

**COMMITTEES**

- Beaver Dam Creek Tributary Restoration Task Force
- Canaan Lake Watershed Advisory Committee
- Cornell University's L.I. Horticultural Research & Extension Center - Advisory Council
- Earth Team Coordinator
- Forge River Task Force
- GIS Users Group
- L.I. Agricultural Stewardship Working Group
- L.I. Ag Forum Planning Committee
- L.I. Regional Envirothon
- L.I. Invasive Species Management Area
- L.I. Native Grass Initiative
- L.H.-L.I. RC&D
- NYACD
- NYS Conservation District Employees Association
- NYS Envirothon
- Peconic Estuary Technical Advisory Committee
- Suffolk Co. Dept. of Health Services Peconic River Project
- Suffolk Co. Land & Water Invasive Species Advisory Board
- Suffolk Co. Vector Control Long Range Planning Committee
- Swan River Advisory Committee
- South Shore Estuary Reserve



**L.I. ENVIROTHON**

The 11<sup>th</sup> L.I. Envirothon is scheduled for Tuesday, April 28, 2009 at the Old Bethpage Village Restoration.

The Envirothon is an environmental science competition for students. All high schools in Nassau and Suffolk are eligible to participate.

At last year's event Sachem H.S. North prevailed again, going on to represent Suffolk County at the N.Y.S. Envirothon.

**LONG ISLAND NATIVE GRASS INITIATIVE**



Founder Plot, Riverhead, NY

In 2008, the LINGI goals were focused on grant writing, managing the founder plot, increasing our native seed bank, and finalizing the Long Island Grassland and Seed Source Inventory map.

Annual seed cleaning activities began in the third week of January as volunteers traveled to New Jersey to use the seed cleaning equipment made available by the USDA-NRCS Cape May Plant Materials Center. The 24 accessions collected in the fall of 2007 from

14 sites were cleaned by the five volunteers in the two-day period bringing the total number of accessions collected to date to 52.

In May, efforts turned to increasing the genetic variety of the founder plot by starting plants from the 2007 collections. Seed was stratified and planted into cell packs from each collection. The greenhouse, planting media, cell packs, and the care of the seedlings were provided free of charge by Suffolk County Community College in Riverhead! Many thanks to Paul Anderson and Eva Sokdek for their efforts!

Weed control was a major time investment on the Founder plot in order to reduce weed competition. In June, the entire plot was weed whacked to facilitate the placement of the weed fabric. Volunteers gathered for three days to install the weed fabric over the existing plants. This complicated and strenuous task involved 29 volunteers and 200 hours of time. Transplanting the 600 plugs into the founder plot followed in late August.

All of LINGI volunteer time and hard work came to fruition in the fall with the first full harvest of our founder seed. This brings LINGI within 2 years of having a commercially viable seed product. Two new collections from East Marion and Mashomack grassland on Shelter Island increased our seed bank and a portion of the seed from Mashomack's collection will be provided to The Nature Conservancy for a grassland restoration grant. This is the first LINGI supported grassland restoration seed contribution!

Further successes were witnessed as LINGI was awarded funding under the Suffolk County ¼% sales tax grant for equipment, training, and seed cleaning activities! We are very excited and thankful to receive this funding! It promptly enabled two LINGI members to attend the Eastern Native Grass Symposium in Columbia, South Carolina where the efforts and activities of LINGI were highlighted in a presentation.

LINGI's efforts are quickly coming to realization and we are growing quickly. This spring, LINGI will continue its fundraising efforts by having a native plant sale in order to fund seasonal staff to assist with the many LINGI activities. If you are interested in obtaining LINGI seed or would like more information about the spring plant sale, please contact our office. In the meantime, LINGI will continue to go to seed!



Gwen Lerner from Nassau Co. SWCD volunteers planting seed at Suffolk Community College

Suffolk County Soil & Water Conservation District • 423 Griffing Ave • Riverhead, NY 11901 • 631-727-2315

**Suffolk County Soil & Water Conservation District**

**2008 YEAR IN REVIEW**

**NEWS BULLETIN** - As this publication was about to go to print, we learned that George Proios was elected Chairman of the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee. George is the only Long Islander to serve on this committee and the first non-farmer to serve as Chairman since its creation over 60 years ago.

**Board of Directors**

- George Proios  
Chairperson  
Member at Large
- Joe Gergela  
Director  
L.I. Farm Bureau
- Daniel P. Losquadro  
Director  
S.C. Legislator - District #6
- Vivian Viloria-Fisher  
Director  
S.C. Legislator - District #5

Phil Schmitt  
Director  
Farmer

**District Staff**

- Paul A. TeNyenhuis  
District Manager
- Elizabeth Condon  
Principal Account Clerk
- Sharon Frost  
Soil District Technician
- Nicole Spinelli  
Soil District Technician
- Polly Weigand  
Soil District Technician

**USDA-NRCS**

- Allan Connell  
District Conservationist
- Liz Roldan  
Soil Conservationist

**104 Years of Combined Service to the County's Natural Resources**



From left to right: Former District Manager Tom McMahon, Suffolk Co. Legislator Losquadro, Exe. Director L.I. Farm Bureau Joe Gergela, former District Board Member Lloyd Corwin & District Board Chairman George Proios.

The Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District lost three major players to retirement this year. District Manager, Tom McMahon retired after 34 years; Lloyd Corwin, District Board member, stepped down after 39 years; and George Proios, County Chief Environmentalist, our present District Board Chairman, retired from the county with 36 years in Town, County and State government.

Tom McMahon was employed 34 years with the District. Among other things, his extensive work with the duck farmers on conservation projects is a credit to his dedication to Suffolk County's sensitive eco-

system. Among many other awards, in 2006, Tom received the highest award given to District employees, the Crony Lifetime Achievement Award for outstanding service to conservation.

In 1969, Lloyd Corwin was appointed to the District Board by the County Legislature to represent farmers in Suffolk County. He decided to step down from his position to further enjoy his retirement and spend more time in Hawaii. Known mostly for owning and operating one of the three remaining duck farms on Long Island, Lloyd has overseen extensive conservation projects completed on his farm. Though the daily operations are now managed by his son Doug, he still remains a big influence behind the scenes. Lloyd was on the District Board for 39 years.

George Proios though retired from his County position, still remains as the District Board Chairman. George is best known for his many positions on committees around the State.

Paul TeNyenhuis, our new District Manager, is no stranger to the District. He began working for the District 24 years ago as a Soil District Technician in 1985. In 1999, he moved up the ranks

to Senior Soil District Technician. He is best known for his methodical attention to detail.

Congratulations Paul, we wish you the best.

"The years of dedication to Suffolk County's agricultural community by these three individuals have clearly shown the significance of the County's Soil and Water Conservation District. This resource is invaluable to the local producers and will continue to be so under the guidance of Mr. TeNyenhuis," said Joe Gergela, Executive Director of the L.I. Farm Bureau and District Board Member.



Former District Managers Stan Pauzer (1969 - 1995) and Tom McMahon (1995 - 2008) & newly appointed District Manager, Paul TeNyenhuis at Tom's retirement party.



Tom McMahon in 1975 was a Soil District Technician.



### NICOLE IS BACK

The District is fortunate to welcome back Nicole Spinelli after one year leave of absence. Nicole used her time wisely working on Quail Hill Farm, a community-supported farm in Amagansett. Her renewed enthusiasm and knowledge of organic farming is an inspiration to the entire office.



### GOOD-BYE BRIAN

Brian Zimmerman, a well known personality in the USDA NRCS office, has moved on to green pastures just west of Suffolk. After 14 years of service with the NRCS Brian accepted a position as Nassau County's District Manager. We wish Brian luck, he will surely be missed.



### HELLO LIZ

The USDA NRCS replaced Zimmerman with the lovely Liz Roldan. Liz comes to us straight from Puerto Rico with mounds of knowledge and experience in conservation projects. She is a graduate of Metropolitan University in San Juan with a degree in Environmental Science. Welcome Liz!

## DISTRICT RECEIVES \$96,000 FROM NYS

Overcoming stiff competition the District prevailed and was awarded \$96,000 for 16 farmers to replace 25 fuel tanks on their farms in Suffolk County.



The fuel tank pictured above is proposed for replacement.

The Agricultural Nonpoint Source Pollution Abatement Grant Program funded through the New York State Environmental Protection Fund allows Districts to apply annually for funding for conservation projects on agricultural land. The program is coordinated through the NYS Soil & Water Conservation Committee. All Districts throughout the State are eligible to apply.

"This is a high priority project for the District and the agricultural community in Suffolk County. Again, it shows our farmers' commitment to protecting the County's drinking water," said Joe Gergela, Executive Director of the L.I. Farm Bureau and District Board Member.

The 16 farms receiving funding are located in the Towns of Southold, Riverhead, Southampton, Huntington, and East Hampton. They will be replacing both regulated and unregulated fuel tanks in compliance with the strict guidelines set forth under Suffolk County Department of Health Service's - Sanitary Code Article 12.

The cost to install one tank can be as high as \$8,000 plus registration and permitting fees. The grant program pays 80% and the farmer is responsible for the remaining 20%.

"The price tag for replacing these fuel tanks is high; however, the environmental benefit far surpasses the cost," said George Proios, District Board Chairman.

The farmers have one year to complete the installations and several have already done so.



This new installation was completed this fall and paid for, in-part, from the NYS Environmental Protection Fund.



## AGRICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

AEM is a voluntary, incentive-based program that helps farmers make common sense, cost-effective, and science-based decisions to help meet business objectives while protecting and conserving the County's natural resources.

The District worked diligently streamlining the State AEM worksheets gearing them to address our sensitive and unique environment in Suffolk County. They address areas of concern such as: pesticide and fertilizer use, petroleum storage, irrigation management, soil erosion, waste disposal, and watershed evaluation. All farmers are eligible and encouraged to participate.

Twenty-five AEM conservation plans were completed in 2008 using the AEM worksheets. To complete an AEM plan, District personnel conducts a farm visit and reviews the AEM worksheets with the farmer. The information gathered is used to develop the Plan. The completed Plan is approved by the USDA-NRCS District Conservationist and then the Plan is shared with the farmer. The AEM Plan puts farmers in the position to compete for state and federal cost-share funds to implement conservation practices identified in their Plan.

Additional funding is available from the State Environmental Protection Fund for non-competitive grants, which enables the Soil and Water Conservation Districts to prioritize watershed concerns; document environmental stewardship; develop and implement conservation plans; evaluate effectiveness; and conduct educational outreach efforts.

"The Suffolk County Soil & Water Conservation District is ahead of the curve in streamlining the AEM Worksheets," said George Proios, District Board Chairman. "We are proud to offer this service to the Agricultural community. It's value in protecting our Sole Source Aquifer is immeasurable to Suffolk County residents."



Drip Irrigation installed on this vineyard conserves water.



A diversion controlled soil erosion on a nursery.



Pasture management is a key practice for conservation on horse farms.



Pesticide and nutrient management practices are reviewed with each farmer.

## District services provided...

### Agriculture

- Engineering Practices
- Irrigation Design
- Ag. Value Assessment
- Agronomic Practices
- Erosion Control
- Conservation Planning
- Pest Management Techniques
- Cost-share Programs
- Transition to Organic Farming Assistance
- Technical Assistance
- Practice, design & installation supervision
- Drainage Systems
- Agricultural Waste Systems

### Landowners

- Bluff Erosion Recommendations
- Conservation Information
- Educational Materials
- Invasive Species
- Wildlife Watering Facilities
- Pond Assistance
- Soil Erosion & Drainage
- Soils Information
- Wetland Restoration Program
- Wildlife Management"

### Education

- Conservation Materials
- Program Guides

### Municipalities

- Nonpoint Source Pollution Remediation
- Site Plan & Subdivision Reviews
- Grant Partnerships
- Watershed Management

### Environmental Consultants

- Natural Resource Maps
- Aerial Photos



Bluff site on the north shore of Suffolk County.