

# CDEA News



Dec. 2009

The Monthly Newsletter of the NYS Conservation Districts Employees Association

## NYS Updates

I just spoke to Mr. Mike Latham to get an update from the NYSSWCC. There is some good news out there as he related several items to me:

- The NYSSWCC is making payments this week, and while they are not totally caught up the delay in processing (still \$750,000 behind) the time for processing has been reduced from five months to one month.
- Part B monies are on schedule and should be coming out in mid January.
- The SWCC is planning on working through the same process next year with the state and they are more prepared to deal with the issues. The fiscal conditions have not improved, but the SWCC now knows the process and the predictability of the process is better.

Mike also wanted to remind Districts that if there are financial issues, to let him know as soon as possible. They need a lead time to try and develop a solution. Communication between the Districts and SWCC is critical. Plan on having these issues for the next two to three years, at least that is what is being reported.

Lastly, Mike said that they expect to meet all of the state cuts that are required from them and the SWCC had begun those cuts in April of 2009. They do not expect any staff reductions or additions.

For now, keep your head up and moving forward, that's the best advice I can give.

## From El Presidente...

Well it has been a very interesting start to my first term as your president of the employee's association to say the least. Whether it is the problems we are seeing with the New York State Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), office issues with our partners at NRCS or dealing with our individual counties and our local budgetary issues, it has been a very busy start to my term.

The problems with the NYS EPF are not expected to be resolved in the near future and in fact may get worse before they get better. I have been working very closely with Judy at NYACD to keep our legislators aware of what is going on with the EPF and how it is affecting districts and landowners in our respective counties. I would say that this will be the number one issue of concern as we head to the annual legislative days in January. The CDEA will work closely with NYACD to develop a coordinated effort heading into this event so as to ensure we are all caring the same message forward. Additionally, I have kept in close conversation with Mike Latham about the concerns that districts are having with payments out of the EPF and he is doing everything he can to get as many payments out as the department will allow. If you have any questions or concerns about the EPF please let me or Mike know.

The office rent issues with NRCS continue to cause some in the state great difficulties. To try and sort this issue out I have been part of a reinvigorated 4 - Way Partnership. Astor Boozer, NRCS, Judy Littrel, NYACD, Mike Latham NYSSWCC and I have meet several times to discuss the office issues and where we stand in the process. Things have changed from a year ago and I encourage each district to work with their local DC and Watershed Leader at NRCS as you move forward with the rent issues in your county. Feel free to contact me with questions and concerns regarding this issue and I will help where I can.

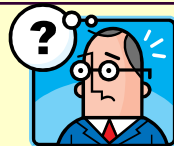
Even with all the problems we are seeing across the state there are also some opportunities that we at the districts should be looking at. Whether it is the Great Lakes Basin funding opportunities, the Chesapeake Bay funding or even the increased funding in NRCS programs, there are opportunities that we can take advantage of and with the funding issues at our local levels, we should look hard at these funding sources.

I will say to close that in this holiday season we should be thankful for all that we have and all wonderful people in our lives. I would ask that everyone say a prayer for the men and women in our armed forces who will be spending their holiday's protecting our great country. Have a safe and happy holiday!

—Steve Lorraine

*Merry Christmas and Have a Happy New Year.*

## Brain Basher ..faxed answers only (518-623-3519)



**December's Question:** What 11-letter word is pronounced incorrectly by 100% of Cornell graduates?

### October's Question:

You are on your way to visit your Grandma, who lives at the end of the valley. It's her birthday, and you want to give her the cakes you've made.

Between your house and her house, you have to cross 7 bridges, and as it goes in the land of make believe, there is a troll under every bridge! Each troll, quite rightly, insists that you pay a troll toll. Before you can cross their bridge, you have to give them half of the cakes you are carrying, but as they are kind trolls, they each give you back a single cake.

How many cakes do you have to leave home with to make sure that you arrive at Grandma's with exactly 2 cakes?

**Answer: Two cakes**

*Congratulations to Victor DiGiacomo of Niagara County.*

## CDEA Employee Profile

The first thing you need to know is that Kristin is spelled with two i's, not an i and an e. Now that we have that sorted out, read on about our very own Kristin White.

Kristin was born in July of 1970, so be prepared to send many birthday wishes and presents to her this year. She was born in Rochester, NY and grew up in Silver Lake, NY (Wyoming County). Her mother was a dental assistant for the Attica State Prison. To me that is interesting, since I never even thought of that as a profession! Since her mom raised her and she was an only child she did admit that she was spoiled rotten, unlike many of us other single children families.

Kristin and her mom lived in a housing co-op, known as the "Institution", (no it was not Attica State pen), on Crystal Lake which afforded her the opportunity for a lot of ice skating. As with most children, she enjoyed hanging out with the neighborhood kids, sledging, building fort's in the woods and raising general mayhem. Her first Drive in movie was at the Silver Lake Drive Inn; care to guess what was playing? It was *Star Wars*.

Kristin went to Perry High School and graduated with around 80 students. She, in her own words, "goofed off", but did manage find time to play the flute, play in the marching band, sing in chorus and play some basketball and volleyball. In her junior and senior years she became very interested in computers and started to learn and understand these electronic necessities. She did skip school and received in school suspension, but there were no cop cars involved, *whew....*

From what I gathered from our discussion, she was (is?) a handful. During the graduation ceremony she and several others decided to drop marbles on the floor as names were announced (all of them). I am sure that she has outgrown that. However I am keeping my eye on you White, during the 2010 WQS Annual meeting. In 1988, Kristin graduated and began work at the Champion Factory. She also went to Bryant and Stratton, didn't goof off, and received her degree.

In her 20's Kristin moved around quite a bit, however in 1997, she met her husband. They met through a coworker and their first date was at the Sonnenburg Gardens in Canandaigua. Their eyes locked onto each other and that was it. I asked Kristin what attracted her to Wayne, and she said that he was mellow, kind, and relaxed. He was a "good guy" and they were married in September of 1999. Wayne is a house director for the Finger Lakes Developmental Disability Office.

*Continued page 3.....*



*Back to your office Mr. Griswold....*



*Christopher*

## District Program Highlight - Suffolk County

A few years ago I ran into Polly Weigand at a NYS Invasive Species conference that was held in Albany. I didn't know it at the time, but Polly and the Suffolk County SWCD were beginning to become involved



in the invasive and non-native species issue. Please read on and find out about their program and the benefits that are being realized through their hard work.

*"Long Island is a diverse mosaic of maritime grasslands, pitch pine, oak and beech forests, rivers, streams, tidal marshes, bluffs, and beaches that are fragmented by towns, roads, and development. As is the trend across the country, a decline in biodiversity continues to be witnessed as these natural habitats are further encroached upon by agriculture, development, and invasive species. In the fields of Restoration Ecology and Conservation Biology, conserving such diversity has long been focused at the habitat, population, and species levels. Recently, the importance of protecting diversity at a genetic level has gained recognition as the implications of the loss of biodiversity within native plant populations and communities are understood.*

*The use of local, genetically native "ecotyped" plant material in landscaping and restoration activities is now being encouraged in order to help preserve the genetic heritage of native plant species and thereby, diversity on a molecular level. Environmental organizations, the general public, and governmental agencies are responding positively to this concept, by increasing advocating for the use of such plant material, thereby instigating a demand for such plant materials. Unfortunately the application of native plants in restorations and landscaping activities has been low due to the lack of native plant source material needed to create a commercially available product.*

*The Long Island Native Grass Initiative (LINGI), is a cooperative effort of over 30 non-profit organizations, governmental agencies, and nursery professionals whose goal is to "bridge this gap" between supply and demand, by providing initial sources of native plant materials to further commercial native plant propagation activities. Since 2005, LINGI's volunteers have conducted field collections, seed cleaning, and applied standard plant propagation techniques towards the creation of founder seed for Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), and Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*). LINGI's efforts are intentionally focused on harvesting in a genetically and ecologically sensitive manner, in order to capture as much .....*

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### White continued....

Kristin had been working for a couple that owned a Hallmark store and just had taken some time off, when she saw an ad for the Seneca County SWCD. This strange little county governmental office hired her as a Bookkeeper/ Secretary and she has been enjoying her job ever since that fateful day. Kristin



Matthew

gets a kick out of the questions that come into the office and dealing with the public. She also likes to rattle cages occasionally, as she did with Jim Malyj. One Friday, Kristin took one of those vinyl window stick-on's that looks like a rock or a baseball struck a window and she placed it on the back window of Jim's truck. Saturday morning, as Jim was enjoying his coffee or tea or Ovaltine (source info varies, he looked out from his house and saw the "shattered" window. Dashing out in his slippers and boxers, he frantically looked at the damage. Much to his delight, it was only a trick, Kristin has assured me that there are no pictures of the occurrence. We can only hope that is true (*no offense Jim!*).

Kristin and Wayne have four children: Justin, Alissa, Christopher and Matthew. The kids are "The Best", according to Kristin. The White's have two cats (Lady and Buddy). I did mention that these are common dog names, but she did assure me that they are cats. Kristin enjoys driving her husband crazy, going to movies (top three: Christmas Vacation, Elf and ...yup you guessed it, Halloween). She enjoys road trips as long as she is driving, so if she and Vicki Hendrix ever ask me to go with them to a meeting, I think I am busy. Kristin also enjoys cooking, holiday baking and Halloween and Christmas. Kristin, thank you for giving us your time for the CDEA News Holiday edition and stay away from my truck.

## Extra Information

- Legislative Day 2010 will be held on January 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> in Albany. The evening of January 25<sup>th</sup> will feature a legislative update and "Inside Albany" update. Meetings w/ legislators will take place on the 26<sup>th</sup>. The briefing will be held at the Best Western Airport Inn on Wolf Road along with a block of rooms. Contact Judy Littrell at NYACD for more information.
- The 2010 WQS registration packet will be coming out around the new year. Registration deadline is February 12<sup>th</sup>.
- Don't forget to order your fertilizer tablets. If you need an order form, contact John Persch at Fulton County SWCD.
- The Empire Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society will be holding their 2009 annual meeting on January 21, 2010 at the Holiday Inn in Waterloo. Contact Henry Kelsey at Wayne County SWCD if you have any questions.
- I am stepping down from developing the monthly CDEA News in April of 2010. If you are interested in taking this on, please let someone from the Executive Board know of your interest. If you want nitty, gritty details on the newsletter, please feel free to contact me.

### Suffolk continued....

.....genetic variability within these populations as possible, while minimizing impact to ecological processes (seed bank, forage, predation, nesting, etc.).



The first full harvest of *S. nutans*, *S. scoparium*, *A. gerardii*, and *P. virgatum* founder plots was achieved in fall of 2008, with the resulting seed provided to Ernst Conservation Seed (ECS) for commercial increase and sale. Come 2011, the first LINGI Ecotyped - Source Identified Certified seed for each of these species will be commercially available, through ECS, marking a great milestone for LINGI.

With increasing nursery interest, high public demand, and constant requests for additional plant materials, LINGI's momentum is rapidly expanding. Through annual plant sales, diversification of targeted plant materials, contract growing, and grant writing, LINGI will continue to successfully serve as the mechanism to identify and collect plant materials from the wildlands of Long Island for commercial plant production. As such, the preservation of the genetic heritage of Long Island's native plant populations and thereby, biodiversity at a molecular level, will continue to go to seed!"



Polly's office

Some individuals that Polly wanted to recognize were Chris Kelly, who is a property owner that donated land for this project, Paul D'Andrea, Drew Horwith and Derrick Rogers of The Nature Conservancy, Jeff Denonocour, Diana Sanford (Suffolk County Parks Dept.), Liz Condon, Nicole Spinelli (Suffolk Co. SWCD), Liz Roldan and Allan Connell (USDA-NRCS), USDA-NRCS Big Flats Plant Material Center, the Cape May Plant materials Center in NJ (seed cleaning is conducted there), Suffolk Co. Cooperative Extension (donated greenhouse for the sale) and Betsy Gullotta who is a professor at Nassau County Community College and is the Ex. Director for the Friends of Hempstead Plains. Without the cooperation and coordination of these groups, this program would not be where it is today. For information about their native seed sale, check out [http://www.nycgovparks.org/sub\\_about/parks\\_divisions/gnpc/lingi.html](http://www.nycgovparks.org/sub_about/parks_divisions/gnpc/lingi.html). If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Polly at Suffolk County and you can be amazed and the Latin phrases that are coming out of her mouth. She may be insulting me when she says them, but it sounds scientific to me!