

CDEA News

The Monthly Newsletter of the NYS Conservation Districts Employees Association



June 2009

2009 NYS Envirothon Wrap-Up



The 2009 NYS Envirothon is all said and done and as fifty-five teams with steeled eyes and shortness of breath began, they knew only one would go on. Off to North Carolina for the Canon Envirothon is Candor High School. Yes, they have been a juggernaut as of late (5 years in a row), and we wish them all the best of luck in Asheville.

The NYS Envirothon went very well and the committee was very impressed with Keuka College's ability to host the event. Sandy Huey (Envirothon Committee Chair) was very impressed with the cleanliness of the rooms and the wonderful food. The college really pushed the publicity of the event. In fact the Dean of Admissions and Marketing went around taking photos and getting quotes from participants daily and then posted them at their website so folks could keep up with the event through the day. The advisors were able to go canoeing, go to an alpaca farm and visit the Women's National Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls. The event will be heading back to Keuka College next year.

The judges that have been helping out over the past few years felt that the presentations were better this year than in the past few. Hopefully that is a trend that can and will continue as we all know how important public speaking is. At this year's event the committee had a chat session with the advisors, which was very informative for next year's event. Sandy thanks all of the committee members, judges, volunteers, advisors, participants, college representatives and chief cooks and bottlers that made up the 400- 450 attendees of the event. She especially wanted to thank a new District employee, Chastity Miller of Franklin County for her photography work, which she thought was some of the best that they have had. I would also like to offer congratulations to Holly Faulkner, who is a junior at Deposit High School. Her t-shirt design was chosen for this year's event. Nice job Holly.

If you would like more info on the event or become part of it, check out the NYS website at www.nysenvirothon.net. The 2010 current topic available at the Canon Envirothon website, www.envirothon.org, so take a look at it and pass it along to your schools. Get them ready to pack sunblock and flip flops for next year's Canon Envirothon which will be in Merced, California. Dude!

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Community Conservation

I spoke to Ron Podolak the other day and he gave me some things to ponder. I had called Ron to get some pictures of what would be an oddball District project because know that Cayuga would have some (*just kidding Ron*).

Districts are very interesting creatures. Where else can an employee answer conservation questions on the phone, go out to a project for construction oversight, head to a site visit with a GIS map that they produced and then host a meeting involving many diverse groups to decide watershed issues, all in one day? I would hazard to say not many. What about sampling streams, running heavy equipment, running chainsaws, developing mineland and conservation plans? Don't forget about keeping the books, running tree and shrub programs, selling fish and teaching children and their parents.

In these difficult times we have to go on. We need to continue to look for new, old and interesting ways to survive. Hey, my District is having a hard time, so I am speaking from experience. We can't get too down. I think that it is safe to say that we are one of, if not the number one, locally led conservation group in NY. Be proud of that.

This is the time that we need to look around and keep our ears open. What can we do to assist our counties and be a vital part? As Ron said, "A diversified District is a strong District."

Now, Ron did provide me with the requested pictures of something that Cayuga County has done that not too many others have done, which is to build the District office. Thanks for the encouragement Uncle Ron.



Outside shell being started



Outside shell installed



Final building

CDEA Views *Submit your photos jim99@nycap.rr.com*



Brian Hall and his dad this spring with double Tom Turkeys.



The Bishopp family at Elmira College for Graduation: Troy, Lindsay, Corrine and Katie

Rockland County SWCD

Rockland County is located, north-west of NYC, and some of you may wonder what conservation can happen down there? Well, hopefully this article will open your eyes to what can occur with dedication, hard work and volunteers.

Several years ago, Rockland County recognized that they did not have much information or baseline data for their streams in regard to water quality. Looking around, they spied the program that Westchester County SWCD had and decided to follow their lead. Now in their fourth year, they have a well established program.

I spoke to Mary Hegarty about their program, of which she is rightfully excited and proud of. They currently have twenty five dedicated volunteers which work in teams of two or three to collect data. The program has not yet gone into the schools mainly due to the fact Mary can only stretch too far (*I believe she properly called it "staffing limitations"*).

The program follows the NYSDEC guidelines for scientific protocols to be as accurate as possible and produce useful and useable data. One thing that Mary pointed out was that many of the volunteers live on or very near to the streams that they are sampling, which really helps to provide a sense of community and connection with the streams. Program training is held in the springtime and then everyone gathers in the fall for a breakfast, ahhh food, the common District denominator. For help last year Rockland County had an Americorps worker, which really worked out well.

Not all the volunteers actually do the sampling, some of the folks are scientists and statisticians, which really comes in handy with analyzing the data. They currently have one complete sampling kit, a colorimeter and a brand new conductivity meter. While Mary would love to expand the number of kits, they do have associated costs. If a District was interested in starting up this



type of program, over the first three years, budget around \$5,000 for supplies and materials. After the initial start up cost, you will likely be spending \$1,000 per year on various sampling items (not including staff time).

You will be learning about Mary next month as she has graciously agreed to be the interviewee, but I want to let everyone know that she was really into chemical sampling when she was in college and thought that was the way to go. However, she has seen the light and feels that macroinvertebrate sampling is a better long-term indicator of stream health. Take that Mr. Hach! If you have any questions or would like to learn more, call or email Mary (845-364-2670, hegarty@co.rockland.ny.us).



Eccoptura xanthenes, a stonefly that's uncommon in SE New York that the program found!



CDEA Employee Profile

Troy Bishopp
Grazing Specialist
Madison County SWCD

"So you make some pretty maps, what is this really going to do for me?" That basically was a question that was posed to me a few years ago as I was presenting a course on GIS for Walk-Ins. The person who posed this question was Troy Bishopp, this month's interviewee. After providing Troy with some specific uses and situations where GIS can be very handy on the farm, I continued on, but wondered who the heck was that?

Troy was born in France, in June of 1963. His father was in the army and the family was stationed overseas. In 1964, the family moved back to New York and settled down in Earlville. Troy mentioned to me that he was not named after the ancient city, but rather Troy Donahue, the actor from the 1960's that made women swoon. I can clearly see the resemblance.

His family moved in central NY several times, ultimately ending up on the family's farm in Deansboro, where his father worked for the NYS Potato Coop. His mother worked for a local insurance company as a bookkeeper and kept Troy and his brother in line. His little brother Scott, incidentally was kept in check on a daily basis by Troy, until he bulked up, then they started to get along well.

Troy's grandfathers both had farms, Grandfather Bishopp had a small Guernsey herd, while Grandfather Steele had a hobby farm where he had sixty acres and raised chickens. He also worked for Colgate University and took care of their swans. So it is easy to see where he gets his love of farming.

While at Waterville High School, Troy played football and the school was small enough that the team members played on both sides of the ball (*that explains a few things*). In 1980, they went to Sectionals for the first time and played Herkimer, who at the time had twice the school body. While they put up a good fight they were defeated, Troy however did receive recognition. As he put it "I received a small trophy for most improved player, my Al Bundy Trophy."

Upon graduation, Troy went to SUNY Morrisville, where great minds begin their education. Troy graduated in 1983 with an A.A.S. in Animal Husbandry and immediately started to improve the family farm and start milking cows. He started with 15 Holsteins and over 5 years grew the herd to 40. When the milk prices tanked, Troy decided that he needed to do something else and reluctantly sold his herd. He told me that it was the hardest thing that he ever had to do, and listening, I began to understand the passion that he has for the farming life. Over the years in addition to farming, he has worked as a garbage truck driver, quarry ground man, poultry manager in Ohio, Wal-mart associate and fence contractor.

Troy is married to Corrine, whom he met at a bar called S-Kickers, where the Oneida County SWCD is now located. He went up and in a manly voice eeked out "you wouldn't want to dance would you?" It's nice to see that the confidence has grown. Since that dance they have been married for 23 years and have three girls. Troy's oldest just had her first child, so be kind to Grandpa Troy as he teeters toward the office rocking chair.

Today the 5th generation farm family manages 500 acres of pasture with 200 head of custom grazed beef animals and brood cows. They have some Alpine goats, a Rat Terrier named Riley and a couple of cats. Troy has a monthly column in Lancaster Farming and is an advocate for grass-based agriculture. Troy has been in Toastmasters Int. for the past two years and really enjoys public speaking. Check out his website (<http://www.thegrasswhisperer.com/>) for lots of entertaining stories and great information.

I wish that I could put in half of what he told me, but unfortunately I can't. I can say that he wants to leave something for the next generation and have them carry on. With everything that I learned about Troy, I would think that he is well on his way to having his wish fulfilled.

2009 NYS Envirothon



Who let the kids from Minnesota in?



Congratulations to Candor HS
for once again winning the NYS Envirothon.
Good luck in North Carolina.



*"See that layer kids?
That was created when
Mr. Griswold was borrr"*



The winning t-shirt entry for 2009.



The winning designer for the T-shirt, Holly Faulkner from Deposit, NY



Uhhhhh.....



2009 Group Photo

2009 NYS Envirothon



Another classic picture of Patricia.
I can't wait for this interview!



I think I saw this gang hanging on the
wall of the Post Office.



"Oh no, you did not just take
my picture."



"You are getting verrrry sleepy,
now cluck like a chicken."



The Grand Pubah, Numero
Uno, Da'Boss...
thanks Sandy!



The Warren County crew hanging out.
Must be Fonzi be on the end.

Booo.....

A cartoonist was found dead in home.
However details of the discovery are *sketchy*.



"Where the heck did my
contact go?"