

CONSERVATION UPDATE

July 2021



DISTRICT UPDATE

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DISTRICT STAFF:

District Manager

Katie Sommerfeldt

Secretary/Treasurer

Judy Bennett

Technician

Megan McAnn

Technician

Melissa Rivellis

Unlike last year, 2021 has started off great! After all the worries about possible funding cuts, we pulled through obtaining our full amount of state funding and we maintained our county appropriation. Without these sources we would not be able to function as we do today. On top of this we were awarded almost a million dollars in grant funding for farm projects throughout the county! Only a small portion of this money comes back to reimburse us for our time in designing and administering these grants, but every cent counts and will keep us moving forward. All of this shows that we are recognized for all the good work the Orleans County Soil & Water District does. Without our constant due diligence trying to improve the county's water quality, and solving drainage and pollution issues, we would not be where we are today.

All of that being said, with it being construction season we have kept very busy. We currently have one Agrichemical Handling Facility being constructed and have another scheduled for completion by the end of the year. These facilities are where farmers can store and mix their pesticides in their sprayers and any spills can be contained. We have two stream crossings that will begin construction in a few weeks, and a third one going in around fall time. These crossings allow the farmers to access their fields without driving through the streams and creating pollution concerns. A covered feedlot is also planned on being installed in a few months for a beef farm so they can properly feed their animals in an area away from stream flooding. We have started working on the designs for a grassed waterway and several micro irrigation projects. On top of all of these old grant application implementation projects, we have submitted four more grant applications to NYS for the implementation of farm agriculture best management practices to improve water quality. We have also been responding to many residential drainage issues regarding flooding and offered recommendations on how to remedy the situations.

We have started two new programs this year. One is our invasive species program, which we will start going out and surveying municipal areas for invasive species, mapping them, then discussing these areas with the local municipalities. Our efforts will be used to stop the spread of invasive species and give recommendations on eradication. We have also been assisting in a biocontrol research project on an invasive species called swallow-wort in the Village of Holley (which you can read more about on page 5). Our other program we will be starting is a hydroseeding program. We have recently purchased a new hydroseeder for the district, which should be arriving later this month. We are very excited to get out there and start seeding some of the ditches where erosion has been a problem.

We would not be here today if it wasn't for our staff and board of directors. Our passion for protecting the county's natural resources is our number one goal, and we do all of this while keeping a great relationship within the county and its residents. If you are an Orleans County resident and would like our assistance for anything conservation related, please contact us.



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AEM: PROTECTING, MANAGING, AND IMPROVING NATURAL RESOURCES

Soil and Water Conservation Districts lead in the implementation of the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program. AEM is a cooperative interagency program that provides one-on-one help to farmers to identify environmental risks on their farms. Once these risks are identified, farmers receive help with solution planning, design, and with obtaining financial assistance to address exist-

ing problems and prevent future ones.

AEM is a voluntary, confidential, locally led, and comprehensive approach that advances environmental management on New York's farms. This program delivers technical support and financial incentives needed to help farmers implement conservation practices critical to the protection of water quality and other natural re-

sources. AEM helps to ensure that New York's farms remain viable and continue to meet their business objectives in an everchanging market place.

Anyone with interest or questions about the AEM program in Orleans County can contact our District Technician, Megan McAnn, at 585-589-5959 ext. 6861 or send her an email at

CONSERVATION COMPLIANCE: Don't Lose your Benefits!

If you intend to install drainage tile, dig a ditch, or clear trees (even orchards) from a field, you need to come to the FSA office to see if there has been a wetland determination done by NRCS since 1985. If not, then they need to process an AD-1026 form to request to have a determination done

by NRCS. This may be a "desk audit" done by looking at maps, but it may require a field visit with the biologist to survey the plant species present in a possible wetland area. This can only be done in the growing season.

If you are ever determined to be "out-of-compliance" with the rules for Wet-

lands or Highly Erodible Land, your crop insurance subsidy will disappear. Currently, most crop insurance premiums are subsidized at 62% of the cost. You could also lose all other USDA program benefits. This is not something you want to lose.

FRIEND OF CONSERVATION AWARD

The Orleans County Soil & Water Conservation District is proud to award Mike Elam with the Friend of Conservation Award. Mike has a long history of environmental conservation in Orleans County. In 1949 his father and grandfather bought what is now "Captains Cove", though at the time it was called "Hatch and Elam Boat Livery". Both his father, Jack Elam, and his grandfather, Butch Hatch, were very influential in regards to conservation and nurtured respect for the environment. Growing up in that environment, and having Oak Orchard Creek as his playground, it's no surprise that Mike grew up to follow in their footsteps. "I was lucky to be raised in Orleans County and especially to live on Oak Orchard Creek." Mike says, "Protecting Orleans County's waterways was and still is important to me." He strives to not only educate himself, but to also pass along his knowledge and respect for the environment to future generations. His grandkids have already started following the same path; they enjoy going fishing, catching frogs, and picking up litter when out by the water. Mike knows that the best way to garner a love for the outdoors is to build that relationship early.

In 1976 Mike became a member of the Orleans County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, and in the same year he helped found a B.A.S.S. chapter called Oak Orchard Bassmasters. He spent the mid-70s on a committee to revise fish seasons, length, and bag limits, as well as lift the ban on salmon stocking. Mike was very outspoken on banning the practice of snagging salmon in the early 1980s, and also spent 5 years running water sample tests on Lake Alice through the Citizen's Statewide Lake Assessment Program.

Mike started coming to Orleans County Water Quality meetings about 20 years ago to represent sportsmen's interests, as well as his own interest in water protection and conservation. A few years ago, Mike was appointed to the chairman position and has been instrumental in keeping the committee alive and informed on all things water quality. During the same time, he would help the DEC as needed with banding ducks, geese, and screech owls.

2007 was a busy year for Mike. All within that year he became the sportsman's rep to the Region 8 Fish & Wildlife Management Board, a councilman to the New York State Conservation Council, and joined the Finger Lakes

Conservation Council (which he is currently the president of).

All of this barely even scratches the surface of Mike's devotion to environmental conservation. During his years he would volunteer with the DEC, the Fish & Wildlife Service, and the Iroquois Wildlife Refuge. It should come as no surprise that someone with such a lifelong dedication to our county and our planet will be receiving the Friend of Conservation Award. "Conservation in the future will be an important issue as the public becomes aware of the value of clean water and clean air, and the importance of fish stocks and protecting wildlife" Mike says. "If the pandemic did anything positive, it made people more aware of the environment and the need to protect it."



Mike Elam (left) receiving award from SWCD Manager Katie Sommerfeldt (right)

A SUCCESSFUL TREE SALE

This year's tree and shrub sale was another success! Last year we had it drive-thru style to help keep a social distance. We noticed how efficient it was and decided to do it again this year. The tree sale is normally held at the fairgrounds, but our drive-thru system was held at the Orleans County Department of Public Works (DPW). A special thank you goes to the DPW for the use of their barn for this program.

We received a large amount of orders this year, in fact we received so many that we weren't able to get enough trees to fill them all. We'd like to apologize to those who could not get what they wanted. Despite numerous calls to different suppliers, they were unfortunately all sold out. However, we were able to provide over 8,500 seedlings and transplants to area residents!

We would like to thank our customers for their continued support to this program. If you would like to see a certain tree species offered next year, please give our secretary, Judy, a call and she will try to have it available. Look for the January 2022 Conservation Update for the order form for next year's tree sale.



District Technician, Megan Mcann, packaging trees

SWALLOW-WORT BIOLOGICAL CONTROL

Controlling invasive species can feel like a losing battle. Manual removal can be time consuming and doesn't work on large infestations, and chemical control can harm other native plants in the vicinity. Biocontrol can be a good solution, but introducing a new species needs to be safely tested to ensure it won't further harm the environment.

With that being said, Orleans County SWCD is excited to be a part of a biological control research study. This project is run through the New York Invasive Species Research Institute (NYISRI), Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), and Western New York Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (WNY PRISM). Holley Falls Park has a large infestation of Pale Swallow-wort, and after learning about the project and getting the site evaluated, it was decided to use the infestation as a site for the biocontrol project.

Hypena opulenta (pictured to the right) is a moth from the Ukraine that feeds exclusively on black and pale swallow-wort. Using *H. opulenta* as a form of biocontrol has involved over 10 years of research. The moths were released into cages (pictured below) where they are monitored to see if they can get established. Since being released they have laid eggs and



Hypena opulenta moth on pale swallow-wort

the caterpillars (pictured below) have started munching away on the leaves. We don't know yet if they will defoliate the plants enough to help curb the swallow-wort, but hopefully by the end of this multi-year project we will have a better understanding of how to control these invasive species.



The Monitoring Tent



Caterpillar eating swallow-wort leaf



STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!

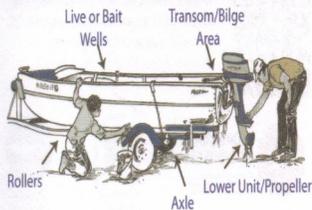
Prevent the transport of nuisance species.
Clean all recreational equipment.
www.ProtectYourWaters.net

Aquatic invasive species are non-native plants and animals that can degrade a body of water, impair boating and fishing, threaten native plants and animals, and destroy habitat. Once aquatic invasive species are established, eradication is almost impossible.

When you leave a waterway:

- Check for and remove any visible plants or debris
- Clean and drain your boat and equipment
- Dry everything that came into contact with water

WATERCRAFT CHECK POINTS



C-200 (1/13)

SHORELINE CLEANUP

Despite the pandemic, last year we were able to have our Shoreline Cleanup and managed to collect over 130lbs of trash! We plan on holding this years cleanup on Sept 18th, and hopefully will beat last years numbers!. Keep an eye on our social media for updated information. For any questions or interest, email our District Technician, Melissa Rivelis, at melissa.rivelis@ny.nacdnet.net.



DON'T MOVE FIREWOOD

Our forests are threatened by nonnative insects that can kill large numbers of trees. Three recently introduced insects—emerald ash borer, Asian longhorned beetle, and Sirex woodwasp—are wood-infesting species that can be transported long distances in firewood. Once transported into new areas, these insects can become established and kill local trees. We must **STOP THE SPREAD** of these insects and protect our forests and trees.

How you can help:

- Leave firewood at home—do not transport it to campgrounds or parks.
- Use firewood from local sources.
- If you have moved firewood, burn all of it before leaving your campsite.



Inset photo: Asian longhorned beetle larva (courtesy of Thomas B. Denholm, New Jersey Dept. of Agriculture; www.forestryimages.org)

HELP STOP INVASIVE PESTS

For more information, visit the following Web sites:
www.emeraldashborer.info
www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp
www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/ep



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GYPHY MOTH

Have you seen this creepy crawly in your trees? This year New York is seeing one of the worst Gypsy Moth infestations in decades. Gypsy moth (GM) populations rise and fall in cycles, making some years outbreaks worse than others. GM are not picky eaters and will chow down on a large variety of both deciduous and evergreen trees.

GM were brought to the U.S. in 1869 to breed with silkworms in hope of creating a hardier variety for the silk industry. They failed as a textile producer, and some of the moths escaped. The first populations started in Massachusetts, and since then has spread to over 20 states.

While GM can cause major defoliation damage to our trees, there is hope. Population spikes such as this years only happen a couple times every decade. The caterpillars will die off naturally from diseases, birds, and rodents. As we move more into July you will start to see less caterpillars and more of the moths. In spring if you see the egg masses (pictured below) scrape them off into a container of detergent. This will prevent some hatching, but ultimately won't curb the population.



Female Gypsy Moth
 Karla Salp, Washington State Dept of Agriculture



Egg Clusters
 Karla Salp, Washington State Dept of Agriculture



Gypsy Moth Caterpillar
 Karla Salp, Washington State Dept of Agriculture

CONSERVATION SUPPLIES (Tax Included)		PRICE	Qty	COST
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Marking Flags	per flag/per bundle of 100	\$ 0.11/\$10		
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Bat Box		\$12.50		
Wood Duck Box		\$30.00		
Winter Nesting Box		\$25.00		
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