

CONSERVATION CORNER Andover Snowmobile Club

By Nelson Lebo

Pedal Power Farm

Modern American agriculture uses massive amounts of fossil fuel energy to make fertilizer, plow fields, plant seeds, apply pesticides, harvest, process, and transport the food we eat. In this country, it takes between 10 and 20 fossil fuel calories to produce every food calorie. In terms of profit and loss, that is a big net energy loss.

Since New Hampshire has very little agriculture, the vast majority of our food must be trucked in from California or the Midwest. As diesel prices continue to rise so will our local food prices. And from Andover, we must travel to New London, Franklin, or Concord to get to a grocery store. We are at the mercy of the trading of sweet light crude on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

Or are we? Permaculture and Low Input Sustainable Agriculture (LISA) both offer great promise. Applied on a local level they each can contribute food calories with very little use of fossil energy.

At Pedal Power Farm in East Andover, I produce food at a net energy profit by using an array of innovative techniques that include accessing the most local forms of organic matter to build soil fertility, rotating crops, using hand tools in highly efficient ways, practicing Integrated Pest Management, and transporting food to my customers by bicycle. This may all seem strange, but my system is over 1,000% more efficient at producing food than industrial American agriculture. I practice a regenerative agriculture that actually gives back more than it takes out.

And you can too! Save money, heal the Earth, eat healthy, get exercise, and gain valuable skills all without leaving home by growing some of your own food. Start small and then expand later. Every little bit helps. Every head of lettuce not shipped from California is a victory.

Celebrate Riverfest At Kayak Country Paddlesports

On Saturday, May 24, join Kayak Country Paddlesports in Cilleyville for Riverfest.

From 9 AM to 10:30 AM enjoy Birding 101, an outing on the Blackwater River. \$10 includes rental kayak and our tour guide Kate Goodin.

From 10 AM to noon join Mooseman Rick Libbey for a Wildlife Photography Clinic with practical tips on where,

Start With A Compost Pile

The first step toward your home garden is making a compost pile. Don't let any organic matter (with the exception of sewage, but that is debatable) leave your property. Coffee grounds, banana peels, eggshells, moldy bagels – these are valuable materials. They are not waste. There is no such thing as waste. In the words of William McDonough, "Waste equals food." Compost is food for plants. Plants are food for us.

The first thing you need to know about composting is don't go out and buy a fancy plastic compost bin. They are expensive, made of oil, ugly, and photodegrade in the sun.

My favorite bin design consists of six-foot branches one to two inches in diameter cut or gathered from the forest nearby. I stack these in a Lincoln Log manner and then layer carbon-rich material (sometimes called browns) and nitrogen rich material (sometimes called greens) in a lasagna fashion.

Since I am lazy and have plenty of space, I'll let a pile sit for six months or a year before turning it. When I do turn it, I dismantle the Lincoln Logs and reassemble them two feet away and fork the compost over – adding oxygen and promoting decomposition in the process.

I'll let this new pile sit for another six months to a year and then do it once more. This is sometimes referred to as a three-bin system. At any given time, I'll have starter compost, middle-aged compost, and finished compost ready to use.

If you are cramped for space in your yard and/or have excess energy you need to burn, compost can be turned more regularly with a finished product available in a manner of months.

There are tons of great resources on the Web about composting, or attend one of the Sustainable Living Workshops offered at Pedal Power Farm on May 10, 11, 17, or 24 from 1 PM to 4 PM. To register, contact me at nelson_lebo@proctornet.com or 261-7139.

when and how to photo wildlife. A \$10 donation is required. This is a popular clinic, so sign up early.

At 1 PM the Fabulous Fondtones '60s band will entertain.

For Riverfest, enjoy a two-for-one rental on the Blackwater – an hour and a half for \$20 for two kayaks. Driving directions and more information is at KayakCountry.com or 735-5000.

By Allan Houle

Andover Snowmobile Club

Reprinted from the New Hampshire Snowmobile Association newsletter

As I write this article and think back on the winter of 2007/2008, I am very thankful for an "Old Fashion New England Winter" to enjoy the sport of snowmobiling. I am also thankful to all of the dedicated volunteers that have stepped up and spent the hours necessary to support our club activities, fund raisers, and trail work that is necessary to operate our club.

Most of these activities are performed with little or no recognition. What most individuals see are the trails that they ride. We are grateful to have a good group of individuals that do the work necessary to keep the trails in excellent condition all season. It is this dedicated force of individuals that spend the time necessary to get the trails in shape before the season and all season long. You can imagine the number of volunteers that it takes to orchestrate the tasks necessary.

For me it was evident one evening when I had the opportunity to groom. As I approached the East Andover end of our section of railbed [the section from Dyers Crossing Road in East Andover to Ford Mill Road in Danbury], I noticed the Franklin groomer was coming toward me. We share the same turn-around area. This was awesome to see.

As I continued west on Corridor 2, I

noticed that the Andover groomer from Salisbury had made a pass to the railbed. And then, to top it all off, as I came to the Danbury end of the railbed, the Canaan groomer had just turned around. That was four groomers covering their areas all in the same time frame. Now imagine that this happens many times on any given winter day throughout the state.

Of course none of this would be possible without the many landowners that allow us the privilege of using their property in the winter months. Thank you, landowners!

As spring approaches, we would like to wish you all a great summer, and we will see you again in the fall.

Tim Frost, who suggested that we reprint this article, also points out the positive economic impact on stores, eating establishments, and gas sales along the trail system.

Got News?

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THE 15TH!!!!

Please have your ad, article, photo, letter, etc. to the Beacon by the 15th of each month! Or at least let us know by then the date it's coming.

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