

CDEA News

The Newsletter of the New York State
Conservation District Employees Association



May 2015



A Letter from the President

P.J. Emerick, President, New York State Conservation Districts Employees Association

I would like to take this opportunity to thank past President Nichelle Billhardt and the other CDEA executive Board members and Division Representatives for all of the tireless work and hundreds of hours they have devoted to make the 2015 Water Quality Symposium such a success. I was astonished at how much time and effort these individuals put in to make sure the courses are organized and informative to our membership. I would also like to recognize all of the training subcommittee chairpersons for taking the time to choose courses that are both relevant and informative to our membership and the course instructors who volunteered their time and resources to present their many years of practical knowledge and field experience. Their enthusiasm and dedication to their topics was energizing! Last but certainly not least I would like to thank our conservation partners NRCS, NYACD and the SWCC for their continued support and for their knowledgeable team members who not only volunteered as instructors, but also took time to make sure the sign in sheets and certificates were created.



Now that the 2015 WQS is over, we will begin working on other items I feel will benefit Districts across the state and also help advance our mission of natural resource conservation.

During my tenure as President, I will continue to work with SWCC to revise and update the Conservation District Administrative Manual. Recently, a committee has been established that consists of representatives from the SWCC, District Clerks and District Managers. These individuals will meet sometime in the next month to start the process.

Also, I will also work with NYACD to reinvigorate our partnership. I have always felt that one of our greatest strengths is our ability to demonstrate to local, state and federal elected officials our value through our unique ability to get effective conservation practices on the ground. It's no secret that Districts are the local leaders for natural resource conservation.

See Letter, Page 2.

Letter (from page 1)

Furthermore, I will work with our partners to explore other areas and programs where the Districts may serve an important role. One in particular is the valuable technical resources District can bring to local stormwater coalitions.

In addition, the CDEA will continue to work with the NRCS and the SWCC to advance the conservation technical assistance program. This program is a very valuable and I believe will contribute to the overall long term success of our Districts.

The items listed above represent only a small portion of what the NYS CDEA will be working on later this year. There are so many opportunities within the NYS CDEA to contribute to your own District and the others throughout the State. It's a great way to develop opportunities with our conservation partners and also a terrific way to gain a greater understanding of teamwork among our partners that enable our conservation efforts in New York State. I hope that more people would consider attending a CDEA meeting, talk more with your Division Representatives, visit the CDEA website and volunteer to be a part of a committee. If you're a District employee, you are already a member of the CDEA. Its your organization. Please consider becoming involved.

Again, thank you very much for attending the 2015 Water Quality Symposium and for electing me as President. If you have any ideas, suggestions or items of concern, please call me anytime. I look forward to working with you!

Thank you,

P.J. Emerick

CPESC, CPSWQ, CMS4S

NYS CDEA President

Sr. District Manager

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2015 Conservation Districts Employees Association Awards presented at the Water Quality Symposium

District Director Award – George Proios
 Special Project Award – The Farm Talks
 Partner Appreciation Award – David Coburn
 Willard F. Croney Award for Distinguished Service – Christine Watkins
 President's Award - John Persch

Division Merit Awards
 Division I - Katie Sommerfeldt
 Division II –Tucker Kautz
 Division III -Dawn Howard
 Division IV - Blanche Hurlbutt
 Division V – Nick Rowell
 Division VI – John Persch

Years of Service

Division I

Sharon Boyd, Wyoming, 10
 Robert Shenk, Cattaraugus, 15
 Mark Seider, Niagara, 15
 Brian Davis, Cattaraugus, 25
 Darcy Tone, Niagara, 25
 George Squires, Genesee, 35
 Greg McKurth, Wyoming, 35

Division II

Jason Cuddeback, Cayuga, 10
 Kelly Emerick, Monroe, 10
 Ryan Cunningham, Onondaga, 10
 Jeremiah Eaton, Onondaga, 10
 Christopher Creelman, Seneca, 10
 Edith Davey, Ontario, 15
 Tim Lozier, Cayuga, 20
 Doug Fisher, Onondaga, 25
 George Barden, Ontario, 25
 Karen Ervay, Monroe, 30

Division III

Troy Bishopp, Madison, 10
 Jo-Anne Humphries, Oneida, 20
 Erica Schreiner, Oswego, 20

Division IV

Robert Weaver, Otsego, 10
 Jon Negley, Tompkins, 10
 Blanche Hurlbutt, Otsego, 15
 Jerry Verrigni, Schuyler, 15
 Wendy Walsh, Tioga, 15
 Brian Caruso, Delaware, 20
 Sandra Whittaker, Delaware, 20
 Mark Richer, Chemung, 25
 Richard Weidenbach, Delaware, 35
 Jeff Barnes, Tioga, 40

Division V

Rhonda Jarvis, Warren, 15
 Elizabeth Mangle, Hamilton, 25

Division VI

Joe Slezak, Albany, 10
 Andrea James, Saratoga, 10

Division VII

Jeff Flack, Greene, 10
 Steve Nack, Columbia, 15
 Lauren Prezorski, Dutchess, 15
 Christine DeGroot, Orange, 20
 Kevin Sumner, Orange, 35

Division VIII

Sharon Frost, Suffolk, 15
 Paul TeNyenhuis, Suffolk, 30

USC Receives 2015 EPA Environmental Champion Award

Wendy Walsh, District Manager, Tioga County Soil & Water Conservation District



In an announcement dated March 30, 2015 USC Coordinator, Wendy Walsh was congratulated, and informed of the special honor awarded to the Upper Susquehanna Coalition. The **U.S. EPA Environmental Champion Award** is an annual award process recognizing “those who have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to protecting and enhancing environmental quality and public health.” Recipients of this, the highest award recognition EPA presents to the public, must be nominated to be considered.

U.S. EPA Environmental Champion Award recipients come from all sectors of the community including businesses, government, non-profit, environmental and community groups, individual citizens and educators.

The USC and other recipients have met the following criteria to achieve this award:

- Significantly contributed to improving environmental quality in New Jersey, New York,

Puerto Rico or the U.S. Virgin Islands during the prior year.

- Demonstrated a high achievement level in the award category.
- Created unique or location-specific benefits, produced results that are sustainable or reproducible, or increased public involvement in environmental action.

Although the USC has a robust, stream, agriculture and wetland programs, we were specifically honored for our wetlands work that we have completed over the past five years. The USC has constructed or restored more than 700 acres of wetlands and wetland-related habitat in the Upper Susquehanna River watershed. These wetlands help New York reduce nutrient sediment loads to the Chesapeake Bay. The Coalition has been designated by the New York State Department for Environmental Conservation as the official wetland data manager for the Chesapeake Bay Program and is responsible for the wetland goals of the state in its Chesapeake Bay Tributary

Strategy.

Award recipients were honored at a ceremony on April 24th in New York City, attending on behalf of the USC were Melissa Yearick, Wetlands Coordinator, Wendy Walsh, Watershed Coordinator and Jeremy Waddell, Wetlands Specialist. We were photographed with Judith Enck, EPA Regional Administrator and New York City Councilman Donovan Richards.

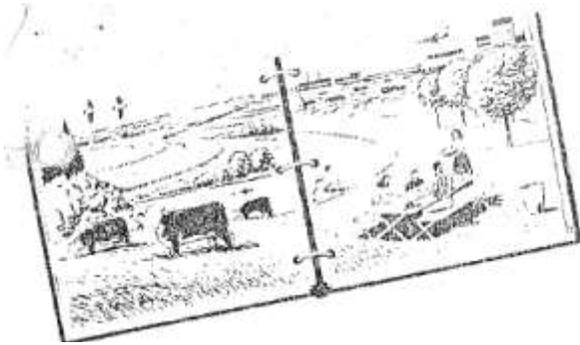
The USC is tremendously excited about receiving the prestigious EPA Environmental Champion Award which Senator Gillibrand nominated us for. The USC is a coalition of soil and water conservation districts who work together to protect and improve water quality and natural resources in the Susquehanna River Watershed. This award is an opportunity for our USC membership to reflect on our work and strengthen our resolve to continue to focus on these important issues. The USC utilizes a multi-barrier approach for planning and implementing restoration projects on a watershed wide basis. Through this approach we are address issues at the source, across the landscape and in the stream corridor. We focus our watershed implementation efforts on planning, funding and implementing in three key focus areas, wetland restoration, stream corridor rehabilitation and environmentally and

See Award, Page 12.

Newsletter Flashback

Showcasing the newsletters of yesteryear

From Caitlin Stewart, CDEA Editor: I received an email from Jessica Verrigni, Stormwater Technician, Chemung County Stormwater Coalition saying that Mark Watts, Chemung County Soil and Water Conservation District, has copies of every single CDEA newsletter ever written - except 1. Jessica emailed me a PDF of the very first newsletter from 1984. Excerpts are found below and on page 7. She will email me more copies, and these stories will be showcased in the Newsletter Flashback column. We hope you enjoy this nostalgic trip down memory lane. The *Ask Miss Dirt* column is a hoot.



President

Jeff Barnes, Tioga District

Vice President

Steve Lanthier, Franklin District

Secretary

Barb Allen, Steuben District

Treasurer

Joan Wrigley, Columbia District

Division Representatives

I.

Dick Tillman, Niagara District

II.

Tom DeRue, Wayne District

III.

John Schumacher, Tioga District

IV.

Ed Tuthill, Essex District

V.

Rick Bird, Otsego District

VI.

Kevin Sumner, Orange District

Member at Large

Margaret Bush, Oneida District

Immediate Past President

[Ex-Officio]

Ron Kaplewicz, Oswego District

DISTRICT EMPLOYEES' DIGEST

(SERVING DISTRICT EMPLOYEES IN NEW YORK STATE)

VOL. I, NO. I

July 1984

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Hello out there! This is Ed Tuthill, Representative for Division IV, here in Essex County. At this time I would like to introduce all of you to the 1st District Employees' Digest. We would like this newsletter to be both informative and entertaining. Therefore, we will be needing lots and lots of interesting tidbits of information from all of you. Anything pertaining to District Employees, such as awards, special achievements, marriages, new employees and other good gossip will be greatly appreciated. Our goal will be to have a newsletter with "all the news that's fit to print" about District Employees.

Our first newsletter will be dedicated to Gene Kellam, District Manager of Albany County, whose impact on the District movement has benefitted all of us. Gene will be featured in one of our Employee Profiles. Gene has retired after many years of promoting conservation in Albany County and strengthening the role of the District Employees' Association throughout New York State. On behalf of the Association, I would like to wish Gene and Dot Kellam many wonderful years of retirement.

So, now please enjoy your first issue and please let us know of any changes or additions you would like to see in our future "digests". Remember, this is your Digest - we need your input. Send articles to me at the Essex County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Newsletter Flashback

Showcasing the newsletters of yesteryear



ASK MISS DIRT

DEAR MISS DIRT:

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ASCS AND SCS?

The letter "A", silly.

DEAR MISS DIRT:

WE UNDERSTAND THAT A GUINNESS WORLD RECORD WAS BROKEN AT THE LAST EMPLOYEES' TRAINING SESSION. COULD YOU FILL US IN?

Yes. Ron Kaplewicz sang, "Please Release Me" 406 times in one night. Congratulations, Ron.

DEAR MISS DIRT:

IS THERE ANYTHING WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT OUR NEW PRESIDENT, JEFF BARNES, THAT WE DON'T ALREADY KNOW?

Well, there is one thing. Jeff was a model for "Fredericks of Hollywood" before joining the District movement.

Send questions to DEAR MISS DIRT, c/o Ed Tuthill, Essex County SWCD.

The mind is a wonderful thing. It starts working the minute you're born and never stops until you get up to speak in public.

Show me a thoroughly satisfied man and I will show you a failure.

NEWS FROM THROUGHOUT THE STATE:

- Division IV combined a meeting with a picnic and some camping on July 13th at Lake Eaton. Maybe this would work in your Division.

- New Employees:

Matthew Browen	Montgomery County
John Peck	Warren County
Pat Ryan	Chenango County
Robert Bragg	Putnam County
Peggy Varken	Orange County
Nicholas Carbone	Jefferson County
Bruce Barnam	Albany County
Doreen Clemens	Saratoga County
Danita Putnam	Albany County
Joe Ryan	Rensselaer County

- VACANCY

District Manager Yates County

- Sympathy is extended to Suzette Benway on the recent death of her husband in a motorcycle accident. Suzette is Clerk-Technician in Essex County.

- DEC will be offering Forestry Courses in conjunction with Syracuse University. Courses include Soils, Tree Improvement, Site Preparation, Technical Writing and Oral Presentation. Additional information is in the mail.

Reforest Nassau Program Kicks Off

Corey Humphrey, District Manager, Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation District

The District is excited to launch its “Reforest Nassau” campaign, filling a crucial need in the region by reforesting areas impacted by storm damage. Superstorm Sandy decimated over 10,000 trees in Nassau, greatly impacting the ecology, air quality, coastal resiliency, wildlife habitat and aesthetics of the County.



Downed trees in Garden City, NY after Hurricane Sandy. Photo Credit: CNN.

The vision of the Reforest Nassau program is to work with residents, municipalities, school districts, not-for-profit organizations, landscapers and others to raise native bare root trees at “grow-out stations” throughout Nassau County.

After growing for several months at grow-out stations, saplings will be transplanted in public spaces, replacing downed and damaged trees. In 2014, the District began a pilot scale

version of the project, in conjunction with Hewlett Woodmere School District’s Youth Leadership team, a group that

provides service learning opportunities for high school students in their school garden. The Youth Leadership students are currently raising four varieties of native trees including Tulip, White Swamp Oak, Wild Black Cherry and Red Maple at their grow-out site and the District is providing technical

assistance to will help transplant 50 donated trees to Nassau County’s Grant Park in the spring of 2015.

A transplant plan is currently being developed with technical guidance from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County, SUNY Farmingdale’s Horticulture Department, NYS Urban Forestry Council and Nassau County Department of Parks, Recreation and Museums. We look forward to expanding this program to add additional grow-out stations through partnering with other school groups, scouts troops, civic groups, and religious congregations. This “Reforest Nassau” program provides students and residents an opportunity to engage themselves in a service learning project and promote environmental stewardship within Nassau County.

Wetland Restoration in Port Washington

Corey Humphrey, District Manager, Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation District

Each year, the Nassau County SWCD coordinates a variety of ecological restoration projects across Nassau County. In 2014, we focused on a wetland restoration project at Mill Pond, adjacent to Manhasset Bay in Port Washington, NY. In partnership with the Town of North Hempstead, the District has set a goal to remove the invasive common reed (*Phragmites australis*), which has infested the pond and out competed the native

smooth cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) from flourishing.

The site is owned by the Town of North Hempstead and has been rehabilitated in the past, but the Phragmites has returned and impaired the ecosystem’s ability to function. The Phragmites has decreased the water quality of this tidal pond by

See Restoration, page 9.

Restoration (from page 8)

creating large, dense, monoculture that outcompetes native plants and displaces wildlife, and critical marine organisms. Once established, *Phragmites* spreads vigorously by horizontal above-ground stolons and underground rhizomes. Because of the ability of *Phragmites* to resprout after cutting or other disturbance, the use of a systemic herbicide is necessary to ensure the removal of this invasive plant. The Town of North Hempstead is coordinating the herbicide application with a New York State certified commercial pesticide applicator.



Mill Pond in Port Washington, NY is infested with invasive Phragmites, damaging water quality. Photo Credit: K.C. Alvey.

The District will help contribute to the restoration of Mill Pond through purchasing and replanting native *Spartina alterniflora* and *Spartina patens* in April 2015. We are going to be planting nearly 4,000 *Spartina* plugs, and seeking volunteers to support the effort. This is a great opportunity to gain

hands-on experience with ecological restoration and to help protect Nassau County's precious wetlands. If you are interested in helping with this project, please sign up through our [Volunteer Interest Form](#) or call us at 516-364-5860.

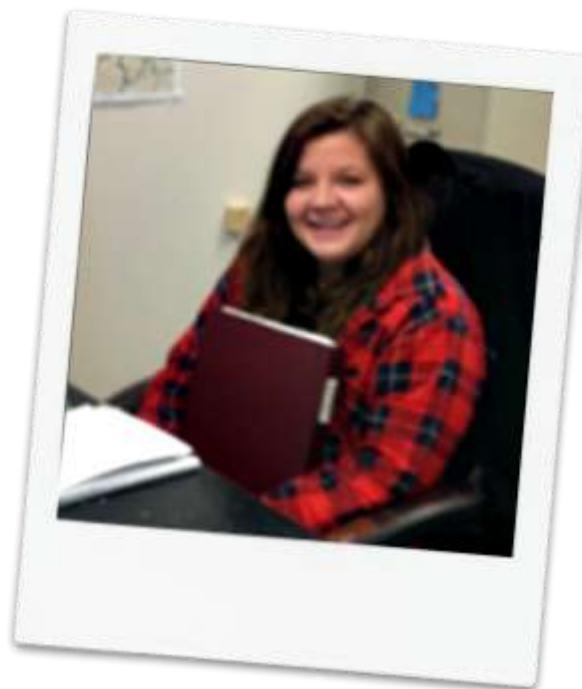
Orleans County Welcomes New Technician

Judy Bennett, Secretary/Treasurer, Orleans County Soil and Water Conservation District

Megan McAnn joined the SWCD staff in January. She graduated from RIT in May 2014 with a BS degree in Environmental Science with concentrations in both Biology and Public Policy.

She interned for a year at both the Monroe County Storm Water Coalition and RITS's Oral History of Family Farms research project. While interning, she volunteered at Color Brighton Green and built rain barrels for the residents of Brighton, NY. As part of the Family Farm project, she interviewed farmers whose farms have been passed down from generation to generation, each for over 100 years, and helped

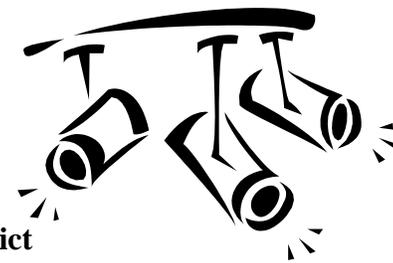
compile a research paper that was eventually published in the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle.



She was born and raised in Medina, NY where she was involved in swimming, soccer, and dance, and where her passion for the environment started. She's always enjoyed being outside, traveling and learning more about the environment which led her to her career today. She is excited to be working with Orleans County Soil and Water Conservation District and looks forward to learning the practical aspects of the job as well as interacting with the people of Orleans County and becoming more active in conservation efforts for the community.

Wise Words from Our District Family

Interviewing seasoned District employees who share some words of wisdom



Marilyn Hollenbeck
Fulton County Soil and Water Conservation District
31 years

How long have you been working at the Fulton County SWCD?

Will be 31 years in August.

What have you accomplished over the years with your District that you are most proud of?

Wow, our little district has really grown, I would have to say I am most proud of the earned income program we have with conservation material sales, it has enabled us to do our jobs without being strapped by budget cuts.

Why have you continued to work at your Soil and Water Conservation District?

It is so much more than sitting at a desk doing book work. I spend a lot of time outside; I guess “fork truck” operator should be added to the job description. I enjoy the people and being able to help the farmers and contractors in any way that I can.



How have you seen District programs, or their focuses, change

over the years?

Way more paperwork then it used to be. When I started here we didn't have computers, I had to be teach myself, we didn't even have computers in high school, so it was learn as you go. It's seems like they want us to be CPA's now, not just bookkeepers. The newer girls coming in are actually teaching me things. The “old” days were a lot simpler; we just worked to get conservation measures out in the field.

What words of wisdom do you have for a newly hired District employee?

Be versatile; be ready to do what needs to be done.

When did you first learn or hear about Soil and Water Conservation Districts?

I started out working for ASCS, which is now Farm Service Agency, which is how I found out my job was about to be open.

What made you decide to apply for a job with your District?

I was already working in the building, knew everyone, and

enjoyed the prospect of working with the farmers and contractors. It was an easy transition.

Did your education prepare you for your job as a District employee?

It totally didn't! Bookkeeping and typing and business math were high school courses, 30 years ago, that was enough, I really don't think that is the case anymore. But, living and operating our own dairy farm helped make me familiar with a lot of the things that we do in the district. But today, it is all about the paper work and justifying what we are here for and what we are doing and that takes up more time than just doing what we are here to do.

Please share with us a memorable conservation moment while working for your District.

There are a few, several of our summer interns have moved on to really good jobs, Cory Nellis started here, and he is now District Manager in Montgomery Co., Jason Kemper started here and he is now Saratoga County Planner, Jacob Hart started here and he is now employed by Herkimer County SWCD. Nice

See Wise, page 11.

Wise (from page 10)



Wow, our little district has really grown, I would have to say I am most proud of the earned income program we have with conservation material sales, it has enabled us to do our jobs without being strapped by budget cuts.



to have been a part of their start.

What is your most epic memory from a Water Quality Symposium?

That was so many year ago, but I'm sure it would include "Bear" and of course Bob Brower's motorcycle skits. We didn't have a lot of planned entertainment then, but made our own fun.

Please share with us a humorous moment from your time at your District.

I think it was at the WQ Symposium when we were in a class about sexual harassment and one of the "older" secretaries

said she had a better way to handle it. She said one of her directors put his hand on her leg and she hit him over the head with a book. Sounded good to me!

If you were snowed in at your District office for a week with no hope of evacuating, who would you want to be snowed in with and what would be your top 3 survival items?

My dog, of course. Survival items would be my horse, a good warm sleeping bag and charcoal grill. Can I have 4 items? Wine would be next on my list.

Do you have a hidden talent?

Absolutely not.

Tell us about what you will miss when you retire.

It won't be getting up in the morning to be here at 7:30 AM, that's for sure. I suppose I will miss something, but right now I can't name anything in particular.

Any concluding remarks?

I have really enjoyed my years with the District, although at times now, things are getting so complicated that I think I will enjoy retirement when that day comes.

I was amazed by the outpouring of cards and condolences from Districts and Staff for the recent passing of my Father. I am truly blessed to work with such wonderful and caring people! Sending a special "Thank You" to all who thought of my family and I at such a difficult time. Thank you!

Carla Luther
District Treasurer, Lewis County Soil & Water Conservation District

thank
you!

2015 New York State Fair Booth

Kristin E. White, Treasurer, New York State Conservation Districts Employees Association Inc.

The NYSCDEA State Fair Committee is looking for people to work at the booth. This year we are offering two 5-hour shifts; 10AM-3PM and 3PM-8PM. To see what shifts are available please visit Seneca County SWCD's website at www.senecacountyswcd.org and click on the State Fair Tab. The theme this year is Invasive Species. We will have available information on both plant and animal invasive species.

Volunteers can bring information from their District relative to the theme and/or their District. Volunteers receive an admission ticket into the fair and a parking pass for the Orange Lot. We are only giving new shirts to those that didn't volunteer last year. We, the State Fair Committee (SFC), continually strive to find an adequate number of Soil and Water volunteers each year to assist at the NYS Soil and Water

Conservation District (SWCD) State Fair Booth. The SFC would like to thank all of the District volunteers in 2014, as volunteers are an important part of SWCD efforts to publicize the importance of conserving NYS Natural Resources. As a NYS SWCD Fair Booth Volunteer, while absorbing all the aromas of the fresh hot almonds and

See Booth, page 13.

Celebrate good times (come on!)



Proud grandparents, Jeff & Velynda Parker, would like to announcement the arrival of Julia Ruth on March 21, 2015. Julia is the daughter of Tim & Olivia Parker.

We are pleased to announce that Chris Hotto of Wayne County Soil and Water Conservation District is expecting another bouncing baby boy in September month! Please help us congratulate Chris by emailing him at Hottoca40@rochester.rr.com.



Award (from page 5)

economically sound agriculture. We work with local, state and federal agencies on projects that support both local needs and regional nonpoint source issues such as the Chesapeake Bay TMDL.

We have a great track record of securing funding and implementing best management

practices on farms, constructing wetlands for water quality improvement, flood attenuation and habitat diversity, rehabilitating streams and roadside ditches and addressing other impacts from flooding. We partner with academia to bring sound scientific information and solutions to our watershed implementation and are very

thankful for the support that Senator Gillibrand and her office have provided us over the years. We are also very thankful for Senator Gillibrand recognizing our efforts and nominating the USC for the EPA Environmental Champion Award.

Booth (from page 12)

cashews that smell of cinnamon and toffee and eating your fully loaded baked potato from the famous Potato Booth, you can also engage your expertise by connecting with “fair-goers” about various conservation subjects. An array of topics are open for discussion and questions ranging from algae problems in ponds, to installing a home rain barrel to collect roof water runoff. The SFC has seen an increase in interest of visitors to the booth each year and do our best to continue drawing interest and excitement into the booth to

educate, communicate, and distribute important information to the people of NYS. The NYS SWCD Fair Booth is truly a unique experience and we look forward to our current volunteers to continue assisting each year, as well as seeing some new faces



at the booth!

If you have any questions please feel free to contact any of the State Fair Committee members:

- Kristin White, Seneca County SWCD
- Erica Schreiner, Oswego County SWCD
- Kelly Emerick, Monroe County SWCD
- Tad Gerace, Ontario County SWCD



CDEA News needs **YOUR** news!

Send your articles, save the dates, special recognitions, or photos to:
hcsxcd@frontiernet.net.

Next deadline: July 3, 4:30 PM

SharePoint

Welcome to the new State Soil and Water Conservation Committee SharePoint Site! It will provide Districts with one, convenient location for:

- Finding resources, including information on particular program areas, outreach materials, GIS data, and more
- Submitting important program documents such as AEM reports, District Aid reports, and documents related to Ag NPS contracts
- Finding announcements from the State Committee as well as the agendas and minutes from State Committee meetings
- Communicating with other Districts through the Discussion Board and Calendar components

If you have any further questions, please contact your AEA or the SharePoint administrator, Gabriella Spitzer (gabriella.spitzer@agriculture.ny.gov or 518-474-4669).

2015 Statewide AEM Award – Call for Nominations

Jennifer Clifford, Associate Environmental Analyst, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, Division of Land and Water Resources

The statewide Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Award sponsored by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, Empire State Potato Growers, Inc., and the American Agriculturist magazine will again this year accept nominations for exemplary farms in New York State. The annual award, presented to a New York farm that is involved in AEM, honors efforts to preserve and protect the State's natural resources. Farms can only be nominated by those who know these outstanding efforts the best, Conservation Districts. Nomination forms will be due June 10th. The award is presented to the farm family at the [Empire Farm Days](#) in Seneca Falls on August 11th – 15th. Along with the farm, the District that aided in their environmental success is also honored during the event by the Department of Agriculture's commissioner. Congratulations to last year's winner, Tre-G Farms nominated by Onondaga SWCD. The State Committee and the Department are once again excited to receive nominations and highlight the great farms that exemplify AEM principles. The nomination form can be found on the State Committee SharePoint site.



The Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District participated in Earth Day on Friday, April 17. We collected 2 pickup truck loads of debris on our property. Prior to our clean up we had our annual Earth Day luncheon.

CDEA Gold Tournament

Christine Watkins, Executive Director, Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District



CDEA Golf Tournament **July 23, 2015** **Casolwood Golf Course, Canastota.**

The registration form will be sent out in later in May.

For more information contact
 Chris Watkins,
 Doug Kierst or Russell Smith.

A Hard Snow is Going to Fall

Gerry Smithson, District Manager, Herkimer County Soil and Water Conservation District

It snowed hard during our tree program. We had a great year in Herkimer for the tree program. 280 total orders, 250 apple trees, 25 rain barrels, and 116 bales of barley straw. Apple trees and rain barrels were new items for us this year.

Left: Deb Michael trying to shield herself from the snow!!! Yes snow during the handout. Top right: Everyone bundled up handing out trees. Bottom Right: Snow on our table while our Technician Jake Hart keeps eating his half-moon cookie.



Poop in the Woods (and other animal signs)

Caitlin Stewart, Conservation Educator, Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District

Piseco's extended learning hours students discovered that poop in the woods is just one way to know of an animal's presence other than seeing or hearing the actual critter. Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District's educator Caitlin Stewart introduced the concept of using tracks and other signs like scat (droppings), chew

marks, homes, body parts, and territory markings to determine which animals passed through, what they did, and where they went.

In the classroom, the presentation began with a warm up lesson and Stewart taught the six elementary school students how to identify certain types of

signs that animals leave in their habitat. Adirondack wildlife tracks including otter, turkey, bear, deer, and weasel were reviewed. Students learned about other types of wildlife signs including body parts left behind on the landscape like moose antler sheds; chew marks on wetland trees made by

See Poop, page 16.

Poop (from page 15)

beaver; territory markings like buck rubs on tree bark; and homes like bird nests.

The afternoon was too nice to stay indoors, and After School Program directors Alicia King and Stacy Brooks equipped the students with snowshoes and all headed to the athletic field to put their animal sign identification skills to the test.

“It wasn’t long before the kids spotted scat,” detailed Stewart. “We looked for tracks close to the pile of droppings, and inferred that the scat was left by a white tailed deer.”

The class examined fresh turkey tracks in the snow that were in excellent condition. Fox tracks, with the characteristic x in the center of the print, were also identified. Larger tracks were left behind by a coyote. Students pointed out woodpecker holes in trees, as well as insect tunnels under bark.

Back in the classroom Stewart described 4 types of tracks.

Walkers create a right-left right-left pattern, and walk in their own footprints to save energy. These animals have lean bodies and long legs, like deer, fox, humans, and dogs. Gallopers have large back legs and smaller front legs. Their front feet land first, then their back feet wrap around the forefeet to land in front. Examples of gallopers include rabbit, mice, squirrel, and voles.

Bounders have long, lean bodies and short legs that are all same size. They bound in a steady jumping pattern, with forelegs landing first and back legs landing right behind. Examples include weasels, pine martens, otter, fisher, and mink.

Waddlers have rotund bodies and short legs. They are usually slow and drag their bellies on the ground. Both feet on the right side are lifted at once, then both feet on the left are lifted, making the critters waddle from side to side when they walk. Examples include porcupine, beaver, muskrat, and opossum.

tummies on the floor and some found it challenging to lift both left legs, then both right legs when simulating the waddlers. The walkers were the easiest to act out.

“The students enjoyed the entire animal tracks and signs presentation,” said Alicia King, Piseco After School Program Director. “The nature walk in the backyard where they were able to see an abundance of tracks belonging to many different animals including fox, deer, rabbit and turkey was the highlight of the presentation. Education that is both first hand and hands on is extremely valuable and makes what the students learn more memorable. We are fortunate to live in such an interesting and resourceful area and any outdoor education helps the students realize how important it is to respect such beautiful surroundings.”

By the end of this lesson, students understood that there are many ways to know an animal’s presence other than seeing it. They searched for tracks, scat, chew marks, homes, body parts, and territory markings, and were able to associate these signs with specific animals. Discovering animal signs outside and acting out track types brought to life what was discussed in the classroom.



Stewart points scat and students found white tailed deer tracks close by.

Students acted out walkers, gallopers, bounders, and waddlers with agility and laughter. They dragged their

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