



NYSG's Mary Penney (far right), her Dune and River Stewards and members of the Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District were joined by around a half dozen Entergy employees for Habitat Restoration Day at Deer Creek Marsh WMA.

Photo courtesy of Mary Penney

HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

It's a balmy Friday morning in early August and help is on the way for the eight students in the Eastern Lake Ontario Dune and Salmon River Steward Program. By noon, about 500 feet of snow fencing will be installed along the dunes at Deer Creek Marsh Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Deer Creek Marsh WMA is the southernmost of four public lands along a 17-mile stretch of Eastern Lake Ontario dune and wetlands area—and the closest to the Salmon River corridor—that the stewards frequent to encourage

public appreciation and proper recreation enjoyment.

At 9 a.m., around a half dozen Entergy Nuclear Corp. employees filter in to help make Habitat Restoration Day a reality. Why? In June, Entergy provided a \$10,000 grant to the Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District on behalf of the Steward Program to assist them in their efforts to protect the area. "As a result of our efforts today,

An Entergy volunteer (in black) and three Lake Ontario dune stewards—Danielle Lichtenstein, Ben Robedee, and, far right, Tyler Kukko—put the finishing touches on a new string of snow fencing along Deer Creek's sand dunes. Kukko, a sophomore at SUNY ESF, will help develop a guidebook for the Deer Creek Marsh WMA.

Photo by Paul C. Focazio



an entire stretch of sand dunes will be protected,” said Entergy employee **Tammy Hadlow** to an on-site staff reporter from Oswego’s *The Palladium Times*. NYSG’s **Mary Penney**, who manages the Steward Program, explained to the reporter the importance of the lakeshore’s sand dunes.

Deer Creek’s dunes guard the wetlands, creeks and local communities from harsh westerly winds and storm energy sweeping over the Lake, thus also helping to maintain the biodiversity of the area’s various habitats. Penney cautions, “If the mature dunes at Deer Creek become damaged, it is unlikely that they would be able to return to their current healthy condition because little to no new sand is being added to the system here.”

In addition to covering the costs of necessary materials for the habitat restoration efforts, Entergy will fund the development of a dune trail interpretive guide for Deer Creek Marsh WMA. “We’ll use the guide to help promote environmentally sound use of Deer Creek and nearby parts of the fragile ecosystem that form the Eastern Lake Ontario Dunes and Wetlands Area,” says Penney. Dune Steward **Tyler Kukko**, who will help develop the guide, adds, “I feel people will be more environmentally-friendly here at Deer Creek if they know how fragile and important the dunes are. This new guide will showcase the resources here.”

This effort is the beginning of a funding stream many supporters of the Steward Program hope continues. “The program is working wonderfully well in educating the public on respecting and saving these fragile dunes,” says **Margaret Kastler**, Town Supervisor of Sandy Creek, a northern public area neighbor on the lakeshore. “The continuation of the Steward Program is vital in the protection of Lake Ontario’s dunes, one of the attractions that bring people to these areas to bird watch, walk our beaches and enjoy our gorgeous sunsets.”

— **Paul C. Focazio**



... for more on the event, plus pictures and articles from the stewards, as well as maps of the Eastern Lake Ontario dune system and Salmon River corridor



Dune and Salmon River Stewards worked alongside Entergy volunteers to make Habitat Restoration Day a success.

Photo by Paul C. Focazio