



Conservation News

Schoharie County Soil & Water
Conservation District

What's your New Years Resolution?

January, 2010, welcome to the new year, actually to the new decade! Back in 2000 did you plant any trees? If you did, over the past 10 years they've grown—some varieties, faster than others, but even those little seedlings are now substantial trees—some may have been used already as Christmas trees, while others are well

next dining room table. Along the way they have provided oxygen, shade, a wind break and habitat for birds, deer, rabbits, squirrels, and other animals. If you planted trees in the past, we thank you. Not only have you made an investment in the future, but you have provided all of us with cleaner air and water and shelter for our wildlife

If you didn't plant any trees in the past 10 years, now is your chance— a small investment of money, in some cases, less than 60 cents each, a shovel and a little work, and you can be on your way to conserving natural resources on your land, and

providing you and your children with oxygen, and cleaner water.

So, you ask, how do you get started? Simply choose the tree or shrub that's best for your situation, send in your order and when you pick them up on April 16 or 17th, you can say, "this decade I'll have made a difference!" The order form is enclosed, and also available on our website. Photos with expanded descriptions are also available on the website.

www.schohariesoilandwater.org

Happy Planting!

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on their way to becoming syrup producers, or your

Goodbye Erin

Erin Paczkowski, the NRCS Soil Conservationist for Schoharie and Schenectady Counties, will be leaving Schoharie County NRCS at the end of January to begin working as a Soil Conservationist in the Tioga County NRCS office. Erin said of her move "I have really enjoyed

my past 2.5 years working in Schoharie and Schenectady Counties and am grateful for all I have learned and all the people I have met."

We will miss Erin's laughter in the office, and all of her "critter" stories. We wish her the best of luck in Tioga County.

Schoharie County Soil & Water Conservation District

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USDA, NRCS

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Erin Paczkowski, Soil Cons.
Will VanDeValk, Engineer

NRCS Announces Sign-up for Conservation Assistance—January 22 Deadline

State Conservationist Astor F. Boozer of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has announced a January 22, 2010 application deadline for New York farmers and private forestland landowners to be considered for 2010 Conservation Program funding. These programs include: the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative, the Agricultural Management Assistance Program (AMA) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). EQIP, CBWI, AMA and WHIP are voluntary conservation programs that provide fi-

nancial and technical assistance to landowners willing to implement practices to improve natural resources and wildlife habitat on privately owned agricultural and forest lands. These conservation programs were authorized or amended in the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill). “We are pleased to offer landowners in New York opportunities to address resource concerns related to soil, water, air, plants and animals through a variety of pro-



grams” said Boozer. “The result will be cleaner water, more productive soils, healthier forests, and more abundant wildlife for all New York residents.”

For additional information, contact the office at (518) 234-4092 or go online to www.ny.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/

Tree Tubes—Why do I want these?

This year on the tree order form you will see a listing for tree tubes—here are some advantages to using them.

- Protect seedling trees from animal damage
- Yes! You can put a 4 ft Tree Tube over a tiny seedling!
- Increase survival and accelerate growth by reducing moisture stress
- Make weed control fast & easy by making it easy to locate your seed-

lings amidst the grass and brush, and by shielding them from herbicide spray and mower damage



- Tree Tubes last for approximately 6-8 years. We recommend you leave them on until the trees reach approximately 3” diameter at the base... which will happen a lot faster than you think!
- Tree tubes can be re-used. Once your tree has reached 3” you can move it to another tree.
- Tubes come with a hardwood stake that is made locally.

Attention Landowners in the Manor Kill Creek Watershed

You may be eligible for technical assistance through the Catskill Streams Buffer Initiative (CSBI). The CSBI helps residential landowners protect their property by creating streamside habitat, reducing stream bank erosion, and improving water quality. Through



this new program, riparian (streamside) landowners will be provided with a Riparian Corridor Management Plan, best management practice designs and/or prescriptive measures and installation. Educational materials and activities to help landowners understand the critical roles

riparian buffers play in providing stream stability will also be provided. For information regarding CSBI contact Pete Nichols at 518 234-4092, or check out the following website for information and application materials. The first application deadline is February 1st, 2010, and after that an annual deadline of October 1st. www.catskillstreams.org/catskillstreamsbufferinitiative.html

Contractor Trainings Available

Stormwater Pollution Prevention training for Contractors and Developers which is mandated by NYS Department of Environmental Conservation is being offered on **February 11** at the Extension Center, Cobleskill. This training is for all contractors, subcontractors and developers who must have at least one trained individual on site when soil disturbance activities over one acre are being performed. The training is from 7:30—12:30 pm. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. Cost for the class is \$75 per person, which includes a break. Don Lake, the principal author of “New York Guidelines for Erosion

and Sediment Control will be teaching this class. To register for the class, call the office at (518) 234-4092.



Training to benefit the Capital Region Envirothon

The same contractor and developer training will also be available at the Bethlehem Town Hall in Delmar on **January 30th** from 7:00 am to 12:00 pm. Cost is \$65 per person. A

portion of this cost is being donated to the Capital Region Envirothon. David Mosher, Schenectady County SWCD District Manager will be teaching this class.

To register for this class, call the Albany SWCD office at (518) 765-7923. Deadline for registration is January 20th.

Agricultural Environmental Management—It’s good business

For many farmers, environmental stewardship is viewed not just as the “right thing to do,” but increasingly as an important strategic asset for their business. Farmers know that in order for their businesses to remain strong, they need to be vigilant about protecting the environment. New York’s Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program provides the tools to help accomplish both.

A Voluntary Program

AEM is a voluntary, incentive-based program that assists farmers in their environmental stewardship efforts and protects the quality of their farms’ natural resources, which are the foundation of their long-term economic viability. The AEM program coordinates

agricultural and environmental conservation agencies and programs, as well as private sector consultants to provide a one-stop resource for services. All agricultural counties in NY state are conducting AEM programs and participation has grown to include nearly 10,000 farms. Farmers work with the soil and water conservation district to develop and implement comprehensive, site specific farm plans using a five-tiered approach.

AEM Risk Assessment can help you:

- Document your environmental practices and 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.
- Qualify for state and federal cost-share grants to address high risk issues.
- Acquire information for long-term business planning and better positioning in the marketplace.
- Consider conservation practices that could save money when implemented.
- Earn “green” payments or participate in farmland protection programs.

Hi Emily!

Emily Mombourquette, a student intern with USDA, NRCS joined our staff in October. She has been helping out with some of the programs, and getting acquainted with some of the folks in the area. Emily is a SUNY Cobleskill Student Majoring in Animal Science, and is active in raising and



showing sheep. She worked with NRCS in Rhode Island this last summer, and is continuing her internship here in Cobleskill until she graduates in May. If you have a chance, please stop

by and say hello, we’re sure there are some sheep farmers here that could give her a few tips.



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Ag Assessments - Deadline March 1

Deadline for applying for this year's Agricultural Assessments is March 1, 2010. Farms need to contact the Soil and Water Conservation District by February 15, 2010 to make arrangements to have a Soil Group Worksheet completed. An agricultural assessment provides a partial exemption from real property tax. Some of the guidelines include: Owner of the land must apply. Land must consist of a minimum of 7 acres of agricultural land, and have an average gross sales value of \$10,000 for the 2 years preceding the application, or if less than 7 acres, land must have average gross sales of \$50,000 or more. Owners of rented land may qualify if it is used under a lease agreement of 5 years or more and meets other requirements. The Ag Value Assessment encumbrances the land and runs for 5 years in an Ag District and 8 years outside an Ag District. To start the process, landowners need to contact the Schoharie County SWCD office with their tax parcel number and acreage. Then the landowner needs to make an appointment to come into the office to determine land uses. More information is available at: www.orps.state.ny.us/pamphlet/exempt/agassess.htm or call us at (518) 234-4092. Your tax assessor can assist you as well.

Tree Order Form Enclosed

Its Here! The 2010 Tree Order form is enclosed. To complete your spring plantings, the Capital Region Envirothon has Spring Bulbs available. Just like last year, orders can be placed for pick up during the annual tree sale.



Varieties available include Hosta, Daylily, Peony, Gladiolus, Iris and several others. Prices begin at just \$5 and discounts are given for quantity orders.

To have a full-color bulb order form and description mailed to you, please call us at (518) 234-4092 or email, brenda.weaver@schohariesoilandwater.org

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