

CDEA News

The Monthly Newsletter of the NYS Conservation Districts Employees Association

Graze-A-Palooza II. by Troy Bishopp

Two days, two farms and 200 area farmers, conservation professionals and consumers came to Madison County by plane, car, buggy, bicycle, and on foot to the learn about the financial, environmental and the very social rewards of grazing management from Idaho's grazing aficionado, Jim Gerrish and Pennsylvania grazing dairyman Arden Landis. Uniquely placed in history as the former destination of the Underground Railroad and home of abolitionist and social reformer, Gerrit Smith, the small community of Peterboro, New York steeped in agricultural tradition and naturally high lime soils has also become a magnet for pasture-based dairy and meat production.

This carbon sequestering hamlet situated near the continental divide of the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay Watersheds is providing a new model for soil conservation and learning while inspiring farmers to connect with one another and their local customers. The host farm families of Nathan Weaver and Richard Bargabos provided the beautiful green-space for this teaching event that focused on management intensive grazing, soil fertility, on-farm mentoring, extending the grazing season, animal behavior and reducing farm input costs. A sun-sational lunch featured grass-finished beef, vegetables, homemade pies, ice cream and an abundance of organic chocolate milk. The celebration of this "locally raised, palate approved" meal reinforces the high quality work farmers perform everyday. As one farmer commented, "Graze-A-Palooza was an experience."

This Conversations in grazing series was supported by The Madison County Graziers Group, The NYS Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, The Upper Susquehanna Coalition, Northeast SARE, Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District, The Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance, The Graze-NY Program, The CNY Resource Conservation & Development Council, NYS Agricultural Environmental Management Program, USDA-NRCS, Cornell Small Farms, The Student Conservation Association, CROPP (Organic Valley Family of Farms), Environmental Defense, Country Folks, Lancaster Farming, Sunnybrook Farm, Ridgeville Farm, Tom & Sue Clatterbuck, Bishopp Family Farm, The Nathan Weaver Family, The Richard Bargabos Family, and The Peterboro Amish Community.



Lewis County's Technician is a new Daddy! Joshua Michael Durant was born 8/14/09 At 8:32AM weighed in at 8lbs 4 oz, and was 20 inches long. Congratulations to Mike & Missy Durant on their first child!

Brain Basher ..faxed answers only
(518-623-3519)

This Month's Question: Can you decipher this common phrase?



Salt: Good morning
Pepper: Hello

Last month's Question: Assuming that you can't steal an animal's sense of hearing, or use an electric device, what would you need in order to hear a pin drop from over 20 yards away?

Answer: A bowling ball! *****Correction—Tim Terry of Wyoming County did answer. I located the fax!

Albany Updates

I contacted Mike Latham last week to get any updates that were available. The good news is that the AEM Year 4 program has been paid. The bad news is that there is no word yet on AEM Year 5. Keep your fingers crossed till the purse strings loosen. Mike did say that he was very optimistic for funding allocation in September. There has been word that the committee will receive substantial funding from the EPF, let's hope so.

Also in the news, Mike is going to West Virginia on a scholarship. No he is not "goin' back to be re-edg-imated", he is heading to the National Association of Conservation Agencies (NASCA) annual meeting. Mike will be talking to other states agencies and see how they are coping in these economic times. Many others are in the same situation that we are in.

In case you didn't know NYS has a 2.1 billion dollar deficit for 2009. It is projected that the 2010-2011 deficit will be 4.6 billion, due to the decrease in sales tax, wage declines, job losses and housing sales. I think many of us still love New York, but I think the relationship needs counseling!

I report this news in case some of you do not know how bad things are now and may get. I won't dwell on this issue in the coming months, I am sure that you will hear about it enough from other sources and I don't want to be one of those sources. I want to try and make you chuckle and forget for a few minutes.

**Don't forget to visit
WWW.NYSCDEA.COM.**

CDEA Employee Profile

Susan Lewis was born in the mighty metropolis of Cobleskill, NY back in July of 1979. I say metropolis, because she was grew up in Medusa, NY which was and still is very rural. Susan has an older sister, Becky who she pestered as a child while growing up on the family farm. The Lewisdale Farm has been in the family since 1899, a fact that she was very proud of. Currently, the farm has around 50 milkers and 30-40 replacement heifers that frolic on 300 acres. In addition to the cows, the farm produces corn and hay silage. As a child, Susan worked with the animals, spent time with her cousins, swam in Sacandaga Reservoir and spent much of the time out of doors.

Susan attended Greenville High School graduating in 1995. In school Susan played the alto sax, sang in chorus, was the secretary of the Key Club, was in the National Honors Society and showed her family Holsteins at various fairs. She says that she was a good kid, but did admit that she wasn't an angel when she spent time during the summer up at Sacandaga. She would not relate any stories to me on that fact, except that she has never been in a police car. Susan did mention that one time she and her cousin snuck out of her aunt's house to go party with some older kids. Just before they arrived, the police busted up the party and they quietly made their way back home.

Upon graduation Susan attended SUNY Cobleskill where she spent the first year on campus, then commuted for the rest of the time. She did have two older, enjoyable roommates, since they knew the best places to go and what social functions a freshman should attend. In 1999 Susan received an A.A.S. in Environmental Studies and in 2001 received her Bachelors in Plant Science with a concentration in Environmental Science. It was this year that Susan had started an internship with Albany County SWCD. Susan was more aware of SWCD's than many, since her family had dealt with the District on the farm and her neighbor was chairman of the Schoharie County Board.

After completing her internship, she accepted a full time position. What does Susan do for the District? Is she the glue that holds it together? I don't know that for a fact, but she keeps the books, does payroll, conducts the tree and shrub and fish sales, organizes the Capital Region Envirothon, assists folks with aerial photos and topo maps and lastly was coordinating a bus tour for legislators, Agency personnel and Board members.

When not at work, Susan enjoys spending time with her two Godsons, Nicholas and Jacob whom she spoils rotten. She also works on the farm with her sister and father, is spending time redoing grandmother's home (she enjoys spackling if you can believe that). Susan has a large vegetable garden, with corn being her favorite veggie and she bakes using the excess zucchini, mmmm.....zucchini muffins, She said they are delicious, what about it Joe?

At some time "Land Baron Lewis" (two house and 44 acres) wants to visit Hawaii and Montana. She is an NRA member (thanks to her dad) and waits tables every month at the Middlebush VFW. Susan also puts together packages for our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, something that I feel is tremendous.

Thanks for your time Susan. Keep on enjoying the farm and good luck with all of the home(s) renovations.

District Program Highlight - Monroe County

In 1988 Monroe County realized that urban stormwater was becoming an impact upon the environment and that something needed to be done. In 1988, the chair of the SWCD and the NRCS DC looked to Monroe



County to add funding for a stormwater specialist. This funding consisted of a series of one year contracts for that specialist to conduct site plan reviews, construction inspections, workshops, and educational courses. In 1992, the District received a Great Lakes Commission Grant for a full time position, and in 1995 at the end of the grant, the county included funding for the position. In 2002, a second Commission grant was received and provided the District with funding till 2005. At this time, the position is funded through the Monroe County Stormwater Coalition.

The Coalition applies for funding through various grant sources, which includes the EPF's Water Quality Improvement Projects and then contracts with the District for the stormwater services. With the latest funding, the services have expanded to include rain gardens, streambank stabilization, and stormwater pond conversions.

The stormwater pond conversion program converts Phase I stormwater ponds designed only for water retention to have stormwater treatment capabilities. This is done by developing a forebay, reshaping of the pond, developing an aquatic bench and converting dry ponds to wet ponds. At this time there are two ponds that are nearing completion with one more scheduled for next year. So far the cost has been around \$50,000 with a provided local match that has exceeded 50%.

The District has conducted very successful trainings for municipalities and has provided training sessions running between 1 and 3 hours covering the stormwater permit, erosion and sediment control and the Blue



Book. The participants and instructors then go out in the field in their municipalities for field exercises. The municipalities have been very pleased with the hands on approach. In addition to the training, the District has developed their own MS4 inspection form which is more specific in detail than other forms currently used. The form assists inspectors who may not have extensive background in certain areas.

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Last month just after the CDEA News was sent out I received an email from Jessica Verrigni. As many of you know Jessica's brother was killed in a motorcycle accident and she and Jerry headed down to Louisiana immediately to help deal with the situation. Jessica asked me to put this in the newsletter, so please read on.....

"Thank you to everyone for the Cards and E mails that I received with my brothers passing. So many SWCD employees reached out to me and it was a comfort to know so many people cared. Thank you to everyone at the CDEA golf tournament that donated to the 50/50 which helped pay the travel expenses for our trip down to Louisiana on such short notice. SWCD employees truly are a second family to me and I appreciate all of the support you give! Thank you!"

District Program Highlight cont.

The coalition is looking at possibly having a more stable funding source through a "pure waters fee." This is a fee, around \$2.00 per parcel, to landowners for the development of a stormwater management districts. That figure is being looked at to determine if it is really equitable for all landowners. The collected funds will then go to county wide activities.



Municipal raingarden designed to treat 2.82 acres of drainage for a total treatment area of 8400 SQ FT.

Paula Smith, whom many of us know, has been hired as a consultant to assist with the development of a stormwater master plan. Once it has been drafted, Paula will then present details of the document and program to all of the municipalities in order to garner support. I asked Caroline what is part of the plan and she rattled off many items, including regional stormwater BMP's, the Six Minimum Measures and streambank stabilization.

In order to have a successful stormwater program the District has maintained at least one CPESC on staff. Currently there are two CPESC's and Caroline and Kelly are studying up for their CPSWQ exam.



Good luck you two.

Stormwater pond conversion in process.



"This picture made the front cover of the Lancaster Farming paper this week. I've always wanted to get a good rainbow shot and this was it. This was taken over Endless Trails Farm in Hubbardsville, NY near the Headwaters of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed before a pasture walk at a nearby farm (Rocky top Acres)."

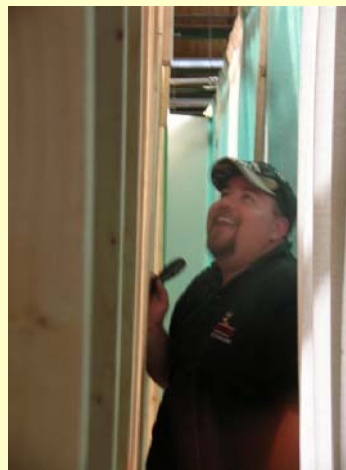
Thanks to Troy Bishopp for this picture.



The 2009 NYSCDEA State Fair booth. Great job to the committee and all of the volunteers.



Wendy Walsh' girls: Ma-hayla is 2 and Tracy Summer was born May 5, 2008, 7 lbs. 11 oz



Is that Jerry Verrigni behind the State Fair booth with the Luke Skywalker in the Death Star compactor? You decide.



PJ and Kelly Emerick on their wedding day at the Wadsworth-Jerris Mansion in Caledonia, NY on July 18th.