

Finger Lakes Institute Community Outreach and Public Service

Sarah Meyer, Community Outreach Coordinator

A native of Geneva, NY, Sarah Anne Meyer pursued her Bachelors of Science (2000) and Masters of Professional Studies (2003) from the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse, NY. Her higher education concentrated on information and technology, environmental science, and water and wetland resource studies. Sarah was appointed Community Outreach Coordinator for the Finger Lakes Institute in April of 2004.

As Community Outreach Coordinator, Sarah provides leadership and direction for the FLI community outreach and public service program. Sarah provides ongoing lecture series, publications, educational exhibits, and internships for college students. Major projects have included creating an expanded clearinghouse of resource information; managing content of the FLI website; organizing guest lectures, public symposiums, workshops, conferences; and designing and planting the FLI Demonstration Rain Garden. Since 2004, Sarah has made significant strides to provide educational experiences pertaining to the Finger Lakes environment that benefit the Finger Lakes region. Programs include such topics as Water Quality, Invasive Species, Global Climate Change, Alternative Energies, Wildlife Management, Regional Planning, Watershed Management, Tourism and Recreation, Forest Management, Green Home Design, Gardening and Landscaping, Wine and Viticulture, and other regional environmental issues.

In addition to outreach, Sarah coordinates public service projects that include Finger Lakes beach cleanups, water quality monitoring days, field trips to regional natural areas, and an annual Alternative Spring Break Trip for Hobart and William Smith Colleges. She often presents to area interest groups, such as research groups, garden clubs, schools, and national conferences on topics relating to the Finger Lakes.

Milestones Sarah is particularly proud of accomplishing in her 6 years at the FLI include:

- 4,000+ persons on FLI Mailing List
- 225+ Community Outreach and Public Service Events
- 7000+ attendees to FLI Events
- 1000+ Event Feedback Forms Completed since January 2006
- Advised over 30 FLI Student Program Participants
- 3 Alternative Spring Break Trips for over 35 college students to clean debris from the Cedar and Ohio Rivers

Sarah credits her early interest in the environment and protecting our natural resources to her participation in the Hobart and William Smith Science on Seneca (SOS) Educational Program, Girl Scouts of America, and the Student Conservation Association.

Since receiving her degrees Sarah has been employed by the Federation of New York State Solid Waste Associations, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, The Great Lakes Research Consortium, and the United States Forest Service Wrangell Ranger District in Wrangell, AK. Through her experiences, Sarah has gained skills in and knowledge of environmental education, information design and watershed hydrology. In her free time, Sarah enjoys kayaking within the Finger Lakes Region, travel, nature photography, cycling and gardening.

If you would like to contact Sarah, please e-mail or call her at: smeyer@hws.edu, 315-781-4382

Service Through Science –Express your Values through Practice

The Finger Lakes Institute Community Outreach and Public Service Program recently received a 2010 Special Projects Grant from the Ontario County Water Resources Council to coordinate the *Service through Science: Engaging the Public in Environmental Stewardship*, a program that pairs public lectures with stewardship activities within Ontario County. The program recruits community members of all ages, skills, and experiences to serve as stewards of Ontario County's natural environment. Through a series of educational outreach and environmental stewardship activities, new stewards participate in hands-on, field-based service programs that contribute to the protection and improvement of the county's natural resources. While the educational outreach component of this program frames a critical awareness about the scientific considerations to natural resource protection, the field-based service programs build residents confidence in, and sensitivity for, environmental quality of Ontario County.



"I created this program to offer not only the knowledge but also the understanding and life experiences to be better stewards of the Finger Lakes. I am trying to entice all types of learners, of all ages, to express their values through practice. I'd like to inspire our regional community members become active stewards of our surroundings." says Sarah Meyer, community outreach coordinator at the Finger Lakes Institute.

Meyer has coordinated multiple Service Through Science lectures and stewardship projects throughout 2010, all of which are free, open to the public, and provide transportation and refreshments to stewards. Presenters have included Jim Engel of White Oak Nursery speaking on preserving the biodiversity of the Finger Lakes and managing the Kashong Conservation Area, recently acquired by the Town of Geneva, in a way that promotes the growth of native trees and shrubs and balanced habitat for birds, insects, and other wildlife. A stewardship project to control invasive and planting native species at the Kashong Conservation Area is tentatively planned for the Fall.

On April 24th, 2010 students from Hobart and William Smith Colleges gathered bags of litter and trash from the roadside of West Lake Rd. along Honeoye Lake as part of the Annual Honeoye Valley Clean Up Day. On Sunday, April 25th members of the HWS Greens House prepared the FLI's Demonstration Rain Garden, a stormwater best management practice, and yard by deadheading plants, turning over soil, spreading mulch, and removing dead branches from the forested back yard. The next Service Through Science Stewardship Project will be the creation of a Erosion Control Garden on Sandy Bottom Beach in Honeoye, NY on May 8th, 2010. A Seneca Lake Beach Cleanup is also scheduled for September 25th, 2010.

The Finger Lakes Institute continues to seek partner organizations in Ontario County having a need for volunteers and the ability to host a stewardship service volunteer site, which may include a beach cleanup, water monitoring, invasive species hand-pulling event, tree planting, trail construction, community garden, etc. Please contact Sarah Meyer, FLI Community Outreach Coordinator, at smeyer@hws.edu to propose a stewardship service activity and potential educational program coordinated by the FLI.