

**Town of LaGrange Conservation Advisory Council  
Mile-A-Minute Vine Infestation 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 and choke underlying plants and adversely impact the ecosystem. A local resident spotted Mile-a-Minute (MAM) vine near the Ball field Park in the Town of LaGrange in mid-July, 2007. It was the second case of confirmed infestation in Dutchess County. The infestation covers approximately seven acres and is located along Jackson Creek. If unchecked, it could threaten the native vegetation downstream on Fishkill Creek (a Hudson River estuary).

Town of LaGrange Conservation Advisory Council responded swiftly and worked with Fishkill Creek Watershed Committee and DEC to pull the vines by the roots from the infested area 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 summer students and community service volunteers. Several other organizations, including Cornell Co-operative Master Gardeners, Nature Conservancy Summer Interns and many local citizens volunteered in this effort, despite the heat, tick infestation in the area, and height of the 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 Conservation Advisory Council submitted a full report to the Town Supervisor recommending DEC approved herbicide application to eradicate the MAM vines in densely infested areas where hand pulling was not successful. The Council distributed MAM vine literature to the Town Highway Department, Town Recreation Department and the Town Hall for early detection and prevention. The Council also responded to calls from local residents reporting presence of MAM vines on their property and made site visits to assure them that these were not MAM vines.

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 such as the MAM vine infestation. It also demonstrates the successful collaboration of the media, DEC, the Town and volunteer organizations and local individual volunteers in alleviating the MAM infestation without incurring any significant cost (cost of the plastic bags only).

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