

**Empire State Chapter
Soil and Water Conservation Society
Annual Meeting
December 12, 2002**

‘Understanding How to Motivate Conservation Decisions on Today’s Farms’

The Annual Meeting of the Empire State Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society was called to order at 10:00 AM by President, Rich Wildman in Syracuse, NY. Rich introduced himself. An attendance sheet listing the 100 attendees including speakers is attached to the Secretary’s copy of the minutes.

Rich explained the goal of this year’s annual meeting. Agriculture is on the cusp of changes in environmental management and we need new tools and new awareness to deal with these changes. Dr. Michael Boehlje from Purdue University will talk about the global issues affecting our farmers. Rich introduced the speaker and his topic - ‘Agriculture in the 21st Century: Business Climate and Conservation Choices.’ Dr. Boehlje’s address was very thought provoking. He spoke and expounded on four fundamental forces that affect US agriculture: expanded global production; growing and diversified global demand; new technology., and world markets. He stated that there are two million farms in the US but 83% of the agricultural production is produced by 17% of the farms. He commented that farming is changing from farming as a lifestyle to farming as a businesses; that farmers are going from needing plant manager skills to needing CEO skills; that the mentality of farmers accepting low compensation is changing and that farms can’t compete on cost alone but now must consider cost, quality and efficiency.

Business Meeting

President Richard Wildman called the meeting to order at 11:40 am. Rich thanked NRCS for their support of the Annual Meeting. He reviewed the priorities and accomplishments of the Empire Chapter for the year. He commented that the Treasurer had changed and some new procedures had been implemented. Rich spoke of how the Scholarship program had been revamped and that a Mini-grant program had been started. A web designer had been hired to design and oversee an Empire Chapter SWCS website (www.swcsnewyork.org). \$2,500 was donated to the NYS Envirothon and the Chapter helped sponsor the Conservation Skills Workshop.

2001 Annual Meeting Minutes – The minutes of the 2001 Annual Meeting held at the Syracuse Holiday Inn were approved with a motion from Dana Chapman and a second by Margaret Fusco. Motion carried.

Treasurer’s Report – Dick Dale presented the Treasurer’s Report. The Empire Chapter is in decent shape financially. Dick reviewed the various accounts that the Chapter has. The Treasurer’s Report was approved with a motion by Ellen Luchsinger and a second by Dan Dostie. Motion carried.

Election Report – Karl Czymmek presented the results. Rich Wildman - President; Jeff Carmichael - Past President; Julie Burger - Vice President; Dick Dale – Treasurer; Elaine Dalrymple – Secretary; Mike Dennis – Region 2 Rep.; Bill Keating – Region 4 Rep.; Lee Telega – At-Large Rep.

Publications Report - Jeff Carmichael reported on the three different publications that the Chapter sells – the Contractor’s Field Book, the NYS Standards and Specifications for Erosion and Sediment Control (being revised) and the new NY Stormwater Design Manual.

Mini-Grant Report – Bill Keating explained the new program. He pointed out that the RFP was available on a table in the back of the room and that the application is also on the website. Awards will not exceed \$1,000 each and winners must submit a newsletter article.

Scholarship Report – Ellen Luchsinger reported that two scholarships are given out and that this was a change from the four that had been awarded in previous years. The amount per scholarship went up to \$1,000 plus a student membership to the SWCS. There is also the Ron Fletcher Memorial Scholarship (\$500), which is available only to Paul Smith’s students. This year there were no applications for the Fletcher Scholarship. Ellen sent mailings to 60 colleges and universities and to NRCS and SWCD. There were 7 applicants and each applicant was required to submit an essay. Ellen acknowledged previous scholarship recipients in the room. Ellen asked that if there is any interest by members to serve on the Scholarship Committee to contact her. Present members include Scott Fitscher, Bill Keating, and Bub Barra and Margaret Fusco. The winners of this year’s awards were Virginia Collins, a senior at Cornell and Kara Fiori, a Senior at Cortland State.

Awards Report – Dan Dostie reported on the awards that are given each year and encouraged applications. He explained that the purpose of the awards is to recognize those who foster the protection of our natural resources. The awards given include the SWCS commendation award, a media award, a merit award, a special achievement award, and an educator award. Mary Ellen Sutherland was the winner of the Education Award and the Cornell staff that developed Cropware received the Special Achievement Award. Caroline Rasmussen accepted the award on behalf of the Cropware team. Dr. Quirine Ketterings of Cornell received the Merit Award and Karl Czymmek received the Commendation Award. There were no nominees for the Media Award.

.Other Business

Jeff Carmichael reported that the Chapter wants to support more professional development sessions. He asked the membership to let the Executive Council know what types of opportunities are desired. The Council wants to help plan the Conservation Skills Workshop. He encouraged people to become members of the SWCS and to promote the awards program.

The Business Meeting was adjourned at 12:10 pm with a motion from Julie Burger and a second by Elaine Dalrymple.

Craig Yunker, Vice Chair of the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee and Managing Partner of CY Farms, LLC spoke and there were discussion groups on the overall theme of the day to complete the meeting.

Submitted by Elaine Dalrymple, Secretary