

Town of LaGrange Conservation Advisory Council

Mile-A-Minute Vine Response Project 2007 Action Award

Mile-a-Minute vine is a non-native invasive plant that can reach over 20 feet long in one year adversely impacting the ecosystem. A local resident spotted Mile-a-Minute (MAM) vine in the Town of LaGrange in mid-July, 2007. The infestation covered about seven acres. If unchecked, it could have threatened the native vegetation downstream on the Fishkill Creek (a Hudson River estuary).



Dr. Maung Htoo, LaGrange CAC Chairman and NYSACC Director, accepts the award from Joy Squires, NYSACC President.

The LaGrange CAC worked with Fishkill Creek Watershed Committee and DEC to pull the vines by the roots and put them in large plastic bags to be burned at a later date. The activity was publicized in two local newspapers, one local TV station and Public Radio in Albany for public awareness and to solicit volunteers. The Town Recreation Department provided bathroom facilities, burning permit, necessary equipment and volunteers. Several other organizations, including Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners, Nature Conservancy Summer Interns and many local citizens volunteered in this effort, despite the heat, tick infestation in the area, and summer vacation season. Forty-four volunteers spent more than 300 volunteer hours from July 17 to August 19 in this endeavor and pulled most of the MAM vines from the sparsely infested areas.

The CAC recommended NYSDEC approved herbicide application to eradicate MAM vines in densely infested areas where hand pulling was unsuccessful. The Council distributed literature to the Town's Highway and Recreation Departments and the Town Hall for early detection and prevention. The Council also responded to calls from local residents reporting MAM vines on their property.

While the eradication of MAM vines in the densely infested areas remains to be acted upon, the project illustrates what Conservation Advisory Councils can do when confronted with an unexpected environmental problem. It also demonstrates the successful collaboration of the media, NYSDEC, the Town and volunteer organizations and local individual volunteers in alleviating the MAM infestation without incurring any significant cost.

For further information contact Dr. Maung Htoo, CAC Chairman, at 10 Rabbit Trail Road, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603, e-mail at mhtoo@verizon.net