Genesee County Soil & Water Conservation District

Autumn 2016 Issue

Last 2016 Fish Pick Up
October 5th
ORDER SOON!

29 Liberty Street, Suite 3, Batavia, NY 14020 **585-343-2362 x5**
www.co.genesee.ny.us/departments/soilandwater

TREE SEMINAR!

With Guest Speaker
Garrett Koplun
NYS DEC Forester

Saturday, September 24, 2016
9:00 a.m. - Noon
Genesee County Park - Pavilion B
access on Raymond Road, East Bethany

- *How to plant bare root seedlings*
- *How to protect & mulch your seedlings*
- *Site selection & what trees to plant in what type of ground*
- *How to maintain growing trees in your yard*
- *Tree identification*
- *Potential problems with insects, fungi, deer & other pests*
- *Why reforested plots need more attention than older plots*

Coffee, Cider & Donuts available

FREE! But please call to register by Monday, Sept. 19 (585) 343-2362 x5

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago.
The second best time is now!
-Chinese Proverb

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District Staff

Molly S. Cassatt
District Manager

Jared Elliott
Field Manager

Bob Berkemeier
Senior Technician

Jodi Chamberlain
District Clerk/Treasurer

Jody Laney
Receptionist

District Directors

Shelley Stein
Chairman, County Legislator

Ted Konieczka
Farm Bureau

Marirose Ethington
At-Large

Dennis Phelps
Grange

Gregg Torrey
County Legislator

USDA-NRCS

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Heath Eisele
District Conservationist

Our Mission:

It is the mission of Genesee County Soil & Water to work directly with county landowners to provide for the conservation of soil and water resources, improvement of water quality and prevention of flood water and sediment damages, thereby protecting the natural resource base and promoting the health, safety and general welfare of our county's residents.

Our 2016 Key Accomplishments:

- Secured over $370,000 of competitive state grant funding for county projects and **Best Management Practices** (BMP's) to reduce erosion, improve water quality, reduce greenhouse gases, and improve soil health and sustainability
- Completed first year of **Water Quality Monitoring Program**, sampling at 11 sites throughout the county
- Developed a new Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan Program within our **AEM** framework to give smaller producers a plan for managing ag waste and the ability to apply for cost-share grant programs
- Coordinated the 26th annual **Envirothon** for science minded high school students, assisting the winners for competition at the state level
- Continued partnership with Orleans Co. SWCD to help form the **WNY Soil Health Alliance** and get the steering committee (now a full Board of Directors) up and running
- Promoted conservation plantings with our annual **Tree and Shrub Program**
- Supported pond owners with information by supplying many species of fish through our **Fish Stocking Program**

Grants?...It's what we do!

Our staff is well versed on the grant application process and has successfully applied for local, state, and federal money on behalf of the residents of Genesee County. Over the last twelve months we have secured:

- Two **Climate Resilient Farming (CRF) grants**: one for a three year cover cropping project, and one for a manure lagoon cover and flare system
- A **Soil Health Mini-Grant**, allowing 15 landowners to complete six Cornell Soil Health Tests at no cost to these farmers
- **Finger lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FL-LOWPA)** funding for a roof runoff collection system, an erosion control project, and to help pay for the analysis portion of our Water Quality Monitoring Program

~continued on page 3~

GCSWCD Projects & Programs Update

Soil Group Worksheets for Agricultural Assessment

This past year, many towns updated their assessment of agricultural land, which led to drastic increases in assessed value on some properties. As a result, we had a significant demand for soil group worksheet development as part of the agricultural assessment process for cropland.

So what exactly is our involvement in land assessment?

Soil and Water Conservation Districts in New York State are responsible for developing the soil group worksheet, which is the basis for agricultural assessment. The soil group worksheet identifies all of the soil types on a parcel of land, and how many acres of each soil type. New York State has ranked each soil type based on its agricultural productivity. The agricultural assessment provides an assessment value based on that soils productivity, which is uniform across New York State. Soils that are more productive are valued higher. This means that your cropland is assessed based on its quality, and not on the value of neighboring properties. This also means that there won't be a significant jump in the assessed value from one year to the next, as NYS gradually changes the soil group values each year.

Interested in receiving agricultural assessment on your property?

Your first step is to contact your assessor to get the process started. Eventually you will be calling the Soil and Water office for a soil group worksheet. When you call, we will need the following information from your tax bill:

* **Parcel section, block, and lot number and town**
* **Full owner name and address**
* **Acreage that is listed on the tax bill**

What you will receive from this is two copies of the soil group worksheet and its associated map (one copy for you and one for your assessor). There is a small fee associated with the soil group worksheet development, to cover Soil and Water staff time and supplies. If you would like more information, call your local Soil and Water office or visit the NYS Agricultural assessment information website at https://tax.ny.gov/research/property/assess/valuation/agindex.htm.

Grants?...continued:

- Three **Ag Non Point Source Abatement and Control Program (AgNPSACP)** contracts from NYS Dept. of Ag & Markets for four large projects with many components including:
  - ~ a Compost Facility with a Waste Transfer System
  - ~ two Prescribed Rotational Grazing Systems (fencing, pipeline, stream crossings, animal walkways, watering facilities)
  - ~ a winter manure storage pad
  - ~ a Silage Leachate Control System (heavy use area and waste transfer)
  - ~ an Irrigation Water Management System
  - ~ a Riparian Buffer
- Two **Genesee River Mini-Grants** for erosion control utilizing surface inlets, underground outlets, diversions, and berm formation

WE ARE HERE TO HELP…
IF YOU'D LIKE TO DISCUSS A RESOURCE CONCERN ON YOUR PROPERTY, GIVE US A CALL!

Early & Current American Soil Conservationists

Hugh Hammond Bennett (1881-1960), whose early work included county-wide soil surveys for the USDA Bureau of Soils, is known as the **"Father of Conservation."** Among his writings of the 1920's, probably none was more influential than a USDA bulletin titled *Soil Erosion: A National Menace* (1928). The bulletin was not a manual on the methods of preventing soil erosion; rather it was intended to draw attention to "the process of land wastage and to the need for increased practical information and research work relating to the problem," especially urgent in light of the massive soil losses being caused by the "Dust Bowl." Largely in response to Bennett's campaign for soil conservation, the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (SCS), precursor to today's USDA Natural Resources Conservation District (NRCS), was established to combat soil erosion and to preserve natural resources.

Dust Bowl

Interestingly, the recognition of soil depletion and erosion and the need for soil conservation has actually been around for hundreds of years. The SCS publication *"Early American Soil Conservationists,"* first published in 1941, includes a composite of short essays from early conservationists dating back to the 1600s.

"Early colonists began to notice a change in the soil. At first it had been dark, in some places almost black, but now it was lighter in color. This change, imperceptible at first, meant that deterioration of the soil had set in. It was a symptom of the slow sickness that would for a long time afflict our land. It meant that much of the organic matter was gone. When a great rain came, the loose soil mixed with the water, and the muddy water flowed down the hills carrying with it the richest portion of the soil-topsoil. Year after year, settlers grew the same kind of crops on the same field. It is not surprising to find reference to worn-out land in the 18th centenary. What does it matter, they thought, if we wear out a field in a few years? No matter how much land we spoil, there will always be plenty more. Because land was so plentiful, colonial agriculture was wasteful and inefficient."

There were a few in those times who believed differently. They were farsighted and progressive, and could imagine the time when the good land would all be used up. Their efforts to prevent soil depletion on their own farms were successful, and many of these early conservationists developed ways of saving the soil that are still being used, at least in principle. Some of the **"Grandfathers of Conservation,"** from the SCS publication include Samuel Deane (1733-1814), Solomon Drown (1753-1834), and John Taylor (1753-1824), who advocated for practices similar to those conservationists implement still today. Samuel Deane experimented with crop rotation and soil enrichment. He determined the best rotation for light vs. stiff soils, but always included a rotation of soil-building crops (called cover crops today).

Solomon Drown was from Rhode Island, and proposed alternate methods to prevent erosion by placing barnyards on low-lying sites. He also advocated the use of rain gutters around barn roofs to help prevent manure runoff (a common practice still today) and believed crop rotation, which he called *alternate husbandry*, was the only way fertility could be restored to the soil. John Taylor, a Virginia farmer, developed a system of soil renovation through the penning of livestock, restricting them from the arable land, and utilizing fodder crops in place of pasture, thereby restoring vegetable matter by means of animal manure. He recommended planting shrubbery or cedar trees at strategic points to reduce streambank erosion (called riparian buffers today).

Jared Eliot

Finally, **Jared Eliot** (1685-1763), who after many years of experimentation on his Connecticut farm, incorporated his ideas into the first American book on agriculture, a series of essays, the first of which was published in 1748. Among his findings and practices were the recognition of soil erosion, the benefits of soil amendments, including manure, ash, limestone and soil-building crops such as red clover and grasses, along with green manure crops of oats, rye, millet, and buckwheat. Coincidently, the GCSWCD has a Jared Elliott, who is also a conservationist!

Jared Elliott

AGRICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

What is Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM)?

According to the NYS Department of Ag. And Markets, "AEM is a voluntary, incentive-based program that helps farmers make common-sense, cost-effective, and science-based decisions to meet business objectives while protecting and conserving New York State's natural resources." In short, the AEM program allows Soil and Water Conservation District staff to perform conservation planning on a farm at no cost to the landowner.

The goal is to provide farmers with local expertise to protect their natural resources.

To do this, we use a 5-tiered approach as the planning platform.

Tier 1 is a questionnaire that gathers information about the farm type, size, facilities, future plans, and conservation interests. This information also allows the District to form a database of active farms in the county.

Tier 2 of the AEM program is an evaluation of the potential environmental impact of the farm. This is where District staff walk the farm and assess the potential sources of pollution, identifying what is being treated or controlled well, as well as what could be improved.

Tier 3 is the plan development phase of AEM. The conservation plan is intended to address the areas of concern on the farm, based on the Tier 2 evaluation and the farm's goals. Conservation plans can vary in complexity, so there are three subsections of Tier 3 (A, B, and C). Tier 3A is a simple component plan, which is focused on one area of the farm (farmstead, cropland, nutrient, pest, and/or pasture). Tier 3B is a comprehensive nutrient management plan (CNMP), which is a requirement for confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) and any farm that wants to receive cost-sharing on a waste storage facility. Tier 3C is a whole farm plan, and is intended to address all aspects of the farm operation.

Tier 4 is the implementation tier. This is where District staff provide technical, and possibly financial, assistance to the farm to install best management practices (BMPs) that address resource concerns based on the Tier 3 plan.

Tier 5 is the evaluation of the Tier 3 plans and Tier 4 BMPs. District staff can revise plans and assess the effectiveness of BMPs annually to ensure that the resource concerns are being addressed adequately. This creates a continuous loop of planning that allows the farm to improve their environmental sustainability.

Why should you be involved in AEM?

Soil and Water Conservation Districts are unique in that they are not a regulatory agency. Our purpose is to help landowners and other agencies improve the water quality and soil health in our county through financial and technical assistance. The same can be said for the AEM program. Every operation has room for improvement, and AEM planning provides the farm with a new set of eyes to help identify where that improvement can be made. We are consultants; our only purpose is to help the farm improve itself. Also, Tier 3 plans are a requirement to be eligible for most grant programs that are offered by the Department of Ag & Markets, which opens up financial assistance opportunities for the farm operation.

We're here to help!
Please inquire with the District if you have any interest in funding for a project that addresses a natural resource concern.

Call us about Grass Carp!

2016 FISH ORDER FORM

TRIPLOID GRASS CARP

The grass carp is one of the largest members of the minnow family, commonly reaching weights in excess of 25 pounds. Native to the rivers of eastern China, it has been introduced into over 50 countries due to its uncanny ability to control a wide variety of aquatic plant species. Grass carp feed strictly by grazing on aquatic vegetation and do not share the bottom-feeding habits typical of common carp and goldfish.

Triploid grass carp, which are sterile and incapable of producing viable young, are the only form of grass carp legal in NY due to concerns over the potential impact fertile grass carp could have on sensitive aquatic habitats should uncontrolled reproducing populations of the fish become established.

AQUATIC PLANTS KNOWN TO BE CONTROLLED BY TRIPLOID GRASS CARP: Common elodea, coontail, fanwort, naiad, curly leaf pondweed, leafy pondweed, sago pondweed, floating pondweed, duckweed, muskgrass and submergents, including bladderwort, watermilfoil, water-stargrass and wild celery.

AQUATIC PLANTS *NOT* CONTROLLED BY TRIPLOID GRASS CARP: Arrowhead, bulrush, burreed, cat tails, watershield, white waterlily and algae.

FISH ORDER FAQ:

When is the order deadline? *We have several fish deliveries throughout the summer as demand for fish warrants.*

When will my fish be delivered? *When we have a sufficient number of fish ordered, we contact our supplier, who gives us a delivery date, usually the next week. You will be notified approximately a week in advance of the exact delivery date.*

How are my fish delivered? *The hatchery truck delivers the fish to our parking lot at 29 Liberty St., Batavia. Your fish are to be picked up between 10-11 a.m. Please be prompt as the hatchery truck will not wait and we have no way to hold your fish.*

What containers & water should I use? *We recommend a large cooler or clean garbage can with lid filled with at least 15-20 gallons of water from your pond. Do not use chlorinated water to transport your fish.*

How do I get triploid grass carp? *A DEC permit is required to obtain triploid grass carp. Our office can assist you with your application. The DEC will notify you how many grass carp you are allowed based on the size of your pond and the weed cover. You must present your permit when picking up your triploid grass carp.*

Species	Price	Quantity	Total Cost
~Feel free to inquire about other species~			
Largemouth Bass 3-5”	$60.00 / 25		
Channel Catfish 6-8”	**Catfish unavailable until Spring, 2017**		
Fathead Minnows 1-3”	$22.00/ lb. (~150 fish)		
Blue Gill 3-5”	$30.00 / 10		
Perch 3-5”	$60.00 / 25		
	Add 8% Sales Tax on above subtotal	→	
Triploid Grass Carp 10-14” *DEC permit copy required with order*	$20.00 each ***(No tax on grass carp)***		$
TOTAL			$

Name

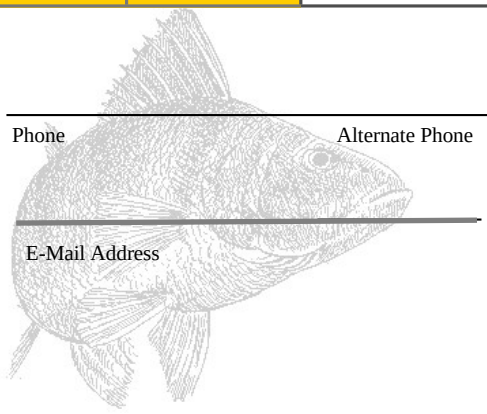
Phone Alternate Phone

Address City ZIP

E-Mail Address

Please return this order form along with your check payable to Genesee Co. SWCD and your grass carp permit, if required, to:

Genesee County Soil & Water Conservation District
29 Liberty Street, Suite 3, Batavia, NY 14020



Autumn 2016

REMINDERS...

Tree Seminar at Genesee Co. Park — details on page one — be sure to call and sign up!

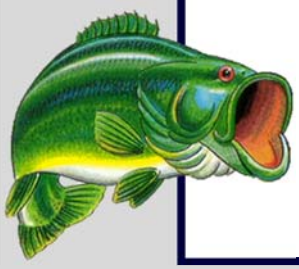
The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now!
-Chinese Proverb

Ag Plastic Recycling — Early October

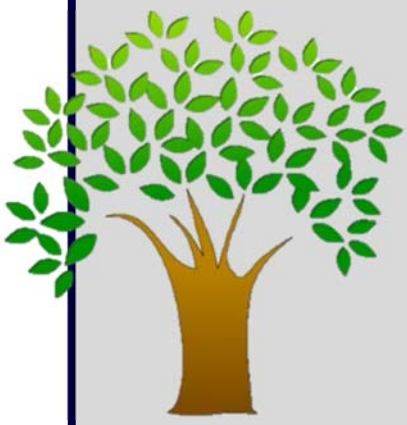
USAg Recycling Inc. will once again be picking up agricultural plastic containers in several locations throughout New York State in early October. The service is **free** to farmers and provides an environmentally friendly alternative to burning or throwing away agricultural containers.

Farmers interested in recycling agricultural plastics should begin collecting plastic containers and taking steps to ensure they are **dry, empty, and properly rinsed**.
Farmers who would like to participate should contact Genesee Co. SWCD to discuss quantities and possible pick up locations. Also for more information visit the USAg Recycling website at http://www.usagrecycling.com.

Here at GCSWCD we LOVE trees and fish...and we enjoy helping other conservation minded folks beautify their property with trees, shrubs, and perennial flowers, and maintain clean, clear water with healthy pond ecosystems by stocking fish.



Our **Annual Tree and Shrub Sale** as well as our **Fish Stocking Program** are great ways to get to know us, and learn about what we can do for you at Soil & Water.



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Chad: 716-560-0470
Office: 585-762-4411
E-Mail: drew@alleghanyfs.com
chad@alleghanyfs.com

Genesee County Soil and Water Conservation District
29 Liberty St., Suite 3
Batavia, NY 14020

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Batavia, New York
Permit No. 228

Don't forget to call and reserve a spot at the 9/24 Tree Seminar...It's sure to be FUN and INFORMATIVE!

Genesee County SWCD and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, political beliefs, sexual orientation, sex, age, marital status or disability. Genesee County SWCD, NRCS and USDA are equal opportunity providers and employers.