

## COMMITTEES

- Beaver Dam Creek Tributary Restoration Task Force
- Canaan Lake Watershed Advisory Committee
- Cornell University's Long Island Horticultural Research & Extension Center - Advisory Council
- Environmental Education Foundation of Soil & Water Districts
- Great Cove Watershed Advisory Committee
- Forge River Task Force
- Long Island Agricultural Stewardship Working Group
- Long Island Ag. Forum Planning Committee
- Long Island Green Infrastructure Committee
- Long Island Invasive Species Management Area
- Long Island Native Plant Initiative
- Long Island Regional Envirothon
- Lower Hudson-Long Island Resource, Conservation & Development Council Inc.
- New York Association Conservation Districts
- NYS Conservation District Employees Association
- New York State Envirothon
- Peconic Estuary Technical Advisory Committee
- Suffolk County Department of Health Services Peconic River Project
- Suffolk County Land & Water Invasive Species Advisory Board
- Suffolk County GIS Users Group
- Suffolk County Vector Control Long Range Planning Committee
- Swan River Advisory Committee
- South Shore Estuary Reserve
- Suffolk County Farmland Preservation Committee
- Suffolk County Water Quality Coordinating Committee

## DISTRICT ASSISTS USDA-NRCS IN SECURING OVER \$133,000 FOR CONSERVATION PRACTICES

by Sharon Frost

The Suffolk County Soil & Water Conservation District staff assisted the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service in securing \$133,243 for the agricultural industry for the installation of conservation practices. Practices include such items as the replacement of diesel (irrigation) engines, pesticide and nutrient management, erosion control practices, micro-irrigation and more.

"The support the District's shows for the farming industry is more than just environmentally friendly they are also assisting in boosting the economy here in Suffolk County," said Hon. Ed Romaine, Suffolk County Legislator District #1.

"This is a testament to the District's dedication to the farming industry in Suffolk County and further proof that the agricultural community are leaders in environmental stewardship", said Joe Gergela, Executive Director of the Long Island Farm Bureau.

Any farmer interested in hearing more about the our funding programs should call the District office.

## DISTRICT SECURES \$25,000 for HURRIACANE DAMAGE ON FARM

By Sharon Frost

Thanks to the quick action from Govern Cuomo, who made funding available to the agricultural community, the District was able to secure and assist a farmer whose berm broke through during Hurricane Irene.

"The District acted quickly getting the message out to all farmers that there was funding available for damage. As a result, a farmer in Orient was able to repair approximately 300' of damaged berm that protect his farm from saltwater intrusion", said Joe Gergela, Executive Director of the Long Island Farm Bureau.

## LOOKING BACK

by Paul TeNyenhuis

Wow! How quickly time passes. Well, we have been busier than ever! In August, we were finally able to purchase insurance for our BigFoot Baler BF400 that we purchased in February. It was delivered during a snowstorm! The Baler is a hay-wagon chassis and is not capable of towing on the main roads so we had to purchase a heavy-duty trailer for it. It was far too late in the season to use it, so it was housed in our storage facility to wait until next year. We look forward to working with it.

Once again, the District funds were cut when the 2011 Budget was passed in 2010. Similar cuts occurred this year as well. This left us with hardly any funds left to operate, while it left positions and salaries intact. Preparing the Budget for 2012 was just as bad. We were told to cut our expenses even further! If that was not bad enough, the County Executive abolished one of our filled positions for a Soil District Technician. However, the County Legislature actually reinstated the position but for only six months of 2012. I just do not know how we are going to continue to keep up our pace without the excellent work of our Technician. Only time will tell.

Our Rain Garden installation was a resounding success! Funds from Performance Measure Part B were utilized along with some from Part C as well. Total cost came to around \$8500, so far. In the Spring, we plan on adding some more Plant Materials as well as a kiosk we purchased, a bluebird house, a purple-martin house and a Solar Sipper. It will be quite an attraction with its Garden Bench and stepping stone walkway through the labeled native plants.

Nassau and Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation Districts will be striving to have a joint conference on Green Infrastructure during 2012. We are calling it the Long Island Green Infrastructure Conference and Expo. Municipalities, elected officials, engineering staff, Architects and Consultants are the target audience to get them into thinking about installing green infrastructure practices and changing their mindset to a more environmentally friendly way of doing things. We are aiming at having this as an Annual Event and alternating the location back and forth between Nassau and Suffolk.



# Suffolk County Soil & Water Conservation District

## 2011 YEAR IN REVIEW

### Board of Directors

George Proios  
Chairperson

Joe Gergela  
Director  
L.I. Farm Bureau

Phil Schmitt  
Director  
Farmer

Edward Romaine  
Director  
S.C. Legislator - District #1



*The District welcomes new Board Member, Suffolk County Legislator Ed Romaine.*

### 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  
Guillermo Melendez  
District Conservationist

Liz Camps  
Soil Conservationist

Allan Connell  
Consultant

### RAIN GARDEN

By Nicole Spinelli

The Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District, with the support of Legislator Edward Romaine and the Suffolk County Department of Public Works, has created a demonstration rain garden in the rear parking lot of the Cornell Cooperative Extension Building in Riverhead, New York. This is a highly visible project which serves a dual purpose of public education and innovative stormwater control. It was funded by the Environmental Protection Fund through the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee. The following agencies provided assistance in planting the garden and have committed to maintaining it: the Suffolk County Soil & Water Conservation District, the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Farm Service Agency.

The garden captures and filters the first two to three inches of rain that falls upon the parking lot before it reaches the storm drain. Stormwater that travels into the rain garden is temporarily ponded - but it doesn't stay for long; the pollutants are treated by the soil and through plant uptake as it seeps down to recharge the aquifer. Rain gardens are a great way to protect the groundwater and improve water quality!

All of the plants were purchased locally and were chosen because they attract butterflies and other pollinators or provide food for birds. Additional selection criteria include nativeness to Long Island, salt tolerance, bloom time, height, flower color, and deciduousness. There is an informational kiosk to greet visitors and explain the garden's purpose as well as signs to label each individual plant species. This rain garden was planted with native species because they are adapted to our local climate and rainfall; once established they seldom need watering or fertilizing.



*From left to right: Linda Haack, USDA FSA; Nicole Spinelli, Suffolk Co. SWCD; Liz Condon, Suffolk Co. SWCD; Sharon Frost, Suffolk Co. SWCD; Paul TeNyenhuis, Suffolk Co. SWCD; Guillermo Melendez, USDA NRCS; Elizabeth Takajian, Suffolk Co. CCE; Liz Camps, USDA NRCS; and Allan Connell, USDA NRCS.*



**Welcome Guillermo Melendez!**

Guillermo 'Henry' Melendez came to us in April replacing the esteemed Allan Connell. Henry spent the last 4 years at USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service Center in Bronson, Florida and prior to that in the Virgin Islands for 6 years as both Soil Conservationist and District Conservationist.

After graduating high school in Puerto Rico he joined the US Navy and served for 5 years at various locations. He attended University of Puerto Rico Mayaguez Campus, where he graduated with an M.S. in Agriculture.

"I look forward to working with the agriculture community here in Suffolk County", said Henry.



**Allan's Back!!**

After a very short (11 months) retirement from the USDA NRCS, Allan Connell returned to the office part-time as a consultant. "We are very fortunate to have Allan return. His knowledge of the NRCS programs, the area, and farmers has been immeasurable," said Guillermo Melendez, USDA NRCS District Conservationist.



**Lovely Latavia**

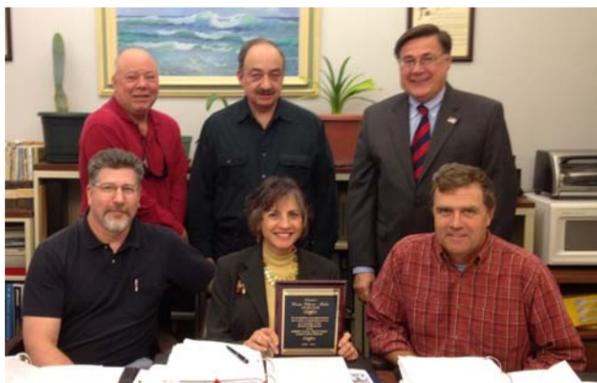
Latavia Ross, our Earth Team volunteer, was an asset to our office. She faithfully arrived twice a week and assisted in any project we pushed her way. We surely miss her!!

**BOARDS THANKS LEGISLATOR VIVIAN VILORIA-FISHER**

After six years of serving on the District's Board of Directors Legislator Vivian Viloria-Fisher completed her term.

She was instrumental in supporting the District's efforts on many projects but will be most remembered for her advocacy for the District's Long Island Native Plant Initiative. In addition, she assisted in our efforts to get legislation passed that put many invasive species on a "No Grow" list in Suffolk County.

Her energy and support will surely be missed.



Top Left to right: Joe Gergela, LI Farm Bureau, George Proios, Chairman Suffolk Co. SWCD, Hon. Ed Romaine, Suffolk Co. Legislator. Bottom left to right: Paul TeNyenhuis, Suffolk Co. SWCD District Manager, Hon. Vivian Viloria-Fisher, Suffolk Co. Legislator, and Phil Schmit, District Director.

**LONG ISLAND NATIVE PLANT INITIATIVE**

by Polly Weigand

The Long Island Native Plant Initiative remained dedicated to preserving biodiversity on Long Island and achieved numerous milestones in 2011.

One of the most notable changes of 2011 was the change of our name from the Long Island Native Grass Initiative (LINGI) to the Long Island Native Plant Initiative (LINPI). In the seven years since our inception, LINPI's focus has expanded from Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*) and Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), the dominant grass species of Long Island's grasslands to over 35 species of trees, shrubs, grasses and herbaceous plants. In this effort the demand for native plants has been demonstrated through increasing requests for plant materials both by the public as well as by the nursery industry. Respectively, it was recognized that in order to continue to advance our mission and effectively produce plant materials and support propagation of native plants, formalization into a non profit was necessary.

LINPI received incorporation and filed for our non profit status with the IRS. We also received a donation from BP Solar to support our efforts.

Maintaining this genetic base is critical to the biodiversity of local terrestrial and aquatic species, populations and habitats. Our efforts include surveying and cataloging native plant ecotypes; collecting and archiving seeds; propagating native plants and creating a commercial source of seed for distribution to commercial growers and the general public. In addition, we have an outreach component that informs and educates various constituencies about the importance of utilizing native plants in a variety of situations including restoration projects and landscaping.

In the Spring, LINPI's efforts and activities were highlighted in the coordination of the first Long Island Native Plant Symposium held on March 11, 2011 at the Eastern Campus of Suffolk County Community College. Nationally and regionally recognized experts spoke at the event and over 250 persons attended this sold out event which is testament to the importance that residents, businesses, and agencies of Long Island (and beyond) attach to the use of native plants. Indeed, the innovative nature of LINPI serves as a model for other organizations. We have been increasingly contacted to assist in establishing similar projects in other states and have presented our program at various scientific conferences locally and nationally.



**THE LONG ISLAND ENVIROTHON**

by Sharon Frost

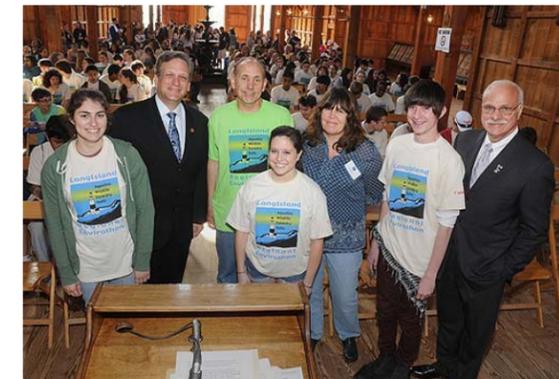
The 2011 Long Island Envirothon was another successful event. We had 45 teams, of 5-students each, compete at the Old Bethpage Village Restoration in Nassau County. We were fortunate that Nassau County Executive Edward P. Mangano addressed the students at the Welcoming Ceremony this year. In his inspirational speech he told the students how he admired them for their dedication to Long Island's environment.

Chaminade and Sagem North High School took top honors for Nassau and Suffolk Counties respectively. They went on to compete at the New York State Envirothon, which was held at the Hobart Williams and Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York in May. Chaminade High School placed third overall and first in aquatics.

This local component of the state and national competitions is held annually in late spring and is based on five subject areas; aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and the current issue. Each station is managed by an expert in the field who develops and administers the exams. The five member teams rotate between the stations, working together to complete the exams. Each member of the winning teams, from Nassau and Suffolk, receives a \$500 scholarship, Canon PowerShot cameras and a Canon printer for their schools. In addition, each team receives paid registration and transportation to the New York State Envirothon competition.



Sachem North High School - From left to right Peter Amato, Kimberly Kanakos, Sharon Luebbs, Jessica McGlinchey, and Ruchi Shah.



Pictured, from left to right, are student Kimberly Lotito, County Executive Edward Mangano, Brian Zimmerman, Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation District, student Kayla Mladinich, Sharon Frost, Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District, student Colin Radcliffe, and Nassau County Legislator Joseph Belesi.

"Protecting, preserving, and restoring our natural resources is a commitment that all of us share. All students, teachers, and volunteers should be proud that we have this common goal", said Sharon Frost L.I. Envirothon Coordinator.

The 2012 Long Island Envirothon will be held on Wednesday, April 25th at the Usdan Center for Creative and Performing Arts in Wheatley Heights.

**DISTRICT GETS OVER \$111,000 FOR FUEL TANK REPLACEMENT**

by Sharon Frost

The District was awarded over \$111,000 for our fuel tank replacement program from the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee. The Nonpoint Source Pollution grant opportunity is funded through the New York State Environmental Protection Fund. This fiercely competitive statewide grant will assist in funding the replacement of 26 single-walled fuel tanks on 16 farms. The Suffolk County Department of Health Services (DHS) regulations that govern toxic and hazardous material storage are the strictest nationwide.



A New dispensing tank on a farm in East Hampton, New York.

In addition to securing the funding, the District, Suffolk County Department of Health Services (DHS), Cornell Cooperative Extension, and LI Farm Bureau agreed to develop a five year Agricultural Compliance Educational Program. During this 5-year period the DHS will assist farmers with compliance issue without subjecting them to the otherwise enormous fines.

**District services provided...**

**Agriculture**

- Engineering Practices
- Irrigation Design
- AEM
- 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 Shoreline Erosion Recommendations
- Conservation Information
- Educational Materials
- Invasive Species
- 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