

2010 ANNUAL REPORT

EMPOWERING BEGINNING WOMEN FARMERS



FY April 1-March 31

Mission:

Central NY RC&D Project, Inc. will work cooperatively in educating and learning from landowners, organizations and other partners to improve our 12 county region's economic, environmental and social vitality through the wiser use of human and natural resources.

Vision:

Central NY RC&D Project, Inc. is a catalyst for a healthy environment and population, living in thriving rural and urban communities integrated with diverse natural and agricultural landscapes.

12 Member Counties

Broome
Cayuga
Chenango
Cortland
Delaware
Madison
Onondaga
Otsego
Schoharie
Sullivan
Tioga
Tompkins



Empowering Beginning Women Farmers through Whole Farm Planning is a three-year project designed to assist beginning women farmers in the Northeast. The program includes instruction in whole farm planning, providing mentor farmers, engaging key agricultural professionals in the region, and instruction in sustainable farming practices.

The project is currently in its 2nd year and has already had very significant outcomes including:

⇒88% of participants reported improvement in on-farm decision making capabilities – Farmer: “As a direct result of the material we covered AND the networking with our mentors, I have cut my kid (goat) loses from parasites by over 80%.”

⇒85% of participants developed a whole farm goal – Farmer: “Now we know what we want- we've gone over all our goals (me, my husband and our 14 year old son), and we know how to get it. AND we know how to pay for it, have time for family, generally balance it all out.”

⇒85% of participants forged new relationships that have positively impacted their farms – Farmer: “I also found the camaraderie and know-how of my fellow participants extremely helpful over the course of the season. Their advice saved me from several trials that would have likely ended in error.”

⇒Other Comments: Farmer: “We now have a financial plan and whole farm goal. Before the training we took whatever profit there was at the end of the year. If we wanted more profit we would add more animals. NOW, we plan for our profit. We know what is making money, what isn't and what is barely making it.”

Farmer: “When I began the program I was overwhelmed by the challenges my husband and I were facing in making our living through agriculture and the fluid milk dairy industry. I emerged from the program with a re-enforced relationship with my husband, a broadened perspective of the possibilities in the business of agriculture and a clear 10 year plan through which my husband and I can both achieve our collective and independent agricultural goals.”

USDA-NRCS EARTH TEAM VOLUNTEER

John Elia, Norwich-NY, is a passionate volunteer. Locally, he is better known as “Pizza John” and is a retired pizza restaurant owner. John can be found volunteering at his many “jobs”, including guide for the Finger Lakes Trail Bullthistle Hiking Club, and helping the Chenango County Historical Society, Northeast Car Museum, and American Red Cross. He is a “Rock Star” for the NYS Archeological Association, a mentor with the Scouts Adventure Club, a trail steward for the Finger Lakes Trail Conference, an organizer for the Central NY Bounty, a motivator with the Chenango County Cornell Cooperative Extension and just an all around good guy for planet earth.

John is an avid hiker and member of the FLT Bullthistle Hiking Club and Finger Lakes Trail Conference. He has coordinated many hikes around the area and takes his responsibilities seriously. He says that all his hikes must include FFF (Fun, Food and Fotos).

John has served over 100 volunteer hours during FY 2010-2011. He assisted CNY RC&D with the Central New York Bounty program, a year-round online farmers' market that delivers food to customers and supports over 110 local small and mid-size farmers and producers. John helped organize and coordinate the Ed Sidote stone bench placement on the Finger Lakes Trail and assisted the Chenango County SWCD tree program, where he counted, packed and distributed to over 150 customers an estimated 10,900 tree seedlings (and seeds) with many donated within the community. Pizza John is always promoting conservation and serving to implement the NRCS mission: “Helping People Help the Land”.



LOOKING BACK AT 20 YEARS OF RC&D

PHIL METZGER, NATURAL RESOURCES SPECIALIST, USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE



Looking back at 20 years of RC&D and those who made a difference—As I thought about the last 20 years and my job assisting the Central NY RC&D Council it was clear to me that effective partnerships was the key ingredient in protecting our region’s natural resources, providing for positive economic impact and improving the quality of life of Central New Yorkers. Specifically, it was individuals, people with substance, who provided the opportunities to build the necessary relationships for effective collaboration.

CNY RC&D has benefited from steady and competent leadership during the last 20 years. I was lucky to arrive when Robert Banta was guiding the RC&D with his friendly and positive demeanor, which helped build the cooperative atmosphere through some pretty heady times, when money and staff were plentiful and attainable. Thin times were ahead and thankfully Madison Wright more than held the organization on course

during challenging and some uncomfortable times. Troy Bishopp followed and he had the job of setting a new direction and spirit, which he accomplished admirably. The Council is now headed by Andy Kiraly, who stepped up when a new phase in CNY RC&D’s evolution called for another leadership change. The tone and attitude of the CNY RC&D leadership has always been and remains purposeful, positive and open minded, which will be necessary to survive the big changes in store brought about by the end of USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service direct federal assistance.

On the staff side of CNY RC&D it started with Jack Salo as the first office manager, followed by Sarah Manchester, both of who set a high professional standard and created a new culture and stability that continues currently under Lauren Lines. Bookkeeper Debbie Hawkins deserves mention as she has always complimented the fine staff leadership. All of these individuals are cut from the same cloth, competent, professional and a pleasure to work with. My trusted NRCS colleague Kim Totten has been there for me both professionally and personally. Few relationships are more important to me and knowing we always have each other’s backs helped to create our successful collaboration over the last 15 years.

As I looked at all the CNY RC&D projects I realized that for each there was one or more “champions” or instigators who got things moving forward. Jack Salo, then of The Place, envisioned the Headwaters Youth Conservation Corps and brought it to the Central NY RC&D Forestry Committee and its Chairman Dinnie Sloman for needed support. Troy Bishopp, aka “The Grass Whisperer” re-invigorated CNY RC&D’s role in promoting better use of grassland resources. Farmer Bob Huot, who never lacked for good ideas, commitment to the RC&D and support of me personally, was the instigator for CNY Bounty, the local food delivery project. After over three-quarters of a million dollars in local food sold we can be glad we listened. Supported by trusted colleagues and friends Rebecca Hargrave, Chenango CCE, Becca Jablonski, Madison AED, and Steven Holzbaur, this project demonstrated a new approach and level of commitment to helping NY farmers.

Phil Comings, from 20 years back, was largely responsible for shaping and driving the Livestock Program, work carried on by Nancy Morey and others. Joel Salatin, Jim McLaughlin, Mike Carroll & Donna Jenny were key partners in bringing Pastured Poultry to the area and Tro Bui, Erica Frenay & Anu Rangarajan of Cornell University, proved to be reliable and trusted allies and friends as we collaborated on many different educational programs assisting small farms. Other influential people include Dick Warner for grazing, Jeni Wightman & Stacie Edick for carbon trading & willow biofuel development and Gary Turits, Kevin Hodne & Marty Broccoli in creating and growing the Center for Agricultural Development & Entrepreneurship (CADE). Dick Winnett, former Finger Lakes RC&D Coordinator, was very influential and his Venison Donation Program attracted us from the very start. Huge contributions can be attributed to Kelly White, of the former Center for Holistic Management and Ann Adams of Holistic Management International, who enlisted us as collaborators in the ongoing Beginning Women Farmers training program. Seth Wilner, a stellar collaborator and co-conspirator from the University of New Hampshire still provides guidance to this day and has become a lifelong friend. There were many, many other collaborators through the years, far too many to include here.



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I was also privileged to work with some great young people, who we were fortunate enough to enlist in our efforts as AmeriCorps members or interns, including Margaret Wedge, Josie “young whippersnapper” Maroney, Hillary Kulik, Aaron Buchta and Mike Gurecki.

The most impactful relationship for me, which I continue to benefit from, was and is with Allan Savory of the Savory Institute. He had a larger influence on me than anyone I have met professionally over the last 30 years. His insights into the most effective way to protect land, increase profits and improve quality of life completely changed the way I did my job. His revolutionary premise that ‘it is human decision making at its most basic level that needs to change’ made me realize that we can have the best intentions and the most advanced technology but if the way we go about utilizing this is flawed, progress will not be made toward the desired goal as expected. He taught me that the answer lies in managing towards a comprehensive goal (i.e. increased profitability, ecological regeneration and improved social relationships simultaneously). Taking actions toward this comprehensive target, instead of a narrow one (e.g. increased



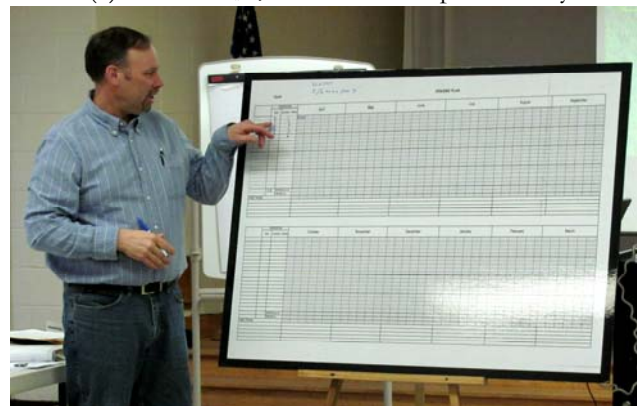
production alone), is the difference between real sustainability versus unintended consequences and short term perceived progress versus short and long term success. I encourage all of you to visit www.savoryinstitute.com to see what the future of natural resource protection and rural economic development will look like.

Lastly, thanks to all those who manage land for their willingness to teach us, each other, and occasionally learn from us. Land managers were a key ingredient in the collaborative atmosphere we all helped foster. The objective was always to learn and then implement what we learned to benefit the region through ecological improvements, increased profits and better relationships with those whose support we need. It has been a rich and rewarding 20 years and I couldn't be prouder to have worked alongside the individuals and organizations that made it all possible.

NORTHEAST SARE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT

TROY BISHOPP, 5TH GENERATION GRASS FARMER/MADISON COUNTY SWCD/USC GRAZING SPECIALIST

The Central New York Resource Conservation & Development Council and Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program (SARE) have seen unprecedented interest from conservation planners and agricultural educators eager to help family farms incorporate managed grazing by participating in a new 3 year professional development grant entitled “*Utilizing Holistic Planned Grazing as a Regenerative Engine for Sustainable Agriculture*”. The overall performance target is to train 30 extension educators, conservation professionals, grassland advocates and/or farmer mentors from the Northeast SARE region and deliver holistic and practical grazing strategies to 120 farms, representing 24,000 acres, of which 72 farms on 14,400 acres develop and implement a holistic planned grazing system. We estimate that the impacts on these 72 farms will be (1) financial-\$2,000 increase in profitability per farm due to reduced production costs, value added products and/or a production increases; (2) ecological-25% increase in ground cover, biological activity and improved soil & forage health; and (3) social-measurable subjective improvement in family quality of life. To date, 46 grazing professionals from around the Northeast are learning to help their rural customers in creating and implementing farm family goals, holistic planned grazing, and biological monitoring while expanding strong relationships in their communities, building professional experience and meeting people “where they are”. Invited farmers are part of the training sessions, explaining their own opportunities and challenges with managing a complex business. The serving of local food to participants at every training site is another aspect of this innovative training project.



The project team with over 70 years of cumulative grazing experience includes: Troy Bishopp, 5th generation grass farmer/Madison County SWCD/USC Grazing Specialist; Phil Metzger, USDA-NRCS Natural Resources Specialist (former RC&D Coordinator); Nancy Glazier, NW NY Dairy Livestock & Field Crops Team for Cornell Cooperative Extension; Jennifer Colby, UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture Pasture Program Outreach Coordinator; Jim Weaver, Chairman, Endless Mountains RC&D-PA; Stacy Koch, USDA-NRCS Natural Resources Specialist (former RC&D Coordinator); Steve Lorraine, Madison County SWCD & NYS Conservation District Employees Association President; Lauren Lines, Central NY RC&D Office Manager and Kim Totten, USDA-NRCS Secretary (former RC&D Secretary).

For an update on the project go to <http://mysare.sare.org/mySARE/ProjectReport.aspx?do=viewProj&pn=ENE10-115>

RURAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS / AMERICORPS SERVES COMMUNITIES



Rural Health Service Corps / AmeriCorps Serves Communities through Local Food Access Programs—Over the past year, Central New York RC&D has worked hard at expanding existing programs in the area of local food access and development. This has been accomplished primarily through support of CNY Bounty and local community garden projects.



Continuing on the success of previous years, CNY RC&D obtained new funding through the Community Foundation for South Central NY - \$14,610, NY Farms! - \$6,000 and the Rural Health Network of South Central NY. Working with the Food & Health Network of South Central NY and other

partners, CNY RC&D is assisting with the expansion of Central NY Bounty into Broome County. The funds have provided CNY Bounty with a Rural Health Service Corps / AmeriCorps member, **Hillary Kulik**, as well as a consultant to lead this expansion project. Staff also assisted CNY Bounty partners in obtaining grants from National Grid - \$60,000 and NYS Community Capital Project - \$123,875(pending). These funds contributed toward an updated marketing & business plan and is anticipated to provide new delivery vans.

The community gardens project is a partnership with the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chenango County. This project provides education about permaculture gardens and growing local food and provides other resources. Community members learn about the many options including neighborhood community gardens and home gardening. For example, staff helps to teach container gardening to families, including those in the Early Head Start program. These programs help individuals, create community and lead toward better service to the participating counties. This results in building healthier towns and cities through improving the quality of life of participating residents.



VENISON DONATION STILL GOING STRONG!



Over 80,000 lbs of venison was processed this year in New York State. This was an increase over last year. The NY Food Bank has requested funds for next year from the NYS Department of Health.

Central NY RC&D counties processed approximately 6,600 lbs, with the most active counties being Tioga (~1,700), Cortland (~1,100), Schoharie (~1,035), Madison (~1,020) and Cayuga (~1,000).

LEADING BY EXAMPLE THROUGH VOLUNTEERS & PARTNERS

Over the past year, with the help of our committed volunteer board and many partners, the Central New York RC&D has accomplished so much. It has been a pleasure to have the opportunity to work with a variety of talented people with a very diverse range of experiences. I have seen first-hand how the RC&D programs impact the vitality of our local communities.

I am looking forward to the coming year and further developing the partnerships that we have with many organizations in the twelve county area that we serve.

LAUREN LINES, CNY RC&D, OFFICE MANAGER



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