



Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District

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NEWSLETTER

FALL 2010 * VOLUME 15, ISSUE 2

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

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Cortland's Agricultural Agencies Vendor Fair

November 15, 2010 6:30-8:30 pm

Cortland County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) is partnering with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cortland County (CCE) & New York Dept. of Agriculture and Markets Risk Management Education to present an Agricultural Agencies Vendor Fair in the New York State Grange Auditorium at 100 Grange Place from 6:30 to 8:00pm on November 15, 2010. This is a great opportunity for beginning, hobby, or experienced farmers to meet with SWCD and other Agricultural Agencies.

The following agencies and organizations will be available to answer your questions and talk about their programs.

- USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA)
- USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Cortland County Soil & Water Conservation District
- First Pioneer Farm Credit
- New York Organic Farmers' Association (NOFA-NY)
- New York Farm Bureau
- Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cortland County
- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)

For more information and to pre-register contact CCE of Cortland - Sharon VanDeuson at (607) 753-5078.

Storm Drain Stenciling



Students in Tim Sandstrom's New Vision Class

Cortland County Soil & Water Conservation District has recently completed a volunteer storm drain stenciling project. The stenciling project was organized to inform the public of the risks of dumping waste down storm drains. Volunteers used stencils that said "Don't Dump Drains to Aquifer" or "Don't Dump Drains to River" to inform the public that waste dumped into storm drains goes directly into either the aquifer or the Tioughnioga River without being treated. Volunteers worked between Main St., River St., Port Watson St., Rte. 13; Pendleton St., Huntington St; and on Owego St. Tim Sandstrom's New Vision BO-CES Classes, the White Family, Alpha Sigma Alpha Sisters, AmeriCorps Volunteers, Stephanie Plude and Becky Hammer-Lester, and Pat Buecheler all volunteered to help stencil. We would like to thank our volunteers for their help with this project aimed at protecting water quality.

Cover Crops: A Valuable BMP

The Cortland County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) would like to encourage local farmers to consider adopting the use of cover crops. In addition to the many benefits of cover crops mentioned in the Winter Issue of this Newsletter, planting of cover crops is a best management practice (BMP) that greatly reduces the nutrient load contributed to streams. This is more important than ever in lieu of the nutrient load (cont. pg. 2)

TMDLs to Address Chesapeake Bay Pollution



Over the past several months Cortland County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) has been working closely with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition, Department of Environmental Conservation, and other interested parties to understand and respond to the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) allocations for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed developed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for each state that is part of the watershed. The TMDL refers to a maximum amount of a pollutant that a body of water may receive and still meet its water quality standards, (with a margin of safety.) In essence, the TMDL is a pollutant diet.

The draft TMDLs put forth by the EPA define the maximum amount of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment that can be in the Susquehanna River when it crosses from New York into Pennsylvania. The Tioughnioga River, Otselic River, and their tributaries are all tributaries to the Susquehanna River, which is part of the larger Chesapeake Bay Watershed. In this case the limits set by the EPA for New York state are 8.2 million pounds of nitrogen and 500,000 pounds of phosphorous per year. There is also a TMDL for sediment. It is EPA's belief that by taking care of phosphorous and nitrogen, sediment will also be addressed.

We believe that the allocations to New York State are unfairly high and could have profound impacts on our farms and communities. We have, with our partners, appealed to the EPA to change the TMDLs for New York State. The current TMDLs will place such a burden on farmers and municipalities in New York State that it could spell the end of small family farms and threaten our already weak economy. In order to achieve the TMDLs, strict best management practices (BMP), similar to those followed by Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), would have to become standard practice on all farms. In its Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP), the Department of Environmental Conservation proposed reasonable and resource needs based practices and nutrient saving measures that could reach yearly limits in New York of 9.6 million pounds for nitrogen and 600,000 pounds for phosphorous. The SWCD agrees that these are much more achievable expectations.

Staff News



Aaron Ristow left the Cortland County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) this past July. Aaron is now working with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition

(USC) as their Agriculture Coordinator. Although Aaron will be missed, we wish him the best of luck and look forward to working with him in his new position!

Cover Crops, cont. from pg 1

allocations that will be implemented by the EPA (see TMDL article above). If you are interested in learning more about cover crops there is a workshop coming up on the 19th in Big Flats, NY. The workshop at the Big Flats Plant Materials Center will provide the opportunity to observe 25 different cover crops or mixes, some with several seeding dates and to observe the establishment of rye by drilling compared to broadcasting with and without cultivation. There are also several speakers attending including Joel Myers and Thomas Bjorkman. Every effort will be made to accommodate everyone. **Please RSVP with the names, number attending, and any special needs you may have by calling 607- 562-8404 or by emailing shawna.clark@ny.usda.gov.** If you need more information or directions please contact the SWCD at 607-756-5991.

2010 Conservation Field Days



Tim Sandstrom teaches students about composting.

The 2010 Conservation Field Days were held September 16th and 17th at Camp Owahta. This is an educational event that exposes sixth grade students to a variety of programs relating to conservation and the environment. This years programs included programs about forestry, beekeeping, composting, wetlands, firearm safety, and many others. The classes rotated through nine stations throughout the course of the day. This year we had a total of 15 different presentations with approximately 500 students and their teachers in attendance.

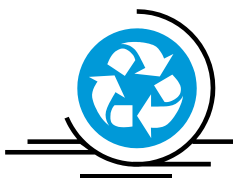
The Cortland County Soil & Water Conservation District would like to thank all the presenters and participating schools for helping make this event a success as well as Cornell Cooperative Extension for their help and the use of their facility.

Recycling Agricultural Plastics

Cornell is spearheading an effort to increase the recycling of agricultural plastics in this area. Agricultural plastics, such as dairy silage bags and bale wrap are often land-filled, burnt, or buried. These disposal methods are not ideal because they increase landfill size, release toxins, and litters the countryside, among other hazards.

The Cornell Recycling Agricultural Plastics Project (RAPP) hopes to provide information and equipment in order to make plastic recycling a feasible, cost-effective method of dealing with agricultural plastic waste. As part of this effort they have acquired mobile plastic bailers and are encouraging farmers to keep plastic clean and dry so that it can be baled and more easily recycled. They are also trying to cultivate markets for recycling of the plastics and promoting the purchase of those products. Recycled agricultural plastics can be turned into plastic lumber, sweet crude oil, and roof tiles.

For more information on this program, contact the Cortland County Soil & Water Conservation District at 607-756-5991.



FSA/NRCS Conservation Loan Program

Are you approved for a conservation project and trying to figure out how to pay for your share of the practices? The Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) have partnered to provide loans and financing options to help manage the cost of conservation projects.

The new conservation loan program can be used to fund conservation practices, and facilitate an operations transition into sustainable or organic agriculture. Any conservation practices identified on an approved NRCS conservation plan will qualify for financing under the conservation loan program.

Approved uses of loan funds include:

- Install structures to address soil, water and related resource conservation.
- Establish forest cover for sustainable yield timber management, erosion control or shelter belt purposes.
- Install water conservation measures.
- Install waste management systems.
- Adapt to any other emerging or existing conservation practices, techniques or technologies, as noted by NRCS, which may require the purchase of equipment.
- Assist in the transition to sustainable or organic agriculture.
- Guaranteed loan funds can be used for any of the above listed practices along with refinancing debt incurred for any authorized conservation loan purposes.

For more information regarding this program, contact the Cortland FSA Office at 607-753-0851 Ext. 2.

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Workshop Announcements Enclosed

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Calendar

11/15/10 Agricultural Agencies Vendor Fair
11/16/10 Empire State Chapter of the Soil & Water Conservation Society Annual Meeting
11/19/10 Cover Crop Workshop
11/25/10 –11/26/10 Office Closed for Thanksgiving
12/14/10 Board Meeting
12/24/10 Office Closed for Christmas
12/31/10 Office Closed for New Years

A decorative border at the bottom of the calendar section features autumn-themed illustrations including pumpkins, sunflowers, and various fruits like apples and eggplants.