



Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District

2006 Annual Report

Year 2006 proved to be very exciting and inspiring, marking the 50th Anniversary of the Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District. In preparing for our celebration event, it was fascinating to look back at the origins of the District and the conservation issues which gave rise to its creation by the Warren County Board of Supervisors in 1956. In the 1950's, agriculture played a significant role in the local economy and dominated the landscape. Today, the only remaining agriculture in Warren County is in small hobby farms and horse ranches, and the landscape has either returned to forestland or is facing significant development pressures.

With the changing landscape of the county over the past 50 years, the Warren County SWCD has adapted to address the conservation issues of the current times. The primary focus of the District today is on water quality, as we undertake dozens of projects and programs every year to protect and improve our many lakes and streams. However, the District also addresses a broad swath of other conservation issues, such as forestry, erosion control, drainage, invasive species, septic systems, and much more. As always, the core of our program is landowner technical assistance, undertaking over 100 site visits and follow-up conservation work every year to assist the conservation needs of Warren County residents. Although we have much to celebrate over the past 50 years, there is little time to rest on our laurels. New challenges face us every day, and we will work to meet those challenges to help keep Warren County a place of which we can all be proud.

- Dave Wick, District Manager

Stream Restoration Projects

Hague Brook Restoration Project

Over the past four years, the Warren County SWCD has been working to restore and protect Hague Brook, using a \$361,500 NYS DEC grant matched by \$383,000 in local funds. Within this time, twelve projects were conducted including numerous bank stabilization efforts, in-stream sedimentation ponds, a new salt storage facility at the highway department, bridge stabilization work and repair of over 1,000 feet of highly scoured concrete retaining wall holding up NYS Route 8 and private properties.

This project was a successful collaboration between the Town of Hague, the Warren County SWCD, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, the Lake George Association, and the Warren County DPW.



Hadlock Stream Restoration Project

In July of 2005, the Hadlock Pond Dam in the Town of Fort Ann failed, releasing millions of gallons of water, which destroyed the downstream channel and its surrounding floodplain. Through a private wetland mitigation agreement, the Warren County SWCD obtained \$20,000 to restore the most devastated 500 feet of this channel. Working with the Washington County SWCD, the District designed a new channel, received all permits, and began reconstruction of the stream and floodplain in the summer of 2006.



With such limited funding, the District rented an excavator and bulldozer and conducted all of the construction efforts with its staff. Over the period of 3-4 weeks, all work was completed for this restoration project, including new fish habitat improvement structures in the brook. The Districts hope that this 500 foot section will be used as a demonstration area for future restoration efforts on this stream.



Projects and Programs

Agricultural Environmental Management Program

For the past two years, the District has been engaged in Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM); a voluntary farm assistance program. Through the AEM program we have visited with almost 40 farmers to assess their agricultural needs as well as soil and water quality objectives. We are in the process of developing Conservation Plans for approximately eight of our farms, which will set out voluntary guidelines to help them grow sustainably while still protecting our natural resources. The success of the AEM initiative not only provides local support for farming in Warren County, but sets the framework for maintaining local, state, and federal agriculturally related environmental programs and funding for the future.



Lake Luzerne Septic Improvement Project

The District recently concluded efforts on a \$15,000 grant to undertake a water quality improvement effort for Lake Luzerne. This project involved a cost-shared septic pumpout program for homeowners, water conservation kit distribution and septic system education initiatives. Thanks to the cooperative efforts of the Town of Lake Luzerne and the Lake Luzerne Association, this project has met with great success. Over 34 near shore septic systems were inspected and pumped out around the lake. District staff provided information to the homeowners about water conservation, septic system maintenance, and water quality issues on Lake Luzerne. This project will reduce the amount of non-point source pollutants and pathogens that reach Lake Luzerne from failing and improperly maintained septic systems.



Prospect Mountain Brook Project

In 2006, the District began work under a \$219,000 DEC grant to address stormwater runoff and streambank erosion in this highly developed and impacted watershed in the Village of Lake George. Over the construction season, the Village DPW and Warren County SWCD worked together to reconstruct 250 feet of stream channel using natural design techniques, and undertook six stormwater "retrofit" projects which capture and remove pollutants from runoff before it reaches Prospect Mountain Brook. Approximately half of the planned work was conducted in 2006, with the remaining work planned for 2007. These initiatives will significantly reduce the pollutants and sediment which currently impact this brook and ultimately Lake George.



Diamond Point Stream Improvement Project

Early in 2006, high waters caused severe damage to many streams and culverts in Warren County. Diamond Point Road in Lake George was one of the areas where heavy rains caused the stream to overtop and destroy the road and culvert, compromising homes downstream. In September 2006, Warren County SWCD and the Warren County DPW teamed up to mitigate a site on Diamond Point Stream. The District designed the restored stream section, and worked with the Warren County DPW crew which conducted the work. The stream's natural meander bends and cross-sectional area and floodplains were restored to their original state, and fish habitat through this section was dramatically improved.



Warren County SWCD 50th Anniversary

Year 2006 marked the 50th Anniversary of the Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District. To celebrate this occasion, a special evening and banquet was held at the beautiful Echo Lake Lodge in Warrensburg in September. Almost 100 people came out for the evening, including numerous town supervisors, state elected officials, agency representatives, local cooperators and landowners, and many others. It was a fantastic and lively evening, with entertainment, lots of door prizes, an excellent meal, and speeches from good friends of the District. Thanks to all who helped us celebrate this special occasion, and we look forward to the next 50 years!



Ed Milner, District Chairman

Municipal and Landowner Assistance

North Country Stormwater Conference and Trade Show

On October 19th of 2006, the Champlain Watershed Improvement Coalition of New York co-hosted the 2nd North Country Stormwater Conference and Trade Show in Lake George Village. Approximately 200 people were in attendance for this very successful event, which focused on stormwater technologies, methods, regulations and case studies of local projects. Attendees had time to visit more than 25 vendors and exhibitors to exchange information and technologies. The Warren County SWCD was a primary organizer of this conference, along with Sarah Gebbie of the LCLG Regional Planning Board.

The conference received high marks by both the vendors and attendees, and based on this success, this event will be held again in 2007. Thanks go to the Lake George Watershed Conference who financially supported this event, and to DEC who provided significant technical input and many quality speakers for the day.



Roadside Hydroseeding Program

2006 was a busy year for our roadside erosion control program, as we worked with highway departments across the county to hydroseed more than 12 miles of roadside ditches and banks. The District owns a Finn T-90 hydroseeder (shown here) which is ideal for this purpose. The hydroseeder sprays a combination of seed, mulch, and water onto the bare soil, and within only 2-3 weeks new grass emerges which stabilizes the soil. With erosion of newly ditched roadways being a primary cause of water quality degradation to our lakes and streams, this program has been hugely successful at reducing these problems to our waterways. Thanks to the town, county, and state highway departments for being active in this program!



Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Program (MS4)

As of 2003, new state law requires many local municipalities to address stormwater runoff pollution issues within their boundaries. These new rules and regulations have specific requirements which most municipalities know very little about. Through a \$100,000 grant to the City of Glens Falls, the District is currently assisting the following eight municipalities with their stormwater programs: Town of Queensbury, Town of Fort Edward, Village of Fort Edward, City of Glens Falls, Village of Hudson Falls, Town of Kingsbury, Warren County and Washington County.

The District is assisting each municipality with achieving their six measures that are required as part of this program, including public education and outreach, public involvement and participation, illicit discharge detection and elimination, construction site runoff control, pollution prevention and good house-keeping. The communities are moving forward with the requirements, and it is the goal of the District to get each municipality competent in these issues within two years.



Landowner Technical Assistance

One of the foundations of the Warren County SWCD is technical assistance to landowners regarding an array of conservation and natural resource issues. We conduct well over 100 landowner site visits every year on topics including erosion control, drainage issues, streambank protection, stormwater runoff, septic systems, logging, forestry, agriculture, pond construction and management, and much more. There is never any charge to Warren County residents for these services.

We take pride in our knowledge of conservation related topics and issues, and hope that we meet the needs of the local communities and their residents. The District also has a vast array of natural resource information including maps and reports, so stop in and take a look sometime. We're located next to Glens Falls National Bank in Warrensburg, at 51 Elm Street. If we can be of any assistance, please don't hesitate to contact our office at 623-3119. We look forward to hearing from you!



Additional Conservation Initiatives

- Cooperator of the Year: Congratulations to George Hilton of Chestertown who received the 2006 Warren County SWCD Cooperator of the Year. George is a Geographic Information System (GIS) Administrator for the Town of Queensbury and has provided invaluable GIS assistance for many District projects and programs throughout Warren County.
- Two New Salt Storage Sheds: Managed the funding and construction of two new salt storage sheds: one in the Town of Bolton and one in the Town of Hague. These new structures will ensure the protection of the local ground-water aquifers at these sites.
- Lake George Basin Highway Department Training: Conducted training for all highway crews regarding water quality and invasive species issues. Thanks to Laurel Gailor of Extension for assisting with this program.
- The 13th Annual Warren County Envirothon: 80 students from six area high schools participated in this hands-on conservation competition. A team from North Warren won our county event and went on to compete at the state.
- Logging Project Reviews: Assisted municipalities and landowners with over a dozen logging project reviews, which outline methods and practices at each individual logging job which will protect waterways and wetlands.
- Public Presentations: Over 20 presentations on conservation issues were given by Warren County SWCD staff to local, county, and state audiences.
- Schroon River Bank Stabilization: Assisted the Town of Warrensburg with designing a solution for a large landslide on the Schroon River.
- Tree and Shrub Seedling Program: Over 7,500 low-cost seedlings were sold to landowners for conservation purposes.
- Fishpond Management Program— Over 3,500 trout and bass were sold to pond owners in Warren County through our pond stocking program.

Board of Directors

Ed Milner - Chairman
Frank Thomas - Vice Chairman
Elly Benoit
Tim Costello
Charlie Maine
Dick Mason
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District Staff

Dave Wick, District Manager
Melissa Gifford, District Technician
Rhonda Jarvis, Office Manager
Lori Kerrigan, Nat. Resource Spec.
Jim Lieberum, Water Resource Spec.

"The District's mission is to implement projects and programs to protect and improve the lakes, streams, and other natural resources of Warren County. Working with municipalities and landowners, the District puts conservation on the land, with cost effective projects benefiting the residents and visitors of this beautiful county."



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