



Atlantic States Spring 2011 Legal Foundation

658 West Onondaga Street, Syracuse, NY 13204-3711

ASLF Selected to Receive Highest Recognition from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

ASLF was selected to receive a 2010 U.S. EPA Environmental Quality Award for “demonstrating outstanding commitment to protecting and enhancing environmental quality and public health” through its work to prevent the construction of 3 regional wastewater treatment facilities in Syracuse by instead using green infrastructure to manage stormwater inflows to the Metro Sewage Treatment Plant. The accepted alternative “Greening Syracuse’s Combined Sewer Overflow Long Term Control Plan” was formulated in a coalition with Onondaga County, the Onondaga Nation, and the Partnership for Onondaga Creek. The Award was presented on April 23, 2010 at the EPA office in Manhattan.

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This improved and practical method of managing stormwater includes using rain gardens, porous pavement and other green initiatives to divert rainwater from storm drains and enable it to percolate through to the groundwater aquifer. The Environmental Quality Award is the highest recognition presented to the public by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This is the second time ASLF has been selected to receive it; the first was in 1998.



Samuel H. Sage with Judith A. Enck, Administrator for EPA’s Region 2

ASLF and South Africa

Atlantic States made its first foray into Africa with an introductory visit to the Western Cape Province of South Africa. Our initial invitation was to participate in the joint program of Syracuse University and Stellenbosch University. However, once there we were welcomed by a variety of people asking us to get involved with a variety of issues. The friendly people, combined with great environmental awareness, leads us to believe that useful long term collaboration is possible.

Highlights of our visit were getting to know and work with Doreen Februarie who founded and runs the NOS-IPHO Consultant that does human resource management and training. One of Nosipho's many projects includes working with roughly 150 youth in nine communities in the Province to train them for green jobs. See their website, www.nosipho.co.za for more information.



Youth Group

Another major relationship developed between ASLF and several of the wineries in the area – one of the main wine producing areas of the world. Many of these wineries own large tracts of land in the very unique and threatened botanical community called the fynbos. These wineries are working hard to protect and enhance these lands, provide access to them for flower tours, bird watching and other outdoor activities while expanding their potential revenue sources beyond just selling wine. They have formed the Biodiversity and Wine Initiative (www.bwi.co.za) and are pleased to be working with us, given our experience working on similar issues around the world.

New ACJ Amendment

Atlantic States has become a leader in the field of green technology for storm water control and related issues. Our initiative along with that of the Onondaga Nation and the cooperation of NYS DEC convinced County Executive Joanie Mahoney, who enthusiastically joined with us, to abandon the building of a \$128 million sewage treatment plant along Onondaga Creek at the edge of Armory Square in Syracuse, and instead use green infrastructure to reduce combined sewer overflows to the Metro Sewage Treatment Plant. The decision set in place the process that resulted in the 4th stipulation to the Amended Consent Judgment (the legal document mandating the reduction of pollutants entering the lake) approved by the Court in October 2009. This new initiative puts Syracuse and Onondaga County as the leading metropolitan area in having a legally enforceable green strategy for dealing with Combined Sewer Overflows and stormwater. Both New York State and the US EPA are looking to this pilot for guidance in replicating these efforts in other major cities across the nation.

During the previous County Executive's administration, compliance with the Amended Consent Judgment (ACJ) amounted to an agenda that used gray solutions such as building regional treatment facilities (RTFs) and storage facilities to house sewage overflows during periods of heavy rainfall. These storage plants were planned and/or sited frequently in areas sensitive to environmental justice issues, and those neighbors have consistently supported ASLF in its goal to use greener methods of stormwater management.

Green infrastructure mimics natural ways that storm water is dissipated. It includes methods such as the construction of rain gardens, installation and utilization of rainbarrels, green roofs, removing impervious surfaces (parking lots, etc.) and replacing them with surfaces that allow rainwater to permeate through and re-enter the groundwater aquifer. In addition to being friendly to the environment and often cheaper, these methods have added ancillary benefits for the city.



Viewing towards the Northwestern Corner of E. Water St. and S. State St. The old gym bldg is shown here with a greenhouse, a section of greenroof and solar panels on its rooftop, and the Water Street is shown as a green street for stormwater management.

ASLF Continues Facilitating County's GI Program under ACJ

Onondaga County is proceeding further down the road to implement and promote green infrastructure (GI) projects in Syracuse in 2010, the following year after the Gray-Green program for combined sewer overflow (CSO) reduction was officially adopted. The County's Green Improvement Fund program was released in April to pay the cost of GI projects on private properties. Four qualified green projects were constructed in 2009. Four green parking lots, designed by the County's GI team to use permeable pavement to replace traditional, impermeable asphalt, were also built. Onondaga County also initiated and advanced a GI outreach program.

The Environmental Finance Center was contracted to promote the County's "Save the Rain" GI campaign, and the County purchased several hundred rain barrels—using federal stimulus money to distribute for free to the residents of the city's Near West and South sides, where CSOs are a problem for stormwater management. ASLF continues its vital role in facilitating the County's GI program. The County has accepted ASLF's proposal of establishing Green Infrastructure Gateways in Syracuse to manage stormwater runoff, demonstrate GI technologies and beautify streetscapes.



Before & After
Former Downtown Farmer's Market

ASLF has conducted initial investigations and completed concept designs for two such gateway projects, the 300 Block of East Water Street and West Onondaga

Street from the Creek to Delaware Street. Both projects have been on the project list of the County's GI plan, and the East Water Street gateway project is expecting to be implemented, along with 49 other GI projects, in 2011. In collaboration with Synapse Partners, LLC and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County, ASLF assisted the County in obtaining two grant awards from the U.S. Forest Service. One grant will enable tree planting on brownfield sites in Syracuse and the other, in which ASLF will take the lead on investigation, is to map out potential tree planting sites in the City which may significantly contribute to the County's green infrastructure and CSO program.

ASLF Board Of Directors Has New Chair

Atlantic States would like to note the retirement from our Board of Directors of Bill Redding, who served on the Board for many years. We thank him for his service. Robin Chanay has graciously accepted to assume the position of Chair. Robin has served on our Board for the last few years; she is a respected member of the urban environmental community and a founder of CRUW (Coalition to Restore Urban Waters).

Green Infrastructure Exhibit Goes on the Road!

Atlantic States has partnered with Onondaga County's Department of Water Environment Protection and the Syracuse Center of Excellence to create an informational exhibit on Green Infrastructure. The exhibit highlights the importance of sensible stormwater management practices in Central New York.



You may remember seeing our GI exhibit at the 2009 New York State Fair, next to the NYDEC Aquarium building. The exhibit spent some weeks displayed on the 4th floor of the Robert P. Kinchen Central Library, the main branch of Onondaga County Public Library-located in The Galleries of Syracuse on South Salina Street. The exhibit has since moved to the Hazard Branch Library at 1620 West Genesee Street on Syracuse's West Side. Hazard Branch Library is the first public library in Onondaga County to be fitted with a "green roof" to reduce rainwater infiltration to the sanitary sewer system and help reduce the costs of stormwater management. We expect to share the Exhibit with other public venues in our area to help provide information to local residents about the importance of stormwater management and hopefully inspire local students to seek careers in the sciences.

Economic Development Green Jobs and New Initiatives

For many years, Atlantic States has promoted sustainable development in the Syracuse area through the creation of living wage paying jobs that benefit the environment and society. These efforts start with considering tasks that the community needs to have accomplished, locating an appropriate population of potential workers, developing a training format, and putting together proposals to acquire funds to accomplish our goals. So far we have struggled with this model especially in regards to the funding. However, there now seems to be more general interest and we are submitting various proposals to get this off the ground.

Why Atlantic States? This is a fair question to ask and can be answered in at least two different ways. For one thing the record of accomplishment of most job training efforts in Syracuse has not been particularly good with most of the funding going to the trainers and their kindred agencies with few people actually put to work as a result of the training. The second reason is that seldom are the trainees being trained for needed positions. Atlantic States thinks it can overcome these problems using our vast experience to prepare people for jobs in occupations that we know can provide jobs.

Although many aspects of the urban environment would be applicable to our proposed program, we are here limiting the discussion to agricultural pursuits.

The Syracuse area, and we trust most metropolitan American city areas, have long suffered from a decline in basic infrastructure and for the need to produce alternative ways of accomplishing certain processes. These issues range from taking care of stormwater and (where needed) combined sewer overflows, building a new sustainable manufacturing economy, and in growing crops that can fill various needs. In the Syracuse area we are focusing on a variety of initiatives that will require workers trained to grow, plant and maintain trees (urban and rural), produce fiber such as flax, and to restore and enhance habitats while providing biofuels from either woody or herbaceous materials. In certain circumstances, this also involves a longer term investment to grow high quality timber hardwoods for higher end uses such as furniture production.

This first program trains people for the agricultural side of the equation and perhaps will extend toward selling the products.

In the future we will assist in creating “value added” jobs be they pelletizing the biomass to combust for energy, making furniture, converting the flax to linen and linseed for further manufacture (see article on lino-lem), and employing people in high end landscaping services. We are excited about this work and so far have gotten good responses with assistance from the private sector and various government agencies.

Great Lakes Green Chemistry Network Officially Joins Atlantic States Legal Foundation

As of January 1, 2011, Atlantic States Legal Foundation became the official fiscal agent of the Great Lakes Green Chemistry Network (GLGCN), a four-year old organization whose mission is to promote the practice of Green Chemistry in the binational Great Lakes region. The Network started out as a temporary project of Great Lakes United (GLU), who via US EPA funding, provided the seed money to start the organization and acted as the incubator in which the Network was able to grow and expand. GLU will continue as a member of the Network’s Advisory Board and a collaborating partner in Network activities. The GLGCN joins Atlantic States having recently received the Michigan Green Chemistry Governor’s Award for its work in the public sector promoting Green Chemistry. The award was

presented as part of Michigan’s second annual Green-Up conference in October, 2010, at the Kellogg Conference Center at Michigan State University in Lansing, MI. “The Great Lakes Green Chemistry Network is extremely honored to receive this award, particularly as Michigan has played such a leadership role in recognizing the potential of Green Chemistry for both economic development and environmental protection,” said Lin Kaatz Chary, Project Director of the GCGLN as she accepted the award.

Leading up to the Michigan conference, the GLGCN had a very busy summer, with presentations at the American Chemical Society Green Chemistry Network’s annual Green Chemistry and Engineering conference in Washington, D.C. in June. They participated in University of Massachusetts Lowell Alternatives Assessment workshop, traveling to Toronto, Ontario for discussions with Environment Canada and the Ministry of the Environment on the renegotiation of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. GLGCN also presented at the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) Third International Conference on Green Chemistry in Ottawa, Ontario in August. Autumn presentations included participation in the 20th anniversary conference of the journal *New Solutions* in New York in September, and a seminar on Green Chemistry at the annual Biopolymers Symposium in Denver, Colorado.

The Network continues its participation in the ANSI standards setting process which is sponsored by NSF International and the Green Chemistry Institute of the American Chemistry Society. The draft standard, the “Greener Chemicals and Processes Information Standard” was available for public comment in the fall of 2010, and is expected to be completed sometime in 2011. Also planned for early 2011 is the launch of the Great Lakes Green Chemistry Student Network website, in conjunction with the International Year of Chemistry. The goal of the Student Network is for it to become a center for information and networking for students interested in the environment, with interactive tutorials and opportunities to “Ask an Expert” which will be one of its regular features.

Be sure to visit the GLGCN website at its website www.glgc.org, for more information about current activities and archived recordings of our monthly phone seminars with leaders in the field of Green Chemistry.

ASLF Recycling Program

The Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency has recognized Atlantic States Legal Foundation (ASLF) as an OCRRA Blue Ribbon Recycler for practicing “outstanding recycling and waste reduction practices in their workplace operations”.

Even before it was fashionable, Atlantic States Legal Foundation (ASLF) was integrating the principles of ‘reduce, reuse and recycle’ into the fabric of its daily operations. Recycling, composting, and deliberate use of raw materials has been a way of life at ASLF since its inception. Since its establishment in 1982, the group has actively sought to remediate threats to the human and natural environment while promoting the responsible use of our natural resources. Careless waste disposal is a waste of natural resources, and ASLF is proud of Central New York for ranking as New York’s best recyclers.

ASLF Is Growing

Aaron M. Lehman joined ASLF at the beginning of February. He received his Bachelor of Landscape Architecture in May of 2010 from SUNY ESF. Aaron is currently working now with the Bronx River Watershed Initiative project dealing with stormwater management to reduce the amount of pollutants flowing into the Bronx River. ASLF hopes to become the grant administrator for the project. Aaron is currently helping with plans for a vacant lot that is on the corner of Seymour St. near the Rescue Mission. Stormwater management, green jobs, and urban reforestation are practices being focused on for this site. ASLF will also be joined by an outreach coordinator and forester in the near future.

New U.S. Forest Service Grant Funding

Onondaga County Awarded Grants from U.S. Forest Service: Using Urban Forestry as Green Infrastructure for Stormwater Management in Syracuse

ASLF assisted the Onondaga County Department of Water Environment Protection to submit two grant ap-

plications, one of which is using tree planting on four brownfield sites to control contaminated stormwater runoff and another aiming at urban forestry planning for green stormwater infrastructure, totaling over \$300,000. This will be undertaken in collaboration with Restoration Tree Trust of Synapse Partners LLC, the City of Syracuse, and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County. 400 trees are to be planted for the Brownfield project and a plan will be developed analyzing where to locate trees in specific CSO areas to best support the County’s green infrastructure program. ASLF will be undertaking the urban forestry development process in both projects, and will be responsible for populating the chosen planting locations, aid in developing an urban tree nursery, and assist to tie the projects into carbon sequestration by using a Geographic Information System analysis.

ASLF Supports Local Farming Initiative

ASLF began working with local veterans of our Armed Forces in the spring of 2009 by hosting a team of four recent graduates of “A Different Shade of Green”, a green-focused workforce readiness program taught by the Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County. These volunteers spent four weeks at ASLF learning plant identification, preparing the ASLF garden, pulling weeds, planting vegetables, building raised beds for plantings, and sifting the weeds and rocks from the soil removed from their creation of a rain garden near the vegetable garden, with the instruction and support of ASLF volunteer Alicia Radicchi.



Vetfarms is a pilot program – the first of its kind in CNY - created in 2008 by local veteran Tom Bryant as a means to provide veterans with the opportunity to earn a living growing vegetables for market in the peaceful therapeutic setting of working farmland. After attending “Beginning Farmers” training at Cornell Cooperative in Syracuse, Tom set about the task of locating suitable land to farm. In northern Onondaga County a five acre parcel was donated for use by these new farmers, and its sandy loam soil allowed them to grow huge pumpkins, squashes, collard greens, turnips, brussels sprouts, cabbages and peppers.

and drive to succeed at farming, and Atlantic States is supportive of these efforts to keep productive farmland in use for agriculture and away from other, less environmentally valuable development.

Tom has been active in community urban gardens since 1997 in Syracuse, Eastwood and Liverpool. He and his fellow veteran farmers helped the New American Center and several Veterans’ posts with the bountiful harvests from their farming in 2010 and hope to help even more people learn farming and profit from the experience as Vetfarms grows. It is their goal to grow into a vocational rehabilitation program recognized by the Veterans Administration. For more information e-mail Tom Bryant at vetfarms@aslf.org.



Veterans sometimes suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome brought on by some of their military duties. It has been found that farming, nurturing animals, or growing crops relaxes and calms many veterans and increases their quality of life. Many Veterans attended Cornell’s “Different Shade of Green” Veteran Agriculture training program and the idea to create some enhanced training while partnering with local farmers became a reality, and Vetfarms was born as a re-integration program for veterans wishing to learn farming and how to run a farm as a business owner. A second farm in Cicero became involved in 2010 and has helped train Vets in safe machinery practices, planting and harvest schedules, and proper market preparation of harvested crops.

It has been documented by the U.S. Department of Labor that the national average unemployment is about 9.3%, while for veterans it is 14.9%. Vetfarms is building a comprehensive plan to assist a population that has done much for our country; many veterans have grown up in rural areas and have the ready skills



Members of the new Americans program help Vetfarms during harvest

ASLF & New Americans

ASLF is pleased to join with Vet Farms and hopes to expand the program in 2011 and succeeding years. The program is looking into growing fiber, food, and biofuels with crops including hard wood forest restoration, fruit from trees including chestnuts, apples, and walnuts, flax for linen and linseed oil, and black currants. In addition to vets, we are also working with the New Americans Program aimed at providing work for skilled immigrant farmers. We welcome interested people to join our effort that will utilize open spaces in the urban area and unused farmland around Central New York as well as provide green training and good jobs for Central New Yorkers.

About Atlantic States Legal Foundation



Atlantic States Legal Foundation (ASLF) was established in 1982 to provide affordable legal, technical and organizational assistance to individuals, community groups, and other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), as a way to effectively remediate threats to the natural environment. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, ASLF was the principal NGO utilizing the citizen suit provision of the Clean Water Act as a means of forcing polluters to cease the desecration of America's waterways. During that time, and continuing today, we worked cooperatively with local environmental groups and attorneys throughout the United States to deter polluters, and would-be polluters, in a national litigation campaign.

In the early 1990s, ASLF also became known as the lead NGO in the national campaign forcing industries to disclose the extent and volume of toxic materials stored at individual facilities. As a result of a 1998 U.S. Supreme Court decision, continued work under this program has become somewhat curtailed. However, our previous efforts resulted in a vast number of industries becoming accountable to their residential neighbors in relation to potential risks to otherwise uninformed communities.

As ASLF grew, and as the nation's environmental problems and solutions have become more complex, we have been focusing a greater portion of our time and energy providing technical assistance to groups and individuals with specific environmental concerns. We participate extensively in stakeholder negotiations, scientific and technical review and consulting, and community education programs. Our staff scientists work in conjunction with leading experts in the fields of wastewater and mechanical engineering, GIS mapping, chemistry, biology, geology, hydrology, toxicology, and risk assessment, in order to provide affordable, accessible technical expertise to communities in need.

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