Sponsor: Evie Weinstein, LMSW
Site: 376 Brooktondale Rd., Brooktondale, NY

SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

I have a one-acre pond on 81 acres of rural property in Brooktondale, bordering Six-Mile Creek (SMC). I have lived at the site since 1988 and in the process have engaged in several wildlife conservation and education projects (plantings, trail construction, pond building, teaching classes, etc.). Having a background in ornithology I have been very eager to share my property, skills and enthusiasm with students K-12 as well as college and graduate students.

A long term vision of mine has been to expand and re-design one of the ponds for multiple uses. I have an interest in blending recreational and educational uses with developing additional flora/fauna and stream corridor enhancement. I am especially interested in leveraging this project to promote community involvement elsewhere along SMC or at other sites so as to promote sustainable landscaping projects and ecological development elsewhere.

In the spring of 2011 I received a grant from the TC Planning Department and Dan Segal (owner of The Plantsman in Lansing, NY) to plant 75 trees along my property that borders SMC. This site is a 2-3 acre field located directly "below" (to the north) and downstream of the pond. Periodic flooding and annual mowing has kept the site in an early succession stage. Countywide efforts to slow down stream bank erosion along sensitive streambank habitats made our project very timely. Species appropriate for streamside restoration were targeted for this first phase and we planned to continue this effort in the future using community partners (local students from our middle and high school as well as Brooktondale neighbors).

This next phase of steamside planting in 2012 had to be delayed primarily due to the emergency efforts necessary to repair damages to my property from the flooding in Sept. 2011. Now, I have become increasingly intrigued by the idea of blending the two projects (streamside restoration and pond expansion). Both efforts require expertise in wildlife ecology, landscape design, environmental regulations, and planning.

The "lake" expansion has the following requirements:

- enlarge the perimeter and deepen the body of water to encourage the development of a layering effect (30 feet of depth in parts of the lake). This will provide much more diverse habitat for water-dwelling species of plants and animals.

- design the lake expansion to incorporate a new out-building/workshop. Design should make best use of water views and solar gain for use of photo-voltaic panels on the roof (south facing roof surface)

- create a body of water suitable for swimming along the house side
- develop the side of the lake furthest from the house with shallow banks to encourage the growth of wetland vegetation, and provide habitat for insect, amphibian and fish reproduction
- create steep banks on the house side to enhance swimming and reduce the growth of vegetation
- plant native species of plants and trees all around the edges of this body of water to attract insects, birds, mammals and to act as good year-round cover for all wildlife.
- build a stormwater spillway that could possibly be harvested for hydropower
- create a water swale below the spillway to act as a filtration site and deflect the energy of flood overflow from the lake before it hits SMC

The streamside restoration has the following requirements:

- introduce native plant species along the lake spillway that will act as a buffer for rain runoff and prevent erosion and siltation into SMC
- plants will specifically target the goal of wildlife resource enhancement, especially birds and butterflies
- provide through community partnerships, the chance for local residents to participate in habitat improvements that are transportable to other properties. This will provide a "living laboratory" to teach other community members "hands on" how to do similar projects on their own properties.
- trails will be created along the stream in the "lower field" as a site for public access for educational purposes (local school classes have already used the property for nature studies over the past 24 years). Possible future use for pubic camping and fishing.

SUSTAINABILITY INTERN ROLE(S)

Intern #1 (landscape architecture): The design demands of this project will entail extensive site consideration and planning. Residential and public access will have to be blended in sensitive and appropriate ways and should minimally incorporate needs for privacy as well as full access to the site. There will be a walking interpretive trail along SMC which will be accessible to the public, provided adequate liability insurance can be acquired. In particular, the political aspects of creating a resource for a community that has yet to be recruited as participant/allies will involve public speaking to neighbors, public officials and natural resource agencies.

SKILLS OR EDUCATION REQUIRED

Familiarity with GIS site maps helpful. Familiarity with CAD helpful. Experience with drawing site plans necessary. The person who matches best with this project should be very inventive, able to "think outside the box", be creative and with a well developed sense of design and aesthetics. They should also have some background in planning, since this project will merge public and private use. Good public speaking and social skills will be important for this role. The intern may have opportunities to interact with community members and public officials as the project progresses.

SUSTAINABILITY INTERN ROLE(S)

Intern #2 (plant ecology/wildlife ecology/forestry): This intern will work closely with the other intern as they conduct research and create a native plant list and landscaping scheme for the lake, as well as the SMC corridor that will provide food and cover for local wildlife. The intern will be asked to source plantings from local nurseries wherever possible. A preliminary flora and fauna survey will be useful in order to establish baseline information. When construction is underway, there will be opportunities to participate in planting trees and vegetation on the site.

SKILLS OR EDUCATION REQUIRED

This person should have a good working knowledge of flora and fauna native to our area along with the skills needed to conduct research on relevant conservation questions. Computer skills such as Excel and MS Word are needed. Experience with conducting biological surveys useful. Most important is a background in wetland and wildlife ecology and conservation efforts. Experience in field research and accurate data recording is also important. Like Intern #1, this person should possess creativity and be resourceful, both of which will greatly improve this project.

A sense of humor is HUGELY appreciated too!

TOTAL PROJECT HOURS OR WEEKLY TIME COMMITMENT:

I anticipate initially a half-day site visit for both interns to familiarize themselves with the location. Thereafter, one or two site visits per week along with email and telephone communications should be adequate to the task. I am flexible with the hours.

INTERNSHIP DURATION: Fall and Spring Semesters with opportunities for more work if mutually desirable.

STAFF SUPERVISION: I will be present for most if not all the time people are on site. Independent work will certainly be possible. As I said, I am very flexible.

INTERN WORKSPACE: This project will be both on-site and also conducted remotely, as the need arises.

FUNDING: This is a voluntary position, unless outside funding can be secured (I am working on this). There may be funding as the project evolves. Work-study hourly stipend can be arranged (I am the funding source!).

Thank you for considering this proposal. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Evie Weinstein, LMSW