

CONSERVATION UPDATE

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TREE PICK UP!

Don't forget to pick up your trees! For those who have placed orders, the tree pick up is in the Log Cabin at the Orleans County 4-H Fairgrounds in Knowlesville on April 22nd from 8 am to 6 pm and April 23rd from 8 am to 1 pm. If you are unable to pick up your order on either of these days, please make arrangements to have someone else pick them up for you. Or if



you prefer, we can deliver your trees for a minimal charge.

If you forgot to place your order there are still trees available for purchase. Stop in the office to place your order.

Quantities are limited. There will also be some trees available for purchase during the above dates and times. For more information call 589-5959 ext. 5.

There are times when the nursery has to make substitutes in their packets. So, if you have ordered one of the specialty packets, one of the species may have been replaced with something else.

DIRECTORS RECEIVE SERVICE PINS

On March 10, 2016 James Neal and William Eick were awarded 10 year pins for serving on the Board of Directors of the Orleans County Soil and Water Conservation District.



James Neal is the Orleans County Farm Bureau Representative and comes from a large

dairy farm operation. William Eick has served as the Legislative Representative and has an extensive background in

farming. With the farming background of these two exemplary individuals they understand that the District is here to help the farmers to protect their land and water resources.

The District is grateful for the time and dedication that they put into helping to preserve the natural resources of Orleans County.



Good Luck to Orleans County Envirothon Teams from Kendall and Lyndonville High Schools on May 5th at Bond Lake Nature Center!



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NEWSLETTER SPONSORS

WNY SOIL HEALTH ALLIANCE REACHES OUT ONLINE

The WNY Soil Health Alliance's website is up and running (and ever expanding)! Our latest addition is a series of On-Farm Trial articles, compiled from interviews with local farmers experimenting with cover cropping, no-till and reduced-till, and interseeding methods.

Cover crop mixes, application techniques and timing, trial results, dual-purpose cover crops and more are discussed by farmers with a wide range of experience, successes and failures, time constraints, and acreages. In the future, we plan to expand the series by interviewing



farmers with more diverse backgrounds to increase the scope of information provided, and help foster connections between farmers with similar circumstances and interests throughout WNY.

Interviews with Toussaint Farms in

Ridgeway, Hartway Farms in Albion, and Stein Farms in Le Roy, are currently available, with more being posted regularly. If you are interested in participating in the On-Farm Trials series, please feel free to contact WNY Soil Health Alliance at wnysoilhealth@gmail.com

To learn more about WNY SHA, read our On-Farm Trial Series, and to sign up for SHA e-newsletters, visit our website at wnysoilhealth.com

AMERICORPS VISTA AT ORLEANS COUNTY SOIL AND WATER

Jena Buckwell joined Orleans County Soil and Water through the AmeriCorps VISTA program in October 2015. As an AmeriCorps member, Jena works with Soil and Water about 10 hours each week on a variety of projects, serving our community while gaining insight and experience in conservation.

During her first few months with Soil and Water, Jena has served by providing organization and outreach for the newly formed Western NY Soil Health Alliance. Jena has primarily worked on the alliance's website <wnysoilhealth.com>, including both design and content creation through reports on local on-farm research and trials. She has also worked on public outreach workshops and events, helping the Soil Health Alliance to gain membership and expand their audience. Additionally, Jena has learned the basics of survey work through assisting our technicians, Katie and Megan in designing drain tile and

waterways on projects of varying scale, and has recently started working on UnBottle Orleans, a campaign designed to promote tap water accessibility throughout the county.

In coming months, she will be helping at both the regional and statewide Envirothon competitions, presenting at Conservation Field Days, and helping with our tree sale. She will also be serving as volunteer coordinator for our annual Shoreline Cleanup later this year.

Jena's time at Soil and Water has allowed her to expand her knowledge of working on conservation projects, coordinating volunteers, and educational programming organization. Her position as an AmeriCorps member has provided her the opportunity to volunteer at other county events, such as Family Game Night, and to take part in AmeriCorps training sessions in topics such as Community Service Projects, Youth Development, and Communication and Social Media.

Jena is a big fan of the AmeriCorps program and recommends it to anyone considering a career change, college students looking to gain "real world" experience, or anyone who is simply passionate about helping their community improve through a structured program that benefits both the volunteer and the community. AmeriCorps members are awarded an educational grant, as well as a modest bi-weekly stipend. The educational grant may be used to pay for future educational pursuits, or can be used to pay down existing student loan debt. Both the educational grant and stipend award amount are dependent on the number of hours committed to the program.

To learn more about the AmeriCorps program in Genesee and Orleans County, please visit <<http://www.co.genesee.ny.us/departments/youthbureau/ameriCorp.html>>

WINTER 2015 WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

We performed multiple stream cleaning projects again this winter with the “Slashbuster”.

The “Slashbuster” is an attachment that the Orleans County Soil and Water Conservation District bought to fit on the Orleans County Highway

Departments excavator. This device shreds woody debris with its rotating teeth and is capable of picking objects up and out of a stream, allowing water to flow freely through its designated channel.

The first project this year was located on Letts Road in the Town of Shelby. The Shelby Highway Department brought our attention to this project when we first sized a culvert for them on this little dead end road on the far west edge of the county. This gravel road has been experiencing flooding issues and the Town of Shelby Highway Department has been trying to fix these problems with the help of Orleans County Soil & Water. The Highway Department installed another culvert under the road and cleaned out the existing culvert in the section where the road was getting flooded. The ditch that the culverts were installed in was overgrown with bushes and small trees restricting the flow of the water



Murray Ditch After

through the ditch. Even with the replacement of the culverts, water was still backing up because of the restricted flow through the ditch. After obtaining easements from the landowners in the area, Orleans County Soil & Water had the “Slashbuster” come out and remove these blockages, with the help from the Orleans County Highway Department. The “Slashbuster” was able to remove all of the woody debris from the ditch, but in certain spots this woody debris and overgrown vegetation caused high spots in the ditch. So this construction season parts of this ditch will be regraded to existing conditions to allow the water to flow without restrictions.

The next project that we started was in the Town of Murray between West Kendall Road and Hulberton Road, just south of Ridge Road. This section of ditch had very large willow trees and other debris in the bottom of the

ditch restricting flow. This project turned out to be a much larger project than we anticipated due to the large diameter of the trees and their close proximity to residential houses. After lots of decision making of what we could take down and what was too big for us to handle at

the moment, we removed some of the woody debris from sections of this channel but did not completely finish the job. Before we could finish the “Slashbuster” broke down and it took a few weeks for it to get repaired. By the time it was up and running again the weather began to get warmer and what little snow that we had was melting and making everything very muddy. We like to use the “Slashbuster” when there is a blanket of snow on the ground to minimize the soil disturbance from the tracks on the excavator, so that we do not make a muddy mess of people’s properties.

With the weather changes and break downs we did not get to complete our job in Murray or get to the other three jobs that we had lined up after that one. These jobs will be resumed at the beginning of next years “Slashbuster” season, along with some new jobs that we are working on getting the easements for.

2015 CONSERVATION FARMER OF THE YEAR!

The 2015 Conservation Farmer of the Year Award goes to Roberts Farms of Medina. Todd Roberts' grandfather, Justin, started Roberts Farm in 1931. In 1960, his sons Lee and Orren, having both graduated from Cornell University, formed a partnership called Roberts Brothers Farms. After having graduated from Cornell University and the Ohio State University and then working as a grain merchandiser for Continental Grain, Todd returned to the farm in 1986. In 1993, Lee and Todd formed the current partnership, Roberts Farms. Lee retired in 2000 from management but remained active on the farm until his death in 2015. The farm continues as a partnership between Lee's wife Virginia, Todd, and Todd's wife, Deb. Roberts Farms produces corn, wheat, soybeans, peas and lima beans on 2,000 acres located in Orleans and Niagara Counties. Three full time employees, Jeff Stear Jr., Ernie Wodrich, and Joe Kyle assist with crops, mechanics, trucking, and the grain drying facility.



Pictured L to R: Edward Morgan, District Chariman, Todd Roberts

Roberts Farms has a long tradition of working with Orleans County Soil & Water Conservation District, NRCS, Farm Service Agency, Cornell Cooperative Extension and area crop consultants to continue their stewardship of the land. Believing that long term sustainability is best ensured by profitability, Roberts Farms uses conservation farming practices to: 1.) minimize soil erosion with installation of drainage tile, planting of cover crops, and cross-slope planting; 2.) optimize soil

health with scheduled soil testing and stalk nitrate testing as part of their nutrient management plan as well as using minimum-tillage practices along with soil residue management; and 3.) reducing chemical usage with Integrated Pest Management practices such as field scouting and targeted application of pesticides.

The farm has participated in the NRCS Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and recently signed up with the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program for the installation of an extensive Grassed Waterway project. This waterway will have the benefit of moving stormwater and field drainage through the farm and into the Wildlife Refuge without taking soil or nutrients with it.

These practices, along with others planned for the future, demonstrate the Roberts' excellent stewardship of the land and desire to protect our natural resources.

FISH

In the event you are stocking your pond for the first time it is usually a good idea to establish a food base for the bigger fish to forage upon. You should start by releasing small minnows and give them a year to establish themselves. The following spring you may introduce the larger fish such as bass. You can also stock with bluegill exclusively for the first year and allow time for them to spawn and reproduce. The following year bass can be introduced and will have the offspring of the bluegill to feed upon.

To determine how many fish to add

to your pond it is recommended that for every acre of surface water you can release approximately 100 largemouth bass (fingerling 1" – 3" long). To support the bass, you will need a forage base of at least five bluegill to every one bass. If you are planning to stock your pond with fathead minnows instead, a ten minnow to one bass ratio is recommended. Each of these fish species is suitable for warm water fish ponds in New York State. As a side note, fathead minnows are highly favored for their ability to control mosquito larvae that potentially carry the West Nile Virus.

Also remember, it is illegal to liber-

ate fish into any water body in New York State without first obtaining a permit. The DEC offers several types of permits related to ponds and fish stocking. If you have a pond you may qualify for a farm fishpond license that is good for five years and permits you to stock the pond. It allows the licensee, and his or her immediate family to fish the pond without any restrictions regarding size, quantity, or fishing license requirements. The permit is free and the application processing requirements are minimal. If you are interested in obtaining a permit application, contact the District office.

GRASS CARP

Triploid Grass Carp are a natural way to control aquatic weeds in New York ponds. As with any control methods the triploid grass carp must be used properly in order to receive the best results.

Grass Carp prefer the tender, succulent plant species over those that are tough and fibrous. Grass Carp will not control species such as cattail, bulrush, water shield, water lily, or algae.

It is hard to tell exactly how many grass carp to put in a pond. If you put in too many they can totally demolish



Grass Carp *Ctenopharyngodon idella*
adult

all of the vegetation in the pond and that will also damage the pond health. DEC will calculate how many carp you are permitted to stock after reviewing the information on your permit application and it will be stated on the permit that is mailed to you.

It is recommended to stock grass carp in late spring when the new plant growth is just beginning. Stocking them later in the summer can lead to unsatisfactory results.

Individuals desiring to stock triploid grass carp in New York must first obtain a triploid grass carp stocking permit from the Department of Environmental Conservation. You can get the permit application by visiting the NYS DEC's website at www.dec.ny.gov or you can get one at the Orleans County Soil and Water Conservation District office.

2016 FISH ORDER FORM

Name:	Phone:
Address:	Cell Phone:
	E-mail:

Species	Size	Price	Quantity	Cost
Bass (Large Mouth)*	3" - 4"	\$64 (per 25)		
Bluegill*	1" - 2"	\$55 (per 25)		
Fathead Minnows*	1"	\$15 (per 100)		
Grass Carp**	8" - 12"	\$20 (per fish)		

* "Farm Fish Pond License" required for new ponds and pond that have not been stocked in the last five years

** D.E.C. Grass Carp Permit Required

(Tax already included in price of fish)

Total \$

	<u>Grass Carp</u>	<u>Other Fish</u>
Order deadline	May 27, 2016	July 7, 2015
Pickup dates	June 16, 2015	July 21, 2015

Make Checks Payable to:
Orleans County SWCD
446 West Avenue
Albion, NY 14411
Please include all permits when placing order!