

Conservation Connects News

Summer 2014



Content

Dear Reader.....pg. 1

Predicting the Future.....pg. 2
(Sustainable Land Use Planning in Genesee County)

Co-Located = Win-Win.....pg. 3

Conservation Connects Services.....pg. 3

Investing in Staff: Wetland Delineation and Bog Turtle Training.....pg. 4

Leadership Genesee.....pg. 4

Something to think about:

"You can't plow a field simply by turning it over in your mind."

— Gordon B. Hinckley

Conservation Connects helps corporations and communities balance development plans with natural resource conservation. It is possible to achieve economic vitality while preserving a healthy environment and a high quality of life.

Visit us [online](#)

Dear Reader:

There are so many exciting things to share with you that I struggled with which to tell you first. I chose to go alphabetical. A is for Amazing New Staff, J is for Jackson Street, and S is for Sustainable Land Use Planning!

In February we welcomed Liza Norment as an Environmental Scientist and GIS Analyst. Liza has degrees in biology and environmental management, education in environmental law and policy, and certification in geospatial analysis. She brings with her a wide range of experience from ecological assessments to public education and outreach. She has already begun to expand her skills and our service capabilities as you will read in her article about bog turtles and wetlands on Page 4!

In May, Richard Sutherland signed on as our Environmental Planner and Operations Manager. Richard hails from New Zealand (our very own Kiwi) bringing a wide range of experience including sustainability planning for municipalities, environmental impact assessments, freshwater management, natural resource protection, policy development, and department management. With degrees in both commerce and planning, Richard provides valuable perspective and unique skills to our team! One of Richard's first achievements was getting us fully operational at our second office location in Batavia. That brings me to Jackson Street...

Come visit us at our new office at 23 Jackson Street, Suite 201, Batavia, NY. Richard provides all the details in his article on Page 3!

Last but certainly not least, we have officially kicked off the Green Genesee/Smart Genesee project. The development of this project is attributed to the persistence and dedication of many and I'm so excited to be a part of it! We are providing ecological assessment, land use planning, energy conservation and project management services to the Town of Batavia on behalf of a team of partners in Genesee County. Our goal: SUSTAINABILITY – which by one definition is to continue to meet our resource needs without compromising the ability of our children to meet theirs. This means protecting the resilience of our environment and vitality of our communities! I talk more on this in "Predicting the Future" on Page 2. You can also follow our progress online at <http://www.co.genesee.ny.us/GreenGeneseeIndex/index.html>.

I hope you enjoy our newsletter and the rest of your summer!

~Sheila S. Hess
Principal Ecologist/CEO

PREDICTING THE FUTURE:

Sustainable Land Use Planning in Genesee County

Sheila Hess, Principal Ecologist/CEO

Alan Kay is a computer whiz who coined the wonderful phrase, “*The best way to predict the future is to invent it.*” I use it regularly. There’s just one problem: Peter Drucker. I recently discovered that Peter Drucker, a well-known management consultant, coined the phrase, “*The best way to predict your future is to create it.*” With two small exceptions, these two quotes are exactly the same! What could this mean? Who said it first? Who do I credit? Was it a co- evolution of a quippy concept or a dark case of verbal plagiarism? How could the Department of “Phrase Coining” not catch this?



Calm down you say? Does it really matter? It likely does not. What *does* matter is that it seems to be true. Any chance of a predictable future lies in our ability to dream, plan, and do. And this is what the Green Genesee/Smart Genesee Project is about.

Genesee County, like most areas across the U.S., faces challenges that call for decisive action and innovation. A growing economy, rising cost of energy, fragmentation of natural resources, and shifting economic opportunities required definitive action right now. An intact ecosystem and wise energy use comprise the only foundation upon which true sustainable growth is achieved. Most communities do not have sufficient funds to support the comprehensive planning necessary to achieve sustainable growth and protection from unmanaged sprawl, high energy costs and loss of agricultural resources and environmental health.

This spring a team of partners in Genesee County received a Cleaner Greener Communities grant from NYSERDA to begin development of a sustainable land use plan and energy conservation strategy. These will be integrated into four municipal comprehensive plan and zoning updates. Partners providing matching funds and in-kind services toward this grant include the Genesee County Planning Department, Genesee County Economic Development Center, New York Green, the Towns of Batavia, Oakfield and Alabama, and the Village of Oakfield. Conservation Connects will be leading a team of consultants to coordinate the first phase of this project which will result in several key outcomes:

1. A Leadership Team comprised of community leaders representing multiple stakeholder groups
2. A Green Genesee Road Map as a land use planning tool for communities across the county
3. Municipal-level sustainable land use and energy conservation strategies
4. Updated comprehensive plans and zoning revisions for four communities in Genesee County

We are excited to be a part of the Green Genesee/Smart Genesee kick off and look forward to helping secure a resilient natural environment, a vibrant economy and a high quality of life for our children today and their children tomorrow. For as Alan Drucker once said, “The best way to predict the future is to create it,” and as we all know, it takes time, energy, resources, commitment and innovation to create a future worth predicting.

Off we go!

CO-LOCATING = A WIN-WIN

Richard Sutherland, Environmental Planner/Operations Manager



Conservation Connects 'Global' Headquarters would like to welcome the arrival of Suite 201, 23 Jackson Street, Batavia, New York to the family. After 6 months of searching and planning, Conservation Connects, LLC and Mountain Engineering, PLLC have signed up to co-locate in a downtown Batavia office space. With both businesses growing in terms of workload and staff, it was a logical move. By co-locating with an engineering firm, Conservation Connects has additional engineering expertise close-by to ensure our clients are getting the best advice and guidance. There are risks in locating ourselves at 23 Jackson, mainly the delicious cupcakes located on the 1st floor at Sweet Pea's! Next time you are in the neighborhood, please drop in and we will give you the grand tour.

CONSERVATION CONNECTS SERVICES

Richard Sutherland, Environmental Planner/Operations Manager

As our company has grown, our services have also expanded. Conservation Connects prides itself in providing quality environmental services and as a result of fostered relationships with numerous professional partners, Conservation Connects can co-ordinate a complete professional service. This foundation ensures our clients are provided with the best information to assist them with timely decision making.

Services provided directly by Conservation Connects:

- Environmental assessment and inventory
- Land-use planning
- Sustainable design and sustainable land use planning
- Community-based watershed filtering
- Green infrastructure assessment and planning
- Mitigation strategies (avoidance, minimization, compensation)
- Habitat protection, restoration, and enhancement
- Permit reviews
- Development of partnership and funding opportunities
- Grant writing
- Workshops
- Development of marketing & education materials
- Wetland Delineation
- Interpretive Design – Signs
- Website Design

Services that Conservation Connects coordinates through partners:

- Civil and Municipal Engineering
- Transportation Engineering
- Cultural Resource Assessment and Management
- Structural Engineering
- Hazard Mitigation
- Energy Conservation Management

INVESTING IN STAFF: WETLAND DELINEATION AND BOG TURTLE TRAINING

Liza Norment, Environmental Scientist/GIS Analyst

In early March, I attended wetland delineation training in State College, PA. After forty hours of instruction and field work, I was deemed qualified to delineate wetlands. Less than eight weeks later I was out in the field delineating my first! Independent and collaborative field work at the delineation site proved a good introduction to the strategy needed to approach confusing wetland conditions and I look forward to continuing to delineate wetlands throughout New York State.



In mid-May, I had the opportunity to attend a bog turtle habitat assessment training sponsored by the New York State Wetlands Forum. During the training, we reviewed legislation and regulation governing bog turtle conservation in New York, learned about turtle ecology, and visited several examples of bog turtle habitat in eastern New York (sadly, we didn't see any bog turtles).

Almost immediately after I finished the bog turtle training, I had the opportunity to use it! The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requested information confirming the lack of bog turtle habitat at a project site in Genesee County. I headed out to the site to assess and document hydrology, soils, and vegetation. Applying what the science tells us about bog turtle habitat and what I had learned at bog turtle habitats in other areas of New York, along with guidance documents provided by USFWS, was a valuable way to see how conditions in the field compare to ideal habitat conditions.

Wetlands and potential habitat for listed species exist all over New York State. We continue to build our capacity to provide natural resource inventories and assessments!



Sheila Hess, Principal Ecologist/CEO of Conservation Connects participated in the 12 month Leadership Genesee program in 2013. The timing couldn't have been better! Monthly workshops covered all aspects of life in Genesee County including our economy, agriculture, environment, health care, communities, tourism and more. The exposure to these topics combined with training in service-based leadership was a perfect precursor to our recent kick-off of the Green Genesee/Smart Genesee sustainable land use planning project! Leadership Genesee is an excellent way to learn more about the resources, challenges, and opportunities in Genesee County. It facilitates professional and personal networking and builds capacity for future service.

Learn more: <http://genesee.cce.cornell.edu/leadership-genesee>