

## Safety First

This is the time of year that I see many people utilizing what is generally regarded as the most dangerous power tool that you can purchase off the shelf. Care to guess? It is the chainsaw. Many District folks that I have interviewed have a landscaping business and many others do it yourselves on various projects and if you are like me, that includes felling the occasional tree and cutting up firewood. How many of us out there are proficient and safe with the saws?

Statistics show that the longer and more often that you run saws throughout your life, the higher the potential for injury is. Obviously the longer you do something there is generally higher potential, however there is a misplaced sense of comfort with chainsaws and one lapse can be a major issue. The other week while keeping an eye on the new household pet, Lucy the hedgehog (yes that is correct), on TV I saw an individual using a saw to trim a branch while they were on a ladder. Everything went well, up to the point that the branch fell. The branch happened to be the part of the tree that was bracing the ladder during the cut, oops. The average chainsaw injury in the US requires 110 stitches to close. In one second at full speed (up to 68 mph), the teeth on a standard 16" chainsaw can strike you 600 times,ouch.

Proper operation of a chainsaw is not an inherent trait, it is learned either through safety classes or from properly trained individuals. I have been fortunate to have friends who are excellent with a saw and extremely safe. I wear a chainsaw helmet, steel toed boots and safety chaps, both at home and work. What, work? Yes, once or twice a year our District usually has a project where we need to do tree felling, cutting or trimming. Some of the guys from Erie County SWCD were hearing our tales of projects that we get involved with and were surprised that we operate the saws, and in fact we own them. Does anyone else? I bet there are more than would be expected.

This article could obviously be about many tools, and in this field we are well versed on a variety of items, and chainsaws may be one of them. A properly maintained and utilized chainsaw is an extremely useful tool, but one that needs respect at all time, including when it is off. If you or your office utilizes chainsaws or may be around them, contact your local Cornell Cooperative Extension office, the NYS Loggers Training (<http://www.nyloggertraining.org/home/>) or NYSDEC Lands and Forests. Training classes are available across the state so check them out and be safe at home and on the job.

## Brain Basher

**Last Month's Question:** Kevin Lewis asks JoAnne Faulkner "What one three-letter word can be inserted in all three blanks below to make two words in each row?" With a knowing smile she easily answers Kevin and makes him but pizza for the office. See if you can match her answers and be as perfect as she was.

LIS\_\_TACLE HAS\_\_DON OF\_\_DER

Answer: The word is "TEN"

LISTEN TENTACLE HASTEN TENDON OFTEN TENDER

Congrats to Darcy in Niagara County for answering correctly and just ahead of Judy from Orleans.

## 2008 NYS State Envirothon

Seth Dennis "Acting" NYS Chair

The New York State Envirothon is just about here. Winning County Envirothon teams have already begun to send in registrations, and start preparing for the two day competition to be held on May 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> at SUNY Cobleskill. The NYS Envirothon Committee has thrown things into high gear at this time, but don't worry, we'll be ready. In actuality, we have put in about 10 months of planning on this, but it all comes and goes in a blink of an eye. What really makes this event function like a well oiled machine are all the volunteers. It looks like at this time, we have a good amount of volunteers, but I know that all the positions have not been filled. If you have not signed up to volunteer at this event, you should. It is a lot of fun, and gets you out of the office for a day or two. Contact Erica "Buzzsaw" Schreiner at the Oswego County SWCD to see what volunteer spots are still available. Tests are looking really good this year thanks to the help of a fellow NRCS State Envirothon Committee member Julie "Dusty" Miller. I know she has put a lot of her time into recruiting test writers, and hounding them to get in first drafts, and final drafts of tests for the big event. Where would we be without John "Daly" Naple? Well, probably lost in the water trap. He reviews all of the tests for the Envirothon, AND is putting together the majority of the Oral Presentation component on day one of the competition, wow! Fred "Bird Man" VonMechow is also helping with the OP planning, along with coordinating all of the Advisor Activities. The Educational Presenters will be pretty exciting this year, as we have "Talons! A Birds of Prey Experience" coming to Cobleskill on Wednesday from 1:00-5:00pm. Please encourage any participating students to check this out if you see them wondering about. We also have the ever popular "Animals Nobody Loves" and a live "Marine Touch Tank" on display for the students. Vicki "Sergeant Slaughter" Hendrix (*ed. note: Sweeeeeeet*) is keeping our budget in line for the event, so please don't cross her line, or you'll be in trouble. New funds/donations are starting to come into the ol' bank account because of the help of one Blanche "The Hammer" Hurlbutt. She also is responsible for getting the entire t-shirt order ready. We appreciate her efforts! Brian "The Captain" Steinmuller is our site coordinator, and is in command of all the PR stuff. Toni "The Snack Fairy" Christman is well, doing the snacks, and will be helping with registration. She is VERY organized and keeps everyone on their toes! Gwen "The Learner" Lerner is handling the majority of the registration responsibilities, coordinating rooms, teams, and the like. This is her first major role in the State Envirothon, and she is doing fantastic. Sandy "Goldmember" Huey is tackling the awards and certificates this year, and Lucinda "Track Star" Kalin will be doing the evaluations. Others assisting with the State Envirothon Committee this year include Amy "Project Wet" Smith, Velynda "Grizzly" Risley, and Josh "R U Serious" Hornesky. I am looking forward to the NYS Envirothon this year. I personally thank all of the committee members for their hard work and time, and also all of those who help volunteer to make this a successful event. Hopefully no one is offended by the nickname fun played out in this article. See you all May 21<sup>st</sup>!

**Ed Note:** Brian Steinmuller poses the following questions: "Do you have a past Envirothon participant on staff? Are you a past Envirothon participant? Do you know of any Envirothon participants who are working in the natural resource field?" If so, the NYS Envirothon Committee would like to hear your story. The Envirothon competition brings out the best of the best of environmentally conscience and motivated students. Most go on to college and eventually will enter the work force hopefully in the natural resource conservation field. The Envirothon Committee would like to tell their stories. Contact Brian Steinmuller with the details.

Visit: [WWW.NYSCDEA.COM](http://WWW.NYSCDEA.COM)

## Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance

The Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance, is an consortium of the 25 counties in New York State with all or some of their land area draining into Lake Ontario. The program began in 1984 as a collaborative approach to control nuisance aquatic vegetation in the Finger Lakes. Since that time, it has grown to encompass all of the counties draining into Lake Ontario and includes land area on the shoreline of Lake Ontario, the Genesee River Valley, the Finger Lakes, the Ontario Lake Plane, the Tug Hill region, and even portions of the Adirondacks. The organization is made up of county planning and health departments, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), and Water Quality Coordinating Committees (WQCC). We receive funding for water quality projects through the State's Environmental Protection Fund and pride ourselves on the fact that we leverage over 2 million annually in local dollars, with very little overhead (96% of the State dollars go directly to program implementation).

The goal of the Alliance is to protect and enhance water resources by

- promoting the sharing of information, data, ideas, and resources pertaining to the management of watersheds in New York's Lake Ontario Basin;
- fostering dynamic and collaborative watershed management programs and partnerships;
- emphasizing a holistic, ecosystem-based approach to water quality improvement and protection.

The Alliance also prides itself in tackling water quality from the ground up, with local needs as the lead in determining the implementation of projects. In 2006, FL-LOWPA undertook a data collection effort aimed at determining the impact the funding has had on the Lake Ontario basin since 2000. In that 6 year period, \$9.5 million in State dollars led to a local match of over \$12 million. In the agricultural arena, FL-LOWPA has assisted 1,400 farms covering 202,800 acres, installed 569 BMP's, assisted 138 CAFO farms covering 32,115 acres, and assisted 186 farms encompassing more than 124,000 acres. Non-Point source pollution from septic systems has also been an area of focus for some counties, and in 6 years, members have assisted in the testing of 6,000 on-site systems, helped to repair/replace over 600 systems, and have reached 200 professionals with targeted septic system education. Erosion abatement and sediment reduction are also a highlight of many county programs, and this has resulted in the stabilization of 459 miles of roadbank and 118 acres of stabilized highly erodible land. Stream-bank stabilization is also a cornerstone of many county programs and we have been successful in stabilizing over 9 miles of eroding streambanks in 6 years. Water quality monitoring, one of the more difficult things to find funding for, is also a very important part of FL-LOWPA work. In this time, 8,504 sites (on over 150 streams and lakes) have been monitored, resulting in the analysis of over 27,000 samples. Through these examples, it is clear that FL-LOWPA is an action oriented organization that puts much of its focus on getting implementation projects completed. Although the priorities for each county may be somewhat different, non-point source pollution control is the common thread. Betsy Landre, the current Program Coordinator for FL-LOWPA, is moving on to a new job and will be leaving the organization at the end of May. She has been the face and voice of FL-LOWPA for over 15 years, and the program is so successful today because of her work with our organization. All of our members would like to wish her a warm farewell and a heartfelt thanks for all the great things she has done for us over the years. Her work has had a profound and positive impact on the Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed.

*-Thanks to Scott Ingmire, Madison County Planning Dept and current FLOWPA chair, for this article.*

## CDEA Employee Profile

Stacy Russell  
Natural Resources Program Spec.  
Cortland County SWCD

Stacy Brink, was born in Elizabeth

New Jersey way back in March of 1971. She only stuck around for one year and then departed with her parents from the Garden State in favor of the Empire State, settling down in Ulster County by the Ashokan Reservoir. Her father was a mechanic and her mother was an account clerk. I feel her pain as Stacy is a single child and so am I. For those of you that have siblings you probably have never had to hear when one discovers you are a single child, "Oh,...well that explains it". I usually respond with "well, why bother trying to best perfection?"

Stacy spent her days in a rural area, swimming, running around and creating havoc, as much as a single child can. Again I feel for her, because if something gets broken or is misplaced, sadly there is no one to blame it on. We single children had it tough. Ontera High School soon straightened out wayward tendencies that she had. She participated in cross country, belonged to an environmental club and worked as a prep cook/bus girl in a local diner. Being a "pretty good" student Miss Brink graduated in 1989 and headed up to SUNY Plattsburgh. For those of you who went there or visited, you may know that in the past that Plattsburgh was anointed as a party school. I was assured that this affected Stacy very little as she was extremely diligent in her studies. She did admit that she enjoyed one or two frothy ones at Peabody's, on occasion. I asked Stacy what her favorite class was and she responded that Environmental Planning was wonderful and a special report that she worked on with a professor on cluster development was published. While there, she belonged to the environmental club that did hikes and day trips. Even though she visited Montreal for purely "historic and cultural" endeavors, she managed to graduate Phi Beta Kappa in 1993.

Moving on into the working world, Stacy began at the Soil Conservation Service in Orange County as a Soil Conservation Tech on the WalkKill/Roundout Watershed Project and assisting with the "Black Dirt" farms. In 1995, a position with the Cortland County SWCD opened up and she has been there ever since. I guess Kevin Sumner didn't scare her off of the Districts, and I would think that Amanda thanks him for that. At the District, Stacy works on a little bit of everything which includes the Graze NY Program, assists the other technicians with project construction and oversight.

Why did she leave her home area? Well her boyfriend, Jim, was in college in Seneca Falls to become a chiropractor, and when the opportunity to move up there came along she went. "Living in Sin" is a good reference since both she and Jon Bon Jovi are from NJ. Love had been there since they were about 19, and Stacy said one reason she fell for him because he is "a handsome guy". That is the family version of what she really said. In 1996 they were married in Ulster County in a church along the Hudson River.

They have two sons, Jacob who is seven and Zachary who is three and a half. Stacy works at the District Tuesday-Thursday and takes care of Zachary on Monday and Friday. You can hear in her voice how happy she is with the kids and how she hopes that they grow up to become State Envirothon Champions. The Russell's have one pet, a cat named Harley, but that is all the info I have on him. During the summer they go up to their camp on Raquette Lake and hike, fish and swim. The boys enjoy the water safari there as well. When she has some time alone, Stacy is still a runner, enjoys downhill skiing and some gardening.

At the end Stacy did admit to sneaking out of the house with a friend that was sleeping over when they were 14. As was told to me, there was a get together in a local cemetery and they slipped out and joined in the fun. They eventually snuck back in the house but were busted by her folks. It seems that her dad had discovered the jail-break and went out patrolling the roads for her. She soon discovered what grounding was all about. Thanks for the stories and history Stacy, and keep an eye on your kids!