

CDEA News

The Newsletter of the
New York State Conservation District Employees' Association, Inc.

January 2017

A Letter from the President

P.J. Emerick, President, Conservation District Employees Association

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped to organize this year's Water Quality Symposium. From the instructors who agreed to teach classes to our partners who will participate in the Farmers' Market, and everyone in between, thank you!

The Water Quality Symposium and the New York State CDEA Annual Meeting will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Syracuse, NY during March 14th-17th, 2017. Registrations are due no later than February 10, 2017. Register online [here](#).

Have a safe and happy holiday season.

Sincerely,
P.J. Emerick

Yates, Chemung & Schuyler Districts Partner for Stream Restoration

Jim Balyszak, District Manager, Yates County Soil & Water Conservation District

Yates recently partnered with Chemung and Schuyler Districts to complete repairs along the Keuka Outlet Trail resulting from 2014 storm damage. Funding for this work came from the NYS EPF through the efforts of Senator O'Mara.

The Keuka Outlet Trail is owned by a local, non-profit group and allows public access over 6 miles of walking trail along the Keuka Lake outlet between Penn Yan and Dresden, NY. It is a prized

community resource used by residents and visitors. Yates District staff performed preliminary damage surveys and cross sections. Jimmie Joe Carl at the Chemung District completed the designs necessary to secure the permits to complete the work. Chemung and Schuyler provided equipment and operators to install the projects and staff from Yates moved materials, assisted with the

See Restoration, page 3.

Restoration (from page 2)

installations and completed seeding of disturbed soils.

Work began in October this year and the low lake levels due to the summer drought assisted in keeping minimal flows in the Keuka outlet during construction.

One section was a vertical slope failure with a raw bank adding to sediment loads and creating a public safety issue encroaching upon the trail. The second section repaired several hundred feet of eroding bank.

See Restoration, page 4.



Site 1 vertical failure.



Site 1 trail encroachment.



Site 1 repair.



Site 1 repair.



Site 1 repair.

Restoration (from page 3)



Site 2 repair.



Site 2 repair.



Site 2 repair.



Site 2 repair.

Successful Construction Season at the Herkimer County SWCD

Ryan Huggins, Natural Resource Conservation Technician, Herkimer County Soil & Water Conservation District

It has been another successful construction season this past fall at the Herkimer County Soil and Water Conservation District. The Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program continues to attract interest from many landowners throughout the county. Our most recent

completed AEM project was a Tier 4 cattle lane and stream crossing project for Cedar Knoll Farm in the Town of Danube.

Cedar Knoll Farm is a small 160 acre dairy farm owned and operated by Donald and Erin

Shutts. One main issue for the farm was the inaccessibility to approximately 15 acres of pasture due to a Nowadaga Creek Tributary. Because this portion of pasture was landlocked, it could only be accessed by crossing the stream.

See Construction page 5.

Construction (from page 4)

After prioritizing areas of concern and factoring in Don's goals, conservation plans were prepared to install a cattle lane and stream crossing. With the

creek being shallow to bedrock and having a large watershed, a low flow crossing was designed rather than culverts. In the end, the project was successfully

installed and turned out great. Don will begin using the crossing next year and looks forward to working with us on future projects.



Before.



Before.



After.



After.

Wise Words from Our District Family

Interviewing seasoned District employees who share some words of wisdom



Jim Balyszak
Yates County Soil & Water Conservation District
28 years



Q. How long have you been working at your SWCD? If you have worked for more than one District, please let us know the counties, positions, and years worked.

A. My initial work was with Cayuga County SWCD in the late 1970s operating a weed harvester during the summers while attending SUNY ES&F. I joined Yates SWCD in 1988 managing the harvesting program then assisted with water quality monitoring, developing watershed management plans, starting septic system inspection

programs and learning stormwater management from co-workers. I was promoted to District Manager when Les Travis took a position with the State Committee.

Q. What have you accomplished over the years with your District that you are most proud of?

A. The growth and strength of the technical services we're now able to provide to residents, ag producers,

contractors and municipal officials. This is the direct result of five dedicated staff members in our office.

Q. Why have you continued to work at your Soil and Water Conservation District?

A. The variety of work and new challenges has made for an interesting and rewarding career.

See Wise, page 7.

Wise (from page 6)

Q. How have you seen District programs, or their focuses, change over the years?

A. As Districts have taken on additional roles and responsibilities to protect our resources it also makes us more visible and valuable to both the taxpayers and our municipal representatives.

Q. What words of wisdom do you have for a newly hired District employee?

A. Embrace the challenges and challenging people you'll meet during your career.

Q. When did you first learn or hear about Soil and Water Conservation Districts?

A. While working for the Youth Conservation Corps at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge.

Q. What made you decide to apply for a job with your District?

A. Who in their right mind would turn down \$17,500 a year?

Q. Did your education prepare you for your job as a

District employee?

A. My degree in Natural Resources Management provided a good foundation for a District career.

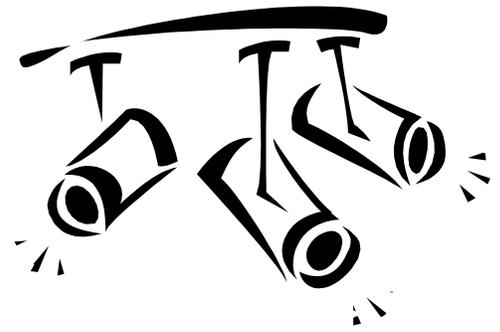
Q. Please share with us a humorous moment from your time at your District.

A. We started one of the first "grass carp" programs in 1993 and serviced Yates and a number of surrounding counties. We would even deliver and stock them in the ponds and one year we supplied almost 1,000.

At that time grass carp were only available from a handful of hatcheries in the south and we had them air shipped to the Rochester airport. Each year there were flight delays and the Rochester Delta air freight office would absolutely not, under any circumstance, bribe or threat answer their phone so we could check on the flights. So we'd show up at the scheduled arrival time only to wait...and wait...

So one evening we got to chat with a waiting hearse driver...unlike his delivery, we still had to get to all our stops and try to keep our deliveries alive...

Another delayed shipment found us navigating a nasty hillside lane during a thunderstorm at o-dark-thirty



and not quite reaching the pond with two wheel drive. The high beams of the truck lights were barely enough to see while trying to temper the bags with 50 degree pond water. The fish got a quick stocking when the lightening started...

Another moonless, midnight delivery found us at the edge of a pond trying not to wake up the owner, nasty dog or whichever one might have the gun. I just kept saying "this doesn't look like the right pond?" It had been two months since I was there during daylight hours and after a few more minutes figured out we were indeed at the neighbors...

Picking up Chinese food just before the store closed at 11:00PM for a pond side dinner at our last delivery stop...

And another, dark night thunderstorm huddled in the back of the truck adding pond water to fish bags and barely able to hear each other yelling with the rain pounding on the aluminum cap...

And one fine, sunny afternoon delivery at a gorgeous pond that has the nicest outhouse I've ever had the pleasure of using...screened windows, vented and self-closing door!

And Now, a Human Interest Story from Niagara County...

Darcy Rae Tone, District Secretary/Assistant Treasurer , Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District

One morning, NRCS Resource Conservationist Charles K. was on his way to an appointment, when all of a sudden he noticed cars in front of him swerving to avoid something in the road. It was a dog! (gasp) As the other people kept driving, Charlie stopped to see if the pup was alright. Well, he seemed to be real friendly, a bit older, a little disheveled, with a collar but no tags. Then Charlie thought, what am I going to do with him? I can't be late for my appointment, but I can't leave him in this very busy roadway either. That's when Charlie decided to call the office for backup.

Being the dog lovers that we all are, we told him to drop the dog off and we would "pet" sit until he returned. But of course, we couldn't just sit back and watch this poor lost senior miss his family. We had to DO SOMETHING. So that's when the rest of the USDA Service Center Team (SWCD and FSA) went into action! There were photos taken, Facebook posts,

calls made to local vet offices, and then a ride through the neighborhood knocking on doors and businesses. Someone realized that the collar he had on was for an electric fence. "Those collars are linked to a location" he said. So it was quickly dismantled to find the serial number and a phone call was made to the fence company. We thought we had a lead, but it fizzled when we took Charlie (yup, we named him after his rescuer) to the address we were given and that wasn't his home. (Sniffle).

So he became our office mascot for the day while we worked. We realized he couldn't see or hear too well and he didn't care for the food we offered him...he made a very quiet, polite visitor. Charlie (the employee) got back from his appointment and decided to take Charlie (the dog) home for the night. They got an early start, and the clock ticked down the end of the day for the rest of us to go home, too.

All of a sudden ...the phone rang! It was a lady asking about her dog ...she got our number from the vet's office! After a quick, excited and relieved call to Charlie (the employee, of course) to give him the woman's information, and with a bunch of high fives around the office, we noticed it was 4:55 on the clock. Case solved with 5 minutes to spare. Good job, USDA Service Center Team!! (Cue the music crescendo).

UPDATE: Charlie (the dog) was reunited with his family, who confirmed he is 14yrs old, hard of hearing and almost blind. He lives just around the corner and up the hill from where he was found. His owner thought he might have been out searching for her son, who had recently left for college. (Sigh).

All names have been removed to protect the innocent. Except Charlie (the employee). Good job, Charlie. (Thumbs up).

Employees Gather for Annual Meeting

Kelly Emerick, Executive Director, Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District

Division I and II of the Conservation District Employee's Association hosted a combined annual meeting on December 9th at Stewart Lodge in Mendon Ponds Park, Monroe County. The meeting began with a roundtable welcome from representatives from Districts of Division II including Livingston,



See Meeting, Page 9.

Meeting (from page 8)

Monroe, Onondaga, Ontario, Seneca, Wayne and Yates counties, plus Districts of Division I including Chautauqua, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans and Wyoming counties. Judy Bennett, Division I Representative, and Kelly Emerick, Division II Representative, began the meeting with opening up the floor to partners. A partner report from NYS Soil & Water Conservation Committee was

given by Victor DiGiacomo, WNY Regional Area Environmental Analyst. Next, discussions throughout the meeting included updates to the CDEA website, training opportunities for employees, the Frank Bratt Scholarship program, NYS Fair and NYS Envirothon. Employees were also encouraged to register early for the 2017 Water Quality Symposium, where Kelly and Judy highlighted the

entertainment being held throughout the event. Once the meeting concluded, everyone that attended brought a dish to pass; and as we all know, the SWCD family loves to eat...and WOW, did we eat! Wrapping up the meeting was an entertaining gift exchange. Merry times were had by all!

Kelly and Judy would like to Thank Everyone that attended!



Your **EPIC** story could be here!

Email your news to hcswcd@frontiernet.net



Thank you for making CDEA News
a continued success!

CDEA Wine Glass Tour

Cheers! We all love our CDEA wine glasses.

Email photos of your CDEA wine glass in action to hcswd@frontiernet.net for inclusion in this new column.



Susan Lewis enjoys Painted Pail Red to start off her vacation.



Not just for wine! Caitlin Stewart rings in the New Year with her husband and uses her CDEA wine glasses as a special way to serve homemade calamari and spicy cocktail sauce.

 A promotional poster for the Water Quality Symposium. The background is a blue, rippling water surface. A black banner with white stars and a scalloped edge is at the top, containing the text 'Water Quality Symposium' in yellow. Below the banner, the dates 'March 14 - 17, 2017' and the location 'DoubleTree by Hilton in Syracuse NY' are written in light blue. At the bottom, a hand icon points to the text 'Registrations due February 10' and the URL 'http://www.nyscdea.com/employees/symposium.html'.

Water Quality Symposium

March 14 - 17, 2017
DoubleTree by Hilton in Syracuse NY

Registrations due February 10
<http://www.nyscdea.com/employees/symposium.html>

Celebrate!

.Tim Welch is a new, friendly face at the Genesee County SWCD. He is the new Conservation District Technician, providing experience in agriculture and a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science from SUNY Brockport. Tim will be completing a variety of work for the District from assisting with agricultural planning, to technical design, to water quality monitoring. Tim recently became a Certified L1 Coordinator for the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAACC) and will be assessing culverts in the County. He may look like Yukon Cornelius, yet Tim is a great addition to the team! Be sure to say hi to Tim at the 2017 Water Quality Symposium!



Where in New York is Ronny Raindrop?

The brainchild of Nichelle Billhardt, Lewis County Soil & Water Conservation District District Manager, CDEA News is proud to present **Where in New York is Ronny Raindrop?** By evaporation or precipitation, by sublimation or freezing, Ronny thrills crowds all across New York State. Submit your photos of Ronny with a brief description of what he's doing and where he is. The garden gnome ain't got nuttin' on Ronny!



Ronny at the State Envirothon, volunteers are the key to making any event run smoothly!
Thank you to all who support and volunteer at our local Envirothons and at the State!

Getting Conservation on the Ground in 2016

Caitlin Stewart, Conservation Educator, Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District

Projects, programs, and events completed by the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District got conservation on the ground throughout 2016. Invasive species, water quality, and erosion control initiatives promoted natural resources, protected public safety, and saved taxpayer dollars.



Conservation Technician Lenny Croote jots down GPS coordinates that will be used for a feasibility study of East Mountain for an Emergency Tower Management Project.

“The SWCD staff members are proud to serve the public and protect the county’s natural resources,” said manager Elizabeth Mangle. “Our invasive species program includes mapping, management, and education that are essential to saving taxpayer dollars and enhancing tourism. Dry hydrant design and installation are

available to fire districts and municipalities to protect public safety. 960 pounds of plastic was kept out of the waste stream thanks to fantastic partnerships with marinas who participated in our new Boat Storage Plastic Recycling Program. We work to evolve our programs into the best version for the health of our environment and the well being of our landowners.”

Grants

The District partners with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to offer the Resource Conservation Partnership Program that provides financial assistance to residents for high tunnels, forest management plans and wildlife habitat enhancement practices. Three contracts were funded for county landowners in 2016 totaling \$13,216. The towns of Arietta and Lake Pleasant were awarded Aquatic Invasive Species Spread Prevention Program grants for boat stewards and decontamination stations totaling \$382,250, and the District assists with online reporting and reimbursement requests. The District is working to develop and implement three Watershed Revitalization Plans that preserve the county’s economic and ecologic viability.

Invasive Species

The Regional Inlet Invasive Plant Program is managed by the District, and 435 hours of Japanese knotweed treatment

was coordinated. Staff removed 500 pounds of purple loosestrife from right-of-ways. Presentations, information booths, and articles educated the public about new invasions and spread prevention.

Water Quality

The Water Testing Program now offers certified results for bacteria analysis, and landowners and businesses dropped off 66 samples during the summer. The Department of Environmental Conservation and the District partnered up for the annual weed survey on Lake Adirondack, and aquatic plant



The Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District partnered with local marinas to collect and recycle boat storage plastic, and this bale of plastic is ready for recycling at the Lake Pleasant Transfer Station.

populations continue to decrease due to grass carp. Twenty-one lakes were monitored for 12 parameters including pH, conductivity, nitrates, total phosphorus, and dissolved oxygen during this summer’s

Conservation (from page 12)



Summer intern Alex Bielli (left) and Conservation Educator Caitlin Stewart collect water samples on Lake Pleasant that will be analyzed for chlorophyll a, a pigment in algae that indicates lake productivity.

Lake Monitoring Program. District staff keep a watchful eye out for changes in the data that could indicate a pollution problem. Two lake associations participated in the Volunteer Water Monitoring Program and checked their shorelines for conductivity spikes that could indicate faulty septic systems. Other water quality initiatives included culvert assessments for fish passage and providing shoreline best management practices to the public.

Erosion Control

Staff assisted municipalities and landowners with erosion and sediment control problems, road restoration and

stabilization, and critical area seeding. Hydroseeding projects across the county prevented erosion, and 8 acres were stabilized. The Elbow Creek Protection Project on Gilmantown Road, Wells utilized biotic soil media, coconut blankets, and coir logs to prevent soil erosion, protect water quality, and alleviate infrastructure safety concerns.

Green Services

Mined land and reclamation plans were provided to landowners. Staff assisted the county with collecting and recycling 3,000 pounds of paper. Modifications and repairs to dry hydrants in Lake Pleasant and Long Lake were made, facilitating fire suppression. The Boat Storage Plastic Recycling Program worked with marinas to take 960

pounds of plastic out of the waste stream. GIS mapping projects were completed. Staff helped to establish a trail and complete a feasibility survey for the Emergency Management Tower Project.

Conservation Education

The Hamilton County Envirothon and Conservation Field Day educated youth about the importance of natural resource protection. More than 1,413 people from kindergartners to adults attended conservation education presentations and events. Staff assisted the public with over 717 information requests. The yearly total Facebook post reach was over 100,000 people.

“2016 has been an incredible year for conservation, and my staff are excited to bring this momentum forward into 2017,” said Mangle.



Beth Gillis of the Lake Champlain Lake George Regional Planning Board explains how rain gardens can prevent pollution during the Landowners Take Care Workshop.

The District has been working to manage and promote the wise use of natural resources in Hamilton County since 1965. For more information go to www.hcswcd.com or call 518-548-3991.

Newsletter Flashback

Showcasing the newsletters of yesteryear

July 1987

DIVISION III

Oneida Co Margaret Bush has resigned as the District Technician and she is now part time Soil Conservationist for SCS at Herkimer and Oneida Counties.

DIVISION IV

Lewis Co. Jack Smith, District Manager, has resigned and is being replaced by Christine Watkins who will be a technician.

Gary Klee, retired SCS employee, has been employed as a part time District Technician.

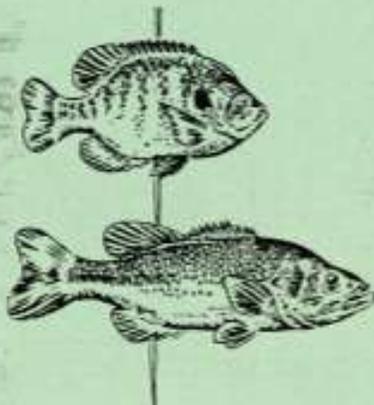
Essex Co. Fence Jumper District Office Manager, Suzette Benway, is resigning to work for SCS as a Conservation Technician. Her job is being advertised now

St. Lawrence Co. District Manager Hal Ramsey has resigned. His job is being advertised.

Hamilton Co. Susan Eldridge has left the part time position as District Clerk and gone full time at the County Treasurer's Office. Her position was filled by Janice Reynolds.

DIVISION V

Herkimer Co. Ted Teletnick, Dave Lupinski and SCS Technician Andy Michael and Ron Kaplewicz went fishing together at Lake Ontario and several large fish were caught.



Fulton Co. Paul Salon, D.C. is leaving after 4 yrs. He is going to Plant Material Center for SCS.

Schoharie Co. We had a tour for Federal, State and local County officials to view Emergency Watershed Protection work done with 403 funds.

Otsego Co Otsego Co. has just purchased two AT&T 6300 computers.

Montgomery Co Matthew Brower, District Technician, is going back to College. He is one of the first two students accepted for admission to the new 4 yr. Bachelor of Technology degree program at the State Ag & Tech. College at Cobleskill. Matthew is out sick at the present time. The District is looking for summer help from a student at the College.

The District is busy with 403 work because of the flooding. The Government gave \$140,000 in federal funds for streambank flooding in the county; this work is almost completed.

Improvements are being made to storage barn with water facilities and toilet facilities as well as a heated working room and phone service.

The Board of Supervisors presented Montgomery Co. Soil and Water Conservation District a Proclamation for Soil Stewardship Week. Alice accepted in behalf of the Directors and office staff.

Schenectady Co. Schenectady Co. SWCD is looking for a greenhouse manager with experience in horticulture.

Bob Bean has resigned to work with the highway department.

Newsletter Flashback

Showcasing the newsletters of yesteryear

July 1987

DIVISION VI

Ulster Co. On May 27 the Ulster County Soil and Water District conducted a tour of the restoration work that was in progress on the flood damaged sites in the Town of Shandaken. Over \$892,000 of federal funds was provided to Ulster County to install protective measures on the critical streambanks.

Our new District Technician began work June 1. She is Gigi Marks. Gigi graduated from Cornell University's School of Agriculture with a degree in Agronomy.

As of July 6, Marjorie Faber was assigned to the Kingston Field Office as SCS District Conservationist replacing George Sisco. This change makes the office one of the few, if not the only, "all female" field office in New York State.

Dutchess Co. Laura Tessier, District Manager of Westchester, Norm Benson, District Manager of Dutchess County and Jim Hotaling, District Manager of Cayuga County have been selected as guest speakers at the Empire State Chapter of the Soil Conservation Society of America's Annual Meeting in Syracuse November 13-14. Jim Hotaling will address Soil Conservation and Water Quality while Laura Tessier and Norm Benson will focus on Urban Suburban Soil Erosion and Water Quality programs carried out by their respective Districts.

Mark Mclean, graduate of SUNY, New Paltz, began his duties as District Technician on June 1 to provide additional staff for the District's expanding urban Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Program.



Grandma Dirt is filling in for "Miss Dirt," who is sunning herself at Lake George! (Notice the family resemblance)

DEAR GRANDMA DIRT: Since Ollie North is from Columbia County, could he qualify for a District Technician job with their District Office?

Answer: Only when he can tell the difference between contours and contras.

DEAR GRANDMA DIRT: If Ollie doesn't qualify for the technician job what about Admiral Poindexter?

Answer: He definitely knows quite a bit about diversions.

DEAR GRANDMA DIRT: Can your common conference chair hold the weight of a common(?) bear?

Answer: That's easy, just think back to the Employees Banquet at the training session. If that doesn't help please check the following before and after pictures.

Before & After



Conservation District Employees Association

“Your local Soil and Water Conservation District provides ongoing programs and services to conserve, enhance and protect soil and water resources in your community.”

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