

# Conservation Connections

## Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District

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 www.ecswcd.org



Semi-Annual District Newsletter

Summer, 2006

### Eighteenmile Creek Watershed Project Update

The Spring of 2006 saw the Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District complete the first round of streambank stabilization projects through the Eighteenmile Creek Partnership Program. Utilizing grant funds secured through the Environmental Protection Fund, a total of three projects repaired over 700 linear feet of severely eroding streambanks located throughout the Town of Boston.



Site before construction

These projects focused on the protection of public and private property through the installation of rock riprap as a hard-armoring treatment. After heavy construction was completed, the District mobilized a crew of USDA NRCS Earth Team volunteers to establish beneficial riparian plantings and bioengineering techniques including 700 live stakes, 400 feet of fascines and brush-layering methods. The District extends its thanks to all the volunteers, landowners, public officials and contractors for their diligent efforts in reducing streambank erosion and sedimentation and improving water quality and aquatic habitat in the Eighteenmile Creek Watershed.



Site after installation of rock riprap

The District has already started surveys for the next group of high priority sites with designs to be developed over the winter and project installation slated for the 2007 construction season. Future project sites will be located in Concord, Eden, North Collins, Orchard Park and Hamburg.

### District Receives Agricultural Grant for Cattaraugus Creek Ag Implementation Project



In the fall of 2005, the Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District submitted a grant application to the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets under the NYS Agricultural Non-point Source Abatement and Control Grant Program. The District received official notification that this application, *The Cattaraugus Creek Agricultural Implementation Project*, was successful. This project will provide a total of \$120,588.00 in state cost-share funding to four landowners in the Cattaraugus Creek watershed to implement best management practices (BMP's) on their farms. BMP's scheduled for implementation include: the construction of milkhouse waste treatment systems, silage leachate management systems, barnyard water management systems, laneway development, alternate water supply system, diversion system and fencing for livestock exclusion.

These practices were identified and prioritized through a tiered planning process called Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM). Tier 1 assessments, which include a summary of current and future farm activities and potential environmental concerns, were completed by 118 landowners. Subsequently, 25 farmers completed the Tier II assessment which included an on-site visit by the District to document environmental stewardship and to determine areas for potential improvement. Next, the District developed conservation plans (Tier IIIA) on 18 priority farms in the watershed.

This year the District and participating farmer operations will begin the Tier IV implementation phase where the District will perform topographical surveys of the areas to be improved by BMP implementation, and prepare designs and construction specifications. The District will also assist landowners in securing bids and inspecting construction activities. It is anticipated that construction will take place in the 2007 and 2008 construction seasons.

The final phase of the project (Tier V) will evaluate the results of AEM conservation efforts to protect the environment and sustain the viability of the farm business.

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#### PUBLIC NOTICE

Erie County Soil & Water Conservation District's Board Meeting is held at the USDA Service Center on the second Tuesday of every month at 9:00 A.M.

#### 2006 Tree and Shrub Program Results 51,280 Trees & Shrubs Planted

The District had another great year with the annual Tree & Shrub Seedling Sale. Through the program a total of 51,280 tree and shrub seedlings and transplants were distributed to Erie County residents.

Thank you to all of our customers who are actively involved in conserving our natural resources, enhancing our forestry resources and for developing and caring for wildlife habitat in Erie County.

# NRCS 2007 Program Sign-ups

While we do not yet know what funds will be available for federal conservation programs in New York State during fiscal year 2007, we expect funds will be available for most or all of the following programs:

- EQIP** – Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- WHIP** – Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program
- WRP** – Wetland Reserve Program
- FRPP** – Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (municipalities and land trusts only)
- GRP** – Grassland Reserve Program
- AMA** – Agricultural Management Assistance Program
- CSP** – Conservation Security Program (make sure you have recent soil tests on all cropland)
- CRP Buffers** – Conservation Reserve Program Cont. Sign-up (FSA administered)
- CREP** – Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (FSA administered)

For more information on these and other programs visit: [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov) and select the “Programs” along the top of the page. We can take sign-ups for many of these programs at any time though processing will be delayed until we know more about funding. Please contact the East Aurora NRCS office if you would like to start the sign-up process for one or more of the USDA soil and water conservation programs.

*The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) prohibit discrimination in its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or familial status.*

## Appointment of Legislators Robert B. Reynolds, Jr. & John J. Mills to District Board



Honorable  
Robert B. Reynolds, Jr.



Honorable  
John J. Mills

## The Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District is pleased to welcome Erie County Legislators Robert B. Reynolds, Jr. and John J. Mills to the ECSWCD Board of Directors



Mr. Reynolds represents District #12 which encompasses Hamburg, Evans, Eden, Boston, Brant & North Collins. In addition to his involvement with numerous service related activities such as Vice President of UAW Local 987 and Coordinator of Ford Total Productive Maintenance Program, Mr. Reynolds presently serves on the Hamburg Central School Board. He is committed to maintaining an active role within the community and in getting out and meeting the constituents of Erie County. Mr. Reynolds is a lifelong resident of the Southtowns and presently resides in Hamburg with his wife, Diane and their youngest daughter, Catherine. He has two other daughters, Holly & Jennifer.

Mr. Mills represents District #13 which includes the communities of Aurora, Colden, Collins, Concord, Orchard Park, Springville, Gowanda and West Falls. A lifelong resident of Western New York, Mr. Mills is the President of J. Mills Distributing Company, a successful food distribution company. It is a family operated business, where he works with his wife, Barbara, and his three children, Kim, Jim and John. He is also the proud grandfather of three grandchildren. In addition to 30 years of government service, Mr. Mills is very active in his community. He remains an active member of numerous service related organizations such as the American Legion, Western New York Food Bank, Orchard Park Chamber of Commerce, Shriners, Masons, Lions and many more. Mr. Mills is also very visible across the 13th District, attending meetings, community events and addressing individual concerns. If you see him, please stop him and let him know how Erie County can serve you.

## New Employee Profiles

Melanie J. Saunders is the new Secretary/Treasurer for the Board and the District and brings with her a combination of 10 years of secretarial and banking experience. But most importantly, she spends her time with her husband, Rick, and their four children. The eldest is Ricky, a junior at Orchard Park High School, who is aspiring to be a Broadway star. Brittany, a freshman who is in the select choir, plays the flute and has interest in vocal performances. Third in line is Tiara, a 5th grader at Ellicott Elementary who loves playing soccer and the clarinet. Last but not least, Stephanie is a 2nd grader who loves to draw and play the piano. Melanie and her family reside in West Falls, New York. In her spare time (if there is any) Melanie teaches 1st Grade Religious Education classes at St. George's. She is looking forward to joining in the District's conservation efforts but for right now will focus on the financial aspects of her job.



Craig Domanowski joins the District as a Water Quality Technician. Craig is a native of Lancaster, New York and a 2004 graduate of North Carolina State University where he majored in Agricultural & Environmental Technology with a minor in Crop Science. In his spare time, he enjoys riding his four-wheeler, hiking, fishing and working on his uncle's farm tilling, planting, baling hay and harvesting crops. He presently resides in East Aurora, New York where he uses his time off to maintain a lawn care business. Craig has a girlfriend, Elizabeth, who loves horses and manages the Pheasant Run Stables. He is looking forward to implementing all of his knowledge of farming and applying it to the District's agricultural programs.



The ECSWCD welcomes Soil Conservationist, Scott Cook, to the East Aurora NRCS Field Office. He began working with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in September of 2004 beginning in the Cattaraugus County office in Ellicottville. He transferred to the East Aurora field office in September of 2005. Scott is originally from Indiana but has resided in Seattle, Washington for many years prior to joining NRCS. He has had prior experience with the U.S. Forest Service as a fire rehabilitation specialist. He has a degree in zoology with a minor in forest resources from University of Washington. Scott is married with two children. Scott is working on a variety of soil and water conservation projects and programs with a focus on grazing systems, the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and buffer strips. He is an avid hiker and backpacker. It is great to have Scott as part of the Erie County team.





**Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District  
2006 Fish Stocking Order Form - Trout**

**Order Deadline:  
October 23, 2006**

Species	Price	Qty Ordered	Cost
3-5" Rainbow Trout	25 fish for \$38.00	_____	_____
3-5" Brook Trout	25 fish for \$38.00	_____	_____



Name _____	Subtotal \$ _____
Address _____	TOTAL ORDER \$ _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____	_____
Phone _____	_____

**Pickup: 10:00 AM  
November 4, 2006**

## Fall Trout Stocking



The District's annual fish stocking program continues with a fall distribution of rainbow and brook trout

To order trout, please send the above order form and check or money order payable to:  
Erie County SWCD, 50 Commerce Way, East Aurora, N.Y. 14052

**FISH WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR PICK-UP on November 4, 2006 10:00 AM ONLY**

## Farm Assessments Available to New York's Farmers

The State is offering free and confidential assessments for farm operations as part of the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Program. These farm assessments, offered by county Soil and Water Conservation Districts, focus on the assets and liabilities of your operation including land management, nutrient and pesticide management, and environmental risk limitation.

This unique opportunity has come about as a result of New York State's AEM Program, which is a partnership of farmers, agricultural agencies, regulators, and interested groups working together to ensure the economic viability of New York's farms. By assessing their potential environmental risks and addressing them, the program serves as a preventative measure for avoiding citations issued by state regulatory agencies, improving relations with concerned neighbors, and generally improving the farm's impact on the environment.

"If it wasn't for the AEM program, I'd be out of business," said Mark Adams of Adam's Hen House in Ontario County. "AEM makes it possible to meet new, stricter regulations and remain competitive."

**What does this mean for you?**

Conducting an AEM farm assessment can help you to identify improvements that will save you money, minimize your farm's impact on the environment, and evaluate any risks to drinking water supplies on and around your farm. AEM assessments can identify many simple, low-cost practices that can significantly reduce risks, such as establishing vegetative buffers, fencing livestock from sensitive areas, and spreading manure on certain fields at a different time of the year.

The assessment will also document the sound environmental stewardship practiced on your farm, identify opportunities to improve neighbor relations, and reduce pressure for further regulation of agriculture.

Schoharie County dairy farmer John Radliff said, "It's a great program, and participation is a first step that can help farmers head off more stringent regulations."

If a concern is identified on your farm during the assessment process, it is your decision whether to implement recommended conservation practices. Frequently the solution is a no-cost management change that could actually save you money in the long run. If a financial investment is necessary to address a potential concern, this information will be useful to your long-term business planning. If you choose to correct the problem, AEM can help you to qualify for state and federal cost-share funding, as well as for green payments and farmland protection programs.

"In today's business climate, it is key to employ every available opportunity that serves to support the economic viability of farming," said John Kriese of Spring Pond Farm in Yates County. Your AEM farm assessment will provide you with sound information needed for long term business planning and help you to be better positioned in the marketplace both in New York State and nationwide.

To learn more or schedule a free and confidential AEM assessment of your farm, please contact Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District or visit NYS AEM website @ [www.agmkt.state.ny.us/soilwater/aem/index.html](http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/soilwater/aem/index.html).

Visit us online at [www.ecswcd.org](http://www.ecswcd.org)



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- Rosemary Bapst - At Large
- Robert B. Reynolds, Jr. - County Legislator
- John J. Mills - County Legislator

*Staff:*

- Mark C. Gaston, District Field Manager
- Melanie J. Saunders, Secretary/Treasurer
- Don Stribick, District Technician
- James Sroka, Water Quality Technician
- Craig Domanowski, Water Quality Technician

*USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service:*

- John Whitney, District Conservationist
- Michael Shinnick, Area I Ag. Engineer
- Scott Cook, Soil Conservationist

*Office Hours:*

- 7:30 AM - 5:00 PM Monday through Thursday
- 7:30 AM - 4:00 PM Friday

\* *The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U. S. Department of Agriculture, does not endorse the products or services advertised in this publication. Views and opinions expressed are not those of NRCS, USDA or the Federal Government.*

**Fish Stocking Order Form Inside**



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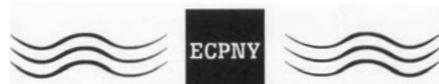
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