Tree & Shrub Sale

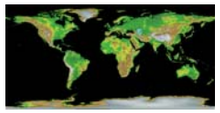
Every spring, the HCSWCD offers a tree and shrub sale to raise funds for our environmental programs and projects. A variety of native bare-root seedlings and ground cover is available for erosion control, wildlife habitat improvement, beautification, windbreaks, and wood product production. These native plants provide food and habitat for Adirondack wildlife.

Erosion Control

Soil erosion results in decreased soil quality and agricultural yields, pollution, mudslides, habitat destruction, increased flooding, and sedimentation in water bodies. Assistance is offered in the planning, design, construction, and management of erosion control structures and practices including diversions, critical area planting, stream bank and shoreline protection.

Soils Information

Soil information, including geologic characteristics, potential for flooding, suitability for septic tank absorption fields, and construction limitations, among other information, is offered. Before making any land use decisions, we encourage you to contact our office. Pick up a free copy of the Hamilton County Soil Survey, or access it on our website. It is important to know the environmental and economic limitations of soils early in the planning process so that solutions may be incorporated into the project rather than costly repairs afterwards.



GIS Mapping

GIS is a valuable asset to Hamilton County, and provides county-based, watershed, natural, and community resources, infrastructure, and recreational maps. Create and view maps tailored to your specific interests at the Hamilton County Geographic Information System Online Mapping Service, available free to the public, at www.hamcomaps.net/ . Search for tax parcels, create topographic or aerial maps, or identify roads, state hiking trails, wetlands, rivers, or soil types. Visit the GIS Resource Center located at the HCSWCD office for one-on-one assistance. Additional applications may be developed, and larger maps may be printed.

Hydroseeding

In Spring 2006, the HCSWCD implemented a county-wide erosion control program that uses a Hydroseeder. Wood or paper mulch, fertilizer, grass seed, lime, tackifying agents, and water are mixed in the machine and sprayed onto soil to seed or reseed lawns or disturbed areas, and to increase bank stabilization. Benefits of hydroseeding include fast germination, the ability to cover large areas in a short amount of time, aiding in erosion control on hillsides and sloping lawns, and a uniform application. Call to schedule a site visit and price estimate.

Invasive Species

A non-native invasive species is one that is introduced outside of its historical range, reproduces rapidly, displaces native species and decreases biodiversity. During the summer, the HCSWCD monitors and manages invasive plant stands. Terrestrial target plants include Japanese Knotweed and Purple Loosestrife, and lakes are surveyed for aquatic invasives. The spiny waterflea has been documented in the Great Sacandaga Lake, and the Salix Woodwasp has been found in Arietta. If you are interested in becoming involved in management efforts or would like to offer a presentation for your organization or school, contact our office. Report sightings of invasive species to www.adkinvasives.com.

Technical Assistance

- Water Quality Monitoring & Testing
- Invasive Plant Monitoring & Control
- Private Well Testing
- Dry Hydrant Installation
- Erosion Control
- Soils Information
- Conservation Education
- GIS Mapping
- Hydroseeding
- Alternative Septic System Assistance
- Development of Mining Plan Permits
- DEC/APA Permit Assistance
- Shoreline management

Also Available

Conservation seed and straw mulch

Welcome to the Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District

Providing Today
Protecting Tomorrow

PO Box 166, Route 8
Lake Pleasant NY 12108
Email: hcswcd@frontiernet.net
Phone: 518-548-3991
Fax: 518-548-5602
http://www.hamiltoncountyswcd.com/

Our History

The Dust Bowl of the 1930s was the result of drought, poor land management, and wind erosion that blew topsoil for thousands of miles. In the wake of this devastating natural disaster, crop failure and livestock loss plagued farmers. In response to these tragedies, in 1937, President Theodore Roosevelt passed legislation that supported the establishment of soil and water conservation districts by local governments with the goals of preventing flooding and soil erosion. The Soil and Water Conservation District's Law was adopted by the State of New York in 1940. The purpose of SWCDs is not only to conserve water and soil resources, but to control erosion, conserve natural resources, reduce flooding, protect public lands, improve water quality, decrease pollution, preserve wildlife, and promote sustainable agriculture through proper drainage and irrigation techniques. The Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District (HCSWCD) was established on February 4, 1965. Hamilton County is the third largest in New York State, and the least populated. 63% of our land is state owned Forest Preserve and remains unaltered by human development. 89% of county land is forested, 5% is water and 6% is open area and hamlets. Our staff conserves and preserves the environmental integrity of the Central Adirondacks.

Presentations

Presentations and outdoor labs are offered to teachers, students, citizens, and organizations on a variety of topics, including:

- Invasive species including display board
- Watersheds, including an EnviroScape Watershed Model
- Stream biomonitoring using benthic macroinvertebrates
- Tree identification
- Water monitoring

Presentations are in PowerPoint format with supplementary hand-outs. Outdoor laboratory experience and field work demonstrations are available.

Volunteer Monitoring

The HCSWCD's volunteer water monitoring program is a partnership offered to several county Lake Associations where interested citizens monitor throughout the summer. The HCSWCD received a grant for water monitoring equipment, and kits are distributed to volunteer monitors. Water quality parameters that are analyzed include transparency, pH, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, nitrates and phosphorus.

The HCSWCD is a partner of the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program, and assists in volunteer training sessions that teach participants how to identify and prevent the introduction and spread of invasive plants. Contact our office if you or your organization would you like to become involved.

Conservation Education

Every Fall, the Lynn Galusha Memorial Conservation Field Day is attended by 5th and 6th graders. Activities and presentations have ranged from fire safety, wildlife, stream biomonitoring, forestry, wilderness survival, to groundwater, soil erosion, and trapping.

Students' knowledge of natural resource management and environmental science is tested at the annual Envirothon held at the HCSWCD's Nature Trail. High school teams take tests in the following 5 areas: soils, aquatics, forestry, wildlife, and a current environmental issue. They utilize problem solving techniques and knowledge gained during training and study sessions to complete each exam. The winner of the local competition competes at the State Envirothon.

Private Well Testing

A well testing program is offered throughout the summer to ensure county residents that their drinking water is potable. Private wells are not regulated under the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act, and it is the responsibility of the private well owner to test the quality of their water source. Water samples are tested for *E. coli*, total coliforms, and chloride levels. Any counts of *E. coli* can result in serious illness and high levels of chlorides often corrode the well and filtration system.

Lake Monitoring

In 1993, the HCSWCD, contracted by the Hamilton County Board of Supervisors, has monitored 21 lakes on a monthly basis during the summer months to analyze the health of our water bodies. Water samples are analyzed for transparency, pH, alkalinity, nitrates, total phosphorus, dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll a, calcium, and aluminum. From this data, the general condition of each lake is interpreted, and changing complexities and anomalies can be seen as well. "The State of Hamilton County Lakes, a Statistical Analysis of Water Quality Trends 1993-2003" is available on CD, book, on the website.

Stream Monitoring

Since 1999, Hamilton County streams have been assessed for benthic macroinvertebrates. These organisms are biological indicators of water quality, and species composition is indicative of stream health. If trends show deteriorating water quality, improvement recommendations can be made for the riparian zone surrounding the stream.

Dry Hydrant Installation

A dry hydrant is a structure that allows fire departments to use surface waters to fill tanks instead of pressurized municipal systems. The SWCD designs and installs dry hydrants at the request of any fire district, town, or village. Water is accessible from a roadway instead of soft substrate where trucks could become stuck, the distance of water transportation is significantly reduced, and more water is distributed in a short amount of time.