



ULSTER CURRENT

A quarterly publication of Cornell Cooperative Extension Ulster County

The Year of the Flood in the Ashokan Watershed

Starting with the October 2010 flood, the Ashokan Watershed Program staff from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County and Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District have been working continuously on flood recovery, education and mitigation.

“The October and December flood events in the watershed were like a dress rehearsal for Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee”

said Elizabeth Higgins of CCE, Program Coordinator for the Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program. “After those floods we formed a Flood Mitigation Working Group in Shandaken, now known as SAFARI, and forged stronger working relationships with state, county and local agencies working in streams and in floodplain management”.

Emphasis was placed in 2011 by the program staff from CCE and UC SWCD on educating the public and municipalities about flood insurance and risk, climate change and its impact on precipitation, and observed changes in streams over the past 20 years due to higher precipitation events. The program developed some



High Street in Phoenicia

initiatives and projects that have borne fruit during and after Hurricane Irene. In August, the AWSMP program funded a consultant to develop a flood mitigation plan for the Town of Shandaken. This document will help guide the town to use the lessons learned in the last three floods to improve floodplain management, reduce hazards from flooding and to mitigate risk. If successful, this plan may serve as a model to other towns in the Watershed for similar documents.

One programmatic achievement was that stream recovery was included by the Town of Shandaken Supervisor in the Town’s command center as a daily topic needing coordination. As a result, Town Highway Department

staff, contractors and National Guard staff working to realign stream channels immediately after the flood took advice and direction from engineers and staff provided by the Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program.

Because of the program team’s outreach efforts, awareness for the services of the Watershed Office has grown exponentially.

The office fielded requests for technical assistance and information from over 90 private landowners in less than a month. Issues range from needing advice about bank stabilization to questions about mitigation and flood insurance. Program staff are also increasingly turned to as a resource for scientific and policy information regarding stream and floodplain management.

For more information visit www.ashokanstreams.org or call CCEUC’s Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program at 845-688-3047.



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Ulster County Farms Affected by Back-to-Back Tropical Storms



Ray Bradley of Bradley Farms in Rosendale picks up a rotted squash from his field that was completely submerged under water after Tropical Storm Irene.

To date we estimate that about 40 Ulster County farm operations lost the majority of the crops growing in their fields as a result of flooding and or being blown over by high winds. While it appears that vegetable farms along the Walkill, Rondout and Esopus waterways were hardest hit, there are reports of crop loss in nurseries, field crops (for animal fodder),

fruit orchards, and sugar maple production.

Crop revenue loss in Ulster County alone is estimated at 10 million dollars at this time. The Soil and

Water Conservation District has been assessing damage in agricultural disaster areas and identifying projects to restore farms and farmland. NYS has initiated a \$15 million Agricultural and Community Recovery Fund (ACRF), including an initial \$5 million conservation component that will provide funding for farmers in New York State to restore farmland damaged by

Hurricane Irene and prevent further damage in the future. Eligible emergency conservation practices include, but are not limited to: debris removal; restoring fences and conservation structures; crop removal; land shaping and grading; and installation of vegetative practice including cover crop. This money does not cover loss of crop revenue.

On Sept 14, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County organized a tour and press conference for public officials and the media to see the extent of damage to area farms. This provided an opportunity for officials to talk with farmers to learn how it has impacted their business and the assistance needed to get them back in business.

FREE Workshops Aim to Save Consumers Money

As homeowners and renters face increasing prices for fuel, food and other expenses, learning how to save money and energy is essential. Interested in cutting your energy bill by \$600 a year? Want to learn how to commit to saving another \$1000 a year in unnecessary expenditures? CCEUC will be presenting free workshops to help you do just that.



Energy, Save Dollars” workshop explores numerous ways to reduce your energy bills through no-cost/low-cost energy actions.

“Making Ends Meet” teaches consumers techniques and tools that have helped lots of people enhance their financial situation while the “Save

These EmPower New York workshops are sponsored by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) and

developed by CCE and NYSERDA.

Save Energy, Save Dollars
Monday, November 21
at 6:00 P.M.

Making Ends Meet
Thursday, October 20
and Monday, November 14
both are at 6:00 P.M.

All will take place at CCEUC located at 10 Westbrook Lane in Kingston.

To register contact: Arthur Zaczekiewicz, Community Educator, 845-340-3990, ext. 334 or aaz25@cornell.edu.

Ulster 4-H Youth Community Members Aid Flood Victims

In the aftermath of Tropical Storms Irene and Lee, it became clear that recovery efforts would take time as residents across Ulster County faced roads, homes and farms that were destroyed or severely damaged. Flood conditions in New Paltz and Rosendale along with a raging Esopus Creek along Route 28 left people without food and shelter. As a result, the emotional toll on county residents was heavy.



Volunteers loading donations that were gathered by Ulster County 4-H members

In response, Ulster County 4-H coordinated a food and clothing drive. The Ulster Equistars/Pony People and Feather Friends collected food items and clothing for men, women and children. Pet food was also collected. The items were distributed to several disaster relief stations and food pantries in Ulster County. All of it was well received.

“Community service projects such as this one teach youth how to be compassionate and empathetic while helping people in need,” said Arthur Zaczekiewicz, 4-H Educator. “These are essential skills for developing strong citizenship.”

Of special note was an anonymous donor who dropped off over \$300 worth of non-perishable food items

to the 4-H office. “It’s the least I can do,” the donor said.

For the youth participants involved, the community service project provided a learning experience centered on organizational and communication skills as well as interacting with the public.

FREE Nutrition Classes Offered to Ulster County Residents

CCEUC’s Nutrition Education Program is offering a FREE six part series entitled, “Eat Smart and Live Well” each Tuesday from 1:00pm to 2:00pm and Wednesdays, November 16, 23, 30 and December 7, 14, 21 at our Education Center located at 10 Westbrook Lane in Kingston.

This fun and educational program is designed to help individuals, seniors and families



who reside in Ulster County make healthier food choices while stretching their food dollars in this tough economy. Participants will gain valuable kitchen skills

through hands-on food demonstrations, nutritious low cost recipes and meal ideas and lots of fun conversation!

This program is open to all low income families and individuals who reside in Ulster County. Participants must income-qualify. For more information or to pre-register contact Kerry Valencia at 845-340-3990 ext. 340 or email klv38@cornell.edu.

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***Building Strong
and Vibrant
Ulster County
Communities***



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Please Recycle

Horticulture Hotline Changes Hours for Fall/Winter Season



The Horticulture Hotline will be changing their hours of service to 9:00am to 12:00pm on Fridays only from November 1 through March 1. Messages can be left at anytime but will only be returned on Fridays from 9:00am to 12:00pm.

Master Gardeners are volunteers trained by CCEUC experts in the art and science of

gardening. They provide the public with gardening programs and activities that draw on the horticulture research and experience of Cornell University.

The Horticulture Hotline offers free, unbiased, research-based information and free gardening advice to more than 1,000 home gardeners annually. Other services offered are pH soil testing and Insect/Disease Identification. The cost is \$5 for plant and insect identification and \$3 for soil testing.

The Hotline number is 845-340-DIRT. For more information about the Master Gardener Program call Dona Crawford at 845-340-3990 ext. 335.

***SAVE THE DATE* CCEUC ANNUAL MEETING**
7:00pm Thursday, December 1 at SUNY Ulster in Stone Ridge, NY

Visit CCEUC online at www.cceulster.org and follow us on

