

NEW YORK ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS, INC.



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FYI...

NYACD NEWSLETTER • AUGUST 2006

FROM THE PRESIDENT . . .

When we least expect it, Mother Nature lets us all know who is in charge. To all those still cleaning up, determining how to rebuild, replant and where to turn, our thoughts and prayers are with you. Many of the soil and water personnel have been lending technical service as well as reassurance to the victims of this flooding. There are a number of good stories that came from these devastating events. This includes not only the premise of one person helping another, one agency helping another, but rather a realization that soil and water districts as resource managers and we, as directors and the policy makers, must be ready to do and provide the technical services necessary for recovery efforts in terms of our water quality and soils. To that end, at our Annual meeting in October we plan to have one of our workshops include how to deal with the aftermath of a natural or manmade disaster, working with FEMA, SEMO and others. This is something that you have asked for from a past resolution.

As I traveled to Pennsylvania for the NACD Northeast Regional meeting and saw the signs of Mother Nature's work, I was also reminded how quickly any of our lives and livelihoods can and do change. While we have seen some success in the last year or so in acquiring additional funds for various programs through cooperative efforts of the partnership, we have to remember that anything can change. We must be sure to remain alert. We need to remain vigilant in assuring that there are adequate and fair sources of funds that will allow us to continue to provide the services that so many depend on the districts for, today and tomorrow. Therein lives the importance of monitoring and providing input into the discussions concerning the shaping of the Farm Bill 2007, the federal appropriations for conservation and agriculture and state funding for soil and water conservation concerns. While Brad Rogers, NYACD 1st Vice President and I were in Collegetown, Pennsylvania at the Northeast meeting, two valuable research documents were adopted. Both papers were the results of the surveys distributed dealing with urban, coastal and rural interface, and the importance and needs of agriculture in the Northeast. Information from both is being used to form a strategy statement to be delivered to the NACD farm bill task force committee.

We need you. We need you to circle your calendars and plan to be at the Otesaga in Cooperstown from October 28-31. As I have mentioned before, one of the main focus areas of the meeting, will be to look at the federal programs for which we currently receive funds as well as the state programs. What issues do we have as districts here in New York?

This is a busy time of the year for all of us. We need to hear what districts want. Decisions will be made on the State level as well as the National level, with or without our input, because they have to be made. The NYACD wants the decisions made with our input there. Please take some time to be with us in October for the Annual Meeting. Please take some time to evaluate the needs and potential needs.

So what is it that New York wants? What is it that your district wants? What happens when the 319 funds are cut to New York State? What do **YOU** want to see in the next Farm Bill, in Federal appropriations, or from the State? There are hundreds of other organizations answering these questions everyday. There are those that want more of the money, or some of the money that they have not had in the past; and there are those who believe we do not need the money at all.

Linda Coffin, President, NYACD

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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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS NORTHEAST REGIONAL REPORT

Several New York district members and employees and State Committee members attended the NACD NE Region meeting in College Town PA. The following is a summary of activities:

- * A memorandum of understanding was signed between the USDA Forest Service USFS Northeastern Area, State & Private Forestry and the NACD Northeast Region and North Central Region.
 - ⇒ The purpose is to facilitate enhanced collaboration to achieve forest resource conservation in urban and rural locations.
 - ⇒ There will be at least an annual meeting between the parties to discuss program and project status and opportunities. Parties will share tools and technologies developed for use by urban and rural constituents.

- * Northeast Agriculture and Forestry Conservation – Advancing through Conservation Districts in the Northeast
 - ⇒ Marge Kilkelly, Northeast States Association for Agricultural Stewardship (NSAAS) – affiliate of Eastern Regional Conference of the Council of State Governments, was hired as a consultant by the NE region NACD to compile the results of the surveys as distributed to districts in the NE and prepare a report with conclusions and recommendations for future discussions in regards to the 2007 Farm Bill and other state and federal decisions. Following a presentation from Marge, the printed report was distributed and adopted by the NE Board of Directors. This report will be mailed to districts soon.

- * Urban and Community Conservation – Advancing through Conservation Districts in the Northeast.
 - ⇒ Deb Bogar, National Association of Conservation Districts was hired as a consultant by the NE NACD to compile the results of the surveys as distributed to districts in the NE and prepare a report with conclusions and recommendations for future discussions in regards to the urban and community conservation current practices and district needs. During the meeting Cliff Lundin, Chair of the NACD Urban, Community and Coastal Resources Committee from New Jersey presented the report to the group. This report will be mailed to districts soon.

- * Reports of NE members of NACD Policy Committees:
 - ⇒ The Northeast is represented on various national committees and it is important that feedback be provided to these committee members about the topics of the committee to allow for them to carry the message from the NE districts to the federal level. Committees with representatives:
 - ◆ Legislative Committee – Mike Domingue-Vermont- 802-229-9250 mdomi5978@aol.com
 - ◆ Agricultural Lands Resources Committee – Terry Pepper- Delaware – 307-744-4148 tlpepper@state.de.us
 - ◆ District Operations Committee – Marjorie Cooper – Massachusetts, 508-892-3720 marjorieCHF@aol.com
 - ◆ Forest Resources Committee – Steve Hobart – Maine – 207-997-3922 fallow@kynd.net
 - ◆ Grazingland and Public Land Resources Committee – Joe Gumm- West Virginia – 304-636-2691 mrfarm@meer.net
 - ◆ Stewardship and Education Committee – Mary Jane Spickler – 302-223-1872 d.spickler@myactv.net
 - ◆ Urban, Community and Coastal Resources Committee – Cliff Lundin- New Jersey- 973-398-2511 lakehse8@yahoo.com and Ed Hoxsie – New York- 845-677-8011 ed-hoxsie@ny.nacdnet.org
 - ◆ Wildlife and Environmental Policy Committee – Linda Coffin – New York- 315-822-6909 lcoffin@nyscc.com
 - ◆ Water Resources Committee – John Hodson – New Hampshire 603-279-6126 jhodsdon2@juno.com
 - ◆ Great Lakes Committee – Brad Rogers – New York – 716-344-0978 bfrogers@usadatanet.net

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LEGISLATION & ANNUAL MEETING

In the July issue of FYI, I explained the three successes Districts achieved in the New York State Legislature in the 2006 Session. As an update, the next step is having our bill signed by the Governor. While we do not expect a problem, the bill has not yet been signed. We will let you know when anything happens on this front.

With the Legislative Session over, your Association has turned its attention to attending NACD conferences and to planning our own Annual Meeting. In late July, President, Linda Coffin and First Vice President, Brad Rogers represented NYACD at the Northeast Regional Conference in Pennsylvania. In early August, I will participate in the NACD State Association Executive Directors' Conference in Colorado. In mid August, Linda will represent us at the half-yearly national NACD conference in Ohio.

This year, the NYACD Annual Meeting will be at the Otesaga Hotel in beautiful, historic Cooperstown, New York. It will be held from Sunday October 29 through Tuesday October 31. (It will be over early enough for you to get home to greet the costumed gremlins at your door on Halloween.) Included in the conference will be time to enjoy the Farmers' Museum and the Baseball Hall of Fame.

With the federal Farm Bill and its many conservation programs scheduled for renewal in 2007, we plan to focus on what we, as conservation districts in our state, should be advocating for in that legislation, and how we should do it. We expect to have some federal officials and some of our allied conservation organizations join us on panel discussions. We also plan to look at possible state legislation for 2007, and we plan on making a special effort to get Board members of Districts to participate.

We are giving this year's conference the theme "Be Prepared - Or Strike Out." As an explanation, we believe that districts have to get prepared for a number of things, or they will lose out. Since Cooperstown is the home of baseball, the second part of our conference name refers to that sports heritage.

So, in what ways do districts have to be prepared? There are many ways, but here are a few which relate to the content of the conference. We believe that districts should be prepared to know:

- 1) what we should support in the federal Farm Bill in 2007,
- 2) what we should support at the State Legislature in 2007,
- 3) how we should be working with emergency response agencies to prepare for climate crisis disasters,
- 4) how the newly-passed 2006 State Legislature bill will affect districts, and
- 5) how we should be prepared to assist agriculture to produce energy crops in addition to food crops.



If districts are not prepared on these and other ways, they will strike out. Districts grew out of the crisis of the Dust Bowl. They were created to solve problems. As those problems were solved and as new needs emerged, Districts and their work have adapted. With newer needs now, Districts will again have to adapt. If they don't, they will strike out. We are planning this Annual Meeting to ensure that every district hits the ball.

In addition to new information to help your district prepare, the Annual Meeting will also include the annual resolution process.

This is the opportunity for Districts to examine current needs and problems and to come up with ways in which your state association could help. This is done by writing resolutions and trying to get them passed by the assembled districts. Those resolutions which get passed become the guidebook for your association's work for the following year.



Specific details of the Annual Meeting program will be released soon. The program and registration form will be sent out in a special mailing in a couple of weeks.

By Gregory Bell, Executive Director

AN INTERNATIONAL TREASURE WORTH PROTECTING

For those of us who live in the United States, it's easy to forget that almost 20 percent of the world's fresh water lies within our boundaries, in five of the world's largest lakes --- the Great Lakes. I should like to highlight some of the reasons to restore and protect the Great Lakes basin ecosystem.

Less than one percent of the water is renewed annually by precipitation, surface water runoff and inflow from groundwater surfaces.

Every day, 56 million gallons of water are used from the Great Lakes for municipal, agricultural or industrial uses.

Thirty percent of all U.S. agricultural production occurs in the Great Lakes region. One third of the basin's land is used for agriculture, primarily for corn, soybeans, and livestock such as cattle and hogs. The lakes also provide climate niches where specialty crops can be produced, including cherries, blueberries, grapes, and nursery plants. And with much of the shoreline tree-covered, the forestry and pulp and paper industries are staples of the region's economy.

Only one percent of the Great Lakes' water actually flows out of the system each year. Because of this, water will stay in Lake Superior for up to 191 years, 99 years in Lake Michigan, 22 in Lake Huron, 6 in Lake Ontario, and 2.6 years in Lake Erie. This means that pollution can stay in the lakes' waters for many generations.



Mission: To represent Great Lakes conservation districts, as an advocate for Great Lakes natural resources, by facilitating activities and strengthening the abilities of conservation districts to conserve, enhance, and restore these resources and use them in a sustainable manner.

The NACD Great Lakes Committee represents the 209 Great Lakes conservation districts (31 in New York State), as an advocate for Great Lakes natural resources, by facilitating activities and strengthening the abilities of conservation districts to aid in the reduction of sedimentation to the Great Lakes by 40% of the 2003 baseline. To accomplish this task the Great Lakes Committee has taken the lead in a sediment reduction project by separately convening Great Lakes technical experts and policy makers. The technical experts have reviewed and are in the process of making recommendations to revise the sediment goal and to measure the success of sediment reduction efforts. The committee has been accepting recommendations for membership to the Policy Task Force and will make a decision on membership prior to the year's end. The policy experts' main task will be to recommend appropriate policy improvements to support the sediment reduction achievement.

In order to accomplish our natural resource focus, the NACD Great Lakes Committee has identified several critical issues that need to be addressed. One issue is the lack of district involvement in Great Lakes restoration activities/programs. Success is predicated on how well we, the Committee, can strengthen the relationship between affected conservation districts and agencies responsible for implementing Great Lakes restoration strategies. To this end the Committee has begun to encourage congressional approval of Comprehensive Great Lakes Environmental Restoration Legislation. We also have targeted conservation districts in Areas of Concern, to encourage increased involvement in Remedial Action Plan development and implementation. We are working on a plan that will increase the percentage of districts receiving funding from the Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control.

Another critical issue facing the Committee is land use changes within the Great Lakes Basin that promote soil erosion, rapid run off, decreased ground water recharge, and an increase in impermeable surfaces that may well degrade water quality. The Committee, working with state associations within the Great Lakes Basin, must help to strengthen conservation districts' ability to provide technical assistance and information to municipalities as they manage growth. We, the Committee, must keep in mind that land use decision-makers contact conservation districts first for assistance/information on issues such as storm water management, wetlands, forestlands, etc. The Committee conducted its first annual Urban and Community Conservation Conference for Great Lakes basin conservation districts on March 8, 2006, in Detroit, MI. This conference helped publicize conservation districts' successes in this area and strengthened their ability to provide technical assistance and information to municipalities as they manage growth.

The Committee is concerned that Great Lakes Basin conservation districts may not be aware of possible funding opportunities. Each Committee member now sends, via e-mail (which may include attachments/links for additional information), funding opportunity information directly to conservation district offices and state associations.

In several Great Lakes Basin states the lack of buffers along creeks, streams, and rivers contributes to decrease in water quality. In many cases, buffers are the sole conservation treatment and may not be effective without complementary practices. The Committee's position is that we must optimize the availability of conservation treatment to reduce sediment loadings in the Great Lakes. The position of the Committee is to advocate for more flexibility in and continued funding of federal conservation programs, including CREP and CSP, to maximize conservation treatment opportunities.

The staff of the Great Lakes Committee is exploring opportunities to partner with Conservation Technology Information Center to promote the implementation of "buffers" with no-till systems and soil quality improvement measures.

The fifth critical issue facing the Committee is how increasing forestry fragmentation and mismanagement increase soil erosion and decrease water quality and biodiversity. It is imperative that the state associations and Great Lakes Committee work with conservation districts to improve and publicize services available to forest and woodland managers/owners. In order to do the aforementioned we must continue to support conservation districts' role in implementing Healthy Forest legislation through solicited recommendations from the United States Forest Service and NACD Forestry Committee and by supporting adequate forestry conservation initiatives in the 2007 Farm Bill.

The Great Lakes Committee continues to work diligently to ensure stable funding sources to the conservation districts of the eight states within the Great Lakes Basin. When addressing state associations and their member districts' issues with NACD, state and federal governments, we are a strong and forceful advocate.

The New York Association of Conservation Districts (NYCAD) has taken an active role in the NACD Great Lakes Committee bringing recognition to itself as a key conservation policy leader.

Cradled between the Atlantic Ocean and two Great Lakes, New York is blessed with one of the longest and most diverse coastlines of any state. To enhance management of its marine and freshwater resources, New York State's Governor, George E. Pataki, brought together an array of marine and Great Lakes experts, including NYACD, for the purpose of discussing issues affecting the environment and economy of our ocean and coastal areas.

The New York State Ocean and Great Lakes Symposium provided the necessary forum to convey the views and ideas expressed by the participants to state policy makers as they consider ways to strengthen protection, enhancement, and careful utilization of New York's ocean and coastal resources.

NYACD is also involved in the review of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. This Agreement, first signed in 1972 and renewed in 1978, expresses the commitment of Canada and the United States to restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem and includes a number of objectives and guidelines to achieve these goals. It reaffirms the rights and obligations of Canada and the United States under the Boundary Waters Treaty.

The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement is reviewed every six years. And this year, 2006, makes the latest review of the Agreement. At the request of the governments of Canada and the United States, the International Joint Commission held public hearings on how well the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement has worked so far. The meetings took place in 14 Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River cities in the Fall of 2005. The parties have also committed to an open, transparent, and inclusive review process which allows for the involvement of all interested parties. The Great Lakes Binational Executive Committee agreed that its co-chairs would solicit both broad public stakeholder and government agency interest in participating in the Review through membership on a number of Review Working Groups.

The importance of the Great Lakes Water Quality is widely recognized. It commits the two countries to restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the waters of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem and has been held up as a successful model of Canada-United States partnership, showing the bilateral cooperation as strong, effective and productive. The Review of the Agreement will help to insure that it continues to fulfill this role well into the future.

NYACD, wishing to be involved, has membership on Review Group A: Scope and Purposes of Agreement; Goals and Objectives; Function.
By Brad Rogers, NYACD First Vice President

NACD—NORTHEAST REGIONAL REPORT (continued from Page 2)

- ◆ Farm Bill Task Force – Mike Domingue – Vermont- 802-229-9250, Joe Lomax, New Jersey- 609-465-9857 jlomax@lomax-morey.com; Martha Clark – 410-956-5771 – mmcedgewood@aol.com; Robert Dobbs – New Jersey – NCDEA 856-767-6299 robert.dobbs@camdenscd.org
- * The NE Board approved a work plan for 2006-07 that includes evaluating the district leadership model and recommending training programs, identifying funding and initiatives of interest to the NE districts, developing a clear process and recommendations for active participation in Farm Bill and other federal discussions highlighting identified NE priorities, evaluating the Clean Water Act among many others.
- * Presentations, workshops and tours included information on the legacy of sediment storage left behind in streams as a result of dams built many years ago, which have produced nutrients in many streams. Others included better roads, cleaner streams (dirt and gravel road maintenance); nutrient management, stormwater management and air quality and agricultural odors.

In all, the meeting was informative, a great time to meet and discuss with other districts and state associations what they do back home.
By Linda Coffin, NYACD President

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Envirothon News

- ◆ The 2007 State Envirothon will be held at SUNY Cobleskill.
- ◆ The 2007 Canon Envirothon will be held at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva. The 2007 Canon Envirothon Committee is still working hard to raise \$80,000 more to reach the goal of \$300,000. Anyone who has a likely contact (sponsor) or would like to donate to the 2007 Canon Envirothon can contact Chairman Sandy Huey at sandy-huey@ny.nacdnet.org or 315-252-4171, Ext. 3.
- ◆ The NYS Envirothon Committee is about to embark on another journey to prepare for the 2007 NYS Envirothon. At this time, we are opening up our doors for new members. If you are interested in joining the NYS Envirothon Committee this year, the term begins on September 1st and concludes on August 31st. There is usually one meeting per month, and you would need to attend at least 80% of all the meetings, either in person or via teleconference. We are looking for enthusiastic people who have a desire to help continue the success of this program. Please let me know if you are interested in joining us this year. I can provide you with a Membership Form, NYS Envirothon Guidelines, Sub-Committee Responsibilities, and a Timeline for review. Or, before you commit, you can ask me questions, or feel free to come to our next meeting (TBD) and see what it's all about. I'm looking forward to adding new members. Thanks -, Seth Dennis, Tompkins County SWCD, 607-257-2340, seth-dennis@ny.nacdnet.org



New NYACD Board Member

The Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Division 1 (western New York) have elected Darlene Vogel of Orchard Park to represent them on the Board of Directors of the state association. She is on the Board of the Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District. The NYACD Board welcomes her.

EPA Publishes Case Studies of Smart Growth Principles

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently published visual case studies of 10 smart growth principles as they have been used in 20 communities around the country. Smart Growth Illustrated uses visual examples of smart growth techniques to illustrate effective principles.

Go to <http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/case.htm> to view the publication.

NACD's "eNotes"

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) publishes a weekly on-line newsletter called "eNotes." It contains about ten brief conservation-related items with links for details. It is available for free by contacting Lisa Lerwick, NACD Director of Communications, at Lisa-Lerwick@nacdnet.org or (202) 547-6223.



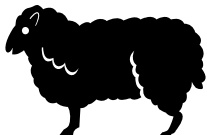
New E-mail Address for NYACD

NYACD has been using two e-mail addresses in recent months. We have been using a newer, faster, better service, but have also retained the old one while slowly making the switch. We have now fully transitioned, so when you contact the Association by e-mail, please use only this address:

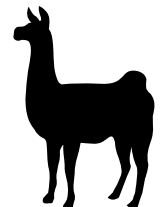
NYACD@nycap.rr.com.



Saratoga County Fiber Tour



While most agriculture is for food, you have the opportunity to see agriculture for fiber. Sponsored by the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Saratoga County, there will be a tour of six farms showcasing llamas, alpacas and sheep on October 7 and 8 from 11 AM until 4 PM. For details and directions, call (518) 885-8995 or visit www.saratogafarms.com.





**Agricultural
Environmental
Management**

Help Your Farm Grow... Reduce Environmental Risk

**For a free, confidential
Environmental Risk Assessment
contact your
County Soil & Water Conservation District**

An AEM Risk Assessment can help you:

- ◆ Document your environmental practices and the benefits your farm provides to your community.
- ◆ Assess vulnerable areas of the farm that may present environmental risk.
- ◆ Identify practices at risk for regulatory action or neighbor complaints to prevent hassles and fines.
- ◆ Determine if your water supply or neighboring wells are at risk for contamination.
- ◆ Acquire information for long-term business planning and better positioning in the marketplace.
- ◆ Consider conservation practices that could save you money when implemented.
- ◆ Qualify for state and federal cost-share grants to address high risk issues.
- ◆ Earn "green" payments or participate in farmland protection programs.

AEM... The Future of Farming

www.nys-soilandwater.org

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UPCOMING EVENTS



- **Saratoga County Fiber Tour**, October 7, 2006, Saratoga, NY
- **North Country Regional Stormwater Tradeshow & Conference**, October 19, 2006, Lake George, NY
- **Conservation Skills Workshop**, October 23-27, 2006, Cortland, NY
- **NYACD's Annual Meeting**, October 29-31, 2006, Otesaga Hotel, Cooperstown, NY
- **2007 Canon Envirothon**, July 29– August 4, 2007, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, NY

September FYI—Deadline for Articles —August 22, 2006.

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