

Mark Hews is President of M E Hews and Company, LLC. The Company specializes in cross sector consulting, natural resource enterprises and rural sustainability. An example of the Company's work includes the recent completion of an Institutional Buyers Study for a group of farmers in Oxford County who were interested in expanding their businesses to effectively meet this market segment for local foods. The Company also contracts with organizations to provide leadership and management services. Mark currently contracts as the Executive Director for the Maine Sustainable Agriculture Society and Board Consultant for Maine Rural Partners, the State's Rural Development Council.

Just prior to starting M E Hews and Company, LLC Mark served as the Director of Programming for the Maine Association of Nonprofits (MANP). He was responsible for all education and learning programs for nonprofit member boards and staffs helping them develop the capacity necessary to run their organizations effectively. Mark has a strong network in the nonprofit and government community.

For most of his career, Mark worked for the US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service holding the positions of Soil Conservationist, District Conservationist, and Natural Resource Specialist. The latter position was with the Threshold To Maine Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area which provided natural resource community and economic development assistance to landowners and communities in southern and western Maine. He held this position for 22 years and worked for USDA 32 years. As Natural Resource Specialist he managed a federal technical assistance program serving the southern and western Maine Counties of York, Cumberland, Oxford and Franklin, working on issues related to balancing agriculture and forestry economic development and conservation. Mark is a trained facilitator and has done extensive work in community capacity building. Two examples of initiatives Mark led are the completion of a feasibility study for the establishment of Commercial Shared Use Kitchens in the region to address the lack of processing capacity and an investigation and feasibility of expanding the meat goat industry to meet increasing demand from ethnic populations in Lewiston/Auburn and Portland. Mark comes from a farm family and has worked his entire life serving rural Maine. As such he has deep relationships with landowners, natural resource organizations, and communities across the state.

Mark currently is a Commissioner serving on the Maine Commission for Community Service which is responsible for national and community service programs in the state. He is also a Board Member for the New England Farmers Union and a Steering Committee Member of the Maine Food Strategy. Both of these leadership positions provide him an opportunity to influence agriculture and food system policy at the state and regional level. Mark serves on the Threshold To Maine RC&D Council, currently serves as President of the New England Association of RC&D Areas, and is a Board Member of the National Association of RC&D Councils. Finally, Mark is a former board member for Maine Rural Partners and the Maine Association of Nonprofits.

Mark graduated from the University of Maine with a BS in Agricultural Economics and a Masters in Public Administration. He has extensive experience in project management, leadership and organizational development working on as many as 20 projects a year during his time as Natural Resource Specialist for the RC&D Program at Threshold To Maine. These projects included agriculture development, shared use commercial kitchens, helping groups develop strategic plans, forestry workshops and community capacity building. Mark has helped develop feasibility studies for shared use kitchen projects and helped author various economic development plans for agriculture in southern and western Maine.