



The Conservation Corner

October 2008



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The Purple Loosestrife Predicament

Purple Loosestrife is a terrestrial invasive plant that establishes dense colonies in ditches, river banks, marshes, and other wetland areas. Native to Eurasia, this plant was introduced to the United States in the 1800s for bee forage and as an ornamental.



This stunning plant is deadly to the Adirondack ecosystem. One mature plant is capable of producing 2.5 million seeds annually. High seed viability and production allow this plant to establish homogeneous stands and out-compete native wetland vegetation including grasses, sedges, and flower-

ing plants. Herbivores lose a food source as native forage is replaced with Purple Loosestrife. Waterfowl, mammal, amphibian, fish, and reptile habitat becomes degraded.

Purple Loosestrife has become well established in Hamilton County. You may see this deadly invader growing along the roadside ditches of Route 8 or Route 30, dotted along the Sacandaga River, or perhaps it is established on your property. People are attracted to the beautiful magenta flowers and often purchase Loosestrife from nurseries to plant in their gardens.

This summer, volunteers and HCSWCD staff took on the Purple Loosestrife Predicament by storm. Georgine Rausch, Barbara Reffitt, and Steve Stefelano and his family manually

controlled Purple Loosestrife by cutting and bagging flowers from June-August before the plant went to seed. HCSWCD staff managed stands along the Sacandaga River as well as along roads in Lake Pleasant and Speculator. More than 121 hours were spent on management efforts this season thanks to our volunteers. Interested in becoming a volunteer for next year's management season? Contact the HCSWCD for more information.



Conservation Field Day

Hamilton County 5th and 6th grade students clued in to conservation at the 2008 Lynn Galusha Memorial Conservation Field Day (CFD) event on September 25. Eighty eight students circulated through 6 stations on the HCSWCD's Nature Trail, interactively learning about Trapping in New York (Harold Barry), Aliens are Invading the Adirondacks: Plants out of Place (Tyler Smith, APIPP), What Bear Goes Where? (Caitlin Stewart, HCSWCD), Protecting the Waters of the Adirondacks & Beyond (Bob Streeter and Vince Spadaro, DEC), Comparing Electrical Draw: Incandescent vs. CFL Bulbs (Nancy Welch, CCE), and Bring Wastewater Treatment into the Classroom (Joe Brillling, DEC). The final presentation, Reptiles of New York, was given by Dean Davis from the Living World Ecology Center. Fifth graders students had the opportunity to write an essay



addressing the topic “What do you view differently now because of one of the presentations at CFD?” and sixth grade students could make a poster about what they learned at one of the stations. Thank you to Cornell Cooperative Extension for their generous donation of the 4-H Summer Camp session that will be awarded to the first place essay and poster contest winners. Thank you to presenters and to all the volunteers who made this event a tremendous success.



Go Green on Halloween

1. Costumes—check out your local thrift store, your parents' closets, or borrow a costume from a friend.
2. Pumpkins—buy from local farmers, go organic, or saunter through a pumpkin patch and pick your own. Roast seeds and compost.
3. Candy—buy in bulk, purchase organic, or make your own. Instead of junk food, hand out pencils, erasers, or stickers to trick-or-treaters.
4. Bagging your treats—use pillow cases or canvas shopping bags instead of plastic or paper bags.
5. When trick-or-treating, walk or bike instead of driving.
6. Decorate with leaves, twigs, hay bails, and mums.

Natural Channel Design on Elbow Creek

A severe storm event in 1996 altered Elbow Creek in Wells, NY by depositing sediment into the channel at the lower end of the Sacandaga Watershed. Since then, bank erosion and sediment transport has adversely impacted local landowners, tourism, and the watershed's ecosystem.

Natural Channel Design utilizes the natural fluvial geomorphology of a stream to promote stabilization and to reconstruct aquatic and flood plain habitat. J-hooks and cross veins are rock structures that, when placed in a stream and along the bank, diffuse and redirect the energy of the stream, reducing bank erosion. This reestablishes the flow of the stream back to a more stable, non-erosive state. Pools behind these structures create superb habitat for aquatic life. Cross veins, J-hooks, and pools were installed along an 800-foot stretch of Elbow Creek. This project was a success due to the joint efforts of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, HCSWCD, Town of Wells Highway Department, and the Hamilton County Highway Department.

