

# Conservation Connections

## Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District

50 Commerce Way, East Aurora, New York 14052-2185  
Telephone: (716) 652-8480 Fax: (716) 652-8506  
www.ecswcd.org



Semi-Annual District Newsletter

Summer 2004

## Springville High School wins 2004 Erie County Envirothon

Congratulations to Springville High School – the 2004 Erie County Envirothon champions! The Erie County Envirothon was held on April 29th at Chestnut Ridge Park. Teams of high school students from throughout Erie County competed to achieve the highest score in the Envirothon test categories of aquatics, soils, forestry, wildlife, and the 2004 current issue “Natural Resource Management in the Urban Environment.”



The Springville team celebrates its victory. Shown above are advisors Eunice Reinhold and Matt Clayton with students Janelle Hrycik, Ken Kellner, Aaron Krolikowski, Justin Proctor, Jennifer Rothfuss and alternates Andrew Gross, Kim Hrycik, and Ty Hess.

Springville’s winning team advanced to the New York State Envirothon, held on May 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> at SUNY Morrisville, where they competed against other Envirothon winners from counties throughout New York State. The Springville team performed outstandingly throughout the competition, placing 7<sup>th</sup> out of 52 teams, and receiving a perfect score on the Current Issue category test. Great job Springville High School! For more information on the New York State Envirothon, visit [www.nysenvirothon.org](http://www.nysenvirothon.org).

Schools participating in the 2004 Erie County Envirothon included Bishop Timon St. Jude High School, Holland High School, Immaculata Academy, Lakeshore Central High School, Orchard Park High School, Park School, Springville-Griffith Institute, and Williamsville North High School. The Erie County Envirothon is held annually and is open to all high schools in Erie County. For more information on the Envirothon please contact the District at 716-652-8480 or visit us online at [www.ecswcd.org](http://www.ecswcd.org).

The Envirothon strives to ensure the success of tomorrow’s conservation efforts by fostering environmental stewardship in today’s students. The District is grateful to the following sponsors who generously contributed to this investment in our future:

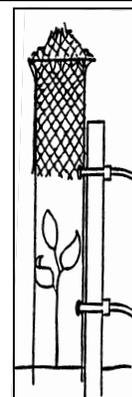
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## 66,000 Trees and Shrubs Planted

The District had another great year with the annual Tree and Shrub Seedling Sale. Through the program a total of 66,000 tree and shrub seedlings and transplants were distributed to Erie County residents. Thank you to all our customers. Remember that you have purchased starter plants and the more care and protection you provide to them the better your results will be.

The District is grateful for the help and support of the following: AmeriCorps of West Seneca, Master Gardeners of Erie County Cornell Cooperative Extension, Market In the Square of West Seneca, Tops Market of East Aurora, Jubilee Market of East Aurora, Masterson’s Garden Center and SWCD volunteers.



### Protect your investment with TREE SHELTERS\*

Available in 5 foot and 3 foot lengths!  
Each tree shelter tube comes with a support stake, ties and bird net

- Increase the success rate of plantings
- Encourage healthy growth
- Reduce animal, wind and mowing damage
- Conserve moisture
- Support maturing trees

\* For broadleaf deciduous trees only

\* Available at District Office year-round

## Attention Agricultural Operators in Northern Erie County

*Would you like to do more to help protect soil and water?*



The Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District is conducting farm visits in the Tonawanda Creek Watershed to work with farm operators to review conservation efforts and how they are helping to protect water quality.

District Technicians will introduce you to *Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM)*, a method for evaluating what you are already doing to conserve natural resources and for identifying conservation practices that you could implement to further your stewardship efforts. **This opportunity is voluntary, free and confidential.**

With the rapidly changing character of our rural areas this is a good time to think about conservation planning on your farm operation. Please call the District Office at 652-8480 to begin the process. ♣

## District Welcomes New Board Member—Legislator Raymond Dusza



The Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District is pleased to welcome Erie County Legislator Raymond Dusza to its Board of Directors.

As Legislator of District #8 representing South Cheektowaga, the Village of Depew, and Lancaster, Mr. Dusza maintains an active role within the community. In addition to his involvement with numerous fraternal, civic and church organizations, Mr. Dusza currently serves as a ranking member on the Legislature's Energy and Environment and Public Safety Committees and is the former chairman of the Legislature's Government Affairs Committee.

He has actively advocated at County Hall for issues such as public awareness drug prevention, domestic violence and child abuse, rehabilitation/services for the disabled, education/employment training and other agency programs sponsored by various Erie County departments including Social Services and Youth and Veterans' Services.

The District looks forward to Legislator Dusza's involvement on the Board of Directors. ♣

## Fish In Search Of Ponds



Get your fishing poles ready! The District is currently accepting orders for the summer distribution of largemouth bass and fathead minnows as part of the annual fish-stocking program.

Largemouth bass perform well for sport fishing in ponds that are one-sixth acre or larger. Feeder fish should also be stocked for the bass. Bass are initially stocked at rate of 100 per surface acre (43,560 square feet) and fathead minnows at a rate of 400

per surface acre.

Ideally minnows should be stocked one year before a new introduction of bass. If minnows are stocked at the same time as bass, it is recommended to increase stocking to 1000 minnows or more per 100 bass due to predation. It's also a good idea to provide habitat and hiding places or a nursery area for the minnows to develop in.

Additional information about fish stocking can be found in the Cornell Cooperative Extension Information Bulletin #116 *Fish Management in New York Ponds* which can be purchased at Erie County Cooperative Extension (phone 652-5400 ext 160), or at the District office.

A pond stocking permit from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is necessary to stock pond fish. The NYS DEC application is available on the District website along with more order forms and fish stocking information.

To order bass and/or minnows, please send the above order form and a check or money order payable to Erie County SWCD, 50 Commerce Way, East Aurora, NY 14052. ♣

***Fish will be available for pickup on Saturday, July 10, 2004 at 10:00 AM ONLY.***

### Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District 2004 Fish Stocking Order Form - Bass/Minnows

**Order Deadline:  
June 25, 2004**

Species	Price	Qty Ordered	Cost
1-2" Largemouth Bass	25 fish for \$22.00	_____	\$ _____
1-1.5" Fathead Minnows	100 fish for \$17.00	_____	\$ _____

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Subtotal \$ \_\_\_\_\_

+ 8.25% Sales Tax \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL ORDER \$ \_\_\_\_\_**



**Pickup Date:  
July 10, 2004**

## Mark Your Calendar! (We'll be there!)

### ◆ Erie County Fair - August 12 to 22

Visit our displays in the Conservation Building and Grange Building at the Hamburg Fairgrounds and sign up for the tree and shrub seedling giveaway drawing.

### ◆ WNY Earth Day Expo - August 15

The annual Earth Day Expo will be held at the Buffalo Zoo again this summer, featuring children's activities, earth-friendly displays, food, music, animals and more! This event is great for families and is free with Zoo admission. Sponsored by WNY Earth Day and the Buffalo Zoo. Call 716-634-1038 for more information or visit [www.wnyearthday.org](http://www.wnyearthday.org).



## Spotlight on New District Staff: Dan Bennett

The District Board and Staff are pleased to welcome Dan Bennett to the new position of Assistant Civil Engineer. Dan is a native of Cowlesville, New

York and a graduate of Tri-State University in Indiana. In his spare time, Dan enjoys playing hockey, snowmobiling and spending time outdoors. He is looking forward to joining in the District's conservation efforts in Erie County, and will focus primarily on streambank stabilization projects. ◆

## Sign Up Now for Soil and Water Conservation Financial Assistance

### Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)

- Permanent Conservation Easements
- 30-Year Conservation Easements
- 10-Year, Restoration Agreements without conservation easements

### Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

- Financial assistance for enhancement and maintenance of habitat for grassland birds

### Buffer Strips Initiative (through Continuous Sign-up CRP)

- 10 to 15-year contracts for establishing riparian, wellhead or floodplain buffers with 50% cost-sharing and annual "rental" payments

### Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- 60-75% cost-sharing for a wide variety of water quality and agricultural waste management practices

### Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)

- Permanent Conservation Easement to maintain land as grassland, pasture or hayland

### Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)

- 75% cost-sharing for erosion control or irrigation water conservation transition to organic farming & planned grazing systems

### Partners for Wildlife (through the US Fish and Wildlife Service)

- Cost-sharing assistance for wetland restoration or enhancement

For more information phone: 652-8480 (Natural Resources Conservation Service) or 652-1400 (Farm Service Agency). Additional information about USDA Conservation Programs is available on the NRCS web page: [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov) ◆

## Invasive Plants Watch out for Giant Hogweed!

Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*), an invasive exotic plant is quickly spreading throughout Erie County. Giant hogweed is especially serious because exposure of skin to the plant fluids can cause severe skin reactions in most people. The plant toxins work by altering skin cells' DNA so that the affected skin cannot protect itself from harmful UV radiation. Skin reactions begin with reddish, tingling blotches within a few hours of contact with plant sap *along with* exposure to ultraviolet light from the sun or other sources. Blisters begin forming within a day or two of exposure and by the third day, broken blisters begin oozing clear to yellowish fluids. Sound serious? That's not the end of it. Even with medical treatment, severe scarring and long-term or permanent purplish skin discoloration and sensitivity to sunlight is likely. The chemical compounds that cause the skin lesions are also known carcinogens.

Unfortunately, this plant is sometimes mistaken for closely related "look-a-likes" including cow parsnip, angelica, and water hemlock. Hogweed's distinctive tri-lobed, compound leaves are commonly 3-5 feet across. Umbrella-shaped white flower heads can be 18 to 24 inches in diameter. Two to four inch thick, hairy flower stalks with purple blotches can reach 15 to 20 feet in height in a single growing season. "It's like Queen Ann's Lace on growth hormones" say hogweed experts.

Eradication of giant hogweed is the goal. Since New York State does not have a noxious weed law which allows or requires removal of noxious plants by public officials, it is up to individual landowners and municipal workers to deal with the problem. Erie County has recently developed a giant hogweed removal protocol which has been shared with county highway workers and many town highway crews. County highway workers have been told to report areas of hogweed infestation, but they are not supposed to attempt removal of the plants themselves. Instead, Erie County has contracted with a private weed control company which will be called to out eradicate hogweed. Towns and villages can also use this same contractor.

Very careful mechanical control is an option, but is challenging. Ideally, hogweed plants should be removed before they flower and spread seeds. All plant parts should be carefully removed, bagged, and sent to a landfill. Herbicides such as glyphosate can be applied, often with repeated applications throughout the season or over a number of years in order to kill off regrowth or new seedlings. Gloves and protective clothing are required. **Hogweed control is best left up to professionals who may also use steam sprays or herbicides which can only be applied by licensed applicators.**

To report sightings of giant hogweed, call the NYS Agriculture and Markets NYS-HOTLINE at 1 (800) 554-4501 Ext. 2087. Internet users can type "giant hogweed" into their favorite web searching site for a long list of reference sites. Some recommended invasive species web pages include: <http://plants.usda.gov>, [www.ipcnys.org](http://www.ipcnys.org), [tncweeds.ucdavis.edu](http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu). ◆



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

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**Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District**  
 50 Commerce Way  
 East Aurora, New York 14052-2185

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 Megan Gollwitzer, District Technician  
 Philip Mogavero, GIS Analyst

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

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.



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