

## **OCCA offers grants to local schools for environmental projects**

For the twelfth straight year, the Otsego County Conservation Association (OCCA) has dedicated funds to local schools for educational projects with environmental themes. These grants are available to teachers in all public and private schools in Otsego County. OCCA is prepared to grant a maximum of \$250 per project to proposals submitted and approved through December, 2010.

“This kind of initiative, along with our many other projects and programs, is an example of why OCCA needs to receive unrestricted donations as contributions to our Annual Fund,” said Erik Miller, OCCA executive director.

Through OCCA’s educational mini-grants, 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, and Cooperstown Central School received monies 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. Guidelines for applying and for requirements, such as progress reports following receipt of grants, are available through the OCCA office, 547-4488, or [admin@occainfo.org](mailto:admin@occainfo.org).

OCCA is a private, non-profit environmental organization with a membership topping 700. It promotes the enjoyment and sustainable use of Otsego County’s natural resources through education, advocacy, resource management, research, and planning. Among other things, the organization publishes a 40-page booklet for outdoor recreation titled “Otsego Walks and Paddles,” a guide for recycling items not included in the county’s recycling program titled “Recycling: Above and Beyond,” and an informational brochure on light pollution. All of the publications, as well as a comprehensive overview of OCCA, its history, and its programs, are available at [www.occainfo.org](http://www.occainfo.org).