



Otsego County Soil & Water Conservation District

967 CO HWY 33 – RIVER ROAD – COOPERSTOWN, NEW YORK 13326-9222 – PHONE (607) 547-8337 ext. 4

As an end of year report, I have attached a list of all the significant accomplishments of the District in 2011. I hope you will agree that the District has had perhaps its most productive year since 2006. We also continue to be productive in areas of local environmental education, the potential natural gas exploration as well as the new water quality standards and regulations being announced by the US Environmental Protection Agency for the Susquehanna River watershed in New York.

All of the items listed below are the result of hard work by the District Staff: Jordan Clements, John Jackson, Bob Weaver and Blanche Hurlbutt. Our ability to increase the number of BMP's being implemented in the County reflects a growing expertise and efficiency on the part of everybody and a growing awareness among our funding partners of the value in the work we do.

Budgets continue to be tight and it is important to recognize all of those who have continued their commitment to conservation in Otsego County. The list of supporters who fund the work we do is long and varied, but each is played a critical part in the accomplishments listed below. A special thanks to the residents of Otsego County, the Otsego County Board of Representatives, the Upper Susquehanna Coalition, New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, our state and federal elected officials, SUNY Oneonta and Cornell University, the New York Association of Conservation Districts and the United States Department of Agriculture for continuing to be solid partners.

The items below also would not have been accomplished without the efforts of our local partners. These include: the faculty and staff at SUNY-Oneonta; Canadarago Lake Improvement Association; Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie - Otsego Counties and Cornell University; Goodyear Lake Association; Otsego County Conservation Association; Otsego County Farm Bureau; Otsego County Highway, Forestry and Parks Department; Town Highway Superintendents, Otsego County Planning Department; Otsego Lake Association; Otsego Land Trust; USDA Farm Service Agency; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the members of the Water Quality Coordinating Committee and local municipal officials and departments.

Together, the local network of environmental community with the support of our funding partners achieves many more of its goals than could be if any were to be attempted alone. This is certainly the case with list provided below and our thanks go out to all.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Fickbohm
District Manager



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AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Environmental Management Program (AEM) - John has taken the Certified Crop Advisor training which is a necessary step toward him becoming a certified nutrient management planner. Year 6 closed out with 13 new enrollments, 18 assessments, 8 conservation plans, 6 implementation visits and 3 conservation plan re-evaluations. The AEM master database and paper file system was also updated to remove inactive farms, consolidation, correcting addresses and physical locations in the GIS system. In Year 7 we are developing a nutrient management plan for future certification and assisted in the design of streambank stabilization projects for 6 farms enrolled in the Agricultural and Community Recovery Fund.

Upper Susquehanna Coalition Agreement – This agreement supported many of the stream, water quality monitoring, EPA Chesapeake Bay-TMDL, outreach, flood response, riparian buffer and natural gas activities described below.

Graze NY – Program implementation resulted in prescribed grazing plans being developed on 8 farms in the county. Farms included three dairies, two beef operations and 3 farms managing horses, goats and sheep. Together they represent rotation grazing for 258 animal units on 314 acres. Time was also spent on successful outreach events and assisting in the installation of 4,500 feet of high tensile fence.

Agricultural Plastic Baler – Since the District took possession of the Ag baler in June the program has produced approximately 12,000 lbs of plastic from 8 farms.

Tropical Storm Irene & Lee - The District was awarded funding to assist 21 County farmers recover from recent flooding. Work included over 8,000 feet of streambank stabilization over 3,000 of which required heavy stone armor (6 farms) and engineering services. Recovery work also included the construction of 1 access road, 1 heavy use protection area, 2,000+ feet of high tensile fence and critical area seeding.

Ag. Non-Point Source Grants –

ROUND XIV – Grazing Grant: This grant will close out at the end of this year. Work completed includes 54,000 feet of high tensile fence, 1 spring development, 780 feet of laneways, 42 acres of pasture seeding and obstruction removal on 6 small County farms. **ROUND XIV – Winsor Acres:** This grant closed out this year. Work is completed included a 300,000 cubic foot manure storage facility and a 30,000 square foot vegetated treatment area. **ROUND XV – Waterpoint Farms:** This grant closed out this year. Work included the construction of an 18,500 square foot silage leachate collection pad and 2 acre vegetated treatment area. **ROUND XVI: Cooperstown Holstein:** Construction is complete on this grant. Work included the construction of a 16,800 cubic foot collection tank and a 1,000 gallon pumping tank that send silage leachate to a 19,000 square foot vegetated treatment area. **ROUND XVII:** Official award announcement were made by NYS Ag &



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Mkts on Aug X. Plan of works for each of our three grants in due to Albany by Aug 27th. Funding awarded the District by the state included two roofed heavy use areas, a pasture management system, 1 access road, 9 watering facilities, 9,000 ft of fence and 1 stream crossing on 3 Farms.

EPA TMDL: The District is participating in meetings between the Upper Susquehanna Coalition and DEC regarding roles and responsibilities in implementing the States watershed Implementation Plan and meeting out 2-year milestones. We also facilitated a ‘Congressional Brief’ attended by 56 town, county, state and federal representatives, natural resources agency personnel and SWCD staff. As part of the Chesapeake Bay Program, we also record and report all agricultural related activities in Otsego to USC for input into the CB model.

Agricultural Assessments – Jordan completed approximately 166 agricultural assessments for County farmers.

Buffers/wetlands – The District assisted with the implementation and funding of 5 buffer projects this year, protecting 12 acres of sensitive area, installing 20,000 feet of fence and planting over trees over approximately 0.5 acres and cost-sharing a the restoration of a 26 acre wetland.

Farmland Protection – The District and its partners (CADE & OLT) were able to secure private contributions and County Board and Farmland Protection Board approval for the submission of a grant application to update the County’s Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan.

FLOODING AND STORMWATER

Stream Projects – In addition to the stream related work described above (ACRF), the District visited 12 sites residential and municipal sites the resulted in 10 written assessments and cost estimates as well as two fully developed designs (Fortin Park and Town of Exeter). The District also facilitated a full day presentation by the USC to members of the BVA on how to conduct a watershed wide stream assessment.

Canadarago Lake – The H&H study has been completed by Malcolm Pirnie Inc and was presented to the project sponsors. Field work for the State of the Lake study was completed in 2011 and the final report should be released by the years end.

Hydroseeding: We completed 57 loads to road ditches, etc (site list and photos available)... Work included 10 loads reimbursed by OCCA, 13 loads billed to our Part B funds, 27 loads billed toward our DEC grant, 6 loads towards our Ag NPS obligations and 1 load for the County Manor. This represents almost 20 acres of critical area seeding throughout the County.

MISCELLANEOUS

Office – All regular reporting to NYS Ag & Mkts took place without problem: Annual Report, Performance Measure Report, Annual Plan of Work and Treasures Report. All Board duties were



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completed on time; approval of our procurement, investment and personnel policies. Additionally, the annual business meeting was held for bank and newspaper selection, the Board and County audit was conducted successfully and we passed an annual budget.

Envirothon – At the local level 8 teams participated, approximately 40 local students, and the event was won by Oneonta. The District worked with the winning team in preparation for the State event in which they placed 15th. The District also participated in the planning and execution of both the State and Canon event by serving on standing committees and representing NY on the Canon Advisory Team.

Training – District staff attended the Water Quality Symposium and Conservation Skills Workshop training events. Board members regularly viewed Board training modules. Staff also received specialized training in composting, accrual accounting, prescribed grazing, sediment and erosion control as well as crop and nutrient management.

Outreach - The District performed outreach and promotion of District programs at the Springfield 4th of July parade, Otsego County Fair, Goodyear Lake Festival, Farm Progress Show, Empire Farm Days, Earth Day, the NYS Fair, Northeast Regional NACD and Legislative Days.

Tree Sale – This year the District Tree Program sold approximately 21,000 tree seedlings, 25 bird houses, 15 bat boxes, 10 composting units and 4 rain barrels.

Fish Sale – This year the District Fish Program sold approximately 500 fingerlings.

Newsletter/website – The District Newsletter was distributed to approximately 3,400 County residents. Website development included the updating of the home page, natural gas, Envirothon, community outreach, Ag Plastics and Tree Program pages.

WQCC - The District secured a DEC WQIP grant for the next two years to fund committee efforts. Presentations were offered on Bradford County PA experiences re: high volume hydrofracturing, micro-hydro and solar power, the benefits of riparian buffers and permitting issues for lakeside residents. The Committee also adopted the Otsego County Nonpoint Source Pollution Strategy.

Natural Gas – The District secured a SRBC monitoring station in Upper Cherry Valley Creek watershed and also has continued its bi-monthly monitoring of 50 stream locations throughout the County. We participated in a public panel discussion in Cherry Valley regarding our monitoring efforts. We have also developed an RFP for water chemistry analysis at our 50 monitoring sites. Additionally, the District has completed its comments on the NYSDEC's SGEIS. Lastly, we have participated in a local USGS/working group focused on the aggregation, analysis of and public access to ground & surface water quality in the County; SUNY Oneonta has recently supported the creating of the "Catskill Headwaters Research Institute" to serve as a focus for this activity.