



GREENews

A quarterly newsletter published by the Hillsborough County Conservation District

Hillsborough County Conservation District

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Bees and Butterflies: The Vital Role of Pollinators

The honeybees are dying. Since the fall of 2006, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has received reports from beekeepers in 27 states that their hives have been hit by a mysterious bee die-off, referred to as Colony Collapse Disorder. Its cause is unknown, raising significant concern about honeybee populations and the U.S. food supply and underscoring the need to help native pollinating insects in New Hampshire survive and thrive.

Until recently, most people weren't aware of the importance of bees and other insects to our food supply. In fact, about one-third of the human diet comes from insect-pollinated plants! According to the USDA, honeybees are responsible for pollinating more than 90 flowering crops each year, including nuts, broccoli and citrus fruits. Loss of honeybees to pollinate these crops could lead to a severe threat to the U.S. food supply.

New Hampshire has approximately 2,000 beekeepers. Rob Calvert, a biologist with the USDA Wildlife Services, is one of them. "There could be several causes for the bees dying," says Calvert. "One theory is that the small amounts of pesticides that migratory beekeepers' colonies encounter as they pollinate different crops over the course of a season can have a lethal accumulative effect on the bees."

Here in New Hampshire,

"bees seem to suffer more from mites combined with cold weather stresses," says Calvert. The mites he refers to are tracheal and varroa mites, which are known to transmit viral infections and have threatened bee populations since the 1980's. Unless controlled, mites can weaken, or even kill, a strong colony. Weakened colonies can then be subjected to secondary infections from bacterial and viral infections.

"What will replace the honeybees, if we can't get their disease issues under control?" asks Emily Brunkhurst, a biologist with the NH Fish & Game Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program. "Honeybees are an exotic species," she explains, and they are not the only pollinators. "There are several native species, like bumblebees, that can pollinate crops. We need to develop farming and gardening practices that provide habitat for the local bees and butterflies that can do their job."

One resource that can help in this effort is the New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan, which identifies invertebrates as a group of species in need of more research. "We don't have enough information about our invertebrate communities," said Brunkhurst. Currently, there are nine invertebrate species listed as threatened or endangered in New Hampshire. Included are the frosted elfin, *Persius dusky* wing

skipper and Karner blue butterflies—all of which are native pollinators.

These three butterfly species are also included on the "Red List" of pollinator insects of North America, which is produced by the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. Species on the Red List are at risk for extinction and are in greatest need

of conservation. According to the Xerces Society, native pollinators play a vital role in the livelihood of both plants and people, as they are responsible for pollinating 75% of the world's flowering plants.

What can people do to help? Calvert suggests limiting the use of pesticides and herbicides and enhancing the habitat around your yard for native

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Also Inside...



SPRING BULBS!
Varieties of lilies, gladiolus, phlox, perennials and dahlias in many colors are available.

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pollinators such as bumblebees. Habitat for nests of bumblebees can be prepared by using a protected pile of corrugated cardboard, bales of straw or mulch. Once mice enter these sheltered areas they create tunnels, which are often later occupied by bumblebees. People can also enhance habitat by planting native flowering plants like wildflowers to support our native pollinating insect species.

Want to hear more?

Come to the Hillsborough County Conservation District's Annual Meeting where Allen Lindahl, NH Beekeepers Association, will speak on the Importance of Pollinators. Learn what you can do to help too!

Date: Wednesday, April 30th

Time: 6:00 PM—8:30 PM

Place: Milford Town Hall

Contact: Kerry Rickrode, 673-2409 for more information.

HCCD Welcomes New Chairwoman!



Amy Bagley was voted in as the new Chair of the Conservation District at the organization's monthly Board meeting in January. Born in Portsmouth, NH, Amy grew up in Milford, and went on to receive a B.A. in Political Science from Keene State College and Juris Doctor from Suffolk University Law School. During her time at Keene State, she was elected to and served in the New Hampshire State House of Representatives. Amy practiced law for a few years upon receiving her degree, and currently is a Sales Account Manager for Airmar Technology Corporation in Milford. Playing an active role on the Board since 2002, Amy previously held the Vice-Chair position.

Join the HCCD Team!

Interested in conserving your county? Are you a forester, farmer or just have an interest in the environment? If you said yes, we are looking for you! We are seeking volunteers to sit on our Board of Supervisors, attend our monthly Board Meetings and bring fresh new ideas to the District. Please call 673-2409 or email us (kerry.rickrode@nh.nacdnet.net) for more information.

Conservation Assistance for Your Farm

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is available to users of agriculture and forest land for conservation planning and technical assistance. Conservation planning is a written record of your management decisions and conservation practices and systems you plan to use and maintain on your farm and or forest. Carrying out your plan will achieve the goals of protecting the environment on and off your land, as well as meeting your individual management.

NRCS also offers conservation programs that provide dollars to land users for conservation practices that benefit the environment. The programs address environmental



resource concerns for soil, water, air, plants, and animals. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) target

concerns such as erosion control, animal waste management, prescribed grazing, irrigation, forest health, nutrient and pest management planning. The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) includes practices that improve or enhance wildlife habitat. Example practices include: tree and shrub planting, wetland and upland wildlife habitat improvement, invasive species control/pest management. NH state wildlife action plan lists critical habitats that are being targeted with WHIP.

Feel free to contact Krista Olson, Soil Conservationist for further information or questions, 603-673-2409.



Farm Spotlight: The Educational Farm at Joppa Hill

For more information, contact Lin L'Heureux, Executive Director, at 472-4724 or Info.EFJH@comcast.net



The Educational Farm at Joppa Hill is involved in USDA-NRCS con-

servation programs and has a conservation plan for the land. This plan helps protect soil and water resources in the watershed.

The mission of the farm is to increase public awareness of open space, sustainable agriculture and the environment by operating a working farm, providing interactive educational programs and promoting first hand experience through community involvement. Established four years ago, the thirty-five acre farm offers many diverse programs that attract the local community of all ages.

Events for Children:

From summer camp to horsemanship lessons, the opportunities for children are endless. Offering half day and full day summer farm classes, the sessions educate the campers on topics like



where food comes from, farm animal care, and helping in the vegetable gardens. Registration is currently open.

Come and experience a hands-on educational farm tour! Appropriate for all ages, even adults, the one hour tour themed "From Dirt to Dinner – The Circle of Life" features how food crops grow from the dirt beneath our feet and a visit to the farm animals. By the end of the hour, children will make the connection between healthy soil, healthy plants, healthy animals and healthy people!

Programs for Adults and Children:

Participate in the farm's special events workshop series. Programs include classes on agricultural and homesteading skills, companion and farm animal care, holistic, herbal and homeopathic medicine, and educational lectures on sustainable agriculture and organic farming.

Got Milk?

The farm is proud to be able to offer

healthy, wholesome milk without the use of chemicals, antibiotics or unnatural conditions. Fresh, raw milk is available for sale through a yearly subscription fee. Customers can pick-up their milk at the farm weekly.



Farm Support

Volunteers are the backbone of the farm. The services provided by the many dedicated individuals of all ages are essential to the success of all of the farm's endeavors. From assisting with daily farm maintenance, office management to teaching children as an education docent, there is a job that attracts all interests and backgrounds.

The Educational Farm at Joppa Hill is a registered 501c3, non-profit organization. Much of their funding comes from member donations, fundraisers and grants. The support they receive ensures that the farm will continue to be a dynamic, positive force in the community for agricultural and environmental education, wildlife and habitat conservation and family fun!

Source: www.theeducationalfarm.org and interview with Executive Director, Lin L'Heureux

NH Dept. of Environmental Services Strives to Improve its Current Wetlands Program

Commissioner Thomas Burack has worked to establish the Wetlands Program Improvement Initiative. The purpose of the initiative is to look at the overall wetlands program, its operation, and hold public meetings throughout the state to gather public input on what is working and what can be improved or changed. Feedback will help to create a new conceptual framework for wetland permitting and compliance, leading to the implementation of changes to the program in late 2008-2009.

The Hillsborough County Conservation District will be hosting a series of listening sessions in various locations

throughout the County to offer the public a chance to provide feedback. If you have an interest in or are concerned with the Wetlands program, we want to hear from you.

Date: Thursday, March 27, 2008
Place: Baldwin Environmental Center, Fox State Forest, Hillsborough
Time: 6:00 – 8:00 PM
RSVP to Kerry Rickrode by March 26th—
673-2409 or kerry.rickrode@nh.nacdnet.net



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Kerry Rickrode, District Manager

NRCS Staff:

Krista Olson, Soil Conservationist
 Mike Lynch, District Conservationist

Call for Nominations

Every year, the Hillsborough County Conservation District names a Conservation Teacher of the Year. We are looking to recognize a teacher who is making significant contributions to natural resource stewardship and conservation education. A school can also be nominated for its school-wide programs. Anyone can nominate a teacher. Please call the office at 673-2409 for more information and to receive a nomination form. Deadline to submit nominations is **April 16th**. The winner will be recognized at the HCCD Annual Meeting on **April 30th** in Milford.



Now Accepting Conservation/Natural Resources Scholarship Applications

A \$500 Scholarship will be awarded to an individual that will be graduating from High School, and is accepted into a program of study in the field of Agriculture, Forestry, Environmental Science, Soil Science, or a related Natural Resources program. Applications are due by **May 2nd**. Please contact the office to receive an application at 673-2409.

Save these Dates

- 3/27—FREE Wetlands Listening Session, 6-8 PM, Fox State Forest, Hillsborough
- 4/16—Conservation Teacher of the Year nomination deadline
- 4/18—Spring Bulb Sale Fundraiser Order deadline
- 4/30—HCCD Annual Meeting & Importance of Pollinators presentation, 6-8:30 PM, Milford
- 5/2—Scholarship Application deadline
- 5/16—Bulb Sale Fundraiser order pick-up, Milford

