

COMMITTEES

- Beaver Dam Creek Tributary Restoration Task Force
- Cornell University's L.I. Horticultural Research & Extension Center—Advisory Council
- Earth Team Coordinator
- L.I. Agricultural Stewardship Working Group
- L.I. Ag Forum Planning Committee
- L.I. Regional Envirothon
- L.I. Invasive Species Management Area
- Lower Hudson-L.I. Resource Conservation & Development Council
- 2007 Canon Envirothon Committee
- NYACD
- NYS Conservation District Employees Association
- NYS Envirothon
- L.I. Native Grass Initiative
- Peconic Estuary Technical Advisory Committee
- Suffolk County Dept. of Health Services Peconic River Project
- Suffolk County Land & Water Invasive Species Task Force
- Suffolk County Vector Control Long Range Planning Committee
- Suffolk County Water Quality Protection & Restoration—Review Committee
- South Shore Estuary Reserve

GOOD-BYE TO SPINELLI

The District said good-bye to Nicole Spinelli this November. After five years of service she decided to move on to sunnier skies. Following her interests she secured a position with Go Solar, a local alternative energy company. We wish her luck and she will surely be missed.



Nicole supervising a solar install.

FEDS AWARD COUNTY FARMERS \$135,000+ FOR CONSERVATION



A pumpkin farm located in eastern Suffolk County.

The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), a federal cost-share program funded through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), awarded 9 farmers in Suffolk County \$135,296 for installing conservation practices on their farms. Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District continues to assist the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service in administering this important cost-share opportunity for local producers. The practices recommended for installation are based upon a farm's conservation plan and target protection for our groundwater, air quality and erosion control.

DISTRICT GETS \$16,000 FROM USDA CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENT

The Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District has entered into an agreement with the NRCS whereas the District is paid for providing assistance in administrating EQIP grants. Working closely with USDA—NRCS conservationists, the District has received over \$16,000 from the USDA for hours spent working on EQIP grants during 2007.

LONG ISLAND NATIVE GRASS INITIATIVE (LINGI)



Polly Weigand collecting native grass seed.

The Green Belt Native Plant Center kicked off this effort by establishing 1200 plugs of four native grasses from seed collected by LINGI members in 2006. With Chris Kelly at the helm of the tractor and LINGI members, all the plugs were planted. Application of a cover crop finalized the founder plot and weeding activities followed throughout the growing season.

With the onset of fall, our focus shifted to increasing the genetic diversity of our seed collections. This was achieved by collecting seed from new grasslands sites. The timing our seed collections activities at peak seed maturity, allowed us to collect enough Switchgrass seed to contribute seed to USDA biofuel trials.

A special thank you goes to all the volunteers that helped with this initiative. Your commitment to the LINGI made 2007 a success!

LINGI is a cooperative effort of organizations, agencies, and professionals working together to preserve the genetic heritage of L.I. grassland by creating a source of native grass seed for use in erosion control, wildlife habitat restoration, and landscaping.

The end of 2007 marked the 3rd year of the LINGI. Winter and spring were focused on the creation of founder blocks which is a breeding nursery used to increase seed quantity while allowing for genetic mixing.



Volunteers collect seed at Smith Point Marina, Mastic Beach.

Suffolk County Soil & Water Conservation District

2007 YEAR IN REVIEW

Board of Directors

George Proios
Chairperson
Member at Large

Lloyd Corwin
Director
Farmer

Joe Gergela
Director
L.I. Farm Bureau

Daniel P. Losquadro
Director
S.C. Legislator
District #6

Vivian Viloria-Fisher
Director
S.C. Legislator
District #5

District Staff

Thomas McMahon
District Manager

Elizabeth Condon
Principal Account Clerk

Paul TeNyenhuis
Sr. Soil District Technician

Sharon Frost
Soil District Technician

Polly Weigand
Soil District Technician

USDA-NRCS

Allan Connell
District Conservationist

Brian Zimmerman
Soil Conservation
Technician

\$600,000 FOR AGRICULTURAL PESTICIDE HANDLING FACILITY

The Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) have formed a partnership to assist farmers in funding the installation of Agricultural Pesticide Handling Facilities (AMF) on their farms. An AMF is a structure designed to provide an area for mixing, loading, unloading and rinsing operations of on-farm agrichemicals. Chemicals are contained on the pad and re-used, thereby protecting the environment, in particular our groundwater.

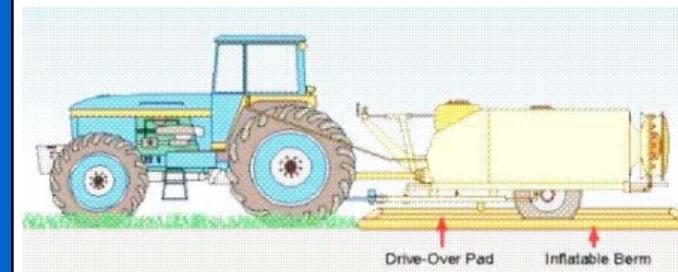


Agricultural Pesticide Handling Facility

The NYS DEC has provided over \$600,000 in funding, via pesticide related violations, for construction of these facilities. According to the agreement the District administers the design and installation of the AMF. The grant allows for a 75/25 match granting growers a reimbursement up to \$30,000 for each facility. A permanent structure costs approximately \$40,000.

"Twenty-seven producers have applied for the funding in 2007 and more are expected to apply in 2008. This is an awesome display of Long Island farmers' commitment to protecting our groundwater," said Thomas McMahon AMF Coordinator and District Manager.

"Each facility is individually designed to meet the needs of the grower. We take into consideration the size of the grower's sprayer, type of operation, site location, ground slope and elevation. Completed designs are evaluated and approved by the USDA—NRCS NYS Engineers before construction begins," said Paul TeNyenhuis AMF Design and Construction Technician.



Portable structures also qualify for reimbursement under this environmental benefit program. They are less expensive costing approximately \$6,000 and provide the farmer with the option of relocating their mixing area.

"Although we encourage farmers to follow best management practices when handling pesticides, these facilities greatly reduce the possibility of a spill due to human error," said Allan Connell, USDA-NRCS Area Conservationist.

Anyone interested in applying for this cost-sharing opportunity should contact the District office.



EPA's Regional Administrator Alan Steinberg addresses students at the 2007 L.I. Envirothon.

L.I. ENVIROTHON

The 10th L.I. Envirothon is scheduled for Wednesday, April 30, 2008 at the USDAN Center for the Creative and Performing Arts in Wheatley Heights.

At last year's event Sachem H.S. prevailed, going on to represent Suffolk County at the N.Y.S. Envirothon. Also, in 2007 the L.I. Envirothon received a \$8,800 grant from the EPA's Environmental Education Fund. The funding was used to purchase reference materials and equipment to enhance the program.



Liz Condon, District office staff helps plant for the L.I. Grass Initiative.

The District staff assisted in planting native grass seedlings to establish a founder plot for the L.I. Native Grass Initiative. "This is an important step to preserve the genetic heritage of L.I.'s grasslands and establish a precedent for future generations," said Polly Weigand Coordinator of the Long Island Native Grass Initiative.

SUFFOLK TAKES STAND AGAINST INVASIVES SPECIES

Did you know that invasive species are the greatest cause of destruction of biodiversity, next to development? Worldwide, their impacts are responsible for costing the United States economy 97 billion dollars in the 20th Century alone! Long Island is not immune to the effects of invasive species. Species such as Purple loosestrife, Autumn olive, Oriental bittersweet, and Japanese knotweed are a few examples of invasive species that have degraded Long Island's biodiversity, prevented access to recreational areas, and impacted agricultural activities.

Suffolk County has responded to the economic and biological impacts of invasive species by passing legislation against the sale, introduction, and propagation of non-native invasive species, the first of its kind in New York State. This bill, sponsored by Legislator Vivian Vilorio-Fisher, includes a "Do Not Sell List" of plant species considered invasive in Suffolk County. A total of 64 species are currently listed and will be banned from sale once the following grace periods expires.



Elaeagnus umbellata, a growing concern on Long Island

To assist with policy, control and management decisions, a Suffolk County Water and Land Invasives Advisory Board will be created as part of this legislation. As new invasive species are constantly being discovered, this board will also evaluate and recommend additions to the "Do Not Sell List". You can find further information on this legislation, as well as the species listed on the "Do Not Sell List" and the grace periods at <http://www.co.suffolk.ny.us/legis/resos2007/i1144-07.htm>

JAPANESE KNOTWEED AT QUOGUE WILDLIFE REFUGE

The Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District was awarded \$7,500 from the N.Y.S. Department of Environmental Conservation through their Aquatic Invasive Species Eradication grant program to assist the Quogue Wildlife Refuge in the removal of Japanese Knotweed.

"This fierce invasive has begun to take root at the Refuge and with assistance of volunteers we are hoping to fully eradicate it before it becomes established," said Sharon Frost, the grant administrator.



Polygonum cuspidatum stand at the Quogue Wildlife Refuge

Also known as *Polygonum cuspidatum*, this invasive reduces biodiversity by forcing out native plants with shade and thick ground cover damaging wildlife habitat. It is extremely difficult and time consuming to remove once it is established and has been declared a noxious weed in several states including New York. Because the leaves and stems that fall are thick and take a long time to decompose, no other plants (except the new Japanese knotweed shoots) can grow in an affected area.

SUFFOLK COUNTY AGRICULTURAL STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM



Suffolk County's Agricultural Stewardship Program was established in response to growing concerns about nitrates and pesticides found in the County's ground and surface waters. Developing this voluntary program is a collaborative effort among the Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District, the USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service and Cornell Cooperative Extension.

"This is a vital step in protecting our sole source aquifer while preserving the region's viable agricultural industry. By helping farmers to evaluate their management practices, we are working to prevent future regulation," said Joe Gergela, Executive Director of the Long Island Farm Bureau.

Components of the five year voluntary agricultural stewardship program include research, education, implementation and monitoring. By utilizing the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program "whole farm plans" are developed, which offer farmers the guidance to incorporate better management practices that both protect Long Island's groundwater and maintain/improve production.

The District has assisted in streamlining the AEM worksheets to make them commodity specific in coordination with the NY State AEM Management Team, USDA-NRCS and Cornell Cooperative Extension. Seventeen "whole-farm" conservation plans were completed in 2007 using the AEM worksheets.

"Working in collaboration with the USDA-NRCS and Cornell Cooperative Extension has brought together a team of experts from all agencies who assisted in the successful implementation of this program," said Thomas McMahon, District Manager.



Farmer plowing his fields in eastern Suffolk County



Vista on eastern Long Island

District services provided...

- Agriculture**
 - Engineering Practices
 - Irrigation Design
 - Ag. Value Assessment
 - Agronomic Practices
 - Erosion Control
 - Conservation Planning
 - Pest Management Techniques
 - Cost-share Programs
 - Transition to Organic Farming Assistance
 - Technical Assistance
 - Practice & Installation Supervision
 - Drainage Systems
 - Agricultural Waste Systems
- Landowners**
 - Bluff Erosion Recommendations
 - Conservation Information
 - Educational Materials
 - Invasive Species
 - Wildlife Watering Facilities
 - Pond Assistance
 - Soil Erosion & Drainage
 - Soils Information
 - Wetland Restoration Program
 - Wildlife Management
- Education**
 - Conservation Materials
 - Programs Guides
- Municipalities**
 - Nonpoint Source Pollution Remediation
 - Site Plan & Subdivision Reviews
 - Grant Partnerships
 - Watershed Management
- Environmental Consultants**
 - Natural Resource Maps
 - Aerial Photos



District staff and volunteers install a deer fence around the founder plot located in Riverhead.