

CDEA News

January 2012

The Newsletter of the New York State Conservation District Employees Association



NYACD Legislative Days

Judy Littrell, New York Association of Conservation Districts

The 2012 NYACD Legislative Days will be held on February 6 and 7, 2012. We hope to see your District represented! With the State's funding crisis ahead of us for 2012, and the events of 2011, now is the time to emphasize the importance of Districts with an increase of funding. A highlight of our 2012 legislative efforts include asking for an increase of EPF funding for Districts.

Schedule of Events

Monday, February 6th
8:30AM—12:00PM:

NYACD Board Meeting/Partnership Reports, Best Western.
1:00PM—4:00 PM: NYACD Board legislative visits.
4:30PM: Registration. Dinner on your own.
7:00PM—9:00 PM: Registration and Issues briefing plus a look at inside Albany politics, Best Western.

Tuesday, February 7th

All day: Visits to legislative offices, NYS Capitol. We will have a registration area at the Liberty Café in the Concourse of the LOB.

Accommodations

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Best Western Albany Airport Inn, on Wolf Rd in Colonie at a rate of \$85 per night, double occupancy which includes buffet breakfast. Districts will make their own reservations with the hotel by calling 1-518-458-1000.

Please contact Judy Littrell at nyacd@nycap.rr.com or 518-857-0060 for more information or to register.

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20 Under 40

Sarah Haase, NNY Business

Brian Wohnsiedler, Executive Director of the Jefferson County SWCD, was recently honored as one of northern NY's emerging leaders. NNY Business magazine announced their "20 Under 40" class of 2011 as a "veritable who's who of young professionals, each working to be the best in their fields while giving more of



Brian Wohnsiedler (right), the new cover model for the CDEA newsletter. And yes, he IS under 40!

themselves to their communities, volunteering their time to improve life for all who live in the north country."

Brian J. Wohnsiedler has been the executive director of the Jefferson County SWCD for more than a decade. He has helped local farmers and agricultural

See Under, page 6.

County Soil & Water Districts: Working to Protect the Health & Safety of all New Yorkers

Barbara Silvestri, New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee

Legacy of Public Health & Environmental Stewardship

For over 70 years, New York's County Soil & Water Conservation Districts have helped farmers, homeowners, communities, organizations, businesses and industries to protect the natural resources upon which all New Yorkers depend.

Through time, District programs and technical services have diversified to meet an expanding range of local needs.

With today's fiscal realities and stricter regulations, the work of Districts is more vital than ever to safeguarding our drinking water, maintaining our local food supply, and protecting the health and safety of all New Yorkers.

Flood Protection & Emergency Response

Districts have been at the forefront of disaster recovery efforts dating back to the Dust Bowl Era. With technical staff at the ready, they help farmers and communities shorten response and recovery time after floods and other natural disasters. In the wake of Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, Districts

were among the first on the scene. In agricultural disaster areas, they worked with farmers to conduct necessary site inspections and assess damage. They identified projects eligible for Governor Cuomo's Agricultural and Community Recovery Fund (ACRF), which provides \$5 million to help restore damaged farms and prevent future impacts. Many District staff members worked around the clock to meet the fast-track timeline of the program.

For example, the Dutchess County Soil and Water District assisted with flood warnings and assessments after the recent storms, staffing the county Emergency Operations Center, providing communities with technical assistance and delivering the Governor's ACRF program. Expediting the assessment process, District technicians calculated runoff volumes and required pipe sizes, while highway engineers prepared contracts.

Fortunately, conservation practices installed over the years protected large acreages of farmland and roadways. "Severe erosion occurred on fields where

practices were not installed to the standards and specifications that Districts utilize," said Ed Hoxie, Executive Director. "Sites within a couple of miles with conservation practices applied by the District didn't have any erosion at all." Working with local highway departments, the District designs culvert upgrades and stream crossings that dramatically reduce flooding impacts to neighborhoods. "We completed a project last year where a road used to receive severe damage from flooding. Now protected, it provided vital safe passage for our recent emergency response," said Hoxie.

Protecting Clean Water Every Day

The quality of water resources directly impacts public health and the health of our communities. The technical expertise and 'know-how' of Districts is essential to addressing environmental problems in ways that save time and money.

These and many other technical services are provided by the

See Protect, page 3.



Watershed-wide conservation practices help protect Skaneateles Lake as a drinking water supply for over 200,000 people.

Protect from page 2

nearly 300 District employees statewide:

Streams, Wetlands & Wildlife Habitat – Districts stabilize streams, shorelines, road ditches and disturbed areas to help protect water quality, lives, homes and property. They also restore wetlands, establish green infrastructure and plant vegetative buffers to filter runoff.

Roads & Highways – Municipalities are assisted with projects including bridge embankment stabilization, culvert sizing and placement, erosion and sediment control, ditch design, highway drainage, and wetland determinations.

Permit Assistance – Experienced assistance helps public and private entities streamline the state and federal permit process required for projects involving streams, stormwater, wetlands, historic preservation and livestock farms. This assistance helps save time, which is especially important during flood mitigation and emergency response efforts.

Water Resources Management – District assistance is critical to protection of drinking water supplies. To better understand water quality problems and develop solutions, District water quality sampling & monitoring programs ensure an accurate understanding of trends.

For example, the 12 municipalities that utilize Canandaigua Lake as a drinking water source have funded the Ontario County Soil and Water District's Watershed Inspection

Program since 1990. The sole responsibility of their Watershed Inspector is protecting the high water quality of Canandaigua Lake that over 65,000 people across three counties drink each day. He conducts septic system inspections, erosion and sediment control inspections,

"The value of our Soil and Water District can't be fully measured in dollars & cents when you consider how much money they save our taxpayers." - James Miccio: Dutchess County Legislator Environmental Committee Chairman

stormwater reviews, percolation tests, and other services. District support includes technical resources, training and much

more.

Stormwater Management – Assistance is provided to regulated municipalities, as well as to communities beyond regulatory requirements. 50 District employees have become Certified Professionals in Erosion and Sediment Control, and more than 100 municipalities have contracted with their District for services. District-led workshops help educate individuals statewide, including contractor training in erosion and sediment control.

Rural Fire Protection – Many Districts work with local Fire Departments and highway crews to install dry hydrants. These year round water withdrawal pipes are installed in ponds and streams along

See Protect, page 4.



Pollution-laden sediment entering Oneida Lake prior to conservation practices being installed. These practices helped restore the lakes water quality and aim to prevent similar problems in the future. Photo credit: American Aerial Scenes

Protect from page 3

roadsides, and used by local fire departments for fire response. Dry hydrants save local taxpayer dollars by reducing the number of water tank trucks needed to fight fires in rural areas.

Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) – Over 12,000 farms of all types and sizes are involved in AEM, a program that responds to vital environmental needs with tangible, cost effective improvements that benefit farms and communities. New York’s AEM program is delivered locally by Districts in cooperation with the State Department of Agriculture and Markets. Districts utilize a watershed approach to prioritize environmental concerns and maximize available local, state and federal resources. Farms are the backbone of rural economies, generating jobs and revenue, while helping to keep local taxes from rising. They safeguard our local food supply, which is also vital to homeland security. Well managed farms protect natural resources and open space, which provides valuable ecosystem services including water quality protection, stormwater management and well water recharge. District assistance is vital part of ensuring that farming remains a part of New York’s future.

Modest Investment - Big Results

The work of Soil and Water Districts helps save New Yorkers billions of dollars in water treatment costs, protects public health, supports New York’s

agriculture and tourism industries, and safeguards our farmland and irreplaceable natural resources for future generations.



Soil and Water Districts make dollars go further, resources go further and conservation go further.

In 2010, county appropriations to Districts statewide totaled \$9 million. These county funds enabled Districts to access an additional \$3 million in reimbursements through the state’s Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), as well as \$20

million in EPF cost-share grants for priority conservation projects.

In total, Districts delivered over \$40 million in projects and programs across New York in 2010. ***Over 90% of these dollars multiply in local economies,*** supporting jobs and businesses. When you factor in the value of clean water to tourism, boating and fishing, with avoided water treatment costs and stormwater expenses, collectively these conservation projects provided an economic value to New York State exceeding an estimated \$200 million.

County appropriations continue to be the foundation necessary for Districts to receive state funding and leverage additional conservation dollars that substantially multiply in local economies.

Because Districts play such a key role in New York’s rural economies, it is important that resources remain adequate to ensure the continued delivery of programs and technical services that meet local needs.



Districts in Pictures



Herkimer County SWCD’s Technician Gerry Smithson was in good company as he completed a check survey for an Agricultural and Community Recovery Fund project. Gerry exclaimed, “I had a nice audience of heifers. They almost licked my boots right off!!”



Districts in Pictures



Guess Who?
Mustache
Bandit
Steve
Mahoney
c. 1980.
Clinton
County
SWCD
Manager.



Jerry Boyd, Carl
Bartlett and
Steve Lorraine
of the Madison
County SWCD
help the
Community
Action
Partnership of
Madison County
sort toys for the
children.

Celebrate Good Times (come on!)



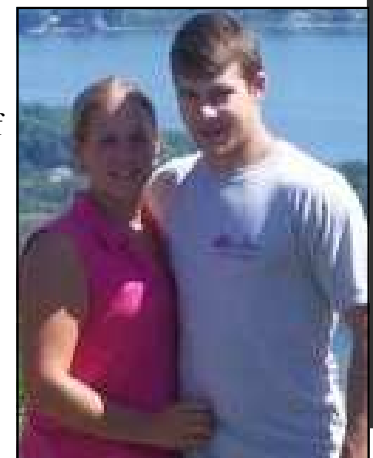
Erie County SWCD's Field Manager Mark C. Gaston, would like to introduce the newest member of the Gaston Klan. Wyatt Walter was born 11/14/11 at 4:48pm. He was 8lbs 10oz and 21 inches (ouch! sorry honey). All are doing well and Sophia has been a great big sister so far.



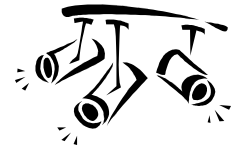
On October 8, 2011 Eric and Tricia LaValley of Franklin County SWCD were married at Notre Dame Church, Malone, NY by Bishop Terry LaValley.

BIRTH: Mila Poppy DiGiacomo to Victor DiGiacomo (Niagara County SWCD's Remedial Action Plan Coordinator) and his wife Heather. Five year old big sister, Ava Rose, is thrilled! Sat, 11/12/11 - 8lbs 5oz and 19 3/4" long.

MARRIAGE: Niagara County SWCD's Secretary Darcy Tone's son, Ian Tone married his sweetheart, Nicole Tommasulo. Fri, 11/11/11 at The Cathedral in Niagara Falls.



Kristen O'dell of Orange County SWCD is engaged to Len Brown.



Orange County Spotlight

Kristen O'Dell, Orange County Soil and Water Conservation District

As we all believe our counties are special in one way or the other, we here in Orange County we believe are the blessed and troubled ones. We not only have the common mineral soils with some pockets of outwash soils,



Quite common to see where the water receded and left the onions to rot.

we also have the muck land (or in previous times called the Drowned lands). The muck area is comprised of 14,000 acres of contiguous muck soil. Due to the pure organic matter of the soil located in the Wallkill River Valley, it is highly productive to grow crops with the most traditional crop being onions. Now with the blessings of this muck soil comes some grave consequences. The Valley in the past seven years has flooded over a dozen times. This year alone after Irene, the Wallkill River has come over its banks five times this year, with two of its main tributaries flooding more often than that. So what makes this year so grave?

Some farmers believe this year started out troubled. With the cool wet spring farmers were not able to get out and plant on schedule and were some times as late as four weeks behind. This as we all know from our personal

farms or gardens has led to crops being delayed to harvest. One onion farmer believed he was one week away from harvesting his onions when Hurricane Irene came along and flooded his 47 of 50 acres he still had in the ground. Many farmers either had their onions still in the ground or were even 'lifted' (a term the onion guys use for when they lift the onions out of the soil and lay them on top for the harvester to come along and grab them). Many acres of greens, carrots, as well as oriental crops being grown were in some areas under water for a week. All of these crops after the floodwaters touched them were ruined and with the help of our CCE



Dike partially blown out at a horse farm upland.

partners the crops were declared a complete loss for the crop adjustors. And this is just the black dirt or 'muck land'. We also have had several areas up land where as culverts were blown out, moved, lifted or even removed from areas. Soybean fields have turned to black and became unmarketable, cornfields leveled and sod fields blackened just to name a few. Oh and the smell of rotten crops is enough to

make you toss your lunch on days of stagnant air.

Since the Irene flood, we have been busy beavers trying to put things back together. Our CCE partner held an emergency meeting within one week of the flooding to help farmers learn where to access resources. While on the firing line, only two of us agencies had any hope of monetary relief outside of FEMA to even get the land back together. Since that meeting we have signed up over 70 individual farmers for ACRF money and were able to secure \$917,238. to put fields back together. This money included projects such as culvert repair / replacement, some land leveling & ditching, dike repair, some streambank stabilization, access road, as well as a few others. During this time the staff got quite cozy in the office with many late nights and early mornings to meet those 6pm deadlines. Special thanks go out to the Kevin's wife for dinner deliveries on Wednesday nights. Now that we have been granted the monies, with the 12/31 deadlines we have been very

See Orange, page 9.



Large section of dike blown out.



Orange from page 8

busy getting the stuff done in the field.

As of Thanksgiving we have only closed out a little over 10 individual contracts with a grand total of 94 left to go. This fall season, with the increased rain fall and early foot of snow has been difficult to get things on the ground. We are still working and hoping for some more 60-degree days into December to get additional work done!



Left side of the road: Soybeans destroyed still standing. Right side: Sod field.



Access roads impassable.

Under (from page 1)

organizations keep up with and understand ever-changing government regulations and requirements.

He credits his success to his family, “Especially my very supportive wife of 10 years.” His extensive community involvement and his interest to serve the public also have been important factors.

“I’ve always had an interest in public service and the intrinsic rewards that keep you interested,” he said. “Almost everything we do has a net positive benefit. We’re usually there to solve a problem.”

And the Soil and Water Conservation District has solved many problems. The organization lead by Mr. Wohnsiedler has offered much help to the north country agricultural community. Mr. Wohnsiedler said leading the district to success took respect, integrity, decency and

professional development. “If you exemplify those qualities, then at the end of the day you’ll find success.”

A strong and reputable character and some good advice to follow can go a long way. Mr. Wohnsiedler lives by words first uttered by a cricket wearing a top hat and holding a cane. “I tell my kids all the time, ‘let your conscience be your guide’.”

Living by those words has helped Mr. Wohnsiedler achieve many milestones in his career. He has helped his board grow the district, but most importantly, he said one of his biggest achievements is being one of the largest support systems for local farmers. “They are my role models. The small farmers who are struggling to hold on to a family business.”

Mr. Wohnsiedler grew up watching his parents run a small family furniture business in Carthage. From this experience,

Mr. Wohnsiedler learned to have a strong work ethic to succeed and also learned the importance of family. “My father was one of the nicest people I’ve ever known, he was the least judgmental,” he said. “My wife and I are building a house on our own; it’s an old 1880 vintage barn. We also own a small sugar bush.”

Mark Your Calendar

Visit the **SWCD Training Calendar** at:

https://www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=lauren.prezorski%40agriculture.ny.gov&ctz=America/New_York

NYACD Legislative Days

February 6 and 7
Albany, NY



The Wake of Hurricane Irene



The Wake of Hurricane Irene



Schoharie Valley September 15, 2010



Schoharie Valley August 28, 2011

Agricultural and Community Recovery Fund (ACRF)

Gerry Smithson, Herkimer County Soil and Water Conservation

In response to the devastating damage caused by Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, the ACRF was announced by Governor Cuomo on September 3, 2011 allocating \$5 million in emergency funding for agricultural storm recovery. Herkimer County was added to the list of eligible counties on September 22nd. District staff immediately submitted five ACRF assessment and

application reports requesting funding to assist Herkimer County landowners. Herkimer County SWCD was very fortunate to have all five requests approved for a total of \$59,550 to assist with storm damage recovery in Herkimer County.

The projects approved included two access road repairs, two access road culvert replacements, and damaged field seeding

renovation. In spite of a very busy construction season, survey and design of these projects were soon completed and delivered to the landowners. Thanks to the mild fall, even under less than optimum conditions, landowners were able to complete most of their projects by the 12/31/11 deadline. A special thanks to all the local contractors who went the extra mile to complete these projects.



This newly seeded hay field received heavy rain from Hurricane Irene resulting in large amounts of erosion and sediment deposition.



This culvert crossing was destroyed in the heavy September rains. The force of the water and the large debris caused two 42" concrete culverts to be blown out of the crossing with ease.



The finished product allowed the farmer to gain access to over 35 acres of corn that needed to be combined.



This water and sediment control basin (WASCOB) with a 6" standpipe and tile outlet was installed with the ACRF funds to prevent erosion due to surface water flows from the upslope drainage area.



An 8 foot culvert was used to handle the flows of this stream. An earthen spillway was also excavated in the crossing to serve as an area for flood water to escape if a blockage ever occurred in the pipe. Concrete waste blocks were used for the headwalls.

Wetland and Grazing Crew Build “Wall to Wall Buffers”

Troy Bishopp, Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District

The Tioga County SWCD/Upper Susquehanna Coalition’s Wetland crew knows how to tread lightly on the land when working around sensitive areas. This capability with the right equipment benefitted a recent pond buffer project in Madison County while the men were in the area constructing a

wetland complex. Utilizing a skidsteer loader on tracks with an attached post pounder coupled with a timely freeze, “the grass and wetland whisperers”, Troy Bishopp and Ryan Ceruti installed a high-tensile fence excluding dairy heifers from a 2 acre pond in less than ideal conditions. The farmer couldn’t

even tell they were there. On the wetland complex site, the equipment and men teamed up to install an eight foot deer fence protecting the newly planted trees. It’s just another example of Districts working together for a common water quality goal and helping each other get conservation in the ground.



Ryan pounding posts.



Troy and Ryan after the job is done.



Madison County’s Jerry Boyd building deer fence.

The CDEA Newsletter needs YOUR news! Send your article, save the date, special recognition, or photo and caption to hcswcd@frontiernet.net

