



*Rose Lake  
Plant Materials Center  
Summer  
Newsletter  
2006*

# *Jamaica Bay Salt Marsh Grass Project*

In early May, the Rose Lake PMC became part of a salt marsh cord grass production project, along with the National PMC, West Virginia PMC and the Cape May, New Jersey PMC. The project was initiated by the Cape May, New Jersey PMC and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who are involved with the restoration of Jamaica Bay, which is east of New York City and Brooklyn. The Rose Lake PMC was asked to produce 120,000 salt marsh cord grass plugs for the project.

Between May 18th and 26th, the PMC removed all metal production benches from the greenhouse, secured volunteers and converted the PMC greenhouse into salt marsh ponds. The PMC staff and volunteers constructed (5) 8' wide x 48' long x 8" high ponds on the floor of the greenhouse. The ponds were constructed of 2x8 lumber, lined with plastic and geo-textile material. Volunteers then assembled book planters that were filled with soil and planted with the salt marsh cord grass seed. Since the cord grass grows in the brackish waters of Jamaica Bay, the seed was shipped to Rose Lake PMC in salt water.

After the book planters were seeded, they were placed in the makeshift salt marsh ponds and flooded with water. The plants grew in fresh water conditions until they were established. Salt was gradually added to the water and eventually increased to 20 parts per thousand which acclimated the plants to the salt water conditions found in Jamaica Bay.

On July 18th, the 120,000 salt marsh cord grass were loaded onto a semi-truck for transportation to Jamaica Bay, New York.

A special **Thank You** to all the volunteers, who helped out the staff of the Rose Lake PMC: Jim Andruszewski, Jack Bricker, Brian Buehler, Steve Davis, Penny Derbyshire, Joni Franklin, Mike Guthrie, Monica Holley, Jason Kimbrough, Jim Iaquina, Tim Lequier, Craig Ogg, Corin Malzahn, Marcus Reynolds, Tim Redder, Jeremy Sova, Abby Smith, Dan Sparks, Jim Sweeting, Erin Thelen, Kim Thorp, Sally Van Lieu, and Kevin Wickey.



Turning the greenhouse into salt marsh bays



Assembling the book planters



Transporting assembled book planters to the soil filling room



Mixing the soil



Filling the book planters



Measuring the seed prior to planting



Planting the seed in the book planters





Loading the bays with newly planted book planters



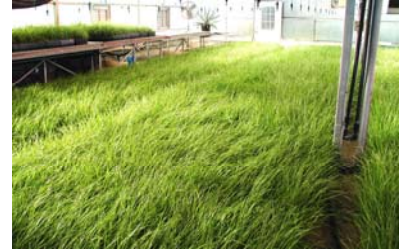
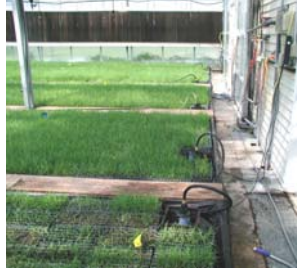
Salt marsh cord grass starting to grow



Our resident frog loved the grasses



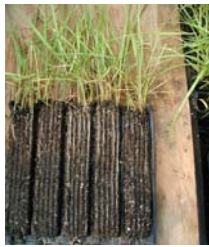
Submersible pumps kept the water circulating



Growing everyday



Grass height and root system the day prior to shipment



The conveyor setup



Loading the plants onto the conveyor



Moving the plants out of the greenhouse



Out of the greenhouse and headed for the loading racks



Salt Marsh Cord Grass being placed in the plant racks to be loaded onto the semi truck



Plants being loaded onto the semi truck for transport to Jamaica Bay



Tired, hot, wet and dirty, this EXCELLENT group of helpers made the job of loading the plants go smoothly.

# *Advanced Plant Evaluations*

## *Virginia Wildrye and Bottlebrush*

Bottlebrush grass (*Elymus hystrix* L.) and Virginia wildrye (*Elymus virginicus* L.) accessions are the subject of advanced plant evaluation at the Rose Lake PMC. Advanced evaluation entries represent “winners” of initial screenings of bottlebrush and Virginia wildrye collections from Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

Bottlebrush grass is an erect, native (Nova Scotia to Quebec and North Dakota, and south of Georgia and Arkansas) cool-season, perennial bunchgrass that reaches 4 feet high. Its common name comes from its bottlebrush-resembling spikelets that become nearly perpendicular to the rachis. Material is being evaluated and selected for restoration or revegetation potential as conservation cover and streambank protection in the Great Lakes and Midwest states.

Virginia wildrye is also a native, cool-season, perennial bunchgrass. It is found in moist woods, meadows, and prairies throughout the United States east of the Rockies. Material is being evaluated and selected for restoration or revegetation potential as a conservation cover and streambank protection in the Great Lakes and Midwest states.

Pending results of their respective advanced plant evaluations, bottlebrush and Virginia wildrye accessions may be named and released to commercial growers.



Bottlebrush Grass



Virginia Wildrye



# *Indiana Plant Materials Committee Members Establish Field Research Plantings and Demonstration Plantings*



Several members of the Indiana Plant Materials Committee, along with other Indiana NRCS and Conservation District employees established field trials designed to evaluate several accessions of Poverty Oatgrass (*Danthonia spicata*) and Canada Bluejoint (*Calamogrostis canadensis*). The team also established a demonstration planting for Icy Blue germplasm Canada wildrye (*Elymus canadensis*). The field site is located in LaPorte County in northern Indiana. Coordination of Indiana NRCS personnel, PMC staff and the land owner was done by District Conservationist Theresa Wojkovich.

Other Indiana NRCS staff included Susannah Hole and Monica Jackson from Lafayette, Brianne Lowe from Rensselaer, Theresa Niccum from Lebanon, and Sheila Batchelor from the LaPorte County Soil and Water Conservation District. John Leif, PMC Manager; John Durling, PMC Agronomist; and Earth Team Volunteer Taylor Durling participated in the field plantings. Land owner Steve Lile prepared the field sites for planting. Steve was able to provide a site in upland conditions that is appropriate for poverty oatgrass and also had a wetland site that was appropriate for Canada bluejoint.

Rose Lake PMC personnel started plants from seed in March of 2006 and grew them in the greenhouse until the plants were ready to be transplanted to the field. John Durling developed the plot layout, including replicates and randomization within replicates, which was used to establish the field trials. The Rose Lake PMC staff will work closely with Theresa Wojkovich to maintain and evaluate the plots for the next three years. The purpose of the project is to identify accessions of poverty oatgrass and Canada bluejoint that have good characteristics for use in conservation plantings, and release those accessions to the public through the Plant Materials Program.



# Michigan NRCS Employee Meeting/Picnic



Jack Bricker, Michigan STC welcomed Michigan NRCS employees to the state meeting/ picnic. and acknowledged the NRCS retirees.

On July 26th under gray skies and the prediction of thunderstorms the Rose Lake PMC hosted the Michigan NRCS Employee Meeting/ Picnic.

State Conservationist Jack Bricker welcomed everyone and acknowledged the retirees. A BBQ lunch was served followed by Sterling Armstrong, a motivational and healthy lifestyle speaker, who had most of the group up and dancing. Michigan DNR and Smokey the Bear presented a talk on fire prevention and the history of Smokey. Following Smokey, the group could attend different presentations which included:

- Jerry Grigar's trip to Belarus
- Fred Gasper's talk on Torch Lake
- MSU student Andy Tluczek's tour of his research project on the Emerald Ash Borer at the ash grove on the grounds of the PMC.
- A poster presentation of the Jamaica Bay Project
- Tour of the Rose Lake PMC



Hotdogs and burgers along with an array of passing dishes were on the menu for the day.

There were door prizes, the amazing treasure hunt race, plant a seed project for the kids and the piñata, all of which were completed or almost completed before the rains came.



The piñata was a big hit, literally.



Michigan DNR and Smokey the Bear gave a presentation to all the attendees



A good time was had by all, maybe some more than others.



Jerry Grigar's presentation on his trip to Belarus



Fred Gasper's presentation on the Torch Lake project

## New Student Intern



I am Seth Earl. I am a student intern for the NRCS Plant Materials Center this summer. I would like to take a moment to introduce myself. I am a senior in the Soils and Crop Science Department at Colorado State University. Originally I am from Hillsdale County Michigan, where I attended school and Camden-Frontier high school. I also competed for the Branch Area Careers Center in the Michigan Environmental contests from 1999-2002. My team was fortunate enough to win the contest in both 2001, and 2002 competing at the national contests which were held in Mississippi, and Massachusetts. In 2003-2004 I was elected to the Michigan FFA State Sentinel to travel across the state to promote agricultural education, and career pathways within the agricultural industry. I interned last summer for the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Ingham County working as a student trainee. Upon graduation in the spring of 2007 from college I will be returning to Michigan to work within the Agricultural and Natural Resources field.

## Ash Seed Collection Reminder

As many of you may have noticed this year there is a lot of ash seed on the trees. This is a good time to be looking for ash trees. The seed is light green and contrast with the dark green leaves of the trees. You can spot an ash tree from quite a distance. So, please get out among the trees and spot the ash trees then use the information on the [ashseed.org](http://ashseed.org) web site to identify the specific ash. Note the trees location and return when the seed has turned a light to golden brown. It will be ready to harvest at that time. Also, follow the directions on the web site for handling, storage and shipping of the seed.

**“Do NOT”** collect any seed at this time. The seed is still green and hasn’t matured. But do enjoy your time outdoors and look forward to returning in the fall.

As always, contact the Rose Lake Plant Materials Center with any questions.

## Ash Seed Collection Workshops

*Sponsored by the National Forest Service*

Learn the skills of collecting ash seeds. Class size is limited so please contact: **Cheri Ford**  
[caford@fs.fed.us](mailto:caford@fs.fed.us) or (906) 932-1330 ex. 314. as soon as possible.

### Dates and Locations:

#### St. Ignace, Michigan

August 31, 2006

9:00 am-3:30 pm

Little Bear East Arena & Community Center

#### Ashland, Wisconsin

September 21, 2006

9:00 am-3:30 pm

Bureau of Indian Affairs Office



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