



2002 ANNUAL REPORT

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The CNY RC&D Project, Inc. mission is to improve the regions' economic vitality through the wiser use of available human and natural resources.

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CNY RC&D Leads Holistic Management™ Certified Educator Training In Northeast



Practitioners worldwide say it works. Local practitioners also have had success. Currently, CNY RC&D is sponsoring the Northeast Holistic Management™ Certified Educator Training Program in Hamilton, NY, led by the Allan Savory Center for Holistic Management™, Albuquerque, NM.

Briefly put, Holistic Management™ is a process for applying systems thinking to agriculture. Developed over the past forty years, Holistic Management™ is about making decisions that move us toward the quality of life we want while considering the effect our decisions will have on present and future generations, our environment, and our finances. Realistically, decisions cannot be made in isolation because every decision affects quality of life, finances, community, environment, and ultimately our descendants.

This awareness can be overwhelming. To avoid that, Holistic Management™ utilizes a decision-making and planning process to realize one's targeted quality of life while strengthening community, environmental and financial health. In agriculture this process occurs through the development of a whole farm plan. Unlike other business plans, holistic farm plans do not begin with bottom line goals. Finances are a critical component, but not the only goal. By using a

Holistic Management decision-making framework, family or farm group reach their quality of life goals as well as making profit, strengthening the community and protecting environmental health.

Northeast Agroforestry Conference: A Brilliant Success

The Northeast Agroforestry and Carbon Conference was held on October 2 – 4 at the Binghamton Regency in Binghamton, New York. This three-day event was really two conferences in one, offering information on both agroforestry opportunities and emerging carbon issues. This was the first formal opportunity in the Northeast to learn about carbon sequestration and carbon credits.

When facing the realities of greenhouse gas pollution, carbon sequestration is a key option for mitigating the damage. The practices that enhance carbon sequestration also address the environmentally friendly development and conservation of soil and water resources.

Several noted experts from various universities in the Northeast and Canada presented. Participants selected from many workshops.

In total, over 150 people attended the conference with over 90% of participants rating the event “good to excellent” on their post-conference evaluations.



CNY RC&D's Council Bring Wealth of Knowledge and Experience

Every year, a governing Council looks a little different. This year's Council is pleased to have two new members: John Waite from Tioga County and Bob Huot from Chenango County. Two continuing members have assumed leadership positions on the Council. Madison Wright of Tompkins County is the new chair and Dick Warner from Cortland County is the vice-chair.

Part of the criteria for Council membership is connectedness in the community and active participation in many agricultural issues. Council members are very busy people, so we feel lucky that we were at least able to catch up with Bob and Madison by press time.



Bob Huot, a Jersey heifer grower in Columbus, NY, joins the CNY RC&D Council this year as Chenango County's Member at

Large. For fifteen years, Bob has been involved with the Chenango District Jersey Cattle Club and is a founding member of the Chenango County Ag Development Council. He is also an initial member and Co-Chair of the Central Unadilla River Valley Economic Development Team (CURVED).

Bob met CNY RC&D's USDA-NRCS partner Phil Metzger through his participation with the Ag Development Council. Bob explains, "It seemed that Phil and I agreed on a lot of ideas. I was interested in CNY RC&D because they were actually doing things." Bob feels his membership on the CNY RC&D Council dovetails with his other Ag memberships. "A goal of the Ag Development Council is to support other Ag agencies. Both CNY RC&D and Ag Development share the mission of working in partnership whenever possible to push forward ventures in agriculture, particularly in giving small farms a higher priority."

"Since September 11th," Bob feels, "there has been a lot more interest in rural areas." He believes part of the challenge facing CNY RC&D is to plan for an urban exodus. He wants to make planning strategies that are good for people leaving urban areas and good for rural

regions, promoting small agriculture and maintaining the rural character.

CNY RC&D is pleased to have Bob Huot involved with its Council. "With my various affiliations, I am able to bring many people to the table," states Bob. "I say what I think and take the role of moving things along. I enjoy making a contribution."

"I see RC&D as a means of proposing and testing solutions to the rural problems that confront us. "

Madison Wright has recently assumed the Chairmanship of the CNY RC&D Council where he has served as a member since 1991. Prior to his tenure on the CNY RC&D Council, Dr. Wright had served on the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council and on the county committee that was planning a landfill. Through his work on the landfill committee, he became acquainted with CNY RC&D and was invited to sit on the Council.



For 30 years, Dr. Wright was a professor of field crop production at Cornell University, and in the course of conducting experiments with forages, canola and soybeans he traveled across the state continually, observing the countryside. His overpowering impression was of a rural landscape undergoing massive change. Dr. Wright explains, "Agriculture, which in 1880 occupied two-thirds of our land, was retreating to the very best soils and shrinking to one-fifth of the land. But whereas we had created an educational system (Cooperative Extension) for agriculture, there was no parallel system for lands dropping out of agriculture and very little legislative attention to the problems created by the reversion of the lands to unmanaged, slow-growing trees."

Dr. Wright's perspective informs his vision of CNY RC&D's role. "I see RC&D (ours, and many others) as a means of proposing and testing solutions to the rural problems that confront us. We need to support agricultural enterprises that fit our means and our markets. We need to transform forestry from a scattered, sometimes-thought-about industry to a solid, built-in part of rural life. We need to encourage new views of what we have, and invite others to come enjoy them."



CENTRAL NEW YORK AGRITOURISM & EDUCATION

Central NY Agritourism Program to Assist Area Farmers

CNY RC&D is administering a \$350,000 grant, as a project partner with New York State Ag and Markets for the Central New York Agritourism & Education Program spearheaded by Senator Nancy Lorraine Hoffmann, Chairwoman of the New York State Senate Ag Committee. Financial assistance is being made available for the promotion of new and existing Agritourism ventures. Forty-five applications were filed and up to twenty will be awarded.

The Central NY Agritourism & Education Program covers seven counties: Chenango, Cortland, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Otsego and Schoharie. Aimed at farmers and farmer groups, the program has three categories of funding. Stop and Look provides up to \$10,000 for signs, parking area, benches and fencing. Stop and Visit enables Agritourism venues to install restrooms, create school bus turn-arounds and purchase liability insurance for projects up to \$25,000. Stop and Stay supplies up to \$50,000 for building or renovating overnight accommodations.

Selections have been made and announcements are pending for the 2001 round of funding. There is approximately \$150,000 available for projects this year. Interested farmers or farm groups are encouraged to call 1-866-AGTOURS (248-6877) for more information.

Agri-cluster: Rural Small Business

Agri-cluster: Rural Small Business & Community Development, a program sponsored by CNY RC&D and Southern Tier East Regional Planning Board and funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission, finished up this year with its program serving Tioga County rural entrepreneurs.

Businesses that participated in all components of the Agri-cluster project experienced an increase in their sales ranging from 10% to 70%. Other achievements included:

- 20 completed business plans and financial projections,
- Local and regional marketing through Tioga County Department of Tourism and I Love NY Program.
- All businesses obtained computers, websites, e-mail and on-line access.
- Agri-cluster members who participated in the project were eligible for a grant up to \$700 for use on a business/product development/enhancement as specified in individual business plans.
- Agri-cluster participants continue to work together as a group.

At the end of the project, its clear the overall goal was met: rural farm and non-farm participants attained national consumer standards, thus enhancing both the individual business and community.

Underground Railroad Exhibit of Sight and Sound



Gwen Clark of Homestar Heritage Community Center in Candor, NY, an Agri-cluster participant and George M. Sands, Regional Coordinator of Central Leatherstocking Region of New York State Forging The Freedom Trail Project pose at the Underground Railroad Exhibit of Sight and Sound held on February 3—9, 2002 at the Roberson Museum, Binghamton, NY.

The program was supported by CNY RC&D.

Willow Biomass Project Continues to Thrive and Grow

By Stacie Edick, Biomass Field Representative



Willow growing on Double D Bioenergy Farm in Leon, NY

CNY RC&D has been working with the Salix Consortium on the Willow Biomass Project since 1995. Funded through the U.S. Department of Energy's Biomass Power for Rural Development Program, the goal of the project is to research commercializing willow bioenergy crops as a locally grown, renewable feedstock for bioproducts and bioenergy.

Some of the partners in the Salix Consortium include:

- Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation
- SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY ESF)
- NYS Energy Research and Development Authority
- Cornell University's Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering
- Cornell University's Department of Ornithology
- Antares Group

Since 1998, the Salix Consortium has planted 500 acres of willow on leased private land in Chautauqua and Cattaraugus Counties. Harvest of the first acreage planted in 1998 began this spring with the Bender Harvester made by Salix Maskiner of Sweden.

Necessary modifications to the harvester delayed harvesting, therefore much of the mature willow will need to be harvested next winter. Harvesting



The Bender Harvester cuts and chips willow

demonstrations will be scheduled in western and central New York this summer. Check www.esf.edu/willow for dates and locations.

NRG's Dunkirk Steam Station (electric power plant) is the intended primary market for the willow bioenergy crop. The biomass handling system has been installed and tested. Test burns are tentatively scheduled for the Spring of 2002. With successful emissions tests and a power contract, willow biomass power will be on the grid and commercial by the close of 2002.

On March 21, 2001 the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced approval of a pilot project to harvest willow biomass from New York State Conservation Reserve Program lands for use in energy production. The project, initiated by CNY RC&D, SUNY-ESF and Antares Group

Inc



The Step Planter plants two double-rows and cuts 5 foot whips into 6 inch cuttings

provides for establishment of up to 15,000 acres of willow and herbaceous cover such as switchgrass or other native or introduced grasses. The CRP Biomass Pilot Project will be a significant catalyst for the establishment of a vibrant willow enterprise in New York State.

The resulting creation of new jobs and tax revenues for local and state governments would bolster the region's farm and forestry sectors, increasing energy independence and strengthen protection of the environment.

For more information on the Willow Biomass Project, please see www.norwich.net/socnyrcd/willow.html or contact: Stacie Edick, Biomass Field Representative at stacie.edick@ny.usda.gov

You can also visit SUNY-ESF's Willow Biomass Web Page at www.esf.edu/willow.

Livestock Program: Smaller but Still Vigorous

By Nancy Morey, Livestock Specialist

The Livestock Program has witnessed the beginning of a year of downsizing and program transition. As the funding sources have been coming to an end, staff has searched for grant programs and opportunities to ensure that new and existing producers will continue to receive technical, practical, and marketing advice for their livestock enterprises.

Our popular loan program for purchasing breeding animals, expanding flocks and herds, and purchasing fencing has continued. As staff time has dwindled, the volunteer members of the Livestock Committee have become more involved in the screening and selection process for these loans. In June 2001, two loans were awarded for the purchase of bulls, one for a sheep flock expansion, one for a goat herd expansion, and several for fencing (permanent and electronet).



Hereford" poses with his Livestock Specialist, Nancy Morey

Small scale livestock producers have been our focus for over 20 years. With new funding for the Livestock Program expected in the fall of 2002, we hope to see a revitalization of the existing programs as they emerge in a slightly altered form.

Within our 12 county region, as well as across the state, the small, diversified livestock farms are on the increase. We will continue to be in the forefront of this expansion with new programming, resources, educational opportunities (such as seminars, field days, and conferences), and our continued work one-on-one with these producers.

Producers who have received animals under the current programs are being contacted about this transition period and informed of options and resources available until further funding is secured. We are also seeking producers' input into the future programs we will be offering.

CNY RC&D Employee Graduates to Ag Consultant

Jim McLaughlin, former Farm Management Technician for RC & D, has ventured out on his own. Through his business, Cornerstone Farm Ventures, Jim offers consulting services to various producers and agencies on Small Ruminants, Pastured Poultry, and Organic Dairy. "It's a win-win," says Jim. "Many groups and agencies need the services of someone with my expertise, but not on a full-time basis. They contract with me to refer people with questions and bring me in for conferences. I get to meet a lot of people and support a kind of agriculture I believe in and love."

Jim also assists individual farmers in establishing or building their business. "Farmers looking to vary their business or create something new for a niche market need specific information not always available from mainstream sources. I can walk them through the entire process or just be available for questions. So far it's been great."

Interested agencies or farmers can call Jim at (607) 334-2833, e-mail at jim@cornerstonefarm.com or visit his website at www.cornerstonefarm.com

Wetlands Reserve Projects Supported

CNY RC&D is administering two Wetlands Reserve Projects, both funded through the USDA Natural Resources



Conservation Service. The first program is to evaluate previous Wetlands Reserve projects through a grant for \$137,000. To this end, CNY RC&D has contracted with SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry to determine past NRCS project effect on migratory birds and wildlife on restored farm wetlands in Canastota, NY.

The second program allows \$82,720 to implement wetlands conservation and restoration in Chenango and Madison counties. Fourteen projects are planned to construct a total of 185,000 square feet of pothole complex and 4,000 linear feet of low embankment dikes.

CENTRAL NEW YORK RC&D 2001 PROJECTS COMPLETED

PROJECT NAME	LOCAL \$	STATE \$	FEDERAL \$	CNY RC&D \$	TOTAL \$*
Chenango BOCES Ag Visions	\$4,500	\$0	\$7,500	\$1,000	\$13,000
Assisted the BOCES Ag Visions program in providing students experiences in Natural Resources fields.					
Headwaters Youth Conservation	\$67,051	\$0	\$63,787	\$8,000	\$138,838
Provided high school & college students conservation service & education experiences in Chenango & Otsego Counties.					
Madison WRP Assistance	\$0	\$0	\$28,600	\$2,000	\$30,600
Assisted Madison County landowners & USDA NRCS in administering the Wetlands Reserve Program.					
Medicinal Herbs Initiative	\$2,000	\$40,000	\$3,200	\$1,000	\$46,200
Assisted Otsego & Delaware County farmers & CADE, Inc. explore the potential of medicinal herbs.					
Oneida Nation Site Investigation	\$3,600	\$0	\$3,600	\$0	\$7,200
Assisted the Oneida Nation in exploring native burial sites as an education experience for students.					
Owego Farmers Market	\$1,750	\$0	\$13,165	\$300	\$15,215
Assisted Owego County farmers in expanding and further developing a farmers market.					
Pastured Meats & Poultry Initiative	\$12,000	\$0	\$4,800	\$1,500	\$18,300
Assisted area farmers & CADE, Inc. through technical assistance in grazing and farm management.					
Pastured Small Farm Assistance	\$0	\$85,500	\$17,100	\$8,500	\$111,100
Assisted area farmers through technical assistance in grazing, low-interest loans, marketing, new farm start-ups, and low cost equipment.					
Small Farm Improvement Initiative	\$0	\$9,500	\$1,920	\$900	\$12,320
Conducted 5 major educational events to promote grazing and diversification on small scale farms.					
Underserved Farmer Assistance	\$0	\$0	\$24,680	\$5,200	\$29,880
Assisted limited resource farmers through technical assistance, low interest loans and information and educational services.					
Buy Local Phase 2**	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,000	\$11,000
Promote and facilitate the development, marketing and purchase of local agricultural products.					
TOTAL	\$100,901	\$135,000	\$168,352	\$29,400	\$433,653
*Includes Cash, Services & Materials		For every dollar committed by CNY RC&D, \$14.75 in matching funds was leveraged from local, state and federal sources.			
**Partnered w/Lake Plains RC&D					

The USDA- NRCS Resource Conservation & Development program helps people in rural areas plan and carry out activities that increase conservation of natural resources, support economic development, and enhance the environment and standard of living in local communities.

The premise of the RC&D program is that local people know what is best for their communities.

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