

# Conservation Connections

## Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District

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[www.ecswcd.org](http://www.ecswcd.org)



Semi-Annual District Newsletter

January, 2006

## Conservation District Receives Grant for Eighteenmile Creek Ag:

In the fall of 2004, the Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District (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 Program. The District received official notification that this application, *The Eighteenmile Creek Agricultural Implementation Project*, was successful. This project will provide a total of \$341,765 in state cost-share funding to nine landowners in the Eighteenmile Creek watershed to implement agricultural best management practices (BMPs) on their farms. BMPs scheduled for implementation include: barnyard runoff management, silage leachate control, milkhouse waste control, fencing along streams and waste storage facilities.

These practices were identified and prioritized through a tiered planning process call Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM). Tier I assessments, which include a summary of current and future farm activities, existing environmental stewardship, and potential environmental concerns were completed by 298 landowners. Subsequently, 52 farmers completed the Tier II assessment which includes 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 III) on 9 priority farms in the watershed.

*Continued on page 2...*

## District Assists Erie County Highway Department:

The Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District has been working since 2002 on a County-wide Stream Maintenance Program in cooperation with the Erie County Highway Department.



*Sites of erosion, including grade control and bank stabilization, jeopardizing public infrastructure caused by storm events in 2004, such as the one shown above in the Town*

The program was originally designed to enable the District to assist the Highway Department in removing obstructions to stream flow beneath county bridges. This partnership effort helps prevent localized flooding, loss of public and/or private property and damage to bridges.

Last year the District took another step in assisting the Erie County Highway Department by addressing six sites where storm events in 2004 had caused serious erosion concerns, jeopardizing Erie County owned and maintained bridges.

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### This could be your last issue of *Conservation Connections*!

The current issue of *Conservation Connections* is available on our website! We encourage you to view future issues of our newsletter online to help us save valuable natural resources.

If you would like to continue receiving the newsletter by mail, please notify us at [info@ecswcd.org](mailto:info@ecswcd.org) or by phone at 652-8480.

Check out [www.ecswcd.org](http://www.ecswcd.org) for past issues of our newsletter, project updates, publications and much more! ♦

### Conservation Tree and Shrub Seedling Program

The District's annual Conservation Tree and Shrub Seedling Program is underway — order early for best selection.

#### Order Form Inside!

32 varieties of seedlings including:  
 Hardwoods ▪ Evergreens ▪ Shrubs ▪ American Chestnuts

7 varieties of transplants including:  
 White Pine ▪ Douglas Fir ▪ Blue Spruce ▪ Norway Spruce  
 Fraser Fir ▪ White Spruce ▪ American Arborvitae

Seedling combination packs for attracting wildlife including:  
 Native NY Wildlife ▪ Bird & Butterfly ▪ Nut Tree ▪ Homeowner

Wildflower seed mixes  
 Fertilizer tablets ▪ Marker flags ▪ Tree shelters

Deadline for Ordering:  
 March 24, 2006

## Eighteenmile Creek Ag Continued:

This spring, the District and participating farmers will begin the Tier IV implementation phase which is being made possible by the *Eighteenmile Creek Ag Implementation Project*. 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 2006 and 2007 construction seasons.

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

"Participation in this program has been excellent", stated Francis Gernatt, District Board Chairman, "The farmers in the Eighteenmile Creek Watershed are to be commended for their voluntary participation in this program to preserve and protect soil and water resources."

This project will build upon Federal Farm Bill Program BMP implementation efforts that have been completed to date in this watershed. The USDA, NRCS is nearing the completion of FY 2000 EQIP contracts on twelve priority farm operations and a number of farms in this watershed have also been approved for AMA or EQIP assistance under 2001 and/or 2004 contracts. In order to help additional farm operations that did not receive funding under AMA or EQIP and to maximize the environmental benefits of the Farm Bill Programs in this watershed, the District is providing this cost-sharing opportunity to implement additional BMPs on the nine farm operations in this project.

## CLEANSWEEP NY PROGRAM BEING OFFERED TO ERIE, GENESEE, NIAGARA, ORLEANS AND WYOMING COUNTIES IN 2006

CleanSweep NY is an effort to remove cancelled, unwanted, unusable, or otherwise obsolete pesticides from holders who may have originally purchased these products during the course of agricultural or non-agricultural business activity. This event is not for the general public who can safely dispose of unwanted pesticides at Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days.

Collections are targeted for the week of April 24, 2006 for the counties of Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans and Wyoming for obsolete pesticides, mercury manometers and empty metal and plastic containers.

Participants must enroll in advance of the CleanSweep Collections by April 14, 2006. For any items that are unknown, have missing labels or suspect packaging, participants must enroll by March 31, 2006.

There is no cost and no limitation on quantity of obsolete pesticides or containers that production agriculture or historical agricultural sites have for disposal. For non-agricultural production applicators, the first 100 lbs of obsolete pesticides will be accepted free of charge; quantities over 100 lbs will be charged on site at the contractor's per pound rate. This fee will be considerably less than an individual's procurement of a hazardous waste service. There may be some restrictions for metal/rigid plastic containers recycled through this program.

The CleanSweep NY program is managed by a private contractor. ***There is no enforcement potential for any data or product turned in as part of this program.***

Enrollment forms may be obtained from your local DEC Pesticide Office, or requested by email at [info@cleansweepny.org](mailto:info@cleansweepny.org) or by contacting the tollfree CleanSweep Information line at 1-

## High School Students & Teachers:

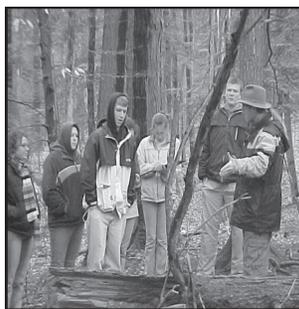
### ***Sign Up Now for the 2006 Erie County Envirothon!***

If you are an Erie County high school student interested in the outdoors or environmental science, the Envirothon is an ideal opportunity for you! Coordinated by the District, the Erie County Envirothon is an annual, hands-on environmental studies competition that brings students from throughout the county together for a unique and rewarding outdoor experience.

Participants in the Envirothon learn about and are challenged in the subjects of forestry, wildlife, aquatics, soils, and a current issue topic. This year's current issue topic is "Water Stewardship in a Changing Climate." To prepare for the Envirothon, students study the various Envirothon topics with help from local natural resource field professionals such as ecologists, conservationists, biologists, foresters, soil scientists and field technicians from local environmental agencies. During the competition, students work as a team to achieve the highest score in the Envirothon test categories. All students are rewarded for participation; the winning team of students at the Erie County Envirothon earns the privilege of advancing to the New York State Envirothon to be held at SUNY Oswego on May 24 and 25th, where they will compete against local Envirothon winners from counties throughout the state. The winning team at the New York State Envirothon qualifies for the Canon National Envirothon – North America's largest environmental competition.



2004 Envirothon participants enjoyed a live owl exhibit.



An ecologist teaches participants about forest ecology and wildlife.

At both the State and National levels, top-scoring teams have the opportunity to win college scholarships.

Not only is the Envirothon a unique chance for students to spend a day enjoying the outdoors while working as a team, it is an excellent opportunity to interact with and learn firsthand from local field professionals. The Envirothon is a helpful supplement to environmental or natural science curriculum, and fosters the development of students' research, teamwork, and professional skills. It is an internationally recognized program, and compliments students' college applications and resumes. Past Envirothon participants have described the program as a "rewarding and fun" learning experience with "unique field experiences that allow students to use teamwork to achieve a common goal in the environment."

We hope that you will join us for this year's Envirothon to be held at Chestnut Ridge Park on April 6<sup>th</sup> and April 27<sup>th</sup>. For more information or to register for the 2006 Erie County Envirothon, please contact the District office at 652-8480 or visit the District's website at [www.ecswcd.org](http://www.ecswcd.org). Further information on the New York State Envirothon is available at [www.nysenvirothon.org](http://www.nysenvirothon.org). ♦

# 2006 CONSERVATION TREE & SHRUB SEEDLING PROGRAM

**ORDER BY MARCH 24, 2006.** Seedling orders are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. As we have no control over the weather or your choice of planting sites, times or techniques, the Erie County SWCD will not be responsible for your trees and shrubs after they leave our distribution center. A fee will be applied for returned checks. No refunds will be offered for orders not picked-up. **Keep this section for your records. Return only the order form.**

<b>GROWTH RATE:</b> ↑ Fast → Moderate ↓ Slow	<b>LIGHT PREFERENCE:</b> ☀ Full Sun ☉ Partial Sun ● Shade
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<b>ADAPTATIONS / BEST USES:</b>	
🌿 Wetlands 🌲 Christmas Trees E Erosion Control	L Windbreak W Wood Products ➤ Wildlife Food and Cover

VARIETY	GROWTH RATE	MATURE HEIGHT	SOIL PREFERENCE	LIGHT PREFERENCE	ADAPTATIONS/ BEST USES
Blue Spruce	↓	30 – 60'	Rich, moist	☀ ☉ L 🌲	

WILDLIFE ATTRACTING SEEDLING PACKS		QTY	COST
<b>Native NY Wildlife:</b>	2 each - White Pine, River Birch, Black Cherry, White Spruce, Serviceberry, Red Osier Dogwood	\$14	
<b>Homeowner Pack:</b>	2 each - Blue Spruce, Fraser Fir, Red Maple, Paper (White) Birch, Pin Oak	\$12	
<b>Nut Tree Pack:</b>	2 each - Black Walnut, Red Oak, Hazelnut, Butternut, Sawtooth Oak	\$12	
<b>Bird and Butterfly:</b>	2 each - Sassafras, Butterfly Bush, Common Lilac, American Elderberry, Highbush Blueberry - Jersey (Mid-Summer Fruiting)	\$14	

AMERICAN CHESTNUT		QTY	COST
American Chestnut	→ 70 – 90' Moist, sandy loam ☀ ☉ W ➤		

EVERGREEN TRANSPLANTS		QTY	COST
American Arborvitae	↓ 20 - 30' Deep, moist, sandy ☀ 🌿 L ➤		
White Pine	↑ 50 – 80' Fertile, moist, well-drained ☀ 🌿 L 🌲 W ➤		
Blue Spruce	↓ 30 – 60' Rich, moist ☀ ☉ L 🌲		
Norway Spruce	↑ 40 - 60' Acid, sandy, moist, well-drained ☀ ☉ L 🌲		
White Spruce	→ 40 – 60' Moist loam, alluvial, tolerant ☀ ☉ 🌿 L 🌲 ➤		
Douglas Fir	→ 40 – 80' Moist, well-drained, slightly acid ☀ 🌲		
Fraser Fir	↓ 30-40' Cool, moist, well-drained Loam ☀ ☉ 🌲 ➤		

EVERGREEN/CONIFER		QTY	COST
10 for \$8	30 for \$21	100 for \$60	500 for \$250
Austrian Pine	→ 50 – 60' Tolerates many soils ☀ ☉ L 🌲 ➤		
Red Pine	→ 50 – 80' Dry, acid, sandy, gravelly ☀ ➤ LW		
Scotch Pine	→ 30 – 60' Acidic, well-drained ☀ 🌲		
White Pine	↑ 50 – 80' Fertile, moist, well-drained ☀ 🌿 L 🌲 W ➤		
Blue Spruce	↓ 30 – 60' Rich, moist ☀ ☉ L 🌲		
Norway Spruce	→ 40 – 60' Acid, sandy, moist, well-drained ☀ ☉ L 🌲 W ➤		
White Spruce	→ 40 – 60' Moist loam, alluvial, ☀ ☉ 🌿 L 🌲 ➤		
Balsam Fir	↓ 45 – 75' Moist, well-drained, slightly acid ☀ ☉ 🌲		
Concolor Fir	↓ 30 – 50' Deep, rich, gravelly/sandy loam ☀ 🌲 W		
Douglas Fir	→ 40 – 80' Moist, well-drained, slightly acid ☀ 🌲		
Fraser Fir	↓ 30 – 40' Cool, moist, well-drained loam ☀ ☉ 🌲 ➤		
Hemlock	→ 40 – 70' Moist, well-drained, acid ☀ ☉ ● W ➤		
European Larch	↑ 70 – 90' Moist, well-drained ☀ 🌿 W ➤		

CONSERVATION SHRUBS		QTY	COST
10 for \$9	30 for \$24	50 for \$35	
Sargent Crabapple	→ 6 – 8' Well-drained ☀ ➤		
Red Osier Dogwood	↑ 7 – 9' Moist soils ☀ ☉ 🌿 E ➤		
American Elderberry	↑ 5 – 12' Moist soils, adaptable ☀ ☉ 🌿 ➤		
American Filbert (Hazelnut)	→ 8 – 18' Well-drained, loam, pH tolerant ☀ ☉ ➤		
Rugosa Rose	↑ 4 – 6' Fertile, slightly acid loam, salt tolerant ☀ E		
Shadblow Serviceberry	→ 6 – 20' Moist, well-drained ☀ ☉ 🌿 ➤		
Streamco Willow	↑ 12 – 15' Moist, slightly acid ☀ ☉ ● 🌿 E		

BROADLEAF DECIDUOUS		QTY	COST
10 for \$9	30 for \$24	50 for \$35	
Paper (White) Birch	↑ 50 – 70' Moist, acid, well-drained loam ☀ W ➤		
River Birch	↑ 40 – 70' Moist, acid ☀ ☉ 🌿 ➤		
Black Cherry	→ 50 – 60' Deep, moist, fertile ☀ W ➤		
Red Maple	→ 40 – 60' Moist, slightly acid, tolerant ☀ ☉ 🌿 W ➤		
Sugar Maple	↓ 60 – 75' Well-drained, fertile ☀ ☉ W		
Northern Red Oak	↑ 60 – 75' Well-drained/sandy, slightly acid ☀ W ➤		
White Oak	↓ 50 – 80' Deep, well-drained, moist, acid ☀ W ➤		
Hybrid Poplar	↑ 80' + Moist, silty or loamy ☀ 🌿 ➤		
Sycamore	↑ 75 – 100' Deep, moist, rich soils ☀ ☉ 🌿		
Tuliptree	↑ 70 – 90' Deep, moist, well-drained loam ☀ W ➤		
Black Walnut	↑ 50 – 75' Deep, moist, rich soils ☀ W ➤		

**BARE ROOT SEEDLINGS RANGE IN SIZE FROM 6 – 24 INCHES**



## Highway Continued:

Realizing the damage that these storm events had caused the County Highway Department applied for and received financial assistance to address the damage from the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA).

The District was contracted to survey the project sites and design projects to restore all six sites to a pre-storm condition. Designs were prepared by the District and reviewed by the USDA, Natural Resource Conservation Service. Site showings were held and the projects were let to qualified contractors to complete the work while District staff inspected their work to insure the projects were built to specifications.



Sites of erosion, including grade control and bank stabilization, jeopardizing public infrastructure caused by storm events in 2004, such as the one shown above in the Town of Concord, were addressed.

In 2005 all heavy construction on the six projects was completed. This spring plant materials will be incorporated into the project sites to add another layer of protection and improve the environmental benefits of reducing erosion and protecting water quality. ♣

## Agricultural Assessment Program:

Land in agricultural production may be eligible for a reduction in property taxes if your town assessor determines that the following requirements are met:

Land, owned by you and/or rented to an operator, must consist of 7 or more acres in a single operation that was used in the preceding two years for the production for sale of crops, livestock, or livestock products. Horse-boarding operations may qualify with certain eligibility requirements.

Proceeds from sales of agricultural products in a single operation must average \$10,000 or more for the preceding two years.

The agricultural assessment is based on the productivity of the soils. The District provides the soils information for the agricultural assessment application through a "soils group worksheet."

Continuous Sign-ups Accepted!!!

Phone 652-8480 or Stop by for More Information

### USDA Wetland Reserve Program -

wetland restoration and conservation easements

### Fish & Wildlife Service Partners for Wildlife -

small wetland restoration or creation projects

### USDA Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program -

10 year grassland habitat improvement contracts

### USDA Conservation Reserve Program Buffer Strips -

10-15 year shoreline and streamside planting contracts

## Work Proceeds on Eighteenmile Creek Streambank Stabilization Partnership:

The Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District has begun work to address streambank erosion problems in the Eighteenmile Creek Watershed. \$326,706 in state grant funds were secured by the District, made available through the Environmental Protection Fund. The state grant will be matched by funds from private landowners, participating municipalities, the District, and the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, bringing the total value of the project to \$654,000.

The project will implement structural or biotechnical streambank stabilization practices on properties where land, homes, public facilities and other structures are threatened by erosion. According to District Field Manager, Mark Gaston, "The Eighteenmile Creek Streambank Stabilization Partnership Program will have numerous environmental benefits including streambank erosion control, improved water quality, improved aquatic habitat, reduction in sedimentation, and increased recreational opportunities."



Site before construction

The ultimate goal of the District's effort is to protect both public and private property in the Eighteenmile Creek area while preserving its natural beauty and value as a wildlife habitat and community resource. Based on the outcome of an inspection that was completed in 2002, the District began the process to apply for cost share assistance to address high priority sites. The District functions as project administrator by administering project funds, providing design and cost estimates, supervising construction, and securing necessary permits.

Construction began in 2005 in the Town of Boston to restore over 250 linear feet of streambank on the Eighteenmile Creek that was threatening a housing complex. Debris had accumulated over the last few storm events which was also causing localized flooding problems. This project required the use of some form of heavy rock riprap because of the dangers they posed to health and human safety. Another newer technique in stream restoration, stream barbs, were also incorporated into the project design where appropriate to reduce project costs and the amount of heavy rock riprap that was necessary.

The District will put the finishing touches on this project in the Spring of 2006. Native shrub willow and dogwood plantings, utilizing specific planting techniques for the individual project, are slated for implementation to "soften" the project site. A combination of joint plantings, top of bank plantings, live stakes and wattles will be installed. The plantings are necessary to enhance the riparian corridor that was damaged or eliminated due to the erosion process and provide stream shade to cool water temperatures for aquatic habitat.

The District would like to extend thanks to all who were involved in making this project a success. The municipal officials, landowners, contractors and permit authorities involved in this project partnered effectively to reduce sedimentation and improve water quality in the Eighteenmile Creek Watershed. ♣



Site after construction

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

**Directors:**  
 Francis Gernatt - At Large  
 Calvin Kohn - Grange  
 Stanley Travis - Farm Bureau  
 Darlene Vogel - At Large  
 Rosemary Bapst - At Large  
 Jeanne Chase - County Legislator  
 Tim Wroblewski - County Legislator



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 Mark Gaston, District Field Manager  
 Don Stribick, District Technician  
 James Sroka, Water Quality Technician

**USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service:**  
 John Whitney, District Conservationist  
 Michael Shinnick, Area I Ag. Engineer  
 Scott Cook, Soil Conservationist

District Board meetings are held at 9:30 AM on the second Tuesday of each month.

**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.

**2006 Conservation  
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 Seedling Program  
 Order Form Inside**



*Conservation Connections* is a semi-annual publication of the Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District. Advertiser support helps to make this newsletter possible. Remember these businesses when you need the products, services and expertise they offer.

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**District Products and Services**

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Bluebird Nest Boxes	\$11.00
Bat Houses	\$12.00
Wood Duck Nest Boxes	\$23.00
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Tree Shelters - 5 foot	\$ 4.62
Tree Shelters - 3 foot	\$ 3.33
Finder Pocket Field Guides	\$ 6.00
Bird Watcher's Digests	\$ 3.00
Fish Management in NY Ponds (CCE #116)	\$ 5.00
Guidelines for Urban Erosion & Sediment Control (1997 edition)	\$25.00
<i>Add 8.25% sales tax to above items</i>	
On-Site Evaluation & Pond Layout	\$600.00
Soil Group Worksheets (per parcel)	\$ 15.00

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