

Published: February 23, 2009 11:00 pm, The Daily Star

OCCA school grants available for 2009

For the 11th straight year, the Otsego County Conservation Association has dedicated funds to local schools for educational projects with environmental themes. The grants are available to teachers in all public and private schools in Otsego County. OCCA is prepared to grant a maximum of \$250 to proposals submitted and approved through December.

"This kind of initiative, along with our many other projects and programs, is an example of why OCCA needs to receive unrestricted funds as contributions to our annual fund," said Erik Miller, OCCA executive director.

Last year, Gilbertsville-Mount Upton Central School received funds for the purchase of hand-held global positioning systems for the study of natural areas surrounding the school. Also in 2008, Cooperstown Central School received funds to design and create an organic garden for the introduction of sustainable agriculture to its students. Other projects funded in past years have included storm drain marking, guides for tree identification, design and construction of a raised-bed garden in a school court yard and binoculars for bird identification.

There is no standard application form; however, proposals should be presented clearly and concisely and be accompanied by a budget, officials said. Guidelines for applying and for requirements, such as progress reports following receipt of grants, are available through the OCCA office at 547-4488 or by e-mailing director@occainfo.org.

OCCA is a private, nonprofit environmental organization with a membership of 500. It promotes the enjoyment and sustainable use of Otsego County's natural resources through education, advocacy, resource management, research and planning. For more information, visit www.occainfo.org.