

CDEA News

September 2011

The Newsletter of the New York State Conservation District Employees Association



CDEA Golf Tourney: an Ace of a Good Time!

Christine Watkins

14 teams competed in the 2011 CDEA Golf Tournament held at Casolwood Golf Course in Canastota. All golfers were treated to seeing CDEA president, Jim Lieberum drive around the golf course in full Scottish gear, including kilt and sporran (the little man purse that hangs around the waist). This year's winning team was the Chenango/Delaware team of Jennifer Burcroff, Lance Lockwood, Sam Ly and

Graydon Dutcher. Second place was the Oneida team of Kevin Lewis, Tim Wimmer, Dave Faulkner and Kurt Johnson. Third place was the Jefferson 1 team of Gary Eddy, Claude Phelps, Mark Redder and Michael Redder.

Longest Drive winner for the men was Jake Ambrose and Pat Lake for the women. Closest to the pin winners were Sam Ly, Lance Lockwood, Tim Bush, Dave Faulker, Kurt

Johnson, Becca Hare, Pat Lake and Rhonda Jarvis. Skins winners were the Oneida team and the Jefferson/Warren/Fulton team.

The golf tournament raised \$870 that will go towards the Frank Bratt scholarship. The 50/50 raffle raised over \$160 that will go towards the Sunshine Fund. A big thank you to all who brought prizes to the tournament and a big thank you to all that participated.



Lance Lockwood, Jennifer Burcroff, Sam Ly, Graydon Dutcher



Rhonda Jarvis, Mike Morrissey, John Persch, Chris Watkins



Tony Capraro, Bob Weaver, Jordan Clements, Scott Fickbohm

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14 teams enjoyed a day of golf at the Casolwood Golf Course in support of the CDEA Tournament. Over \$1000 was raised for the Frank Bratt Scholarship and Sunshine Fund.



Mark Migliore, Dave Wick, Mark Usher, Cliff Frasier



Jen Case, Seth Dennis, Pat Reidy, Aaron Ristow



Frank Hall, Brian Hall, Tim Bush, Ron Bush



Jerry Verrigni, Jessica Verrigni, Karen Tillotson, Bob Pierce



Doug Kierst, Russell Smith, Ryan Cunningham, Eric Haas



Conservation Skills Workshop will be held September 26–30 in Cortland. Registration packets have been emailed statewide, but are also available on the CDEA website or by contacting Chris Watkins, cwatkins@centralny.twcbc.com 315-782-2749. Please distribute the registration packets to all employees and partners. Remember, Conservation Skills isn't just for the new employee. The planning committee has developed a framework of classes for both the novice and the advanced. Registration deadline is September 16.



Division V Spotlight

Students Clue in to Conservation with Essex County Soil and Water



Trout in the Classroom

Local Westport School students put Atlantic Salmon Alevins into a Salmon in the Classroom Tank after listening to discussions about Salmon life cycles by Bill Wellman, NY Chapter Trout Unlimited Vice President. This program is taking place in Ticonderoga, Crown Point, Granville and Whitehall classrooms thanks to support from a grant awarded to Lake George Regional Planning Board from the Lake Champlain Basin Program. Local Chapter of Trout unlimited, Essex County Soil & Water Conservation District and Lake George Regional Planning Board have been collaborating together to make this project happen.



Storm-drain Markers

Students from Moriah, Westport, and Elizabethtown Lewis Central Schools put more than 100 storm-drain markers down in their towns this fall. The students learned about Storm water pollution and how they could lessen the impacts themselves. Hopefully these markers will help community members think twice before dumping contaminants down the drains.



District Manager :Dave Reckahn soaks willow cuttings used to make a living classroom Wigwam as part of Moriah Central Schools Outdoor Classroom Grant.



Division V Spotlight

Hamilton County Soil and Water Combats Invaders

Caitlin Stewart

From plants to crustaceans to insects, Hamilton County is being invaded! Invasive species threaten our economy and recreational enjoyment. Invaders cost the United States \$138 billion dollars every year, or a dollar a day for all citizens.

Because of these economic and ecological costs, the District works hard to keep Hamilton County invasive free.

Beetles Take a Bite Out of Loosestrife

District staff released 200 *Galerucella* beetles along the Sacandaga River in the town of Lake Pleasant to control Purple Loosestrife, a deadly invasive wetland plant. Explosive populations of Loosestrife kill



wetlands by choking out native vegetation that wildlife depend on for food, shelter, and nesting. Manual management of invasive plants is time consuming and labor intensive, but through this new initiative, beetles can really take a bite out of Loosestrife. These bugs are voracious herbivores that feed on the leaves and stems of Purple Loosestrife,



ornamentals. As their food source declines, the bugs will die out.

Tiny Critter Could Mean Big Changes for Our Lakes

This past September, Sacandaga Lake was added to a growing list of New York State waterbodies infested with a new invader, the Spiny Water Flea. This crustacean hitchhiked from Eurasia to Lake Huron in 1984 in ship ballast water, and has spread to Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, the Great Sacandaga Lake, Peck Lake, and Stewarts Bridge Reservoir, threatening aquatic ecosystems, fishing, and tourism. Fleas gobble up enormous quantities of zooplankton that small fish rely on for food. The growth and survivorship of small fish are adversely impacted by fleas that are in direct competition with fish for food. Larger game fish lose a food source as the smaller fish die out. Fleas clog rod eyelets and inhibit fish from being landed. Tail spines prevent small fish from swallowing the fleas. Adult fleas and eggs stick to fishing line, downrigger cables, and anchor ropes, and make their way into bait buckets and bilge water,

but do not harm native wetland vegetation or garden

easily spreading to new lakes. Recreationists enjoying an outing on an infested lake could unknowingly harbor eggs or adults in their gear and watercraft and transport this deadly invader to un-infested lakes. Invasive species do not adhere to municipal or state boundaries and hitchhike for miles and miles.

Combating Invasives

District staff have amped up their efforts to stop the spread of invasive species. Educational outreach efforts include invasive species presentations and the dissemination of posters, brochures and ID cards. The District monitors twenty-one



lakes for physical and chemical parameters in June, July, and August. Spread prevention includes disinfecting monitoring equipment and the anchor rope with a 5% bleach solution. A visual inspection of the boat and trailer occurs before and after launching at each of lake, and all plants, mud, and organisms are removed. The boat and trailer are washed at the office.



Division V Spotlight

Franklin County SWCD Presents 2011 AEM Award Winner

Chastity Miller

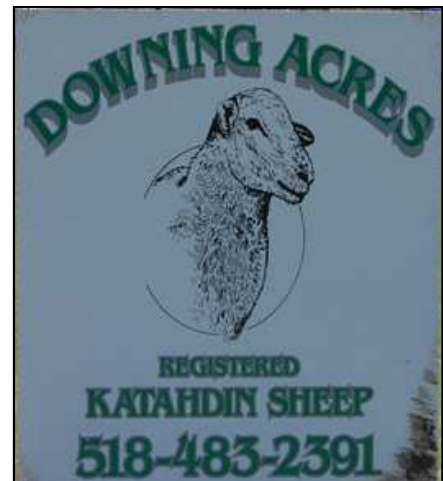
The Agriculture Environmental Management Award is given to a farm that has voluntarily participated in the AEM planning process available through the Franklin County Soil and Water Conservation District. AEM is a voluntary, incentive-based program that helps farmers make common-sense, cost-effective and science-based decisions to help meet business objectives while protecting and conserving the State's natural resources.

Pat and Elizabeth Downing have owned the 200 acre Downing Acres Farm for 8 years, and they currently have 180 ewes, 50 lambs, 25 adult rabbits with litters, and are expecting 250 lambs. The farm has 80 acres of tillable land, 60 acres of grazed land, and 60 wooded acres. Hay is the only crop produced on the farm. In the past, the farm was a dairy, but has since become

overgrown. Pat and Elizabeth have been using their flock of sheep to restore overgrown pastures through pasture management since 2008.

Pat and Elizabeth started with AEM in 2008 and have since been through the entire AEM process. They first began with the regeneration of pastures through fencing practices and continued with fencing out the entire length of the C(T) classified blue line stream (tributary of Allen Brook) that runs through their property. They received EQIP through NRCS in 2009 to assist with these practices. The Downing's have managed to double their flock in the last 2 years with the new pastures and best management practices that they have installed and implemented.

They are eager to share their green practices with the farming community, and encourage producers to visit and gain valuable knowledge that can be employed on their own farms. In 2010, the Downing's agreed to participate in a study funded through Farm Viability in association with the Black River/St. Lawrence RC&D Council that allowed the District to take a more in depth look at the social, economic, and environmental factors on the farm. The District conducted interviews and field studies with Pat and Elizabeth and had the opportunity to see their pasture transform significantly through only one grazing season. They are allowing us to continue these studies for the next couple of years in hopes of documenting the changes that good management practices can bring to all aspects of farm life.



Franklin County Soil and Water presents Downing Acres the 2011 **Agricultural Environmental Management Award**. Tricia Decosse, Pat Downing, Beth Downing, Patrick Downing



Division V Spotlight

Franklin County SWCD in Pictures



Bigfoot Baler Recycles Ag Plastics

Franklin County SWCD and the Recycling Agricultural Plastics Project of Cornell University unveiled the Bigfoot Baler at the Franklin County Fair in August. This machine recycles agricultural plastics including bunker covers, bale wrap, and silage bags. During demonstrations, local farmers learned that the machine operates via hydraulics and a gas motor. The environmental benefits of this machine are tremendous. Often, plastics are buried on the farm, which may lead to polluted groundwater. The Bigfoot Baler packages 1,000 pound bails of plastic that are then transported to a recycling center. Farmers may rent the machine for free to use on their farms after they complete a training session and sign a release. District Manager Chastity Miller said, "We encourage farms to practice Best Management Practices to keep plastic clean, dry and keep it off bare ground. The cleaner it is, the more markets we have for it." Recycled agricultural plastic is morphed into sidewalks.



Grazing School in Pennsylvania, August 2-4.



Tricia and Tiffany attended grazing school.



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





Division V Spotlight

Hazard Mitigation in Warren County

Dave Wick

The Warren County SWCD has worked with municipalities for years on restoring washed out roads and culverts, and in 2011 the District was tapped to run the county's Hazard Mitigation Program. In June of this year, Jim Lieberum, the District's Water Resources Specialist, was named as the county's Hazard Mitigation Coordinator. In a nutshell, Hazard Mitigation deals with identifying areas which are in high risk of being impacted by natural disasters, putting together a plan for remediation, and getting funds to upgrade those systems so they don't fail in storm events. For example, if a road, bridge or culvert has a history of overtopping or failing, that site is identified and a solution developed. When funding comes available from a Presidential disaster declaration or a FEMA program, that site is upgraded to help it avoid failure.

The county contracts with the District for \$16,000 per year for this service, which is one third of the cost of their original projection to do it internally with a full time staff person. Our daily working relationships with all highway departments in the county was a primary reason the county asked the District to take on this role.

As I'm writing this, our staff has been out all across Warren County looking at storm damage from Irene. We're walking key streams and logging bank erosion and infrastructure damage, touring sites with town supervisors and highway superintendents, and working with landowners to develop costs and solutions to massive streambank failures. This information is relayed to county emergency management officials, and helped get the

county declared a disaster and eligible for 87% cost reimbursement for public infrastructure repairs.

Our strong connection with our towns and the county is the heart of the Warren County SWCD's program. Working on these programs gets the District tremendous exposure at political levels and with the media, which certainly helps come budget time. If your District is not engaged in these issues, you're missing out not only on huge opportunities to protect and improve your natural resources, but also the chance to forge stronger relationships with municipalities and decision makers who have considerable sway over your financial position in the county. If you have any questions about these programs or District involvement in emergency response work, feel free to call us anytime!



SWCD Natural Resources Specialist Lori Kerrigan talks with Town Supervisor Evelyn Wood at a road washout in Town of Thurman, Warren County, from May 28 storm event.



Projects in Clinton County SWCD

Nathaniel Grue

Hurricane Irene

After hurricane Irene blew through Clinton County on August 28th and 29th, local farmers went around their farms to assess the damage. Although county farmers grow a variety of different crops, some of the worst damage was found in apple orchards. Forrence Orchards in Peru, N.Y. suffered a great amount of damage by the heavy rains and high winds late Sunday and early Monday. Complete rows of new saplings tipped over and whole older trees uprooted. With its large leaf pattern and large sized apples, the honey crisp trees seems to be the hardest hit. Not only taking this year's apples but winds strong enough to take next year's as well, means bad news for these orchardists.



Hydro Seeding

Clinton County Soil and Water is introducing its new hydro-seeding program. All town garages now have access to our new hydro seeder for highway use. From roadside ditching to stream bank stabilization, the hydro seeder is the tool to use. The first roadside project that this machine was used for was stabilizing a sloping roadside near The Great Chazy River, in Altona. This gave us the chance to test the machine. Not only is the roadside now stable but it was one of the only roadsides not washed out by the past weekend's heavy rains and high winds, caused by hurricane Irene. Photos below show the project. Where we stopped seeding, you can see the erosion.



Jefferson County Farm Receives NYS AEM award



Porterdale Farms is a third generation dairy farm started by grandparents, Glenn and Ruth with 35 cows on 198 acres in 1934. They won Jefferson County's Conservation Farm of the Year in 1966 and again in 2009. Porterdale is a Dairy of Distinction and has received the gold level for milk quality. Porterdale is Jefferson County's largest dairy farm with 1700 mature animals and 1300 replacement heifers. A large portion of their milk is sold as kosher milk; they produce over 30 million pounds of milk annually. The Porters grow alfalfa grass hay, corn silage, and corn grain on 4500 acres. Their conservation practices include comprehensive nutrient management plan, 3 manure storage structures, silage leachate collection system with irrigation of high flow runoff, roof runoff management system, solids separation, irrigation of manure, reduced tillage, riparian buffers and streambank stabilization. Jefferson County SWCD (Director, Kevin Simpson, Technicians – Jake Ambrose and Levi Rudd, and Planner Chris Watkins) with Commissioner Aubertine, and the Porter family from Jefferson County. Commissioner Aubertine presented the Porters with the NYS AEM award at the Empire Farm Days. Farming has been more than a means of earning a living for the Porters – it has been a passion that has shaped their lives. Faith, family, and farming are top priorities for the Porter family. Compassion for the environment and their community is second nature to them.

Mark Your Calendar

**Nassau County SWCD
DEC 4 hour Soil and
Erosion Control Training**
September 13
Old Bethpage NY

**New York State
Soil and Water
Conservation
Committee
Meeting**
September 20
Albany



**Conservation Skills
Workshop**
September 26 – 30
Cortland

**NYACD Annual Meeting
and Administrative /
Manager's Conference**
October 16-18
Radisson Hotel, Utica

Jefferson County SWCD On You Tube

Jefferson County SWCD's summer intern Jamieson Crast, created two videos for the District. One explains the services offered by the District and the other invites people to use the recreational trails in Jefferson County. Check them out on YouTube at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PYL4CnLdua8>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81D14u_wPnA



Celebrate Good Times (come on!)



Brenda Weaver, Schoharie County SWCD's Office Manager is a grandmother! Her son Andrew and his fiancé welcomed Hailey Weaver into the world on July 12, 2011, weighing in at 6lbs 6 oz. Andrew is known to several SWCDs as a computer technician with a company out of New Hartford NY. Mom and baby are doing GREAT!



Jefferson County SWCD's Technician Jake Ambrose sang at the Lewis County Fair on Friday, July 22. He opened for Josh Thompson with Crazy Girl, Walking in Memphis, and Only the Good Die Young.



Jefferson County SWCD (Director, Kevin Simpson, Technicians – Jake Ambrose and Levi Rudd, and Planner Chris Watkins) with Commissioner Aubertine, and the Porter family from Jefferson County. Commissioner Aubertine presented the Porters with the NYS AEM award at the Empire Farm Days. Farming has been more than a means of earning a living for the Porters – it has been a passion that has shaped their lives. Faith, family, and farming are top priorities for the Porter family. Compassion for the environment and their community is second nature to them.

Conservation: A Key Economic Development Tool

Barbara Silvestri

Conservation Districts Fuel Local Economies

Agriculture, natural resources and tourism are leading parts of the economic engine in rural and upstate communities. For decades, County Soil and Water Conservation Districts have worked with residents, municipalities and industry to ensure the health and viability of all three of these areas.

Conservation projects like soil erosion control, public water supply protection, flood prevention, stream restoration and stormwater management provide multiple benefits. They protect farm viability and the natural resources enjoyed by residents and tourists alike, while improving the local tax base, protecting public health and safety, and saving landowners and communities time and money.

Investment Pays Big Dividends

Soil and Water Districts provide a significant return on their county's investment by leveraging funds from multiple sources for conservation projects that maintain and create green jobs and support local business.

Since the inception of New York's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) in 1994, Soil and Water Districts have put over \$81 million in cost-share grants to work on over 2,000 farms involving more than 5,000 conservation projects across 50 counties. For their share, farmers have contributed over \$25

million toward these state funded projects that protect water quality and natural resources for all New Yorkers.

Well over 90% of the grant dollars spent on conservation projects by the Soil and Water Districts surveyed in 2010 are

“Soil and Water Districts provide a significant return on their county’s investment by leveraging funds from multiple sources for conservation projects that maintain and create green jobs and

reinvested back into the local and regional economy: Local contractors are hired to implement the projects and supplies are purchased from area businesses that spend this money locally on labor, materials and equipment.

A birds-eye view across a few regions of the state demonstrates how these dollars multiply:

In Western New York, agriculture is by far the number one industry in Wyoming County, providing the largest tax base and fueling the local economy. Since 1994, the Wyoming County Soil and Water District has brought in over \$4.5 million to help farmers cost share agricultural

conservation projects that protect drinking water and benefit tourism, fisheries and recreation. After adding in the farmer contribution, this amount nearly doubled to \$9 million added into the local economy.

In 2010 alone, \$1.2 million was invested in conservation practices on 10 farms in Wyoming, Cattaraugus and Genesee Counties. In addition to preserving the area's tourism industry by safeguarding the public water supply of Letchworth State Park, over 90% of these dollars were spent at local businesses.

“These project funds definitely have helped us to grow the business, create jobs and gain new customers,” said Jason Merle, of J. Merle Excavating in Attica. “We have been able to put on eight seasonal equipment operators and upgrade our construction equipment, including a new excavator, off-road dump truck and two ‘dozers.” Merle reports spending 95% of these dollars in and around the county at equipment dealers, building material suppliers and even the local insurance company.

Due to diminishing federal engineering support, State EPF funding also provides opportunities for local private engineering firms to fill the gap, helping those businesses thrive

Please see Development, page 12.

Development, from page 11.

in today's economy. "The funding for these conservation projects certainly adds to our livelihood," stated Jessica Skinner of Jess Engineering in Alpine. Working on these projects increased our workload by 25-30% and gives us the opportunity to service new clients."

regulations, which could have put them out of business," stated Wyoming County Soil and Water District Manager Greg McKurth.

In the Finger Lakes Region, the Ontario County Soil and Water District doubled its county appropriation in 2010. The County Government sees a

District for conservation projects on farms was spent locally.

"This funding keeps our employees working, allows us to hire additional workers when needed and helps us keep our machines current," explained Kristie Christensen of Karen Hudson Pipes and Pumps in Penn Yan. "These projects have also opened up new markets for us because once farmers see the quality of our products, they return to buy additional supplies."

"Over 90% of the dollars that we are paid is spent on labor, supplies and equipment in and around our county," reports Jack Curran of Jack Curran General Excavation in Clifton Springs.

District staff supported by these funds work to protect drinking water and restore water bodies. These projects save communities thousands of dollars annually on water treatment costs and directly affect the area's tourism industry, which along with agriculture is a vital part of the Finger Lakes Economy.

In Central New York, over \$300,000 in State EPF funding was utilized in 2010 by the Cortland County Soil and Water District for conservation projects on three farms. This funding leveraged additional dollars totaling over \$425,000 directly supporting jobs and growing local construction companies.



Crews from the Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Town of Bolton Highway Department install stormwater infiltration chambers designed to reduce erosion and flooding while preventing pollution from entering Lake George.

Many farmers report that these practices allow their farms to be more efficient, meet state requirements, and protect water and air quality at the same time. "Without this funding, many of the farms could not have completed the much needed conservation work or meet state

significant return on investment just from the Soil and Water District's agricultural program, one of thirteen programs and services they offer. All \$260,000 in State EPF dollars, federal funds and farmer match leveraged by the Soil and Water

Please see Development, page 13.

Development, from page 12.

“If it were not for agriculture projects funded by the state, our Construction Division that employs ten people would not exist,” said Don Ford of RMS Gravel. “Roughly 80% of the work completed by our Construction Division comes from funding for conservation projects, and we spend 95% of these dollars right here in the county and the surrounding area.” Dave Kemp, owner of Kempcon, a construction company in Cincinnati agrees, “Without state funding for conservation projects, my business would only be a two man crew.”

The Adirondack Region relies heavily on natural resources-based tourism such as fishing, boating, swimming and other outdoor pursuits. The Warren County Soil and Water District has been tremendously successful putting cost-effective conservation projects into action to protect the precious natural resources of the Lake George area, which support a multimillion-dollar tourism industry.

“For every County dollar invested, the Soil and Water District delivers five times the economic value,” reports District Manager Dave Wick. “In 2010 alone, we multiplied our \$220,000 county appropriation into \$1 million worth of conservation projects on the ground, supporting jobs and local businesses, while protecting the natural resources our economy depends on for future generations.

“The assistance of our Soil and Water District in solving our stormwater and flooding problems has been remarkable,” said Lake George Village Mayor Bob Blais. “Our taxpayers and the lake are truly grateful.”

Key partners in getting the work done are municipal highway departments, who provide construction crews and equipment to install many of the conservation practices. “Our municipal leaders are well aware of how Soil and Water and their municipal forces can stretch limited grant funds to achieve amazing things,” adds Wick. As a result of the Soil and Water District’s know-how and cost

effectiveness, the County has requested that the District take on new roles as the County’s Stormwater Management Officer and Hazard Mitigation Coordinator.

Growing Greener \$\$\$

County appropriations are the cornerstone of support necessary for Soil and Water Districts to bring in additional funding and provide the programs and services that are more critical now than they have ever been. Together, these dollars strengthen capacity and maintain jobs at Soil and Water Districts, doing as much for the local economy as they do for the environment.

Clearly the benefits of funding Soil and Water Districts go much further than the initial investment, ensuring that the economic engine of rural and upstate economies is fueled into the future. **As you look to the future, look to your County Soil and Water Conservation District!**

WOW!

The September CDEA Newsletter came in at a **whopping 13 pages!** Keep those articles, photos, save the dates, and special announcements coming. Thank you to all who have made submissions!

