



NEW YORK CITY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Annual Highlights 2011

The District continued its work in stormwater management, providing input on policies, designing and construction a retrofit project, offering education opportunities for practitioners, and building coalitions of green infrastructure professionals. The District also took on a leadership role on the Hudson River Foodway Corridor project, which has been awarded a research agreement from NYSERDA.

PERSONNEL

In June Damian Griffin was appointed to our Board by the City Council. In October, Rich Shaw accepted the position of State Soil Scientist in NJ.

SUSTAINABLE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

970 Prospect Avenue Green Infrastructure Project

With funding from the Conservation Project Financial Assistance program of the NYS Soil & Water Conservation Committee, we teamed up with eDesign Dynamics and the Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association to install two large (8' x 19' x 3') native wetland planters fed by a downspout from a 3,600 square foot roof.



Before



After

The planters have a storage volume of approximately 3,600 gallons and can detain (with some retention via evapotranspiration) a one-inch rain event completely.

Leveraging our project, the Banana Kelly CIA was able to secure a grant to turn the backyard into a recreational space for the residents of this affordable housing apartment building. We purchased outdoor furniture and supplies to construct a smaller planter for a vegetable garden. Residents are coming together to form a gardening committee. The Banana Kelly CIA was also able to hire a mural artist to paint a mural depicting the Bronx River a mile away.



Community event for the residents in August

Monitoring and Maintaining Past GI Projects

We returned to W150th Street to weed the site and add some finishing touches to the site (creating a path through the planted area, wrapping the sump barrel in filter fabric, etc.). The native plants are doing well but weed removal proved to be critical for their success.



Boneset (left) and New York Astor (right) thriving on W150 Street

Greenstreets Monitoring

In 2009, we partnered with NYC Parks, Drexel University and Brooklyn College to investigate the function and performance of stormwater-capture greenstreets in terms of potential volume of stormwater retention and pollutant demobilization rates. Over the past two years, the three monitoring sites have been designed and constructed, most of the monitoring equipment deployed and some data have been generated.

Tatiana has been working at Brooklyn College under the supervision of Dr. Joshua Cheng, collecting and analyzing soil samples. She will also be undertaking the water quality sampling and analysis in the spring of 2012.

DEC Endorsed 4-Hr Construction Site Inspection Training

Responding to the needs of the development community and city agencies responsible for construction projects, we offered a workshop to train Qualified Site Inspectors as required by the Stormwater Phase II regulations.

Green Infrastructure Bus Tours

We hosted two GI bus tours in fall: one to Philadelphia, which has made great strides in GI implementation, and another in NYC focused on GI monitoring. The tours were free thanks to funding from the Conservation Project Financial Assistance program. The tours drew a wide variety of GI practitioners – city agency representatives, engineers, landscape architects, academics, contractors, suppliers, and individuals simply interested in the topic.



The tour group at the first stop in Philadelphia

We arranged to have an interpreter (often the project manager) at each site so that we can learn as much as possible about the project. In addition to learning about projects, the opportunity to network proved to be highly valuable. We will host more tours in 2012.



Stormwater capture tree pit in Philadelphia

Stormwater Partnerships

Stormwater Infrastructure Matters Coalition

Tatiana and Shino continued to serve on the steering committee. The District also administered the NYC Environmental Fund grant to hire a SWIM Coordinator (Kate Zidar) for the second year.

Lower Hudson Coalition of Conservation Districts

The District took over the financial administration of the Lower Hudson Coalition of Conservation Districts. Shino continued to serve on the Steering Committee of the Coalition and again participated in the Southeast NY Stormwater Conference planning committee.

The theme of the 2011 Stormwater Conference was Green Infrastructure. Marit Larson, who represents the Commissioner of NYC Parks Dept on our Board, was one of the presenters.

The Coalition hired a part time coordinator in May, and secured a grant from the Hudson River Estuary Program to produce a DVD of GI in the Hudson Valley. Our project on Prospect Avenue is featured on the video, which is available at <http://www.lhccd.org/stormwater-planters.html>.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

NYC Outdoors: Environmental Education Expo

Rebecca coordinated the 11th Annual NYC Outdoors! Expo with the River Project and NYU Wallerstein Collaborative. Through the NYU partnership we hosted the event at Kimmel Student Center. More than three-dozen organizations participated as exhibitors and nearly one hundred people attended the event. In addition to the “regular” exhibitors, there were a few new organizations that joined the event. As usual the networking opportunity among the exhibitors as well as attendees was a huge draw for the event.

Envirothon

The 2011 Envirothon was held in Inwood Hill Park, Manhattan. Con Edison generously provided the funding for the event. A total of 25 teams participated from 16 different schools across all five NYC Boroughs. Bronx High School of Science, Staten Island Technical High School and Benjamin Cardozo High School were the first, second and third place winners respectively.



A team of students examining a soil pit with Rich Shaw.

NY State Envirothon

Rebecca attended the State Envirothon with the teams. Out of the 50 State attending teams, the Bronx High School of Science received 10th place and Staten Island Technical High School received 15th place overall.

SOIL SURVEY

In October, Rich Shaw accepted the position of State Soil Scientist for the NRCS in NJ. Fortunately, he will still be able to work on the NYC Soil Survey Program one day a week.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Lower Hudson Long Island Resource Conservation & Development Council

In April the RC&D Coordinator was assigned to a different program within the Natural Resources Conservation Service due to de-funding of the RC&D program. The timing was most unfortunate as the NYSERDA funded research study for the Foodway project was just getting underway.

Because the NYSERDA study was to evaluate the potential energy savings and emission reductions for barge transportation of agricultural products in NYS – something close to the heart of our own Chair, Eugenia Flatow - our District stepped up to take the lead on the project. Shino has put together a project team with members of the RC&D Council Board, convened a Technical Advisory Committee for the project, drafted RFPs for the research, managed the contracting process, and worked directly with the contractors. The study is expected to be completed mid-year 2012. The project team is actively seeking additional funding.

For more information, please visit our web site at www.nycswcd.net or send e-mail to info@nycswcd.net