

The Conservation Corner



Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District
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Hamilton County Online Mapping System: www.hamcomaps.net

A publication developed to highlight conservation efforts, programs and events throughout Hamilton County
Authored by Conservation Educator
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What's New With Stormwater

Stormwater can harm our Hamilton County lakes and rivers, but you can help! When rain or snow melt cannot percolate into the ground due to impermeable



surfaces or saturation, it flows over lawns, construction sites, or paved surfaces where it picks up pollutants and carries them to surface waters. Pollutants that stormwater runoff may transport include sediment; fertilizers; herbicides; pesticides; road salt; automobile fluids; animal waste; bacteria; or litter.

Benefits of clean stormwater include a lower cost to treat drinking water; a re-

duction in the number and severity of floods and property damage; increased property values; recreational swimming, boating, and fishing opportunities; healthy ecosystems; cleaner beaches; and increased tourism.

You can help prevent stormwater runoff from polluting our water bodies by repairing car oil leaks; cleaning up pet waste; picking up trash; safely storing and disposing of chemicals, refraining from lawn and garden chemical application; and washing your car on the lawn with organic soap.

Because construction sites sometimes contribute to stormwater pollution via eroding soil and machine fluids, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) will implement stricter regulations. The

new NYSDEC Stormwater Permit Requirement, beginning May 1, 2010, mandates that all construction site contractors and subcontractors must have at least one trained individual from their company on site daily for projects that disturb one or more acres who is responsible for implementation of erosion controls and stormwater management. These individuals must have completed a four-hour training course that will be offered at the Indian Lake Town Hall on February 23, 2010 from 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM (snow date February 25). The registration fee is \$75 and covers training, materials, and refreshments. For training session registration forms or for more information, visit the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District's website at www.hamiltoncountyswcd.com or call 518-548-3991.

NOW required for DEC Stormwater Permits
Contractors Erosion & Sediment Control Training
February 23, 2010 (snow date 2/25)
8:30-12:30
Indian Lake Town Hall



Tree and Shrub
Sale going on
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Invader of the Month Giant Hogweed

Native to the Caucasus Mountains of Eurasia, Giant Hogweed arrived in the United States as an ornamental in the early 1900s. This biennial herb



J. Shepherd - NYSDOT

may reach 14 feet in height. Hairy, hollow stems are marbled with red-purple blotches. In June, clusters of small white flowers bloom in an umbel. Lobed leaves are deeply incised. Hogweed invades moist soils, waste areas, ditches, forest edges, and stream banks. Sap is known to cause skin rashes, blisters, and scars. Do not cut or mow this invader as the root system will send up new growth. Reproduction also occurs by



fragmentation, and stems washed down a stream may take root in new locations. Call the Giant Hogweed Hotline for management recommendations at 1-845-256-3111.

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Coping with the Cold

How do our Adirondack wildlife survive the frigid winter months? Adaptations help them cope with the cold.

- 1) **Hibernation.** When an animal hibernates, its body temperature and heart rate drop. The groundhog hibernates for 5 months while skunks, chipmunks, opossums, and raccoons temporarily hibernate for a few days in logs or under the ground to escape frigid temperatures.
- 2) **Migration.** Many birds fly south for the winter where the climate is warm and food is plentiful.
- 3) **Holes and burrows.** Reptiles and amphibians hunker down in burrows or holes. Some species of snake will ball together with friends and family for extra warmth.
- 4) **Body fat.** Mammals increase their body fat during the fall in order to be able to draw on these reserves throughout the winter. Songbirds change their diets during the winter and consume berries and seeds to increase fat for warmth and energy.
- 5) **Overwintering.** Adult insects cope with the cold by huddling in large colonies for warmth. Some

insects spend the winter months in the larva stage.

- 6) **Fur and Feather.** Insulation helps keep active animals warm during cold months. Warm air becomes trapped close to their bodies. Squirrels shield their heads and backs from the wind with their tail. Birds fluff their feathers for extra warmth.



How can you help wildlife during Winter?

With the exception of songbirds, wildlife experts do not recommend putting food outside. Disease may be passed between and among species that gather around food offerings, food may have little or no nutritional value, and wildlife will return to your property during the spring and summer to munch in your garden. If you want to help animals during the harsh winter months, offer a heated bird bath to your feathered friends; plant nut and berry trees and shrubs that offer natural nutrition; plant evergreens that provide shelter from the elements; and offer brush piles and patches of briers to act as ground cover.



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