

functioning and active conservation partnership in every state and territory."

The five partner leaders signed a new national partner statement to kick off the conference, defining areas of common interest and specifying individual commitments to common goals.

Representatives from every state, the Caribbean area, and the Pacific Basin area actively participated in two full days of discussion, dialogue, brainstorming and planning. The list of over 270 participants included leaders from all members of the Conservation Partnership.

Basic principles addressed at the conference included the importance of accountability and transparency to achieve and maintain support; the value of keeping things streamlined and simple; the critical nature of customer service and the concept that results sell better than promises.

Examples of workshops topics included mentoring of new leaders, financial management and ethics considerations in the 21st century. For a complete listing of conference topics, please see the final agenda at <http://nacdnet.org/meetings/LC/LeadershipConfProgram.pdf>. Follow-up items including presentation materials, leadership models and suggestions for integrating leadership activities into ongoing state level partnership functions are posted on the NACD website.

Wanted: Stories on Producers Conserving and Generating Energy

NACD is looking for examples of innovation in energy conservation and energy generation on America's farms and ranches for an upcoming report. "Energy Conservation Opportunities in Agriculture" will focus on ways in which agricultural producers are changing farming and ranching practices to conserve energy, reduce consumption and generate energy in their operations. We also hope to show how conservation districts are helping producers achieve success in this area.

Early response has been excellent, with fine examples from several states. They indicate that innovative conservation and renewable energy practices are in place across the country. We'd like to make sure every region and state is represented in what promises to be an exciting and informative report. Please contact us by Feb. 10th with examples in your area.

Examples of conservation activities include, but are not limited to, water consumption, irrigation practices, farming and ranching practices that reduce inputs, weatherization and other energy conservation measures and energy audits.

Examples of energy generation on farms and ranches include, but are not limited to, wind, solar, methane digesters, bioenergy crops, biodiesel in vehicles and woodlot utilization for energy.

NACD will share findings of this activity with conservation districts, NRCS and a wide array of partners, including those in the conservation, agricultural, commodity, government and nongovernmental sectors. Please submit ideas and examples to project coordinator Bill Berry at billnick@charter.net, 715-341-9119.

DISTRICTS AT WORK... GOING THE EXTRA (EIGHTEEN) MILES

Not Your Father's Swimming Hole –

Eighteenmile Creek in Niagara County, N.Y., suffers from water quality degradation and sediment contaminated by industrial and municipal discharges, waste disposal and pesticides. Sediment contaminants include polychlorinated biphenyls; mercury; dioxins and furans; dieldrin; mirex; DDT; lead and copper.

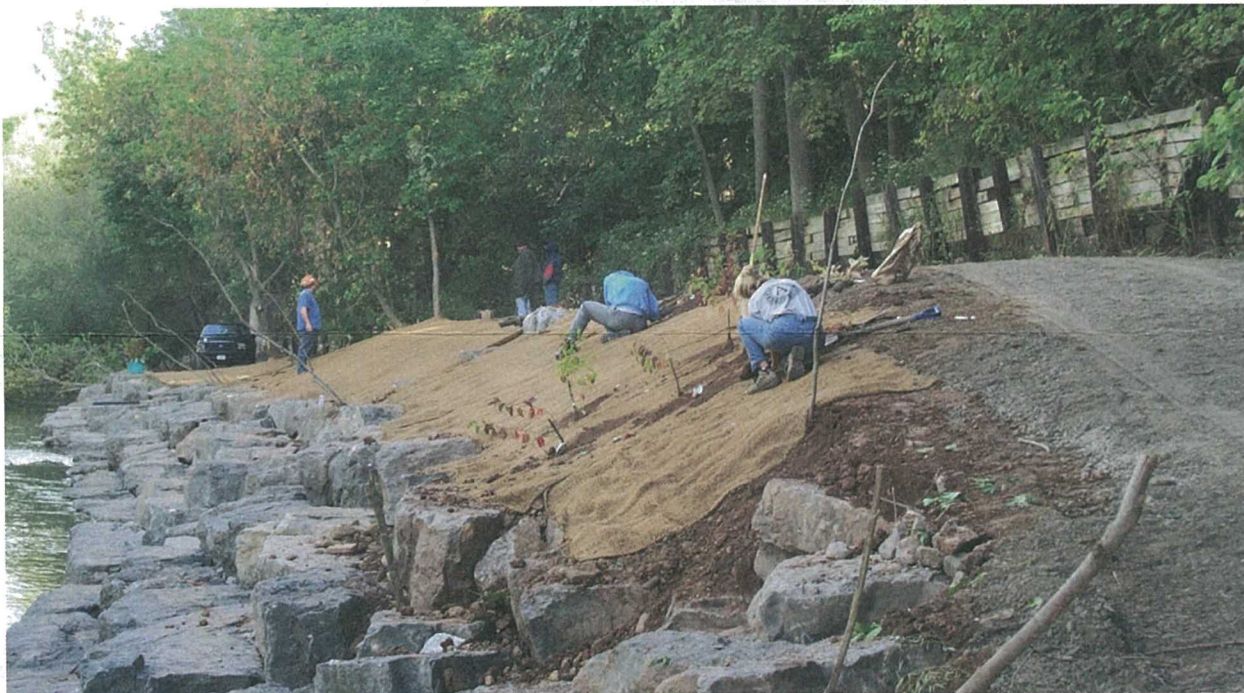
Contaminated sediments affect fish and wildlife consumption, degrade creek bed organisms and restrict dredging. Experts suspect that contaminated sediments also contribute to decreased fish and wildlife populations, fish tumors and bird and animal deformities and reproductive problems.

Listed as an Area of Concern for the Great Lakes by the International Joint Commission of the United States and Canada, the Eighteenmile Creek watershed borders Lake Ontario to the south. Forty-one such areas currently exist in the Great Lakes basin.

SWAT Team – The Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District coordinates efforts to restore Eighteenmile Creek. The conservation district enlisted the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Buffalo State College to design a Soil Water Assessment Tool (SWAT) for the watershed. The tool predicts land management impacts on water, sediment and agricultural chemical yields in large, complex watersheds.

Modelers developed Eighteenmile Creek's SWAT to reflect the diverse soils and land uses. Products include annual sediment yields and critical areas of erosion, valuable information for planning remediation activities.

Critical Direction – Eighteenmile Creek will benefit from the SWAT model in several ways. Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District hopes to decrease overall sedimentation of the creek, minimizing potential for additional sediment to become contaminated. The model showed considerable variation in sediment generated from different areas within the watershed. Levels ranged from 0.22 tons/hectare/year to 5.52 tons/hectare/year, identifying critical areas to address first.



District employees and AmeriCorps volunteers stabilize a creek bank along Eighteenmile Creek with large stone, erosion control fabric and tree and shrub plantings.

This kind of data gives the Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District clear direction for focusing local, state, and federal resources to minimize sediment loading. For example, USDA and the Conservation District identified and assisted a dairy farm with plans to grow cover crops, and install a filter strip to catch nutrients leaching from a silage storage area. Additionally, the Conservation District employed state cost share dollars to address barnyard water management, milk center wastewater treatment and silage leachate control.

An Evolving Tool – Vic DiGiacomo, the Conservation District's Remedial Action Plan coordinator, expects to employ the SWAT model in watershed planning for years to come. Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District will continue to update and improve the data that the model requires.

For example, accurate SWAT model calibration and results require a Geographic Information System land-use layer. Next year, the Conservation District will compare current land-use data against the most recent aerial photography to identify any land use changes. The update will also identify and

compare cultivated acres against idle acres. With assistance from USDA, the Conservation District can annually identify and update the use of agricultural parcels. Regular updates will further improve the accuracy of the SWAT model, increase its usefulness, and provide critical information for decision-makers.

Conservation Districts can Partner with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers –

Federal legislation directs the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to apply sediment transport models to Great Lakes tributaries discharging to federal navigation channels or Areas of Concern. The agency strives to assist local and state decision-makers in evaluating alternatives for soil conservation and non-point source pollution prevention. For more information about potential partnerships, contact Tony Friona, USAC—Buffalo, at anthony.m.friona@usace.army.mil or Jim Selegan, USACE—Detroit, at james.p.selegan@usace.army.mil.

For more information on the Eighteenmile Creek project, contact Victor F. DiGiacomo, Jr., Remedial Action Plan Coordinator, at victor.digiaco@ny.nacdnet.net.