental Studies Students	Mason	Included LNT (Leave No Trace) Ethics and the SRRC and invasives pests. <i>Pics. 4 + 5</i>
11/9/15	New England Environmental Education Alliance (NEEEA) Conference	180			Attended conference and set up display including the MFPOSP info and handouts. Attended How to Teach about Invasives session and how to communicate about climate issue effectively. <i>Pic. 6</i>

- The Mid-winter months are slow for outreach due to the holidays etc. I am using this time to organize and develop outreach events and to promote or provide outreach through social media such as my FB or websites. I have submitted a proposal to the Maine Land Trust Network to present at their annual spring conference April 23rd at Mt Ararat H.S. I will be notified this month if approved for that proposal.
- Attended Invasives Species Forum on 11/20/16 at Massabesic Middle school, which I found inspiring to have these young people so educated about the invasives in their communities and some taking part in the efforts to battle them. They were great and would love to have some of them as future boat inspectors or interns for the SRRC!
- Keeping updated on the latest Invasive Pest news through social media and have participated in HWA webinar last month and plan on participating in an Invasive Webinar 1/12/16.
- Once the camping season starts and visitors flock to the Saco River, we will be noting in a metric below when out of state firewood has entered our state or access areas.

Thank you for supporting our outreach and look forward to learning and educating for the protection of our environment. We will be updating our education facility in the spring.

SRRC Semiannual Report (cont)

DATE	VISITOR BRINGING FIREWOOD/STATE/CITY	TYPE OF FIREWOOD	DID THEY KNOW THEY SHOULD NOT BE TRANSPORTING?
10/05/15	York, Maine	Pine?	no

pic 1



pic 2



pic 3



pic 4



pic 5



pic 6



MACD Proposal

1. Services to be Provided

The Scope of Services to be provided by the MACD Employees Committee Technical Delivery Team is in accordance with the goals and plans outlined in the *DACF Maine Forest Service's Maine State Forest Assessment and Strategies* of June 18, 2010. As noted in this publication, "MFS has identified several critical and interrelated challenges that are key to the future of our forests: Keeping our forests as forests for the long-term – this is fundamentally important....A number of exotic insects and diseases, some established, some not yet here, threaten significant components of Maine's forests."

The Forest Invasive Pest Outreach and Education Technical Delivery Team will utilize the three-pronged approach developed by Jean Federico of the OCSWCD as a starting point for cost efficient and effective outreach and education. Presentations will be formatted to provide a consistent brand. Care will be taken to present concepts in a straight-forward and scientifically sound manner. The 1st prong is events, such as walk and talks and workshops. Walk and talks will be held in 11 counties in Maine in community forests, state parks, public lands, such as the Thorncrag Bird Sanctuary, and in conjunction with several land trusts. Technical Training Workshops will be held in a minimum of seven counties. All of these events will target outreach to local landowners and to forestry professionals, such as arborists, landscapers, foresters, nurserymen, distribution centers, and warehouses. Additionally, state park visitors, and visitors to the many beautiful forested public lands and community forests will be targeted. The 2nd prong is events such as fairs. A minimum of eight fairs in the target counties will have invasive forest pest displays and handouts. Some of these fairs will be staffed by the Technical Delivery Team and others by the MFS, such as the Fryeburg Fair where they have a large display each year. The 3rd prong is municipal outreach through the Maine Municipal Association (MMA) and, where possible, through local municipal associations such as the Oxford County Municipal Association. This outreach will target municipal officials, public works department personnel and other local government officials. The Technical Delivery Team will work with the MMA to develop an invasives breakout session for their 2015 Annual Meeting, which is well attended by municipal staff and decision makers from all areas of Maine. The goal of this session will be to highlight forest invasive issues and the resources available to address them. The Technical Delivery Team will also assist municipalities in developing invasive pest management plans for their communities. A 4th prong will provide outreach to campground owners, campsite visitors, and users, transporters, and sellers of firewood. This outreach will be provided by a combination of hand delivery and mailing of outreach and education materials.

Technical Delivery Team Members that will coordinate and provide forest invasive education and outreach in 12 counties through the above-noted events are:

Jean Federico, Hildy Ellis, Rebecca Jacobs, Rosetta Thompson, Jane Heikkinen, Art Grindle, Josh Platt, Melissa Brandt

Technical Delivery Team members that will provide additional support are:

- Hildy Ellis - Contract administration and publicity.
- Joanna Tarrazi - Public relations expertise and social media management. Additionally, she will coordinate grant reporting.
- Dale Finseth - Grant financial management and metrics assessment for the grant.
- Rosetta Thompson - Assist with publicity and grant reporting.
- Melissa Brant - Assist with publicity and social media management. She will also develop workshop agendas tailored to the needs of each county.

- Jane Heikkinen - Assist with publicity.
- Rebecca Jacobs - Develop a PowerPoint presentation for municipal trainings.

2. Implementation - Work Plan

Implementation Tasks	Project Development	Month (s)	Leads Responsible	Locations
Coordination with DACF for Outreach & Education Materials	Through DACF staff/divisions involved in forest pest outreach	September & October, 2015, then on as needed basis	Jeannie, Joanna	Via Electronic Delivery &/or Physical Delivery
Develop Additional Materials as Needed	Handouts Fair/Event Display PowerPoint	September, 2015 - January, 2016	Rosetta Rebecca, Joanna	Handouts to be distributed at all events; PowerPoint for MMA, & other events
Develop PR & Media Outreach	Press Releases for News Outlets; Articles for Partner Groups	September, 2015 then on-going timed for local events	Joanna, Hildy, Jane	Statewide & regional news outlets; Partner Newsletters & Web-based communications
Interface Social Media with DACF & other Invasive Pest Partners	DACF Bug Watch, Maine Natural Areas Program iMap, Maine Invasive Species Network, MFS & others	Start in October, 2015 & on-going through one year grant time frame	Joanna, Hildy	Web-Based Social Media
Delivery/Mailing to Campgrounds & Information Kiosks in State Parks.	Contact in all Higher Priority Counties, then provide based on availability of printed materials from DACF	April & May, 2016	Jeannie, Hildy, Jane, Rosetta, Art, Josh	Campgrounds & State Parks in 12 higher priority counties (<i>excluding the Fryeburg/Swans Falls/Saco River corridor areas to avoid overlap with Saco River Recreational Council efforts</i>)
Workshops	Develop agendas, presentations, handouts, certification credits, such as through SFI & other certification organizations;	Develop Workshop Content starting in October, 2015; Workshops to be held from February, 2016 through September, 2016	Technical Delivery Team Members as noted: Jeannie, Rebecca, Hildy, Rosetta, Jane, Art, Josh, Melissa	Provide workshops in counties that do not have other events or enough populous to offer more than one event: Cumberland, Franklin, Hancock, Oxford (<i>excluding the Fryeburg/Swans Falls/Saco River corridor areas to avoid overlap with Saco River Recreational Council efforts</i>), Waldo, Kennebec, York

Walk and Talks	Develop agendas, presentations, handouts, & certification credits through SFI & others; Visual Surveys at Walk & Talks ; Purple Traps for EAB Detection in select locations based on DACF availability, such as Oxford County near where EAB is detected in NH counties (<i>excluding the Fryeburg/Swans Falls/Saco River corridor areas to avoid overlap with Saco River Recreational Council efforts</i>)	Development of Walk & Talk Content to start in November, 2015; Walk & Talks will be held from April, 2016 through September, 2016	Technical Delivery Team Members	Somerset County Yankee Woodlot; Great Pond Mountain Conservation Trust; Hidden Valley Nature Center; Merryspring Nature Center; Coastal Mountains Land Trust; George's River Land Trust; Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens; Androscoggin Riverlands; Thorncrag Bird Sanctuary; Reid State Park; Range Pond State Park
Fairs/Events	Develop/Coordinate Visual Displays, presentations, handouts starting in November, 2015	October, 2015 – September, 2016	Technical Delivery Team Members as noted	Ag Trade Show; Conservation Fair; Maine Farm Days; Common Ground Fair; & other fairs that MFS has a display <i>*Coordinate with Saco River Recreational Council to ensure coverage at Ossipee Valley Fair, Oxford County Fair; Waterford World Fair; Fryeburg Fair</i>
Training to MMA	Coordinate with MMA	February or March, 2016	Jeannie, Art, Josh	MMA Conference

MACD Semiannual Report



**Maine Association of Conservation Districts
Employees Committee
PO Box 541, Portland, ME 04112-0541
Phone: (207) 596-2040
Email: Hildy Ellis, Committee Chair at hildy@knox-lincoln.org**

**MACD Employees Committee Invasive Forest Pest Outreach and Education Grant Report
to the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Bureau of Agriculture, Division of Animal and Plant Health
for RFP # 201506109**

Quarterly Report Time Frame: September through December, 2015

With coverage in every county in Maine, conservation districts are uniquely positioned to efficiently deliver invasive forest pest outreach and education statewide. The MACD Employees Committee (MACD) is utilizing Districts' skills, qualifications and strengths by convening a Forest Invasive Pest Technical Delivery Team to provide outreach and education in 12 targeted higher priority counties in Maine during this grant period, through workshops, walk and talks, provision of educational materials through campgrounds, state parks, other public lands, land trusts, fairs and other events. The Team is in the process of coordinating, reviewing and developing resource materials as needed, and is facilitating information transfer and training among its members and partners. The results of all outreach will be analyzed through evaluation forms and assessment metrics, which are reported to the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF). Districts offer a local delivery system for this important outreach, which results in cost-effective programs that are being provided to the target populations.

1. Press Releases

The MACD Employees Committee coordinated two major press releases in November and December, 2015, for this grant. A grant announcement press release was coordinated with John Bott, the DACF Director of Communications and Special Projects. The DACF distributed this press release to 2,300 people and agencies through their list serve. The MACD Employees Committee Member Joanna Tarrazi distributed this press release through the committee, and it was also featured in the National Association of Conservation Districts Forestry Notes.

A Technical Delivery Team "Train the Trainer" session provided to team members at the MACD Winter Meeting was highlighted in another major press release. Jeannie Federico, Oxford County SWCD Education and Outreach Coordinator, who led the training, spoke of the threat to Maine's forests from the Emerald Ash Borer and other invasive pests, and said, "There are lessons to be learned from states that have already been damaged by these invasive pests, in addition to all the research now being done to slow their spread. By educating the public, Maine's conservation districts can help to mitigate the damage to its beautiful forests."

The Train the Trainer session press release was distributed to statewide media outlets in Maine, including the Portland Press Herald, and the Central Maine Sentinel and Kennebec Journal, which are

the official media outlets for the State of Maine, as well as other major outlets. The PR was also distributed through the DACF list serve of 3,700 (up from the November 18, 2015 release), through conservation districts in Maine, the Maine Environmental Policy Institute's Maine Environmental News, and the EPNewswire, a business journal focused on the intersection of science-based regulation and basic industries, including food, energy and chemical production. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service distributed PR through their list serve and media connections both at the local and national level.

2. Facebook Posts

The same PR was publicized through multiple Facebook pages, including the DACF page, the MACD page and through individual conservation districts, including the Knox-Lincoln SWCD and the Piscataquis SWCD. The social media outreach will be expanded upon as we prepare to hold events in the 12 higher priority districts, by reaching out to local partners and co-hosts of the events.

3. Technical Delivery Team Meetings

The first Technical Delivery Team Meeting was held on October 7th during the MACD Fall Meeting. At this meeting, Hildy Ellis, MACD Employees Committee Chair and Invasive Forest Pest Grant Administrator, reviewed the goals, objectives and work plan of the grant with the team and answered questions about project logistics. Another meeting was held with the team during the MACD Winter Meetings, during which the Train the Trainer session was held.

4. Train the Trainer Sessions

Jeannie Federico led this training for the Technical Delivery Team, as Jeannie has an extensive background, experience and skills in presenting on invasive forest pests, having made multiple presentations in Oxford County. Jeannie provided a display and a training packet with a sample agenda and training materials that cover the invasive forest pests that are threats or are already present in Maine, including the USDA Forest Service Pest Alerts and additional information resources. The training session also included a question and answer session facilitated by Jeannie and Hildy, and prepared the team to schedule and deliver presentations throughout the 12 counties in Maine that are the focus of this grant.

5. Workshop Agenda

Rebecca Jacobs, Educational Coordinator of the Knox-Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District, and Jeannie Federico, developed sample workshop agendas that will be used as templates for workshops and events throughout the state. Rebecca, in addition to Jeannie, has extensive experience presenting information on invasive pests. The agenda, and additional presentation materials, are all available on the MACD SharePoint Library for easy access to all team members. Some workshops will be classroom only sessions and some will also have field sessions to provide first-hand knowledge to participants, but all workshops will have the same agenda. Content will differ based only on the invasive pests already present in some regions in Maine, or that pose a greater threat to Maine's forests in some regions based on proximity to current invasive populations.

6. PowerPoint Developed

Rebecca Jacobs also developed a PowerPoint, which she adapted from programs presented by DACF over the years of the outreach project. The presentation is aimed at increasing awareness of landowners, professionals and the general public about the threats posed by invasive pests, how to

recognize the pests and/or their presence through damage to host trees, and how to report suspected invasions.

7. Presentation Materials Developed

Jeannie Federico developed the workshop content based on previous workshops she has led. The workshop content includes multiple handouts from the DACF as well as a handout about “Host Trees” that Jeannie developed.

8. Education Credits for Workshops

Plans were made for Education Credits for workshops to be secured through the Society of American Foresters, the Maine Certified Logging Professionals Program and the Northeast Master Logger Certification Program through the Trust to Conserve Northeast Forestlands. Additionally, the DACF Maine Board of Pesticides Control gave pre-approval for pesticide credits for these workshops. Each workshop hour will translate to a continuing education credit. Presenter biographies will be submitted to each certifying agency if required, as well as the participant list of each person requesting credits.

9. Workshops Scheduled

Workshops were scheduled for 5 counties in Maine and 6 other counties are in the process of working with community partners to schedule workshops in the spring and summer of 2016. A Workshop and Event Schedule is on the MACD SharePoint site for easy access for all Technical Delivery Team members to post and share their workshop information.

The 1st workshop will be held on March 4th, in Hancock County at the Ellsworth City Hall. Mary Thompson, former USDA NRCS employee who has extensive experience working in 6 counties in Maine over a thirty year period will serve as the presenter.

The 2nd workshop will be held on March 17th at the Oxford Comprehensive School in Oxford County in partnership with the Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine. Jeannie Federico will serve as the presenter.

The 3rd workshop will be held on March 23rd in Franklin County and additional details are still being arranged for this event. Joe Dembeck, Somerset County Executive Director will serve as the presenter. Joe is an active member in the Small Woodlands Owners Association of Maine (SWOAM), Town of Skowhegan Conservation Commission (current Chair), and a board member of Somerset Woods Trustees, a land trust. Before working for SCSWCD, Joe was the Fisheries Management Supervisor for the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and was the agency representative on the Governor’s Task Force for Invasive Species.

The 4th workshop will be held on April 2nd in Waldo County at the Rural Living Day in partnership with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension. Mary Thompson will serve as the presenter.

The 5th workshop will be held on April 19th at the Searsmont Town Office in Waldo County in partnership with the George’s River Land Trust. Mary Thompson will serve as the presenter.

The 6th workshop will be held in April or May, 2016, in Lincoln County in partnership with the Pemaquid Watershed Association and the Midcoast Conservancy. Mary Thompson will serve as the presenter.

For each county in which the workshops are being presented, the local county soil and water conservation district will serve as the host. The Lincoln County presentation will also serve Knox County landowners and professionals. The remaining counties to be scheduled include Androscoggin, Cumberland, Kennebec, Sagadahoc, Somerset and York.

10. Other Events Scheduled

Another outreach and education event is planned for the Penobscot County Conservation Alliance's Sportsman's Show in Orono that participants come to from every region of the state. This show will be held from March 11th to 14th. A display and information similar to the Agricultural Trade Show will be presented at a MACD booth.

Additional fairs that will have information include the Farmington Fair in Franklin County, Maine Farm Days in Kennebec County, Ossipee Valley Fair in Oxford County, the Union Fair in Knox County and the Knox-Lincoln Plant Sale.

Plans were made for outreach at additional fairs and events in partnership with the Maine Forest Service, which has a strong presence at several fairs and is committed to providing technical assistance for this grant.

Although the Maine Municipal Association was approached by Jeannie Federico to give a presentation at one of their meetings, the association declined this offer. Therefore the Technical Delivery Team is working on a strategy to cost effectively and efficiently provide outreach to municipalities, as these grant funds will not enable us to provide outreach to municipalities one at a time. An event to provide outreach through municipal public works departments has been planned and will occur in June at the Highway Congress located in Somerset County, Maine, with the goal of these public works officials bringing the information to town managers for follow up planning.

11. Evaluation and Assessment Metrics

Dale Finseth, Kennebec County SWCD Executive Director, has a background in developing evaluation and assessment metrics for grants and contracts, and developed a table to use for this grant project. The table/metric that Dale designed and is using with the Technical Delivery Team provides monthly data regarding the project's public contacts and outreach activities. This metric documents all education and outreach activities. Specific "workshop data" is part of the metric, and enables the project to track specific activities in addition to cumulative estimates of the resulting public effectiveness of the efforts. In addition, all workshop events will include evaluation forms in order to determine the effectiveness of the presentations and collect suggestions for further activities.

➤ Attachments:

- DACF Press Release: November 16, 2015 – Grants Awarded to Combat Invasive Forest Pests
- MACD Statewide and National Press Release: January 5, 2016 – Maine Conservation Districts Address Statewide Natural Resource Initiatives During Annual Meeting

For Immediate Release: November, 16, 2015

Contact

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Grants Awarded to Combat Invasive Forest Pests

AUGUSTA - The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF) is pleased to announce grant awards to the Maine Association of Conservation District's Employees Committee and the Saco River Recreational Council to provide outreach and education on invasive forest pests that threaten Maine's economy and wellbeing.

The two projects promote early detection of invasive pests such as Asian longhorned beetle, the emerald ash borer, the hemlock woolly adelgid, winter moth and others through outreach and education efforts. Early detection reduces the costs and resources needed for a management response and increases the chances of eradication success.

"The Maine Association of Conservation District's Employees Committee, in partnership with 12 county conservation districts in Southern and Central Maine, and the Saco River Recreational Council were both awarded grants under a competitive RFP issued by the Department," said Karen Coluzzi, State Pest Survey Coordinator for the DACF's Division of Animal and Plant Health. "The outreach and education that these two conservation organizations will provide will result in increased public understanding of the economic and environmental threats associated with invasive forest pests, increased support for management and mitigation efforts, and increased reporting of potential pest sightings to federal or state authorities."

For more information on invasive forest pest outreach and education in Maine, contact Karen Coluzzi at the DACF Division of Animal and Plant Health at Karen.L.Coluzzi@Maine.Gov or at (207) 287-7551.

More information on the DACF's Forest Pest Outreach and Survey Project is available at www.umaine.edu/invasivespecies/2012/05/14/fpos

More information on the DACF's efforts to address Invasive Forest Pests is available at www.maine.gov/dacf/php/caps/ALB/AnnualReports.shtml/

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 5, 2016

Contact:

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Conservation Districts in Maine
Integral to Statewide Natural Resources Initiatives

BANGOR, Maine, December 29, 2015--The Maine Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) recently convened at the Spectacular Events Center in Bangor for its Annual Winter Meetings. The 16 conservation districts in Maine that were represented at the meeting serve as the bridge between citizens and local, state and federal agencies. They provide conservation leadership, teach the value of natural resources, and help plan and implement voluntary programs to both prevent and solve local environmental problems. They work with many partners to provide assistance to the public for their use of land, soil, water, wildlife, forest, plants and other natural resources.

At this meeting preparations were made for several statewide conservation initiatives, including natural resource assessments to be conducted in Spring, 2016, throughout all counties in Maine. These assessments, to be conducted in partnership with the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), will help determine local conservation priorities and also provide a comprehensive framework for evaluating NRCS technical and financial conservation assistance in Maine.

Presentations were also made on the numerous soil health initiatives underway in Maine. Dr. Brandon Smith, the Northeast Team Leader for new NRCS Soil Health Division, and Tony Jenkins, NRCS State Resource Conservationist, spoke about the soil health challenges facing farmers. They also discussed NRCS plans for a broader adoption of agriculture management practices that will maintain or enhance soil functions. "Healthy, and sustainable agricultural soils are measured by ecological factors such as organic matter and biology, as well as by economic values, such as agricultural productivity and crop yields," Jenkins explained.

The meeting also addressed a number of soil health initiatives to assist potato farmers in Aroostook County. Angie Wotton, Southern Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Director and Kassy Michaud, Central Aroostook SWCD Executive Director, gave presentations on their work with multiple public and private partners, including the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF) and the Maine Potato Board, to help potato farmers improve soil health. These initiatives will also help farmers prevent soil erosion and improve water quality using innovative cover cropping, green manures and other technical assistance provided through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). The RCPP promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners.

A MACD Advisory Council Meeting with DACF's Commissioner Walt Whitcomb focused on the gains being made in local, sustainable agriculture in Maine. Whitcomb noted that "Maine is the largest agricultural producing state in New England, and the state has prime farming soils and a lot of untapped

potential,” with Maine’s primary agricultural products being potatoes, blueberries, apples, eggs, dairy and maple syrup. Whitcomb also noted that the DACF is going to continue to make the partnership with conservation districts a cost-efficient and effective local delivery system.

A recently awarded DACF Invasive Forest Pest grant will provide outreach and education in several counties in Maine through the MACD Employees Committee Technical Delivery Team. The outreach and education will serve to prevent the spread of invasive pests to Maine, and also to contain invasive pests that have already come to the state. Because Maine’s well-managed forests provide an approximate 8 billion industry each year in Maine, from forest products and the forest-based recreation economy, monitoring, management and education are all important to sustaining the state’s forestlands. Jeannie Federico, Oxford County SWCD Education and Outreach Coordinator, spoke of the threat to Maine’s forests from the Emerald Ash Borer and other invasive pests, and said, “There are lessons to be learned from those states that have already been damaged by these invasive pests, in addition to all the research now being done to slow their spread. By educating the public, Maine’s conservation districts can help to mitigate the damage to its beautiful forests.”

During the MACD Board of Director’s Meeting, the torch was passed to Bruce Talley of Medford, Maine, to begin his three-year tenure as the newly elected MACD President. Talley, who also serves as a Supervisor of the Piscataquis County SWCD, notes that “healthy soil and water are as essential as the air that we breathe.” He is excited to work with conservation districts throughout Maine, and their conservation partners, to plan, implement and manage the state’s natural resources for future generations.

Photo Cutline: From left to right: The Maine Association of Conservation District’s (MACD) newly elected President, Bruce Talley is seen in this photo with the MACD Executive Director Tom Gordon. Along with the MACD Executive Committee, Talley and Gordon guide and lead conservation work in Maine for 16 conservation districts. For further information on locally-led conservation work in Maine, please contact Tom Gordon at (207) 329-1399.

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