

Overview of 2009 MAITC Grants Funded up to \$5,000

Casey Bowie -- \$4,772

Representing St. John Valley SWCD in collaboration with the New Sweden Consolidated School

The St. John Valley SWCD is collaborating with the New Sweden Consolidated School to implement an elementary school curriculum that teaches children agricultural concepts through an experiential learning approach. The curriculum, titled *Maine Apprentice Gardener Program*, consists of a yearlong series of classroom lessons, experiments and activities for third and fourth grade, with extensive teacher support materials. The aim of the program is to educate students about the importance of agriculture and the environment to their daily lives, and apply what they learn to develop a school garden. This agriculture-based curriculum is not an add-on, meeting many of the Maine Learning Results requirements. It is cross-disciplinary and provides practice not only in science, but also in language, creative arts, health and mathematics.

Kevin Duplissie -- \$5,000

Representing the University of Maine Child Study Center

This project will expose the 42 children at the UMO Child Study Center, their families, and 50 University students to the concepts of what agriculture provides for them and how. Using resources from Maine Ag in the Classroom, books, and other materials, two university students will lead weekly lessons, which will be followed up with growing projects, fieldtrips, and class activities throughout the entire year. The project will result in a piloted model curriculum for using agriculture in Pre-Kindergarten through First Grade classrooms. Lessons will be aligned to the Maine Learning Results. This project will foster the UMO's strong roots in agriculture to utilize college students to foster awareness in our youngest students.

Don Sprangers -- \$5,000

Representing Washington Academy

Washington Academy has produced biodiesel as part of a class research project for the past four years with lab batches from 100 ml to 15 gallons in size. In 2008 the program acquired funding for the purchase of a 40-gallon Freedom Fueller biodiesel processor. State law now prohibits the use of "home brewed" biofuels for ground transportation. Washington Academy will be retrofitting their existing 21 x 48 foot greenhouse with a biofuel heating system that will enhance course offerings by creating a four-seasons greenhouse that will be used to grow produce for the school cafeteria. It is the goal of the students in the Ecology program, Health class and Culinary Arts class to provide, prepare and consume locally grown vegetables in our school's food service program.

Margaret Pietrak -- \$2,875

Representing Skowhegan Area Middle School

"Let-tuce Sustain You!" aims to promote sustainability in agriculture through hydroponics. Maine gardens are viable for only a short growing season, yet hydroponics provide a local alternative for fresh produce in the winter. Students will learn about plant physiology and nutrient needs through hydroponic growing experiments. Speakers will share knowledge on nutrient requirements and plant physiology plus share research on growing plants on fish hatchery wastewater. Students will visit Backyard Farms, participate in videoconferences and in turn teach local elementary students what they have learned. Lettuce grown will be served in the school cafeteria.

Richard Rudolph -- \$5,000

Representing Rippling Waters Farm in cooperation with Bonny Eagle Middle School

Students at the Bonny Eagle Middle School in grades 6 – 8 will be involved in growing food in the solar greenhouse project. Lessons are fun, hands-on and tied to the Maine Learning Results. Utilizing an Americorp Vista volunteer, students will explore the food system, food insecurity, ecological approaches to growing food, nutrition, and the importance of physical activity and healthy diets. Throughout the 2009 – 2010 school year, students will grow produce for their own school cafeteria as well as local food pantries, giving students a chance to contribute to their community as well.