

Conservation Connects News

Winter/Spring 2 0 1 1



Dear Reader:

This past fall Conservation Connects celebrated its first anniversary! In the space of one year, I've had the good fortune of working with a diversity of clients and collaborators on a variety of projects including conservation program development, natural resource inventories and watershed assessments, site specific and regional mitigation strategies, sustainable growth models, and land use restoration and management plans. A central theme to all the work I do is the relationship between economics and the environment and how critical both are to achieving the quality of life we'd all like to share. Before I expand on that topic below, I have a few updates to share:

- A new website was launched in December at the same web address as before. www.conservationconnects.com
- Please note the new mailing address: PO Box 358, Alexander, NY 14005. The phone number remains the same – 716-560-1768
- Conservation Connects will soon be certified as a Women-Owned Business under the "MWBE" state certification program. Stay tuned...
- Finally, Conservation Connects welcomes Jennifer Martino. Jennifer will be providing a range of services from administrative assistance to graphic design and outreach.

I am grateful to all the folks I've worked with over the past year and look forward to our ongoing and future work together. I wish everyone a peaceful and prosperous new year!

~Sheila Hess, Owner

Something to think about: Proactive integration of natural resource conservation at the local and regional level can facilitate efficiency and compliance with changing policies and programs such as proposed updates to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) Short and Full Environmental Assessment Forms - <http://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/70293.html> and the 2008 revisions to regulations governing compensatory mitigation for wetlands and streams - <http://www.epa.gov/owow/keep/wetlands/wetlandsmitigation/index.html>.

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.

The Economics of Natural Resource Conservation

Most of us have had reason to consider conserving natural resources. Perhaps out of genuine passion and concern (hunters, birders, naturalists, tree huggers?), perhaps in regards to state and federal regulatory statutes (you don't want to go to jail or pay fines) or social ethics (you want people to like you and you hope for a good review at the pearly gates). But set aside for a moment hobbies, laws and societal pressures and we find that we still have an excellent reason to consider how our natural resources relate to the business of the day: **Natural resource conservation is a good economic investment – in the short and long term.**



In fact, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the most successful - perhaps the only truly successful - economic development strategies facilitate economic vitality and at the same time protect and restore the quality of life afforded by the natural environment. Balancing economics and the environment is a simple concept that has been promoted for years, but in practice is hasn't been easy. Confusing regulations, lack of communication among economic and conservation communities, and continued reliance upon unsustainable growth models have been barriers to achieving the synergy that a balanced approach will provide. The mission of Conservation Connects is to overcome these barriers and realize the short- and long-term benefits of balance.

To sustain our health, quality of life and a desirable standard of living we now realize it is critical to evaluate the impacts of our land use decisions at three levels: economic, environmental and social. This is the triple bottom line approach defined by the buzzword "sustainable." But sustainable is more than a buzzword; it is a lucrative and rewarding philosophy for any business and economic venture. Countless case studies and statistics are available that demonstrate the economic return on conservation. Adopting a sustainable growth model does not necessarily require a restrictive investment. There are a growing number of incentives, programs and organizations that can help. Taking time to explore these opportunities can result in significant and lasting benefits to your organization and community.

The table below provides just a few examples of the rewards and resources associated with integrating natural resource conservation into your communities and companies.

REWARDS	RESOURCES
Forested areas along rivers and streams protect water quality and provide aesthetic and recreational value. This in turn attracts businesses and people to the community. These are just a few benefits of protecting and restoring our riparian areas. www.chesapeakebay.net/content/publications/cbp_12195.pdf	The Natural Resource Conservation Service provides resources and incentives to landowners, farmers, businesses and communities for protecting the natural resources that sustain rural businesses and communities. www.nrcs.usda.gov/PROGRAMS
REWARDS	RESOURCES
Ecological design techniques provide powerful tools for industry professionals, owners and communities to use in implementing sustainable strategies in their building projects. These techniques result in green buildings and reductions in resource use, energy consumption, emissions and waste. Visit www.usgbc.org for information and case studies.	The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) lists numerous sources of funding for green building available at the national, state and local levels for homeowners, industry, government organizations and nonprofits. www.epa.gov/greenbuilding/tools/funding.htm

Visit www.conservationconnects.com to learn more.