

# Teaching Youth. . .

## *...about the Great Lakes*

This May, western New York will once again welcome hundreds of students and their teachers in grades 5-9 from states and provinces around the Great Lakes basin to the fourth biennial **Great Lakes Student Summit** ([www.greatlakesed.org/2001summit.htm](http://www.greatlakesed.org/2001summit.htm)). **Helen Domske**, NYSG coastal education specialist and associate director of the Great Lakes Program, has been part of the planning teams and has served as a co-host and workshop presenter for each of the Student Summits. Says Domske, "We're looking forward to hosting students from around the Great Lakes, who will be sharing their research projects and environmental concerns. These young people truly are the hope of the new

millennium and the future health of Great Lakes ecosystem will depend on their commitment." Designed to inform, inspire and motivate student interest and involvement on issues affecting the Great Lakes basin ecosystem, this NYSG-supported event will feature field trips to the Niagara Falls region and a boat trip on the Buffalo River and Lake Erie that will involve hands-on water quality testing. In addition, students will showcase their own research projects on topics such as non-point source pollution effects and watershed restoration and attend workshops relating to Great Lakes issues. At the conclusion of the Summit, students will summarize what they've learned and vow to protect the Great Lakes into the future by writing "A Promise to Future Generations."

- Paul C. Focazio

## *...about the value of native plants*

A little over a year ago, New York Sea Grant established the **Allan Overton Memorial Coastal Habitat Restoration and Education Endowment** at Cornell University with the goal of involving young people and their teachers in hands-on coastal restoration projects. The first project, completed in October 2000, was the installation of a native plant educational garden at the Village of Quogue's dock on Long Island's South Shore. Around the Island, and across the state and nation, there is a growing interest in using native plants in public and private landscapes. Since native plants are adapted to local environmental conditions, they can be maintained with less irrigation, fertilization, and pest control. Long overlooked by horticulturists because they may be less "showy" than other plants, they are now coming to the forefront of interest. **Ellen Talmage**, a local grower of native plants on Long Island, volunteered many hours meeting

with the Quogue Mayor **Thelma Georgeson** to envision a design for the garden. The Village contributed time and money to prepare the site for planting day and The Long Island Shore and Beach Preservation Association recruited young people from the Westhampton Middle School to help. Some 20 students and their teachers spent two hours planting and installing educational signs about the garden. The mayor hired a professional landscape designer to install native plants around the rest of the newly restored village dock, an area much larger than a youth project could achieve.

Donations of any size can be made to the Allan Overton Endowment by sending a check made payable to Cornell University to Robert Kent, New York Sea Grant, 3059 Sound Avenue, Riverhead, NY 11901.

**Village of Quogue Mayor Thelma Georgeson was on hand to help install a native plant garden funded through the Allan Overton Endowment, with additional support from the Village.**

Photo and article by Robert Kent

