

Albany County Soil and Water Conservation District

2015 Activity Highlights



Technical Assistance

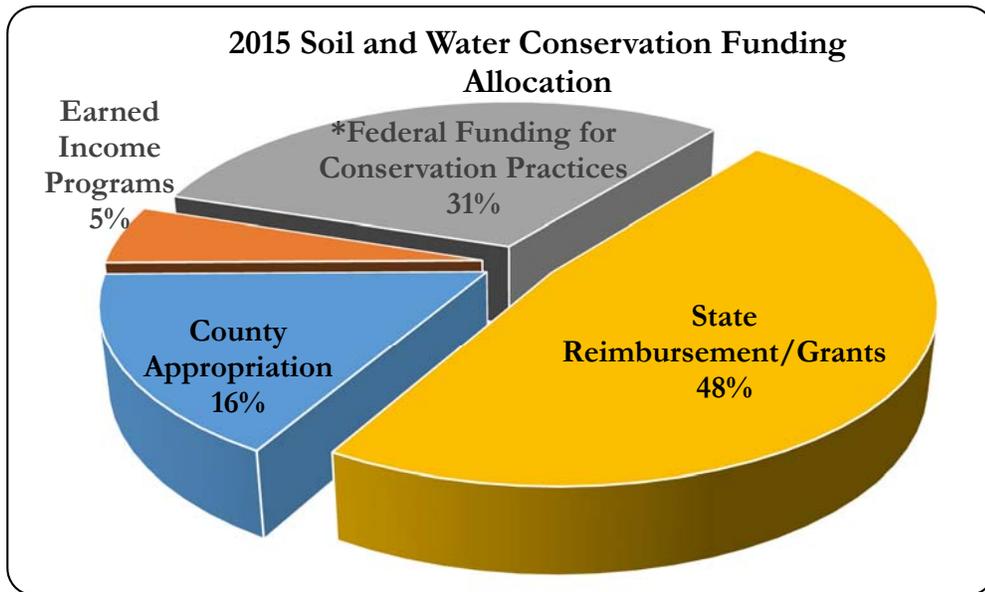
Agricultural Environmental Management



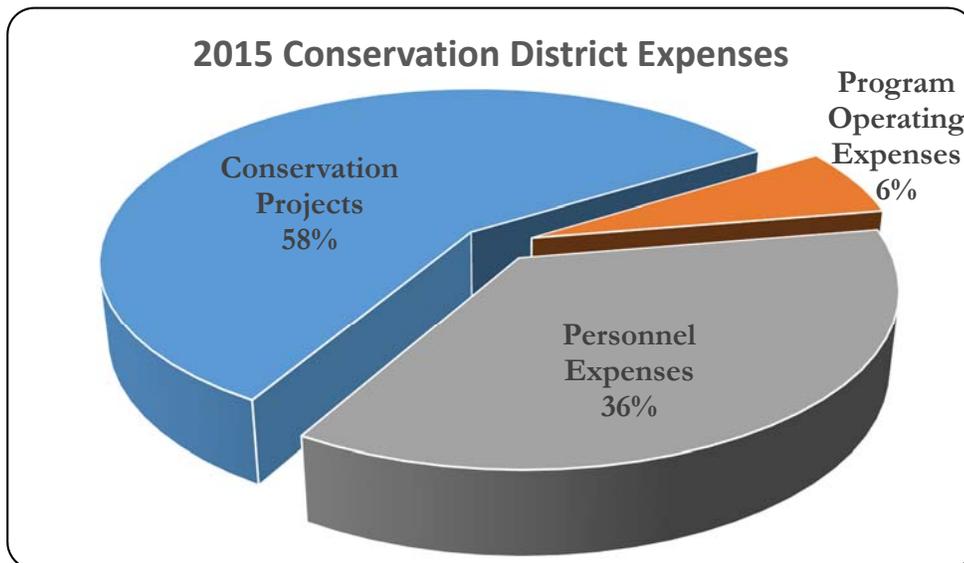
Community Conservation Education

The mission of the Albany County Soil and Water Conservation District is to improve local land management practices and provide technical assistance to residents, landowners, and units of government throughout Albany County.

During 2015 the Albany County Soil and Water Conservation District leveraged \$660,569.00 in funds for the \$108,773 investment from the County. This represents a \$6.07 return for each dollar in County appropriation funds to help meet the conservation needs of Albany County.



* Funding goes directly to producers



The following businesses benefited from Conservation District technical assistance programs in 2015

- * Altamont Agway
- * American Chestnut Society
- * Bentley Seeds
- * Blackburn Manufacturing
- * Casing's Inc.
- * Catskill Mountain Signs
- * Ernst Conservation Seed
- * Fence Masters
- * Foley's Garage
- * Meadowview Tree Nursery
- * MPR Excavation
- * Olsen's Hardware
- * Pikes Peak Nursery
- * Pikes Peak Nursery
- * Project Native
- * Samuel L Minder Nursery

Conservation Field Day



In October the Albany County Soil and Water Conservation District, along with assistance from, City of Albany and Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County, hosted our 1st Conservation Field Day with over 100 students from City of Albany Elementary Schools in attendance. The event was held at the Normanskill Farm.

The purpose of this event was to give students in 5th and 6th grade an opportunity to become acquainted with the world of nature and some of the issues that affect their environment and their lives. A variety of environmental groups and individuals presented a 20 minute program to each group. The students rotated through eight different learning stations throughout the

day. Topics included: Beekeeping, Soil Health, Forestry and Lyme Disease Prevention.

Capital Region Envirothon



The Envirothon is an outdoor, hands-on environmental competition for high school students. The program provides environmental and natural resource management education to high school students. The competition, held each spring, tests the knowledge of each team in the categories of: Soils/Land Use, Aquatic Ecology, Forestry, Wildlife and Current Environmental Issues. The Capital Region Envirothon consists of teams from Albany, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Schenectady, and Schoharie Counties Teams comprised of 3-5 students from grades 9-12 learn that cooperation and teamwork is needed to achieve success. In 2015 there were 14 teams from 10 schools that participated.

Outdoor Conservation Events



The District staff takes great pride in a vast range of educational opportunities reaching young students and citizens alike. We strive to educate the conservationists of tomorrow. The Conservation District participated in the 2015 Live Life Local event held at the Farnsworth Middle School in October. This event provided the District staff with an opportunity to distribute Home Water Analysis Kits to private well owners which were purchased utilizing Conservation Project Funds. The District participated in the Altamont Fair again in 2015 to provide information about District programs. We were able to be on hand to answer questions from County residents. The District also utilizes its website and Facebook page to educate the public and sends out a newsletter to over 3,500 county residents.

Conservation Tree and Shrub Program



Each spring the Soil and Water Conservation District conducts their annual Tree and Shrub Program, offering a wide variety of tree seedlings, ground covers, and wildflower seed mixes at reduced prices. These tree and shrub plantings will provide wildlife food/habitat, protect water quality, provide windscreens for crops, homes and livestock, reduce air pollution, reduce heating/cooling expenses and stabilize erodible land. Over eight thousand one hundred tree and shrub seedlings were distributed to Albany County residents during the District's 2015 Program. This program has been offered in Albany County for over 20 years with more than 315,000 trees being planted for the conservation of natural resources in Albany County.

Fish Pond Stocking Program



Keeping a rich diversity of fish life in a pond helps to improve the overall health of the pond and limits the amount of bothersome issues that most often require chemical treatments. Through the spring fish sale approximately 7095 fingerlings and minnows were stocked into ponds across the county. This includes 84 Triploid Grass Carp, a herbivorous fish that provides environmentally friendly, low-cost control of nuisance aquatic weeds. The carp sold in our 2015 fish sale provide an alternative to chemical controls for many species of pond weeds in twenty two ponds.

Demonstration Rain Garden Installed at Public Library



In conjunction with the Guilderland Public Library, Town of Guilderland Highway Department and Cornell Cooperative Extension the District installed a Rain Garden at the entrance to the Library parking lot. This is a highly visible location and on a daily basis the library has approximately 675 patrons. This amount of traffic will help the District increase resident's knowledge of a rain garden's capabilities to control stormwater runoff. The municipality provided staff and equipment for the digging of the garden. CCE Master Gardener Volunteers and District staff

planted the garden with 8 different species of native herbaceous plants that are suitable for rain gardens. The garden is approximately 300 square feet and will be able to treat stormwater runoff prior to entering the water supply from an area of the parking lot that is approximately 1760 square feet. This is the eleventh Demonstration Rain Garden installed in Albany County.



Municipal Staff and Contractor Training Opportunities



The Conservation District was able to offer the Post-Flood Emergency Stream Intervention Training in 2015 to over 75 individuals. This training was targeted to municipal highway/department of public works staff, local contractors, municipal officials, environmental organization, county legislators and other interested parties. The District also hosted a NYSDEC Endorsed 4 hour Erosion and Sediment Control Training for over 60 trainees. This training provides principles and practices of erosion and sediment control and the certification is good for 5 years.

Bozenkill Stream Bank Protection - Flood Mitigation Grant



The District applied for and received funding to complete multiple projects around the County as a result of Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. The seventh project was completed in 2015. The orchard and golf course access road and bridge, along the Bozenkill, were severally impacted during flooding. The project site consisted of 350 linear feet of stream bank lost for a width of approximately 10 feet. The access bridge's foundation piers were damaged and prone to future catastrophic damage. The project consisted of large rock rip rap along the west side of the Bozenkill stream. Rock averaging three feet wide and long were placed at the toe of the stream with smaller rock placed behind to stabilize the bank. Two rock vanes were also installed to further

protect the bank. The armoring will protect the pedestrian and farm field access road/bridge from future erosion and potential failure.

Technical Assistance



The Albany County SWCD strives to improve local land management practices and provide technical assistance to county residents, landowners, municipal staff, county government staff, and others by providing a variety of information and permit assistance on stormwater management, erosion and sediment control, Agricultural Environmental Management, pond management, wetland identification, native and invasive/exotic plants identification and management, other natural resources management, and identification of soil types and characteristics. In 2015 staff responded to over 300 requests for technical assistance. Resources made available to the public include but are not limited to soils maps and interpretation, USGS Topographic maps, Historic Aerial Photography, NYS & Federal Wetlands maps, and information on pond construction and care.

Pollinator Garden at Knox Town Park



In order to improve the health, abundance and diversity of local pollinators, the Conservation District partnered with the Hudson Mohawk RC&D Council to install a pollinator garden utilizing grant funds from the Hudson Valley Foundation for Youth Health. A 28' 10" by 118' garden was solarized using tarps and was also tilled prior to seeding. The garden was installed at the Knox Town Park. The Northeastern Pollinator Conservation Seed Mix created by The Xerces Society was sowed in the garden. This mix contains approximately 15 species of perennial wildflowers that provide high quality sources of pollen and nectar.

Countywide Tire Recycling Event



The Albany County Soil and Water Conservation District held a Tire Recycling event for county residents on 7/13/15. During the collection 38 residents brought their used tires to the Albany County Department of Public Works for recycling. A total of 787 were collected and recycled in this project. Those who participated in our free program saved a total of over \$1580 by not having to pay disposal fees at their local recycling facility. In addition the tires collected were recycled into other products instead of taking up space in the landfill or posing environmental risks. The District has offered this service in the past resulting in more than 5000 tires being recycled.



We look forward to continuing to serve you in 2016!

Board of Directors : John Santacrose (Chairman), Edward Kleinke (Vice Chairman),
L. Michael Mackey and Herbert Reilly

Staff : Joseph Slezak (Field Manager), Susan Lewis (Administrative Manager and Technical Assistant)
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