2011-2012 Piscataquis County Cooperative Extension Annual Report

Donna Coffin

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/extension_county_associations

Part of the Life Sciences Commons

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Maine County Extension Associations by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.
Making a Difference

For more than 90 years, University of Maine Cooperative Extension has worked with Maine volunteers to offer community-driven, research-based educational programs in every county. Our annual report features highlights of recent accomplishments and the difference we make in the lives of Maine citizens and their communities.

Piscataquis County
2011 – 2012

Photos by Edwin Remsberg, USDA
University of Maine Cooperative Extension’s successful educational programs result from a federal, state and county government partnership. Since 1919, when the Maine Legislature passed the County Extension Act*, the University of Maine has been in all Maine communities with a county office whose operations are funded by county government. Our educational programs anticipate and respond to local and state needs and issues. We also communicate those issues and opportunities to UMaine faculty to influence their research and development plans.

A sampling of our educational program areas:

• Agriculture Business & Community
• Food & Health
• Gardening & Horticulture
• Home, Family & Youth Natural Resources
• Insect & Plant Disease
• Management Safety & Preparedness

Executive Summary

This year has truly been a year of opportunity and transition. In addition to expanded programming, the Executive Committee and Piscataquis County Staff have been assisted by the UMaine Extension Administrators in studying the needs and opportunities in our county. We are now in the process of significant reconfiguration of staffing and programming. We have not, however, been limited to studying—we have accomplished much! While it is difficult to summarize such an exciting year in a few paragraphs, some of the programs we are especially proud of include our continued work with 4-H (pages 3-4), the “GrowME” project (pages 4-5), our work with farmers including the Dover Cove Market and the “So you Want to Farm in Maine” program (page 5) and the “You Can” Series in conjunction with the Piscataquis Valley Adult Education Cooperative (pages 5-6). We have, of course, continued the work most people are familiar with—programs that literally run through the Maine Food System “from Farm to Fork.” Our programming has also expanded geographically as we continue to develop a presence in the Greenville area.

An additional development that has made this year’s work and accomplishments possible is the continued building of the Piscataquis County Extension Association Executive Committee (page 7). These people are volunteers from our communities who represent agriculture, business, education, and health disciplines. They apply their time and expertise in partnership with UMaine Extension Staff to insure we are in touch with the needs of our communities, that we align resources to avoid duplication and create synergy through a team approach and a collaborative philosophy. During these hard times we are focused on the best use of resources and return on investment. We are pleased to offer this Highlights Report to provide some detail regarding what we have done, are doing and hope to achieve as we move forward. We always welcome an opportunity to review our programming and operations, to answer questions and listen to ideas.

Please enjoy these highlights and the exciting plan we have for providing cost effective local access to the educational services of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension in Piscataquis County.

Food Systems & Youth Programming Focus

As a trusted resource for almost 100 years, University of Maine Cooperative Extension is the only entity in our state that touches every aspect of the Maine Food System which policy, research, production, processing, commerce, nutrition, food security and food safety are integral and interrelated. UMaine Extension helps support, sustain and grow the food-based economy. In addition, UMaine Extension conducts the most successful out-of-school youth educational program in Maine through 4-H. Today, 4-H is focused on science and technology to help foster interest in these avenues to successful careers.
FoodCorps

FoodCorps is a response to the increased interest in Farm to School programming by parents, schools and communities concerned about the health and weight of our youth. The program will help change school food environments and increase the amount of local foods and fresh fruits and vegetables available to students. School staff, already busy with the demands of teaching, need support to deliver food system education, build and sustain school garden programs, help to establish relationships with local farmers and provide a volunteer network to support Farm to School efforts. Piscataquis County Extension is sharing Zoe Hastings, the FoodCorps Service Member, with Penobscot County for the coming year. She will be implementing a three-ingredient recipe for healthy kids:

- Deliver hands-on nutrition education
- Build and tend school gardens
- Bring high-quality local food into public school cafeterias

4-H Clubs & After School Youth Programs

Recent findings from a 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development indicate that young people in 4-H are three times more likely to contribute to their communities than youth not participating in 4-H. The research discovered that the structured learning, encouragement and adult mentoring that 4-Her’s receive play vital roles in helping them actively contribute to their communities.

In Piscataquis County young people are able to participate in 4-H activities in a number of venues. Local clubs are the backbone of 4-H and UMaine Extension supports the following clubs in Piscataquis County:

- **4-H Family Club:** The Oldfield family runs 4-H Animal Land at the Piscataquis Valley Fair. 4-Her’s can exhibit their animal projects and fair visitors can have a petting zoo type atmosphere to see animals up close and ask 4-H families questions.
- **Parkman Adventures 4-H Club:** The club is based in Parkman/Guilford area and members have focused on science & technology and nature-based projects.

- **Piscataquis Livestock 4-H Club:** The club is based in the Guilford/Parkman/Dover area and members have focused on shooting sports and livestock projects including swine.

In addition to the traditional 4-H clubs, youth in Piscataquis County can participate in a number of non-traditional 4-H activities.

**4-H Afterschool Programs:** Milo, Brownville & Lagrange are the sites for 4-H afterschool programs that have included chick hatching, gardening, and food & nutrition. This was second summer to include the Kids Can Grow raised beds gardening project. Teachers in the Greenville and Dover-Foxcroft areas are interested in starting a Science afterschool program this fall to introduce students to a number of 4-H science, technology, engineering & math related projects.

**Maine 4-H Youth Community Action** project involves youth partnering with adults to make a difference in their communities. Youth identify an issue in their community and work together to make a difference. In Milo youth have completed work on the new Recreation Center Snack Shack and dugouts, this helped increase awareness of cafeteria food waste by turning it into compost. They also started a High School Science Garden and are collaborating with Kids Can Grow to promote gardening. This group of teens and tweens is also involved with the Tech Wizards grant funded mentoring program that focused on building underwater robots to combat milfoil in lakes. Other teens created a digital video documentary on the importance of kids staying in school.

**Operation Military Kids** has focused on establishing 4-H clubs and organizing events for all youth to participate in. As a result, Foxcroft Academy is considering using the Youth Community Action as a method to connect international students and local youth with the community in Dover-Foxcroft.

**Special Events** that Piscataquis County 4-H youth participated in this past year included:

- Piscataquis Valley Fair- they entered their 4-H projects and displayed them in the 4-H Exhibit Hall
• Tractor Supply Grand Opening- they promoted the 4-H Clover Promotion Campaign, had a livestock exhibit and a food booth
• Parkman Days- they participated in a community event and had a information booth

The 4-H Youth in Piscataquis County would like to thank all the businesses that participated in the annual 4-H Clover promotion where their patrons were able to show their support for the 4-H Youth program by buying a 4-H Clover to be displayed at the store.

Food Cupboards
For more than 10 years UMaine Extension has been providing oversight to the FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) program that provides funds to county food cupboards. Through the years the volume of paperwork to verify that funds are used appropriately has skyrocketed. Recently the availability of funds has been scarce. Last fall $28,000 was expect to be allocated to the county food cupboards. They only received $7,767 that was dispersed to Dover-Foxcroft, Milo, Guilford, Greenville and Monson cupboards. In the future the oversight of the FEMA funds will be shifted to the Piscataquis County Emergency Management Agency.

To assist food cupboards Piscataquis County gardeners and farmers donated 600 pounds of fresh vegetables through the Maine Harvest for Hunger Program to help those in need. UMaine Extension also assisted the Piscataquis Public Health Council in developing a map where people in Piscataquis County can access local farm products direct from the farmer and farmers’ markets.

Nutrition Education
The Eat Well Nutrition Education Program is free to income eligible individuals, families, schools, and groups. The program offers one-on-one visits in the home, teaching in groups. Participants learn:
• Cooking skills
• How to prepare great snacks, make favorite recipes healthier and keep food safe
• How to stretch food dollars
• New ideas and recipes for healthy meals
• Meal planning for busy people
• Tips for a healthy lifestyle

Eat Well Nutrition Associates, Felicia Dumont and Cathy Curry, have been visiting a number of local schools introducing the new MyPlate program. They have also been working at local food pantries as part of the UMaine Extension’s Harvest for Hunger which encourages local farmers to donate produce that can be picked up by those visiting the food pantries.

GrowME Project
Third graders around Piscataquis County were no doubt peering into their cups watching for a sign of green, while their parents watched the thermometer and the long-range forecasts. Those third graders are part of an estimated 700 elementary students who completed an assortment of agricultural projects during Maine Agriculture week. This program was created by collaboration between Valley Grange, Piscataquis County Soil & Water Conservation District and Piscataquis County UMaine Extension. Their mission was to build a local program of agriculturally themed activities for kids, led by local volunteers, with the goal of increasing agricultural literacy by making it fun! It started with a core group that grew every time they met. The group had volunteers from each of the three organizations and the community, as well as local master gardeners and farmers.

Julie Kimball, principal of SeDoMoCha in Dover Foxcroft was especially pleased the event was covered by WABI-TV5 from Bangor. “The kids were totally pumped,” she said of the coverage. GrowME volunteers also visited Brownville, Milo, Guilford and Greenville Elementary Schools. Valley Grange hosted an Eggstravaganza to wrap up the Maine Agriculture week activities with slides from many of the classrooms, a summary report and a visit from a virtual chicken courtesy of Donna Coffin with the Piscataquis County UMaine Extension. An informal blog (http://growmehelp.wordpress.com) had been created as a resource for teachers and volunteers to advocate for agricultural literacy year-round. It offers
farmers, gardeners or anyone connected with agriculture listings on the blog if they are willing to host school field trips, tours, or provide assistance to schools and teachers.

**Dover Cove Market**

UMaine Extension assisted six local farms in planning the new Dover Cove Farmers’ Market. The market is open on Tuesdays and Saturdays in the A. E. Robinson garage parking lot at the corner of South and Pine Streets in Dover-Foxcroft. With assistance of the Piscataquis County Economic & Development Committee, market patrons are able to use credit cards for their purchases. They have had a successful summer, so the group is investigating an online winter farmers market where customers can order their farm products online and then pick them up at Bob’s Hardware in Dover-Foxcroft. For more information visit [www.facebook.com/DoverCoveFarmersMarket](http://www.facebook.com/DoverCoveFarmersMarket).

Many of the farmers participating in the market are also members of the Maine Highlands Farmers, [www.MaineHighlandsFarmers.com](http://www.MaineHighlandsFarmers.com).

**So You Want to Farm in Maine**

Current farmers thinking about changing farm enterprises and new farmers interested in starting a farm lack the skill, knowledge and confidence to investigate their options to start, adapt and maintain a profitable land-based business. Major issues farmers and potential farmers need to overcome include understanding rules and regulations affecting agriculture operations and marketing options.

To enhance the business management knowledge, skills and confidence of these farmers, UMaine Extension conducted trainings for five counties, including Piscataquis. Tandberg MOVI and Jabber videoconferencing software have been used the past two years. The program hosted 109 participants representing part-time farmers, full-time farmers and those not in farming. They learned about agriculture enterprise selection, business planning, record keeping, market research, regulations, resource identification and funding sources.

Knowledge change was assessed by a post evaluation. As a result of attending these training sessions, participants reported the following knowledge and understanding gains:

- 75% learned about the rules and regulations affecting agriculture enterprises and the agencies that enforce them.
- 71% learned where to look for resources and information about their farm enterprise of interest including web resources, government agencies, universities and other organizations.
- 69% learned about the importance of developing a business plan and the items a farm business plan should include.
- 59% learned market research techniques that they could implement to refine the knowledge of markets for their agriculture products.
- 50% learned about production and financial recordkeeping and the different methods that can be used including paper and electronic records.

**You Can… Accomplish More Together**

Piscataquis Valley Adult Education Cooperative (PVAEC) staff, the local UMaine Extension staff and the Piscataquis County Extension Association members shared their needs assessment that indicated county residents were interested in learning basic homesteading skills to help their families cope with tough economic times.

UMaine Extension had twelve staff and volunteers that were interested in providing educational sessions on a variety of topics. The PVAEC had the logistic capabilities of assembling a course catalog and mailing to all 13,000 residents in the four school districts served by them and managing course enrollments. They collaborated to offer 15 courses in the You Can series to help community residents endure tough times by sustaining their families with traditional skills in self-sufficiency.

The result has been a roaring success, with a variety of topics that include raising poultry and livestock, making maple syrup, starting seeds, firewood processing, managing your household and
preserving foods! PVAEC experienced the best volume of enrollments for the sessions, with 113 registrations. The post class evaluations of the sessions showed the attendees learned a great deal and plan to implement that new knowledge to help their family survive these rough times. Participants completing the evaluations rated the courses excellent, would recommend the course to a friend and were interested in taking future classes. Both organizations are exploring ways to continue to work together to provide valuable educational offerings in the county. Some of this fall’s programs include: Weed identification and control, Winter Greens in Sub-Irrigated Planters, and Backyard Beef.

*The County Extension Act*

The County Extension Act explains the role of county government in funding local Extension offices: Cooperative extension work shall consist of the giving of practical demonstrations in agriculture and natural resources, youth development, and home economics and community life and imparting information on those subjects through field demonstrations, publications and otherwise. For the purpose of carrying out this chapter, there may be created in each county or combination of two counties within the State an organization known as a “county extension association,” and its services available to all residents of a county. The county extension is viewed as a unique and important educational program of county government. The executive committee of each county extension association shall prepare an annual budget as requested, showing in detail its estimate of the amount of money to be expended under this chapter within the county of counties for the fiscal year. The executive committee shall submit to the board of county commissioners on a date requested by the county commissioners, and the county commissioners may, if they deem it justifiable, adopt an appropriate budget for the county extension program and levy a tax therefore. The amount thus raised by direct taxation within any county or combination of counties for the purposes of this chapter shall be used for the salaries of clerks, provision of office space, supplies, equipment, postage, telephone, a contribution toward the salaries of county educators and such other expenses as necessary to maintain an effective county extension program.1

1Excerpted from Title 7, Chapter 7 of the Maine Revised Statutes, §191–§195.

**Future Staffing Changes Inspired by New Program Emphasis**

In the future UMaine Cooperative Extension Program emphasis will be:

- **Maine Food System:** General agriculture, horticulture, farm-based business education, human nutrition, food safety, food security and pest management.
- **4-H Youth Development:** Clubs, afterschool programs, school enrichment, summer activities, youth leadership, focus on science education.

In Piscataquis County, the intention is to hire two full time program staff to address high priority programming in 4-H and horticulture. Current staff member, Jane Conroy, will be transferred to Orono to lead new regional and statewide responsibilities.

**University of Maine Cooperative Extension**

**Piscataquis County Office Staff 2011-2012**

![Left to right: Craig Anthony, Donna Coffin, Brenda Mowdy, Felicia Dumont, Amanda Miles and Cathy Curry. Photo: Jane Conroy](image)

**Extension Educators**

**Barbara Baker**, 4-H Youth Development- clubs, afterschool, and youth community action  
**Donna Coffin**, Sustainable Agriculture & Home Horticulture- home gardening, farming, agriculture enterprises and marketing  
**Jane Conroy**, Family Resource Management & Food Safety- financial money management, parenting, family living, food safety (transferring October 2012)

**Eat Well Nutrition Education Program**

**Wanda Lincoln**, Regional Supervisor  
**Cathy Curry**, Nutrition Associate  
**Felicia Dumont**, Nutrition Associate  
**Sue Henner**, Nutrition Associate (retired January 2012)
Program Associates
Craig Anthony, Home Horticulture
Zoe Hastings, FoodCorps Service Member
Brenda Mowdy, 4-H Youth Development
Brenda Oldfield, 4-H Operation Military Kids
Hannah Todd, Home Horticulture
(position ended January 2012)

Support Staff
Amanda Miles, Piscataquis County Secretary and Statewide Accounts Payable/Purchasing

Piscataquis County Extension Association
Executive Committee Members

Walter Boomsma, Abbot
Karen Dolley, Charleston
Tish Dutson, Willimantic
George McKay, Dover-Foxcroft
Judy Merck, Blanchard
Thelma Regan, Wellington
Wally Sinclair, Brownville

Executive Committee Members that have retired:
Nancy Matulis, Dover-Foxcroft
Paul Matulis, Dover-Foxcroft
Lilly Weatherbee, Dover-Foxcroft

Local Partnership
Our County Extension Association is the vital link between the county, our communities and UMaine. The Association’s Executive Committee is comprised of local volunteers who represent community interests by advising UMaine Extension staff on educational programs, advocate for and secure funding from county government to support the county office, oversee the office budget and facilities, and guide UMaine Extension staff in identifying their programming goals.

Statewide Extension Funding

As a unique partnership among federal, state and county governments, UMaine Extension uses funding from Maine counties and the University to match and leverage support from the United States Department of Agriculture, other federal grantors, state agencies and private foundations. Each county UMaine Extension office is also part of a statewide organization and the national Extension system.
Without statewide support, UMaine Extension would not be present in this county. Funds for projects are provided through the University of Maine, Federal Formula Funds, grants, contracts, and fees. Dollars from other sources support salaries and benefits for Extension Specialists, County Educators, Extension administration, computer equipment and networking, publications, postage, telephone, and travel.

This pie graph illustrates the financial resources for programs offered, supported and managed out of the Piscataquis County office.

Each year, Piscataquis County tax dollars support the UMaine Extension with physical office space, support staff salaries, office supplies, equipment and some programming expenses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2011 State/County Funding Comparison</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel Services</td>
<td>$321,665</td>
<td>$8,275</td>
<td>$329,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment &amp; Supplies</td>
<td>$7,036</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$10,036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postage</td>
<td>$4,429</td>
<td>$25</td>
<td>$4,454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>$1,306</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td>$2,506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>$13,215</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$13,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$54,436</td>
<td>$54,436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$347,651</td>
<td>$66,936</td>
<td>$414,587</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Piscataquis County Budget

Without statewide support, UMaine Extension would not be present in this county. Funds for projects are provided through the University of Maine, Federal Formula Funds, grants, contracts, and fees. Dollars from other sources support salaries and benefits for Extension Specialists, County Educators, Extension administration, computer equipment and networking, publications, postage, telephone, and travel.

This pie graph illustrates the financial resources for programs offered, supported and managed out of the Piscataquis County office.

Each year, Piscataquis County tax dollars support the UMaine Extension with physical office space, support staff salaries, office supplies, equipment and some programming expenses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2012 Piscataquis County Funding Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment &amp; Supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2009-2012 Piscataquis County Funding Support Comparison</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>% change from 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Funds</td>
<td>$33,700</td>
<td>$12,500</td>
<td>$12,500</td>
<td>$17,500</td>
<td>-48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Costs</td>
<td>$44,478</td>
<td>$49,487</td>
<td>$54,436</td>
<td>$57,157</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$78,178</td>
<td>$61,987</td>
<td>$66,936</td>
<td>$74,657</td>
<td>-5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$531,756</td>
<td>$349,934</td>
<td>$347,651</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>-35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Budget</td>
<td>$609,934</td>
<td>$411,921</td>
<td>$414,587</td>
<td>$74,657</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A sampling of programs that have statewide and local importance:

• **Ways to Enhance Children’s Activity and Nutrition:** UMaine Extension has collaborated with the National Institutes of Health and partners throughout Maine to implement *We Can!* (*Ways to Enhance Children’s Activity and Nutrition!*). Innovative science-based programs have been offered to encourage parents, caregivers, and children to increase physical activity, improve eating habits, understand food marketing, and reduce time spent watching television and playing video games. As a result, Maine youth engaged in thousands of hours of physical activity during 2011. Analysis using established averages of $4,000/person/year in savings when obesity and overweight is postponed for only one year, and assuming a success rate of between 10 and 20 percent, establishes that between $1.2 million and $2.4 million was saved in health associated costs overall as a result of participation with *We Can!* The project received national recognition as a model for successful collaboration between the National Institutes of Health and UMaine Extension.

• **No-till Corn Production Reduces Energy Costs for Farmers:** UMaine Extension and Extension partners from Vermont and Massachusetts collaborated to establish and demonstrate fuel and nutrient efficient methods to grow silage corn. Research projects with 14 cooperating farmers on more than 840 acres of silage corn planted using no-till production techniques resulted in increased yields and quality over their conventionally tilled corn fields. Due to the minimized use of time and fuel, these 14 farms collectively saved $42,000 in fuel, labor, and equipment costs by reducing tillage operations. This equates to an average of $50/acre, or an average of $3,000 per farm.

• **Maine Maple Producers Trade Show:** There are 332 licensed maple syrup producers in the state of Maine who produced over 360,000 gallons of syrup, a value in 2011 of over $13 million. Based on producer needs, UMaine Extension and the Maine Maple Producers Association developed and instituted the first annual Maine Maple trade show. The three-day event consisted of sugarhouse tours, industry and equipment displays, and a day of technical sessions featuring industry experts. Attendees found the event useful to them in improving their knowledge of production in ways that would improve their business, and many predicted they would make changes as a result of
what they learned that would help them to be more efficient, save money and increase profits.

**Food Safety Education for Families and Commercial Food Producers:** Each year 48 million people in the United States become ill from eating adulterated food. In Maine, food safety risks exist from home food preparation and preservation, people serving crowds, and in retail and commercial food sales. UMaine Extension provides food safety training programs that include food preservation, cooking for crowds, general food safety for the home, industry food sanitation, and certification for meat, poultry, and seafood producers. We estimate that more than 50,000 consumers of home prepared and preserved food, and those attending public and community events have a reduced potential to contract foodborne illness due trainings provided by our food safety program. Further, more than 500,000 statewide, national, and international consumers of food produced by New England-based retail and commercial food businesses have a reduced potential to contract foodborne illness as a result of trainings provided by our food safety program. These results are decreasing the occurrences of foodborne illness and increasing overall health in Maine and wherever Maine foods are sold and consumed.

**4-H Science, Engineering, and Technology (SET):** 4-H SET programs in Maine provide youth with hands-on learning experiences to develop passions that will help to prepare the next generation of scientist-leaders. In 2011 Maine 4-H youth completed more than 14,000 projects, many of which were integrated within communities to address local problems. In one example, during the first year of our Tech Wizards program, teams of students are helping build underwater submersible robotic vessels based on a design by students from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The robots seek out invasive aquatic plant species that are threatening Maine’s lakes and waterways – especially *Eurasian Milfoil* which has caused millions of dollars in damage and mitigation expense. Youth then use the DASH (diver assisted suction harvester) boat and remove the invaders.

**The Fundamental Tradition of the Maine Homemakers:** The Maine Extension Homemakers Program is a Maine tradition. For decades Maine Homemakers have been engaged in strengthening communities through support for worthy community causes. During 2011 more than 700 Maine Extension Homemakers in 10 counties offered community education programs in areas such as food safety, personal safety, nutrition and health, gardening and the environment, financial planning, consumer issues, family relationships, and cultural and creative arts. At the same time they were actively donating their time, money, and materials to improve the lives of community members. Extension Homemakers have improved the quality of life in their communities by volunteering more than 18,900 hours, the estimated dollar value of which was over $320,000.

**Signs of the Seasons:** Climate change is affecting the environment around us. In order to fully understand these changes scientists need as much data as possible. Signs of the Seasons is a program of UMaine Extension and Maine Sea Grant, and with other Maine-based partners is part of an international effort to train citizens to observe and record the seasonal timing of life cycle events to build a comprehensive database of information for scientists. We are coordinating a network of Master Gardeners, 4-H youth, coastal groups, and citizens who are adding to the body of scientific knowledge related to phenology, the scientific study of seasonal changes. This knowledge will allow Maine to be better prepared to adapt to environmental changes to keep our agricultural, economic, and cultural prosperous.

For More Information about Piscataquis County:
165 East Main Street, Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426
Phone: 207-564-3301 or 1-800-287-1491 (in Maine)
Fax: 207-564-3302  Email: cepsq@umext.maine.edu
Find us on [www.facebook.com/umaineextpsq](http://www.facebook.com/umaineextpsq)