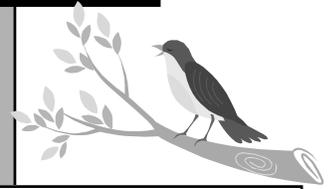


Conservation Connections

Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District

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Telephone: (716) 652-8480 Fax: (716) 652-8506
www.ecswcd.org



Semi-Annual District Newsletter

Summer, 2008



CONGRATULATIONS SPRINGVILLE!

The Erie County Soil & Water Conservation District appreciates the assistance and continued support of The Erie County Parks and Recreation Department to allow us use of the facilities at Chestnut Ridge Park to conduct our 2008 Erie County Envirothon. On May 1st, 2008, a total of 7 different area high schools consisting of 12 teams participated in the 2008 Erie County Envirothon.

On Competition Day the students were tested in five different areas of environmental studies. Aquatics, Forestry, Wildlife, Soils and the 2008 Current Issue statement: "Recreational Impacts on Natural Resources".

The final results are as follows: Overall 1st Place Team: Springville I, Overall 2nd Place Team: Springville II and Overall 3rd Place Team: Orchard Park I.

The District is grateful for the continued support of our conservation partners such as U.S. Fish & Wildlife, NYS Department of Conservation, Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Earth Dimensions, Earth Spirit Educational and Adirondack Mountain Club. It is our privilege to have such outstanding individuals from these agencies involved with our Envirothon.

Our sponsors this year included: M&T Bank, Erie County Parks & Recreation, Earth Dimensions, Malcom Pirnie, NY Forest Owners Association, S.C.O.P.E., Erie County Water Quality Committee, Panera Bread, Eastwood Industries, 3rd Rock, Fox Construction, Glen-Coe Conservation Society, Erie County Farm Bureau, Upstate Farms Cooperative, Dick's Sporting Goods, Tops & Wegmans Food Markets. The District appreciates the generosity of our sponsors, if it were not



Springville's winning 2008 Erie County Envirothon team included: Krista Kellner, Chelsea Savage, Allison Hrycik, Amanda Wach & Stephanie Schelble

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Important Dates:

- ECSWCD & NRCS booths at America's Fair at the Grange & Conservation Buildings from August 6th-17th, 2008
- Erie County Soil & Water Conservation District Board Meeting @ the USDA Service Center on the second Tuesday of every month at 9:30 AM
- Summer Bass & Minnow Stocking Program
Order Distribution Day:
July 26, 2008 at 10:00 A.M.



10 additional severe erosion sites will be addressed by Phase II of the Partnership Program.

DISTRICT EXPANDS CONSERVATION EFFORTS ON EIGHTEEN MILE CREEK

The Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District is pleased to announce the successful application for water quality improvement funding from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation for Phase II of the Eighteen-mile Creek Streambank Stabilization Partnership Program. The District has been awarded a grant through the Environ-

mental Protection Fund in the amount of \$292,342 to address additional streambank erosion problems in the Eighteenmile Creek Watershed. This state grant will be matched by funds from private landowners, participating municipalities and the District with additional technical assistance provided by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service. In combination with the Phase I grant from 2004, the District has secured approximately \$600,000 to implement best management practices on high priority erosion sites within the watershed. The total economic footprint of both Phase I and II Programs, when added to matching funds, will total over \$1.2 million dollars. This amount is impressive as well as essential when considering the intrinsic importance of the natural resources within the watershed for every person in Western New York.

Envirothon...continued from pg. 1

for them the Erie County Envirothon would not be possible. The 2008 NYS Envirothon was held on May 21st and 22nd at SUNY Cobleskill, Cobleskill, N.Y.. Springville represented Erie County at the NYS Envirothon and placed 6th overall out of 55 teams from across New York State. This talented team of students should be commended for their fantastic achievements.

The District is getting ready for another exciting program for next year, if you have interest or know of someone who would be interested in participating in the 2009 Erie County Envirothon, please call the District at 652-8480 or e-mail Melanie Saunders at melanie.saunders@ny.nacdnet.net for information on this worthwhile environmental program.



AEM PROGRAM PROGRESS & FUTURE GOALS FOR THIS COMING SEASON

Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) is a program offered by the Erie County Soil & Water Conservation District to help local farmers in our area evaluate what they are doing already to conserve our natural resources and also identify different conservation practices that would further improve their environmental stewardship. The AEM program uses a Tier process to evaluate each farm. Tier I of the program is a simple survey that is mailed out to the farmers that requests basic information about the farm operation such as farm type (dairy, beef, crop, equine), size (acres) and number of animals and farmers that submit completed surveys will be contacted by the District staff to set up an appointment for a Tier II farm visit. During the Tier II farm visit, District technicians will have the farmer give them a tour of the farm and explain how the farm is managed or run and from there bring to the farmers attention any areas of environmental concern on the farm and discuss with the farmer ways on how to address those concerns in an environmentally friendly manner. District and NRCS staff will then work with farmers in Tier III to develop conservation plans and preliminary designs for areas of concern on the farm as preparation for the District application to receive cost-share funds to implement these plans. Once the District receives cost share funding through State Grants, the farmers conservation plans developed in Tier III are implemented through Tier VI, where Best Management Practices (BMP's) are implemented or constructed on the farm. Then through Tier V of the AEM program the District comes back to the farm to evaluate the BMP's that were implemented on the farm for efficiency and effectiveness. Farmer and landowner participation in the planning process is required to be eligible for state ag non-point source and federal grant funds for cost sharing to implement the BMP's identified in the planning process.

The Erie County Soil & Water District recently completed its Education and Outreach portion of the AEM program (Tiers I, II, III) in the Eighteenmile Creek Watershed with 11 Tier I surveys being completed by local farmers, 14 Tier II farm site visits for environmental assessment and documentation of environmental stewardship were accomplished and conservation plans for 5 priority farms were completed. The District also assisted in implementation of BMP's on 3 farms in the watershed that previously had completed the planning process and were able to secure either State & Federal cost-share funding.

This coming Summer, Fall & Spring the District will be setting sites on Cattaraugus Creek and Seven Creeks Watersheds to start Education & Outreach with local farmers. 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.

CONGRATULATIONS!! Mark & Brandi Gaston

SOPHIA GRACE
June 2, 2008
6 lbs 8 oz



District Products and Services

USGS Topographic Maps	\$ 8.00
DOQQ Prints (81/2 X 11)	\$ 1.00
Bluebird Nest Houses	\$ 11.03
Bat Houses	\$ 11.95
Wood Duck Nest Houses	\$ 22.99
Marking Flags, Fertilizer Tablets	\$.10
Tree Shelters—5 foot	\$ 4.60
Tree Shelters—3 foot	\$ 3.22
Finder Pocket Field Guides	\$ 4.00
Add 8.75% sales tax to above items	
On site Pond Evaluation & Layout	\$ 600.00
Soil Group Worksheets	\$ 35.00
Additional Parcels	\$ 20.00

NYACD 2008 ANNUAL MEETING

The New York Association of Conservation Districts 2008 Annual Meeting will be held October 19-21, 2008 in Geneva, N.Y. Help us celebrate 50 years of service as soil and water conservation advocates and professionals. Meet state and local government representatives, county conservationists, technicians, engineers and educators through your sponsorship. Contact D. Vogel, dvreseda@aol.com for details and rates

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WETLANDS RESERVE PROGRAM

The East Aurora Field Office of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting applications for enrollment of eligible lands in the federal "Wetlands Reserve Program," according to NRCS District Conservationist, John Whitney. Whitney said approximately \$5 million is currently available for projects throughout New York State with additional funds anticipated in future years.

The Wetlands Reserve Program provides owners of currently or recently active agricultural land that was once wetland with three (3) options for restoring that land to wetland conditions. The first option is a 10 year restoration agreement which provides contract holders financial assistance of approximately 75% of the cost of any necessary wetland restoration work such as ditch plugs, tile line disruption, or shallow marsh excavation. The second option provided the same 75% cost sharing but adds a payment of approximately 75% of the appraised value of eligible land in exchange for establishing a 30 year conservation easement. The third option provides full payment for any necessary restoration work along with a payment of 100% of the appraised value of the eligible land in exchange for a permanent conservation easement.

Applications go through a ranking process as part of determining eligibility and funding needs. Applications which offer less than 10 acres or so tend not to rank as well said Whitney. If the land is already regulated as a State wetland it is also unlikely to rank well since the program objective is to restore currently or recently farmed land to wetland conditions, not simply to enroll land that is already protected wetlands. One of the first steps in determining eligibility involves checking what soils are mapped on the property under consideration, added Whitney. "If the soils are mapped as hydric soils, those areas have a high potential for meeting the eligibility requirements."

Erie County landowners interested in the Wetlands Reserve Program can contact the East Aurora NRCS and Soils & Water Conservation District Office at 652-8480. Owners of land in other counties can contact their local NRCS/SWCD office. More information about the federal Wetland Reserve Program is available at: www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp.

KENMORE FARMERS MARKET

The Kenmore Farmers Market opens Saturday, June 14th, from 8:00 AM–12 Noon on the village green, located on the corners of Delaware Avenue and Delaware Road. The market runs weekly until October 25th. This year the market is still looking for a few more fruit or vegetable farmers to add to our line up of local vendors and farmers. The market is small so everyone does well with additions of artisans and entertainment. The market will be an exciting place to be this year. The fee for the season is \$100.00. For more information please call Katie Burd 716-874-1784 or e-mail kkburd@verizon.net.



ECSWCD & NRCS NEWS:

- STORMWATER CONSTRUCTION GENERAL PERMIT (Update Released May 1, 2008)
- JAMES SROKA, DISTRICT TECHNICIAN, WINS NYS DISTRICT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION DIVISION I MERIT AWARD
- CHARLES KESTERSON WILL BE LEAVING THE NRCS EAST AURORA OFFICE TO TAKE THE SOIL CONSERVATIONIST POSITION AT THE NRCS ALBION OFFICE

2008 Tree and Shrub Program Results
51,450 Trees & Shrubs Planted

The District had another great year with the annual Tree & Shrub Seedling Sale. Through the program a total of **51,450** 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 2009, please call to add your name to our mailing list or check our website at www.ecswcd.org in January 2009 for the updated order form.



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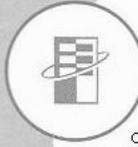
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John Whitney, District Conservationist
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Office Hours:

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

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