

Conservation Connections

Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District

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Semi-Annual District Newsletter

Summer, 2007



Inside this Edition

Envirothon	1,2
Stream Update	1,2
Help your Farm Grow AEM	2
Fish Stocking Form	3
Tree & Shrub Results	3
Web Soil Survey	3
Prescribed Grazing Systems	3



Mark your Calendar!

We welcome you to join us:

- **ECSWCD Board Meeting:**
June 19, 2007 at 9:00 AM @
USDA Service Center
- **WNY Earth Day Expo—June
23, 2007:** The annual Earth
Day Expo will be held at
the Buffalo Zoo from 10:00
AM—4:00 PM
- **ECSWCD Board Meeting:**
July 10, 2007 at 9:00 AM @
USDA Service Center
- **America's Fair—August 8-
19th 2007:** Visit our dis-
plays in the Conservation
and Grange Buildings at
the Hamburg Fairgrounds.
- **ECSWCD Board Meeting:**
August 14, 2007 at 9:00
AM @ USDA Service Center

ENVIROTHON 2007

On April 19th, 2007 a group of approximately 75 high school students were given the opportunity to connect with and learn from local natural resource professionals at Workshop Day at Chestnut Ridge Park.

The presenters included:

Forestry Workshop—Chris Enser, Forester,
NYS Depart. of Environmental Conservation

Aquatics Workshop—Mike Goehle, Biologist,
US Fish and Wildlife Service

Wildlife Workshop—Sandy Geffner, Director,
Earth Spirit Educational Services, Inc.

Soils Workshop— Don Owens, Soil Scientist,
Earth Dimensions, Inc.

Current Issue—Walter Simpson, Energy Officer,
University at Buffalo's Energy Department



Springville's winning team included Stephanie Schelble, Amanda Wach, Kim Hrycik, Allison Hrycik & Krista Kellner

Each team was required to give a brief, ten minute oral presentation on the 2007 current environmental issue, "What is the real cost of energy?." The presentation counts as part of the team's overall Envirothon score.

On May 8th 2007, the same group of students participated in Competition Day at Chestnut Ridge Park where they competed for the highest scores on the natural resource test categories at outdoor testing stations.

Continued on pg. 2

Stream Update Spring/Summer 2007

Most Erie County residents can easily recall what was going on in their lives on October 13th, 2006. The lake-effect snow storm impacted many people for weeks and months.

Once the snow was cleared, trees removed and power restored there still remained additional work to be done, specifically along our local creeks and streams. The Soil & Water Conservation District accepted the charge of coordinating stream debris removal efforts resulting from our memorable snow event. This undertaking saw the District working with many agencies including the Erie County Emergency Services & Department of Public Works, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the NY State Emergency Management Office, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and the Army Corps of Engineers. Assistance with debris assessments came from local municipal officials and emergency services personnel. Most towns had impacted waterways where debris removal had to be addressed with only southern Erie County escaping the wrath of the snow damage. Currently the stream clean-up work is progressing toward a



Riparian tree plantings and biotechnical stabilization techniques along Cayuga Creek in the Village of Lancaster

Continued on pg. 2

Envirothon.....continued from pg. 1



Holland students are collaborating on a soil test on Competition Day

Springville Griffith High School's team of students became the 2007 Erie County Envirothon champions with the highest collective scores in all categories. These talented students moved on to the New York State Envirothon, held May 23rd & 24th at SUNY Cobleskill where they placed 5th out of 53 teams. Congratulations Springville! First Place in the New York State Envirothon was won by Tioga County.

Participating schools included Holland, Orchard Park, East Aurora, Springville, Lakeshore and East High. All of the students should be commended for their efforts and for doing a fantastic job. The Erie County Soil & Water District Board of Directors and staff are grateful to all of the sponsors and volunteers who make the Envirothon possible. For more information on this program, contact Melanie Saunders at the District (716)652-8480.

Stream Update....continued from pg. 1

completion but will most likely continue throughout the summer. When not involved with stream debris removal, The District continues its' focus on water quality protection through multiple grant funded projects in the Buffalo and Eighteenmile creek watersheds. Earlier this spring, riparian plantings were installed at projects in Lancaster and Aurora to further enhance the stream corridors. Additional survey, design and construction is planned for streambank stabilization projects located in Alden, Boston, Concord, Eden and Elma. Is there a creek located along your property? Does it need your help? Did you know that most waterways in Erie County have been impacted by development over the years? The District encourages everyone to be proactive in protecting our local water resources. Visit the District website or stop into the office for information on simple practices anyone can apply to improve the health of your stream.



Stream debris in Ellicott Creek

HELP YOUR FARM GROW!

Conducting an **Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Risk Assessment** is a quick and easy way to take a comprehensive look at your farm's impact on natural resources and acquire information for long-term business planning. The assessment can help you document your environmental stewardship, prioritize areas presenting risk, identify opportunities to save money, and locate available resources to address potential concerns.

You can schedule a free, confidential assessment with the Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District. The first step will be completing an AEM Questionnaire and the AEM Watershed Site Evaluation Worksheet, with the help of conservation agency staff. The Watershed Site Evaluation Worksheet looks at your farm's specific location and site characteristics to determine which of the AEM Worksheets should be completed in order to focus on the water quality issues that are a priority for your farm.

Virtually identical farm operations in different locations might have entirely different environmental concerns. Perhaps your farmland drains to a stream with high sediment levels, or into a lake used as a drinking water supply where pathogens such as Giardia or Cryptosporidium are a concern. Perhaps it sits above an underground aquifer that already has elevated nitrogen levels. In each case, the assessment is tailored to focus on issues and opportunities important to your farm, and minimize the farm's impact on water quality.

The following are some of the AEM 'Core' Worksheets that may benefit your farm operation:

Manure Management - This worksheet looks at practices to maximize the benefits of manure as a crop nutrient source and soil conditioner, while minimizing the risk of pathogens, nutrients and organic material entering water bodies or contaminating water supplies. The worksheet also considers maintaining good neighbor relations and avoiding odor complaints.

Farmstead Water Supply - Determine if your water supply or neighboring wells are at risk for contamination. This worksheet evaluates how safe your well, or those around you are from being impacted by your farm activities.

Barnyards - Properly managing the concentrated nutrients in the barnyard reduces pollution risks, minimizes odor complaints and promotes livestock health. This worksheet addresses barnyard runoff and keeping clean water clean by diverting it away from the barnyard and other heavy use areas.

Stream and Floodplain Management - Protecting stream corridors not only improves habitat for fish and wildlife but also clearly demonstrates your concern for the environment to your neighbors and your community. This worksheet documents your efforts to protect nearby waters and identifies the many sources of funding available to promote stream health.

Pasture Management - Let your cows do the work! Well managed pasture can produce a high quality feed that can be very cost effective. This worksheet examines planning and management decisions that promote quality feed production, reduce production costs, prevent soil erosion and the risk of water quality degradation, while enhancing wildlife habitat.

Other worksheet topics include Soil Management, Petroleum Products Storage and Livestock Odor Management. There is also an Agriculture and the Community Worksheet, which addresses neighbor relations and can help add up the benefits that your farm provides to your community.

In addition to these Core Worksheets, there are specific worksheets tailored to Dairies, Greenhouse Operations, Vineyards and Horse Farms. All the AEM Worksheets are available on the web at: www.nys-soilandwater.org/aem/techtools.html

If you would like to schedule a free, confidential AEM Risk Assessment for your farm call us at the Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District office, 716.652.8480.

Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District
2007 Fish Stocking Order Form - BASS/MINNOW

Order Deadline:
July 16, 2007



Pickup: 10:00 AM
July 28, 2007

Species	Price	Qty Ordered	Cost
1-2" Largemouth Bass	25 fish for \$32.00	_____	_____
1-1.5" Fathead Minnows	25 fish for \$32.00	_____	_____

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

2007 Tree and Shrub Seedling Sale Results 51,000 Trees & Shrubs Planted

The District had another great year with the annual Tree & Shrub Seedling Sale. Through the program a total of 51,000 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.

If you would like to order seedlings in 2008, please call to add your name to our mailing list or check our website at www.ecswcd.org in January 2008 for the updated order form.



WEB SOIL SURVEY

The Web soil survey provides electronic access to full soil survey report content and provides access to the most current data.

<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov>

Web Soil Survey is a simple yet powerful way to analyze soil data in three basic steps.

1. DEFINE your area of interest
2. VIEW and print your soil map
3. EXPLORE your soil information



Prescribed Grazing Systems

With the high cost of fuel and feeds and with increased interest in organic and lower impact farming techniques, more and more Erie County farms are turning to prescribed grazing systems to meet a substantial part of their livestock forage needs.

In brief, most effective planned grazing systems (intensive rotational grazing) are managed to meet the following fundamental principles:

- Paddocks are sized to **balance the forage demand** with the production potential (carrying capacity) of the land
- Livestock forage and nutritional needs are carefully managed to **provide proper herd health** and to meet production goals
- Livestock are left on a single pasture or paddock for **no more than seven day grazing periods**
- The number of paddocks is sufficient to allow for **28 to 35 days of rest/regrowth**
- Early spring surplus forage is mechanically harvest or at least clipped so that summer production potential is not impaired and **excess forage is not wasted**
- Animals are not allowed unrestricted access to waterbodies

Typical components of successful planned grazing systems include:

- Improved animal trails and walkways
- Additional fencing (usually electrified high tensile fencing but other fencing systems can work)
- Filter strips and buffers along streams
- Spring development or other watering facility improvements
- Pipelines for water distribution to paddocks

Prescribed grazing systems are successfully being used for dairy cattle, beef, sheep, horses, goats, bison, llamas and alpacas.

Technical assistance is available to help with planning and implementation of prescribed grazing systems. Financial assistance may also be available through various cost-sharing programs with landowner costs reduced to 25-50% of the total practice or project cost. The **Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)** and the **Agricultural Management Assistance Program (AMA)** are the two USDA programs that are currently being used to provide cost-sharing assistance. The **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)** can sometimes provide additional financial support for fencing and watering systems as part of riparian buffer projects. State grant funds may also be available. Contact the East Aurora NRCS & SWCD office for further information or for planning and cost-sharing application assistance.

Visit us online at www.ecswcd.org



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 50 Commerce Way
 East Aurora, New York 14052-2185

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- 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

Office Hours:

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

The Natural Resources Conservation Service

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Fish Stocking Order Form Inside

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District Products and Services

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DOQQ Prints (8 1/2 X 11)	\$ 1.00
Bluebird Nest Houses	\$ 11.00
Bat Houses	\$ 12.00
Wood Duck Nest Houses	\$ 23.00
Marking Flags, Fertilizer Tablets	\$.10
Tree Shelters—5 foot	\$ 4.62
Tree Shelters—3 foot	\$ 3.33
Finder Pocket Field Guides	\$ 4.00
Bird Watcher's Digests	\$ 3.00
Fish Management in NY Ponds	\$ 5.00

Add 8.75% sales tax to above items

On site Evaluation & Pond Layout	\$600.00
Soil Group Worksheets	\$ 35.00
Technical Assistance Available	

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