



# Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District's Conservation Corner

Highlighting the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District's projects, programs, and events.

January 2012

## Funding Opportunities Through NRCS Conservation Initiatives

### District Staff

Elizabeth Mangle  
*District Manager*

Janice Reynolds  
*Clerk/Treasurer*

Lenny Croote  
*Conservation Technician*

Caitlin Stewart  
*Conservation Educator*

Tom Bielli  
*NRCS District Conservationist*



*Working to manage and promote the wise use of natural resources in Hamilton County since 1965*

The Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program offers technical and financial assistance for three initiatives, including On-Farm Energy, Organic, and Seasonal High Tunnel. Applications for financial assistance are accepted throughout the year by NRCS. The ranking periods for the Organic, On-Farm Energy and Seasonal High Tunnel initiatives end February 3, March 30 and June 1, 2012. At the end of a ranking period, NRCS ranks all submitted proposals for funding consideration, and will notify all applicants of the results of the rankings and begin developing contracts with selected applicants.

**On-Farm Energy:** NRCS and producers develop Agricultural Energy Management Plans (AgEMP) or farm energy audits that assess energy consumption on an operation. NRCS then uses audit data to develop energy conservation

recommendations. Each AgEMP has a landscape component that assesses equipment and farming processes and a farm headquarters component that assesses power usage and efficiencies in livestock buildings, grain

*“Technical and financial assistance is available for On-Farm Energy, Organic, and Seasonal High Tunnel, and Forestry Initiatives.”*

handling operations, and similar facilities to support the farm operation.

**Organic:** NRCS helps certified organic growers and producers working to achieve organic certification install conservation practices for organic production. New for fiscal year 2012, applicants will be evaluated continuously during the ranking periods. Applications meeting or exceeding a threshold score may be approved for an EQIP contract before the end of

the ranking period. Applications rating below the threshold score will be deferred to the next period. A new threshold score will be established at the beginning of each ranking period. This new scoring process allows organic producers to implement conservation practices in a timelier manner.

### **Seasonal High Tunnel Pilot:**

NRCS helps producers plan and implement high tunnels, steel-framed, polyethylene-covered structures that extend growing seasons in an environmentally safe manner. High tunnel benefits include better plant and soil quality, fewer nutrients and pesticides in the environment, and better air quality due to fewer vehicles being needed to transport crops. More than



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102 County View Dr.  
PO Box 166  
Lake Pleasant, NY 12108  
Phone: (518) 548-3991  
Fax: (518) 548-5602  
E: [hcswd@frontiernet.net](mailto:hcswd@frontiernet.net)  
W: [hamiltoncountyswd.com](http://hamiltoncountyswd.com)

facebook

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## Funding (from page 1)

4,000 high tunnels have been planned and implemented nationwide through this initiative over the past two years.

Applications are also being

accepted for **Forestry Conservation Activity Plans**.

Non-industrial, private, forest landowners (no timber companies or government bodies) may apply for cost share assistance to develop a

forest management plan.

For more information, contact our NRCS District Conservationist Tom Bielli at 518-853-4015 or [thomas.bielli@ny.usda.gov](mailto:thomas.bielli@ny.usda.gov)

## Adirondack Tree and Shrub Sale

The District is proud to offer the 2012 Native Tree and Shrub Sale! All plants available in this year's sale are well suited for our Adirondack climate and are non-invasive. Bare-root seedlings and ground coverings may be used for erosion control, wildlife habitat, beautification, Christmas trees, and wood production. Shrubs and trees provide food and cover for song and game birds, rabbits, deer and other wildlife. Plantings act as windbreaks and screens that protect your home from harsh weather and provide privacy.



### NEW This Year

#### Apple Trees

Bare root apple trees are available for the first time this year. One bundle contains 1 Cortland and 1 McIntosh apple tree, 5-6 feet tall, for only \$25.

McIntosh apples large with juicy flesh and tender skin. Cortland apples are wonderful for cooking and cider.

#### Edible Tree Pac

Trees in this pack bare fruit, and include Serviceberry, Cranberry, Nannyberry, Spicebush, and Filbert American.

#### Wildlife Tree Pac

Trees in this pack are specially suited to attract wildlife, and include American

Mountain Ash, Ninebark,

Arrowwood,

Elderberry, and Witch Hazel.

#### Tulip Tree

Beautiful tulip-shaped leaves turn a glorious golden yellow in fall. Greenish-yellow flowers with orange centers bloom from April to June.

#### Fredonia Grape

This moderately hardy vine produces large grapes that are excellent for juice, eating fresh, and wine.

#### Ordering Information

The District is going **green!** We will no longer mail tree and shrub order forms. Visit our website for [order forms](#) and [photo descriptions](#), or contact the District to receive an order form via email or special request mail. Ordering Deadline is March 28, 2012.

#### Pickup Information

Friday April 27, 2012 at the Brown Shed Building on South Shore Road across from the Lake Pleasant Fire Hall 9AM - 3PM. Saturday April 28, 2012 at the Blue Mountain Fire Station 9 AM - 12 PM and at the Brown Shed Building 9AM - 1PM. Planting information will be provided when you pick up your order.

In December, we recycled 840 lbs of paper! Thank you to our Hamilton County Recyclers!



The Water Quality Coordinating Committee Annual Report is now available on our website. New members are always welcome