

NEW YORK ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS, INC.



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FYI...

NYACD NEWSLETTER • APRIL 2007

FROM THE PRESIDENT . . .

Today one of the phrases that is being heard across this country and state, through businesses, agencies and organizations is "shared services." This effort allows for more bang for the buck. It permits larger bargaining power as well as to provide a wealth of information and equipment sharing. The partnerships and coalitions that the soil and water districts cooperate through and with are increasing. As we move forward with the legislative agendas and work on the Farm Bill as well as to making known the other needs such as stormwater, we need to continue to reach out; to build larger coalitions and enter into even more shared service agreements so to speak. NYACD Executive Director Gregg Bell, along with several NYACD board members as well as NYCDEA members have been consistently talking with other groups and organizations to make them, first aware of the efforts expended by the districts in especially the stormwater arena. Assemblyman Grannis has recently been confirmed as the DEC Commissioner. We look forward to working with him and the other members of his staff as we move forward in several shared services operations in not only stormwater, but in invasive species, forest management, habitat restoration and preservation among others. The state budget has also recently been approved. Communications have been an important aspect of that work as well.

My thanks to board members Darlene Vogel and Tim Nichols who have been serving on a special committee put together by NRCS to look at a business model plan. Key components of the plan will push further the need for identifying shared services between not only neighboring districts but with the Federal agency NRCS. The outcome of this effort is yet to be determined. Reactions to the plan will be varied and we will all need to evaluate, communicate and collectively bargain for what the resources and those that we serve need. We have been included in the discussions leading up to the draft plan, for that I say thank you to NRCS State Conservationist Ron Alverado. As always feedback remains critical and we all must be ready to provide that service.

For now, happy spring and thanks for doing what you do.

Linda Coffin, President

NYACD MISSION:

The NYACD provides leadership in the wise use of soil, water and related natural resources. This direction is provided through programs that support member Soil and Water Conservation District's scientific, marketing/outreach and financial work and that encourage networking and building alliances with outside groups that have related interests.

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NEW COMMISSIONER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Governor Eliot Spitzer's nominee for Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation, State Assemblymember Pete Grannis, was recently confirmed by the State Senate and begins serving in the post this month.

As a member of the NYS Assembly since 1974, Mr. Grannis championed environmental issues throughout his tenure in the legislature, where he fought for the passage of State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), the original Bottle Bill, and the cleanup and revitalization of the state's brown-fields.



Pete Grannis
Commissioner, NYSDEC

- from NYSDEC website

NY NRCS ANNOUNCES FUNDING FOR CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANTS

SYRACUSE, N.Y., March 15, 2007—USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist Ron Alvarado announced today up to \$250,000 is available for new technology under the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) Program.

CIG, a component of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), provides farmers with the opportunity, through innovative approaches, to address some of the states most pressing natural resource conservation needs.

"These grants offer an opportunity to promote public-private partnerships and support the agency's agenda to provide innovative technologies and approaches to environmental enhancement and protection on working agriculture lands," Alvarado stated.

State, tribal, and local governmental entities, non-governmental organizations, and individuals may apply. Project proposals should demonstrate the use of innovative technologies or approaches to address a natural resource concern. Project results are expected to improve and create the transfer of conservation technologies, management systems, and innovative approaches (such as market-based systems) into NRCS technical manuals or guides or to the private sector.

Applications are due in the New York NRCS State Office by June 1, 2007. Project proposals will be evaluated with the assistance of the State Technical Committee, based on the criteria identified in the program announcement.

Selected applicants may receive grants up to 50 percent of the total project cost, not to exceed \$75,000. Applicants must provide nonfederal matching funds for at least 50 percent of the project cost, of which 50 percent may be from in-kind contributions. Projects may be single or multi year, not to exceed three years.

Additional information, the Program Announcement, and related forms are located on the Web at www.ny.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/programs/cig.html and at www.fedgrants.gov. Questions can be directed to Don Pettit, Assistant State Conservationist at (315) 477-6503.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

New York's State Legislature passed an on-time 2007-2008 State Budget. In it were several items of good news for soil and water conservation districts, but with one item missing. As a state association, our major lobbying efforts for 2007 were to get funding for our proposal to provide technical services for the Stormwater Phase II Program. This was not included in the State Budget, although the goal might be achieved in some other way.

However, elsewhere in the Budget there was good news on both the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) and in agency budgets. Overall the EPF was expanded from \$225 million last year to \$250 million this year. An EPF increase was one of our lobbying goals. In agency budgets, there was the restoration of over 175 environmental staff, mostly at DEC. While we did not lobby on it, it is good news.

In several specific lines of the Environmental Protection Fund, there are good allocations for matters of concern to soil and water conservation districts. Last year the amount for district operations was raised from \$1.8 million to \$3 million. This year's EPF continues the \$3 million figure.

In the non-point source pollution control line of the EPF, the new total figure is \$16.5 million. This is divided between agricultural non-point at \$11 million and municipal non-point at \$5.5 million. For comparison, in the 2005-2006 EPF, there was \$11.7 million for agricultural and municipal non-point combined. (The two uses had not been broken out at that time).

We will now have to evaluate how to proceed with the districts' stormwater proposal. There are a number of entities and agencies which are involved in the statewide implementation of the new stormwater program. Our proposal will have to be shaped to fit in with the other parts of the puzzle which have yet to be developed. Of course, the January 2008 deadline for implementation of the Phase II program by MS-4 communities provides much of the background for our proposal and everything else which is happening in New York on stormwater. The pieces of this puzzle will have to be made to fit by that time.

By Gregory Bell

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

2007 NEW YORK STATE ENVIROTHON

Wednesday, May 23rd

&

Thursday, May 24th at

SUNY Cobleskill in Cobleskill, NY



Please visit www.nysenvirothon.org to sign up or contact Megan Henderson for more information:
 ONONDAGA COUNTY SWCD
 2571 ROUTE 11 STE 1
 LA FAYETTE NY 13084-3354
 P: 315-677-3851
 F: 315-677-3971
mhenderson@ocswcd.org

GREAT LAKES DIVERSION



For those of us who live within the Great Lakes Basin, it is easy to forget that almost 20% of the world's fresh water lies within our boundaries in five of the world's largest lakes --- the Great Lakes. We, soil and water conservation districts, could state fact after fact that emphasizes the importance of restoring and protecting the Great Lakes basin ecosystem. During the industrial revolution industry learned to use the lakes as a place to dump waste, and this practice continues to our day. It is being reported that today 23 billion gallons of chemicals and raw sewage are being pumped into the lakes and streams. Those living near the Great Lakes are discouraged from swimming or fishing in the lakes by more than 2700 government-issued advisories.

Furthermore, a problem that has faced the Great Lakes' states for decades is now becoming more critical. Only one percent of the water actually flows out of the Great Lakes system annually, and nature has the ability to replace such a diversion. But, man has found ingenious ways to stake claim to this precious commodity. Beginning in the early to mid 1980s, a coal company proposed to pipe Lake Superior water to Montana to feed a coal slurry pipeline. There was another proposal to transfer groundwater from Lake Michigan's hydrologic system for mining purposes. More recently the "Nova Group" was a permit issued by the province of Ontario, Canada in 1999 to allow bulk export of Lake Superior water to be sold to Asia. Fortunately, a public outcry negated this decision. Today Nestle Water International takes 224 million gallons of ground water out of Lake Michigan and transports it out of the basin. In Wisconsin Nestle has proposed to divert 720,000 gallons of water a day, over 26 million gallons a year. Such proposed diversions enrich the company because there are no payments made by the company to any entity for the water. The Great Lakes ecosystem has and will continue to suffer irreparable damage.

The Water Resources Development Acts of 1986 and 2000, the system used for approving water withdrawals from the basin, prohibited any diversion or export of Great Lake water outside of the basin unless all 8 Great Lake Governors consent. The eight Great Lake states handle basin water withdrawals in several different ways, from issuing permits to not requiring any system for permitting or notification of water withdrawals.

Congress, in the year 2000, amended the authority given to the Great Lakes governors to manage Great Lakes water withdrawals so that a better framework for dealing with Great Lakes basin withdrawals would be created. The eight Great Lakes Governors responded by creating and endorsing in December 2005, along with the premiers of Quebec and Ontario, Canada, an amendment to the Great Lakes Charter called The Great Lakes St. Lawrence River Basin Resources Compact, which contains a ban on new diversions of water outside the basin. The compact now must be approved by each of the state legislatures and Congress must give its consent.

The agreement details how the states and Provinces will manage and protect the Great Lakes St. Lawrence River Basin and provides a framework for each state and province to enact laws protecting the basin. The agreement includes the following points:

- Lasting economic development will be balanced with sustainable water use to ensure Great Lakes waters are managed responsibly.
- There will be a ban on new diversions of water from the basin. Limited exceptions could be allowed, such as for public water supply purposes in communities near the basin, but exceptions would be strictly regulated.
- The States and Provinces will use a consistent standard to review proposed uses of Great Lakes water.
- Regional goals and objectives for water conservation and efficiency will be developed, and they will be reviewed every five years. Each State and Province will develop and implement a water conservation and efficiency program.
- The collection of technical data will be strengthened, and the States and Provinces will share the information, which will improve decision-making by the governments.
- There is strong commitment to continued public involvement in the implementation of the agreements.

May, 2007 was the date for final approval of the compact by all eight states, but that date does not seem realistic. To date only Minnesota has approved the Great Lakes water protection compact. However, several issues still need to be addressed. One glaring error in the compact is the definition of diversion. The compact permits the exporting of bottled water out of the Great Lakes basin in containers less than 5.7 gallons. Water shipped in containers greater than 5.7 gallons containers would be considered a diversion. This loop hole allows a company, such as Nestle, to treat and ship the water in the .5 liter bottles we see everywhere. The governors and premiers should amend the compact so that any bottled water shipped out of the basin would be considered a diversion.

In New York the Assembly has approved the compact; however, the Senate continues to debate a provision that allows private citizens to sue government agencies over failure to enforce the compact's environmental standards. Sen. George Maziarz, a Niagara County Republican planning to sponsor a ratification bill this year, says that the compact grants no more access litigation than citizens enjoy under other environmental laws and water compacts.

By Brad Rogers, First Vice President, NYACD

NACD POLICY ON GREAT LAKES DIVERSIONS

There is a need for scientific information on water withdrawals and diversions of both ground and surface water, their impacts and their relationship to Great Lakes ecosystem health. There is also a need for a common conservation standard to be used in making decisions regarding water quantity and water quality. This standard should be applied to all new water withdrawals and diversions, and any proposed increases in existing withdrawals and diversions of both surface and ground water.

The water quality and quantity in the Great Lakes is critical to the economy, manufacturing, tourism, agriculture, power supply and overall quality of life of millions of citizens.

The Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River Basin Agreement has no provision to stop the diversion of our waters in small containers by the large corporate water bottlers. NACD will encourage Great Lakes Governors to limit water withdrawals and diversions from the Great Lakes, and strongly support the implementation of the Great Lakes Charter Annex 2001.

Visit NACD's web site at <http://www.nacednet.org>

AEM SIGNS

At a recent State Soil and Water Conservation Committee meeting, the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets announced a new effort to publicize the Agricultural Environmental Management program - signs! The Department has begun distributing the 18" x 24" color signs to each soil and water conservation district to be installed at farms which participate in the program.



For the readers of this newsletter, it is probably easy to spot AEM at work. If you drive past a farm and see a concrete barnyard which controls run-off, a manure storage structure, or fencing and a cow stream crossing, you know that you are probably seeing AEM at work. You know that that farm's environmental impacts have been professionally assessed and are being addressed.

However, for the general public which is not familiar with agricultural conservation practices, they would not see AEM or their taxes at work. This new signage effort is designed to highlight these conservation practices and the role of the Agricultural Environmental Management program in bringing them about.

By Gregory Bell, Executive Director, NYACD

PATRICK HOOKER: NYS AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER

Patrick Hooker is New York State's 26th Agriculture Commissioner, serving at the pleasure of Governor Eliot Spitzer. As Commissioner, Pat oversees the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, addressing agricultural economic development, environmental stewardship, and food safety issues to ensure agriculture remains a significant contributor to New York's economy and quality of life.

Pat joined the Spitzer Administration on January 11, 2007 with a wealth of knowledge, experience and passion for the State's agricultural industry. Previously working for New York Farm Bureau for 16 years, Pat was the farm advocacy organization's top lobbyist, serving as Director of the Public Policy Division. He has also worked in the State Legislature – first for State Assembly Minority Leader C.D. "Rapp" Rappleyea as his Rural Affairs Advisor, and later as the Director of the New York State Senate Agriculture Committee, chaired by State Senator John "Randy" Kuhl.



Pat grew up working on a neighbor's dairy farm in the Town of Nelson in rural Madison County. He was an active member of the Madison County Junior Holstein Club, as well as the Cazenovia Aggies Chapter of the FFA. In FFA, Pat held various local and county offices before being elected State FFA President in 1979. Later he was named National Chairman of the International Committee and received his American Farmer degree.

Pat graduated from Morrisville State College in 1982 with an Associate's degree in Agricultural Science. While there, he was elected student representative to the College Council and was inducted into Phi Theta Kappa honor society. After Morrisville, Pat attended Cornell University, where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Education in 1984. At Cornell, Pat was initiated into Alpha Gamma Rho, the national agriculture fraternity. Pat successfully achieved the Dean's list at both Morrisville and Cornell.

Pat and his wife Karen have two children, Erika and Mitchell. Together, they own a 360-acre farm in Richfield Springs in southern Herkimer County, where they grow hay, board horses and produce maple syrup.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Earth Day: April 22, 2007

- The Nature Conservancy - <http://nature.org/earthday/>
- Earth Day Network - <http://www.earthday.net/>
- EnviroLink's Earth Day Online - <http://earthday.envirolink.org/>
(See sections on the [History of Earth Day](#) and the [Organizer's Guide](#).)
- National Environmental Education (EE) Week - <http://www.eeweek.org/>



Arbor Day: April 27, 2007

Planting the Seeds of Tomorrow Today. Go to www.arborday.org.

Stewardship Week 2007: April 29-May 6, 2007

"Today is the Day to be a Part of Conservation's Power". Are you looking for a way to promote stewardship in your community during Stewardship Week? NACD offers a number of free downloadable materials in addition to the printed materials available for purchase through the FFA hosted Stewardship Marketplace.



Download the Stewardship Educators' Guide at <http://stewardship.nacdnet.org/download.htm> and select one of the Conservation's Power Stewardship activities to use in your community. NACD's national partners, including Project Learning Tree, Project WET, Food Land and People and National Energy and Education Development Project (NEED), have provided ready-to-use activities that complement the Conservation's Power theme. Present your activity of choice to students at schools, after school programs or boys and girls clubs.

Water Week: May 6-12, 2007

Promoting our water resources and clean drinking water.



New EPA Web Module Offers Watershed Outreach Training

EPA's Watershed Academy recently posted a free, updated online training module on "Getting In Step: A Guide to Conducting Watershed Outreach Campaigns." This module offers a tested step-by-step system to help local governments, watershed organizations and others maximize the effectiveness of public outreach campaigns to help solve nonpoint source pollution problems and protect local waterways. The module is based on EPA's free, downloadable outreach guide "Getting in Step: Guide for Conducting Watershed Outreach Campaigns." To view the new Getting in Step online training module, visit <http://www.epa.gov/watertrain/gettinginstep/>. Approximately 50 other free online Watershed Academy training modules are available at <http://www.epa.gov/watertrain/>.

Finger Lakes Institute Offerings

The Finger Lakes Institute has a variety of events, programs, reports available. Check it out at their website: <http://fli.hws.edu>.

The Finger Lakes Institute is dedicated to the promotion of environmental research and education about the Finger Lakes and surrounding environments. In collaboration with environmental partners and state and local government offices, the Institute fosters environmentally-sound development practices throughout the region, and disseminates the accumulated knowledge to the general public.

TWO FREE GRAZING WORKSHOPS TO BE SPONSORED BY THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY SWCD AND THE HUDSON MOHAWK RC&D IN APRIL

The Montgomery County Soil and Water Conservation District (Montgomery County SWCD), USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS), and the Hudson Mohawk Resource Conservation and Development Council (HMRC&D) will be hosting two grazing workshops in April at the Winner's Circle in Fonda.

The first workshop, "Transiting Dairy Cows and Livestock onto Grass in Spring" will be held on Thursday April 12th from 9:30-11:30. Although the talk will be geared towards dairy farmers, the information will be helpful for livestock farmers as well. The workshop is being presented by Karen Sullivan, animal nutritionist with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation District.

The second workshop, "Grazing for Diversified Livestock" will be held on Thursday April 26th. Presenters include: grassland specialist Darrell Emmick with USDA NRCS who will speak about "Behavior Based Grazing Management"; Kathleen Harris of the Northeast Livestock Processing Service Company who will be speaking about processing facilitation and marketing services for livestock farmers, and an area farmer practicing rotational grazing.

Farmers interested in transitioning to a grass based operation, as well as those already using rotational grazing, are encouraged to attend. Farmers can save money in feed costs and veterinary bills by switching their livestock to a grazed diet.

Both workshops are free, including lunch but pre-registration is required. To register, please call the Montgomery County SWCD at (518) 853-4015. Funding for the workshop is being provided through a grant from the USDA NRCS Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative program.

The Hudson Mohawk RC&D Council is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization that promotes regional, economic and natural resource conservation development in Albany, Columbia, Greene, Montgomery, Rensselaer and Schenectady counties and is funded in part by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services.

By Elizabeth Marks
Hudson Mohawk RC&D Coordinator
Email: elizabeth.marks@ny.usda.gov



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UPCOMING EVENTS



- **Earth Day**, April 22, 2007
- **Arbor Day**, April 27, 2007
- **Stewardship Week**, April 29– May 6, 2007
- **Water Week**, May 6-12, 2007
- **“Grazing for Diversified Livestock”**, a workshop, April 26, 2007, Fonda
- **2007 New York State Envirothon**, May 23-24, 2007, Cobleskill, NY
- **2007 Canon Envirothon**, July 29– August 4, 2007, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, NY

May FYI—Deadline for Articles —April 30, 2007.

Please send articles to Maggie Atkins at matkins@frontiernet.net; Phone: 585-396-9973; Fax: 585-554-4077. **Thanks.**