



Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District

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Phone: (607) 753-0851, Ext. 3 * Fax: (607) 756-0029

SWCD...established to promote the conservation and wise use of our county's natural resources

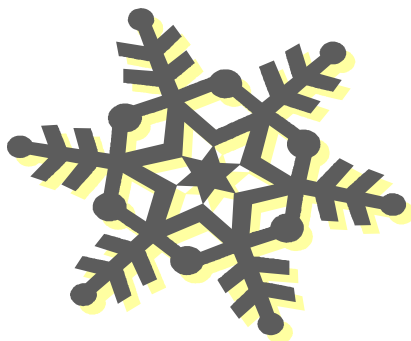


Volume 11, Issue 1

Winter 2006

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*Mark Your Calendars!!
The 2006 Ag Day Dinner is
scheduled for March 14th.*

SOIL GROUP WORKSHEETS



Landowners filing for an agricultural assessment in 2006 must file applications with their local assessor by March 1st. To complete an application for an agricultural assessment, landowners must have a Soil Group Worksheet (SGW) prepared by the SWCD for each tax parcel they intend to enroll. Landowners who have previously had a SGW completed for a tax parcel do not need a new one unless the total parcel acreage changed.

Landowners participating in the program for the first time, or those who need a revised SGW, should make an appointment with our office now. The worksheets should be completed as early as possible. All appointments must be made before Monday, February 13th. When calling, the landowner should have the appropriate tax map number, location, and acreage for each parcel. This information can be found on the most recent parcel tax bill. A fee of \$25.00 will be charged for each SGW, new or revised.

Agricultural land does not automatically receive an agricultural assessment. Landowners must apply each year to remain eligible. For more information, contact your local assessor, or Real Property Tax Service at 753-5040. Contact SWCD to make an appointment for your SGW.

THE ANATOMY OF A TREE

The outer bark is the tree's protection from the outside world. Continually renewed from within, it helps keep out moisture in the rain and prevents the tree from losing moisture when the air is dry. It insulates against cold and heat and wards off insect enemies.

The inner bark, or "phloem", is a pipeline through which food is passed to the rest of the tree. It lives for only a short time, then dies and turns to cork to become part of the protective outer bark.

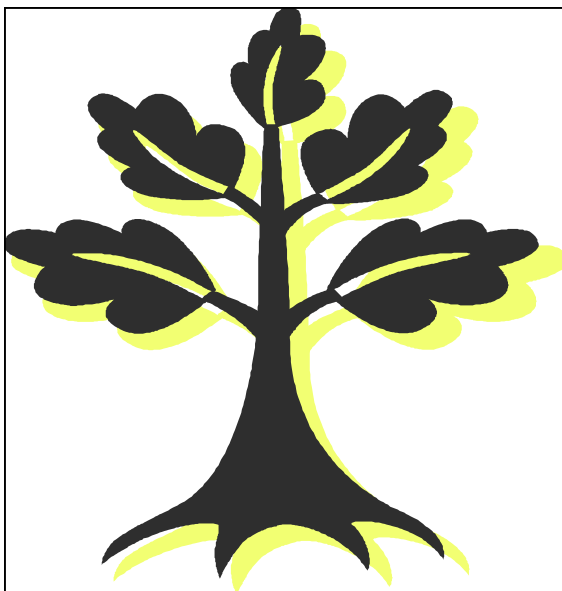
The cambium cell layer is the growing part of the trunk. It annually produces new bark and new wood in response to hormones that pass down through the phloem with food from the leaves. These hormones, called "auxins", stimulate growth in cells. Auxins are produced by leaf buds at the ends of branches as soon as they start growing in the spring.

Heartwood is the central, supporting pillar of the tree. Although dead, it will not decay or lose strength while the outer layers are intact.

A composite of hollow, needlelike cellulose fibers bound together by a chemical glue called lignin, it is in many ways as strong as steel. A piece 12" long and 1' by 2' in cross section set vertically can support a weight of twenty tons!

Sapwood is the tree's pipeline for water moving up to the leaves. Sapwood is new wood. As newer rings of sapwood are laid down, inner cells lose their vitality and turn to heartwood.

Leaves make food for the tree. This tells us much about their shapes. For example, the narrow needles of a Douglas fir can expose as much as three acres of chlorophyll surface to the sun. The lobes, leaflets and jagged edges of many broad leaves have their uses, too. They help evaporate the water used in food-building, reduce wind resistance, and even provide "drip tips" to shed rain that, left standing, could decay the leaf.



For more information about trees, visit www.arborday.org.

* Enclosed with this newsletter is an order form for seedlings and shrubs being sold *
* as part of our Annual Spring Tree Sale. If for some reason you did not receive an *
* order form and would like one, please call us and we will gladly send you one! *
* Remember, as always, this sale is on a first come first serve basis, so order early *
* to ensure that you get the species you want. *



Want to Make Money from Marginal Pasture and Cropland?

New York State Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) pays farmers to put marginal pastures and cropland adjacent to streams, public well heads and water bodies into buffers strips that stop nutrient and sediment pollution from getting into the water.

Economic Incentives

- Annual rental payments that are higher than the normal CRP rate
- 50% cost share on conservation practices
- 40% practice incentive payment (PIP) on certain conservation practices
- Signing Incentive Payment (SIP) - \$100 to \$150 per acre
- Annual maintenance payment of \$5 to \$10 per acre

Producers with lands enrolled may also receive an annual tax credit.

Additional benefits include:

- Improving water quality
- Improving habitat for wildlife and fish
- Improving public perception of agriculture
- Cleaner cattle
- Cost share on fencing
- Cost share on developing alternate water source for cattle

For more information, contact Jean Foley at SWCD by calling 607-753-0851, Ext. 3.

NEW COUNTY AQUIFER SIGNS

The Homer-Preble aquifer and the Otter-Dry Creek aquifer are two very important sources of drinking water for the residents of Cortland County. Road signs were put up in the past to mark the location of these aquifers, but most were missing or became faded and extremely difficult to read. Recently, the SWCD in cooperation with the Cortland Aquifer Protection Alliance (CAPA) purchased new signs to replace the old ones. Staff from the County Highway Department, the City of Cortland Water Department, and the SWCD coordinated efforts and installed the signs this fall. Ten signs have been installed to locate the Otter-Dry Creek Aquifer, which identify the aquifer as "Cortland's Water Supply." An additional twenty signs have been posted to identify the Homer-Preble Aquifer, which encourage readers to help "Protect Our Groundwater." We hope that these new signs will serve as a continual reminder of the importance of our groundwater, as well as the role we all must play in protecting it!

Agricultural Environmental Management Program



In a recent press release, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets reminded farmers that County Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are conducting free, confidential environmental assessments of farms for interested farmers. The assessments are part of the State's voluntary Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program, which works to protect and enhance the environment while maintaining a viable agricultural industry.

In our last newsletter we focused on The District's development of an AEM Strategic Plan. We are actively implementing that plan by conducting AEM Tier 1 inventory questionnaires, Tier 2 assessment worksheets, and Tier 5 Evaluations. There are specialized AEM Worksheets to assess the different needs for most types of agricultural operations including dairy and livestock, equine, field crops, vineyards, fruits and vegetables, and greenhouses. The AEM Worksheets document sound environmental practices, indicate the level of risk certain activities may present to the environment, and suggest how risk might be reduced on selected practices.

Once a farm assessment has been completed, the farmer can decide whether or not to continue the AEM process to develop a conservation plan that addresses the identified environmental concerns and potential opportunities. A conservation plan provides information needed for long-term business planning and implementation, and will help reduce environmental liability and increase compliance with state water quality requirements.

Farms completing an assessment are eligible to apply for cost-share funding of conservation planning and practice implementation. Over \$45 million in cost-share funds have been awarded through the State's Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Grant Program to farms for the planning and implementation of conservation practices. AEM is a voluntary, incentive-based program that helps farm operations meet business objectives, while protecting water quality and the environment. Strong partnerships at the local, state, and federal levels have led to the growing success of AEM, with more than 9,000 farms in 54 counties enrolled across the state and over 160 farms in Cortland County.

To learn more about AEM, or to request a free environmental assessment of your farm, contact SWCD. For more information visit our website at www.cortlandcountyswcd.com and the New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee website at www.nys-soilandwater.org.



SWCD Board of Directors: Front Row (L to R): Eugene Wright; Michael McKee. Back Row (L to R): Patrick Snyder; John Steger; Carl Ritter.



SWCD Staff: Front Row (L to R): Amanda Barber; Darrel Sturges; Andy Breese; Pat Reidy. Back Row (L to R): Melanie Dewey; Jean Swisher; Neil McMahon; Stacy Russell; Jean Foley.

Do Your Petroleum Storage Facilities Need to be Registered?

We have had a number of calls and questions over the past few months about farm fuel storage. A number of you have been scrutinized by your insurance companies and neighbors with varying results

from needing secondary containment, needing permits, and fines.

Hence, this article is about petroleum storage regulations. In Cortland County, the County Health Department Division of Environmental Health is responsible for administering Petroleum Storage Regulations.



NYS-DEC does not have jurisdiction, except where a spill has occurred. The NYSDEC regulations are included as part of the County Sanitary Code and were last updated in 1997, with fees updated in 2003. These regulations can be found at www.dec.state.ny.us/website/der/guidance/index.html#tankregs.

Simply put, these regulations apply to you if you have storage tanks, both aboveground and underground, whose combined total storage capacity is over 1,100 gallons at one site. This includes petroleum products used for heating or engine fuel. This also includes out of service tanks that have not been permanently disposed of or closed. Facilities that exceed the threshold 1,100 gallons must register with the Cortland County Health Department by completing an application and submitting a fee, which is based on the storage capacity.

This is an annual registration, and for facilities less than 2,000 gallons the fee is \$35 per year. This fee increases incrementally up to \$130 per year for greater than 20,000 gallons storage.

Now there is likely to be some discussion as to how "at one site" is defined, and some people may use that as a means to avoid the registration, however, the registration process should not be our focus. Our focus should be on making sure that our facilities and operation have a minimal impact on and present a minimal risk to

the health and safety of our family, community, and environment. There are a number of other requirements for registered storage tanks and facilities. These include secondary containment, gauges, labeling, etc. Some of these same practices may be required by your insurance company. They are also very helpful for emergency personnel responding to an accident, and can help avoid costly errors on the farm. (Ever have an employee put gas in a diesel engine?)

So take a moment to evaluate your petroleum storage tanks. Make sure that the contents and capacity of all tanks is documented. Make sure all tanks are painted, kept in good repair and monitored regularly. Keep good records on fuel use. Consider secondary storage. If the storage capacity exceeds 1,100 gallons, contact the Division of Environmental Health at 753-5035 to get your application.



By: Suzette Kocher

It's hard to believe that another year has ended and a new year is ready to begin. Where does the time go?

We have been notified that the budget allocations are presently being sent to the States. Once we know what we will receive here in New York, we will send notification of the program sign-up deadlines. Watch your mail for a postcard!!

If you have an existing program contract with us, we will be calling you shortly to set up a day and time to meet and discuss your contract. We will want to talk about the practices planned for installation on your farm, and make sure we are still on track for implementation or, if your farming operations have changed, re-think what we will be doing.

During the winter months is also a good time to review your Food Security Act (FSA) plan. Are there any revisions that need to be made? Are all of your Highly Erodible Lands (HEL) planned? Have you acquired new land that hasn't had a determination yet? If we work on this during the winter, we can help you be better prepared for spring planting.

Elena and I have enjoyed working with the landowners in Cortland County and look forward to another year working with you. We wish each and everyone of you a safe and joyous holiday season.

Happy Holidays.



SERVICES

AGRICULTURAL LAND CONSERVATION



EQUIPMENT RENTAL



CONSERVATION EDUCATION



FISH STOCKING PROGRAM



HOMEOWNER ASSISTANCE



LIVING SNOW FENCE



SEEDLING PROGRAMS



SITE PLAN REVIEWS



SOIL GROUP WORKSHEETS



SOILS INFORMATION



STREAM DISTURBANCE PERMIT ASSISTANCE



STREAM STABILIZATION ASSISTANCE



URBAN CONSERVATION



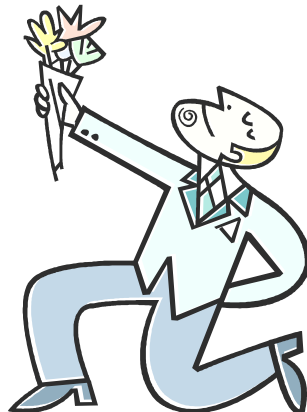
WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT



CONTACT OUR OFFICE FOR MORE INFORMATION

STAFF NEWS

Darrel Sturges, a Conservation Assistant with SWCD, became engaged this Fall to Kelly Bower from Trumansburg. The nuptials are scheduled to take place on September 23, 2006. Congratulations Darrel and Kelly!!



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100 Grange Place, Room 202
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Homer, NY 13077

*Providing Today - Protecting Tomorrow.
...established to promote the conservation and wise use of
our county's natural resources.*

2006 TREE SALE ORDER FORM ENCLOSED

WE'RE ON THE WEB
VISIT US AT:

WWW.CORTLANDCOUNTYSWCD.COM

Please contact our office if you wish to be added/removed from our mailing list.



Calendar

Board of Directors:

Michael McKee - Legislator
Carl Ritter - Treasurer
Eleanor Ritter, RC&D Representative
Patrick Snyder - Member at Large
John Steger - Legislator
Eugene Wright - Chairman

SWCD Staff:

Amanda Barber - Manager
Andy Breese - Natural Resource Conservationist
Melanie Dewey - Secretary to the Board
Jean Foley - Conservation Assistant
Neil McMahon - Conservation Assistant
Pat Reidy - Water Quality Specialist
Stacy Russell - Natural Resource Program Specialist
Darrel Sturges - Conservation Assistant
Jean Swisher - Account Clerk

NRCS Staff:

Darrell L. Emmick - State Grazing Land Management Specialist
Suzette Kocher - District Conservationist
Elena Steele - Soil Conservationist

- 01/10/06 Board Meeting (1:00 p.m.)
- 01/11/06 Office Closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 01/26/06 WQCC Meeting
- 02/14/06 Board Meeting (1:00 p.m.)
- 02/20/06 Office Closed for President's Day
- 02/23/06 WQCC Meeting
- 03/07/05 to 03/10/06 Water Quality Symposium
- 03/14/06 Board Meeting (1:00 p.m.)
- 03/14/06 Ag-Day Dinner (7:00 p.m.)
- 03/23/06 WQCC Meeting
- 04/07/06 Tree Orders Due
- 04/11/06 Board Meeting (1:00 p.m.)
- 04/20/06 Tree Pick-Up