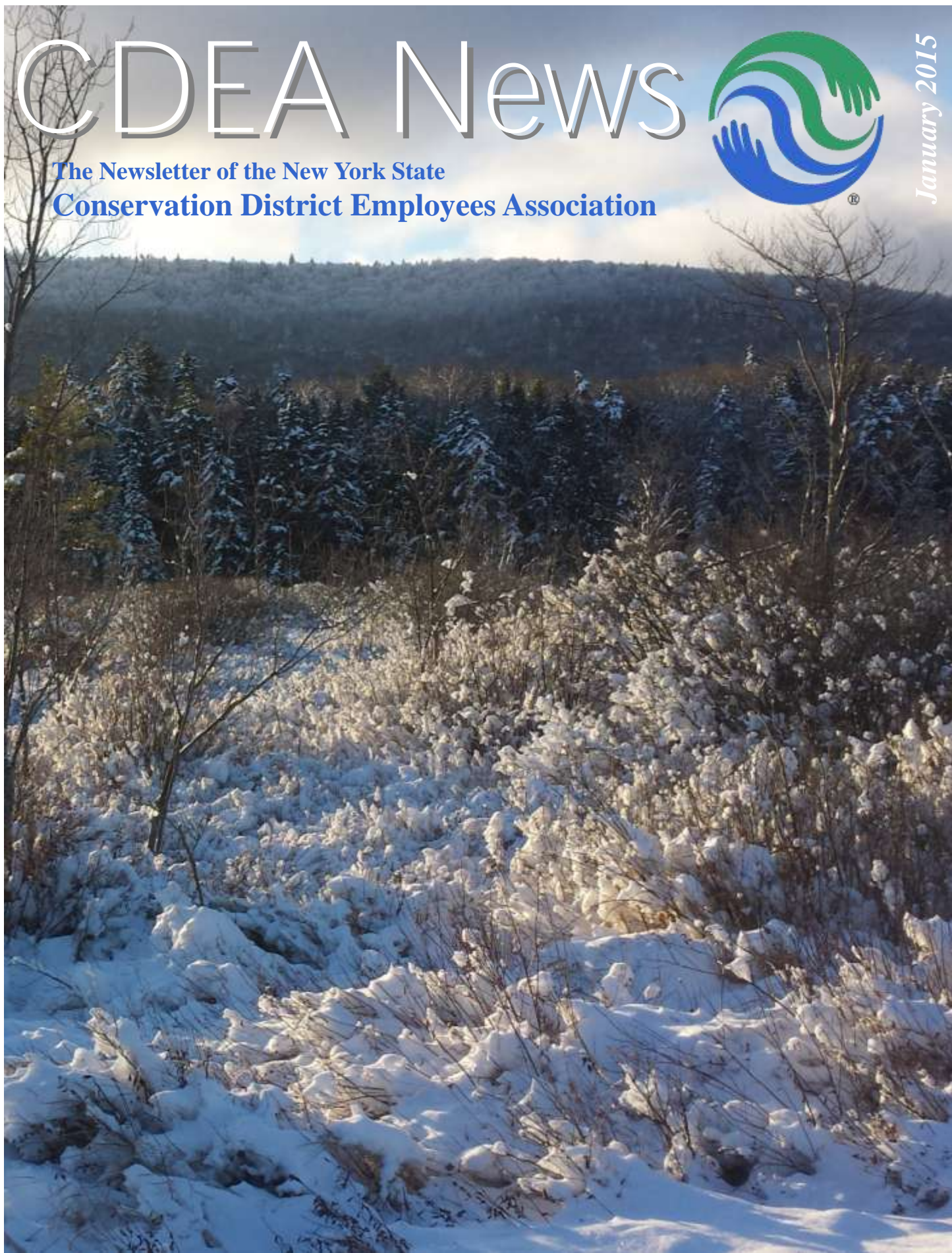


# CDEA News

The Newsletter of the New York State  
Conservation District Employees Association

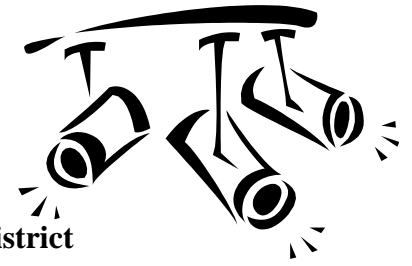


January 2015



## Wise Words from Our District Family

*Interviewing seasoned District employees who share some words of wisdom*



**David Wilson**  
**Chautauqua County Soil and Water Conservation District**  
**30 years**

*How long have you been working at the Chautauqua County SWCD?*

A. 30 years, 5 yrs as a technician, 25 yrs as field manager.

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

A. I am humbled to have been honored with the Willard F. Croney Award, and being able to serve the Employees' Association as President and Vice-president. In the District, we have tried to make the Soil & Water District name something that everyone would recognize; county legislators, municipal officials, agricultural producers, urban and suburban people. We are now the "go to people" to get something done.

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

A. I enjoy the variety of work and the challenges working for the District and the people I work with. The District has allowed us to implement new programs to benefit the taxpayers of

Chautauqua County.

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



A. When I first started the focus was soil erosion and the Soil Conservation Service. Over time the Districts have become much stronger, are involved in many more programs, and when someone needs something done, we now get the phone call because they know we can get it done quickly and efficiently.

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

A. Listen -It's important to know the "whole story" before you open your mouth. Don't be afraid to think "outside the box."

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

A. A local legislator that served on the District Board of Directors and lived next to my parents suggested I apply.

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

A. I had college loans and needed a job. I also wanted a job in the outdoors.

*Q. Did your education prepare you for your job as a District employee?*

A. I graduated from Finger Lakes Community College and SUNY- Fredonia with a BS degree in Environmental Science. School plus being raised on a grape farm, gave me

*See Wise, page 2.*

Wise (from page 1)

the basics. Attending the District training sessions were the most valuable.

*Q. Please share with us a memorable conservation moment while working for your District.*

A. I have had many. Being able to work with the fire departments, installing over 150 dry hydrants for fire protection, and having the fire chief say thanks for providing water in the middle of winter to save some ones house ranks right up there.

*Q. What is your most epic memory from a Water Quality*

*Symposium?*

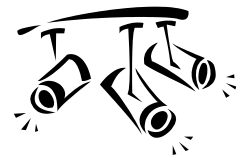
A. The nights at Keuka College; the "Rounder Sisters," The "Bear Song", Bob Brower's "Motorcycle."

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

A. Way too many to talk about.

*Q. Do you have a hidden talent?*

A. I'm not sure about a talent, but I am pretty good at talking my way out of a jam.



*Q. Tell us about what you will miss when you retire.*

A. The district staff and the people I work with.

*Q. Any concluding remarks?*

A. Frank Bratt once told me "there's no such thing as a problem - and every problem is just an opportunity" and "It's a lot easier to walk around the fence than it is to keep running into it, and it doesn't hurt as much!"

## Conservation Skills Workshop 2014

Christine Watkins, Executive Director, Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District

Another successful Conservation Skills Workshop was held in late September. This year we offered 10 classes that covered a wide range of technical abilities. Classes ranged from a full week Riparian Corridor Management to several 2-3 day classes, such as GPS Surveying Applications, Ag and Stormwater BMP Design, and 590 Planning.

We had approximately 90 participants this year. It is always good to see participation from our sister agencies and private entities, as well as SWCD employees.

Good training can't happen without the assistance and support of good people and partners. A huge thank you to:  
 \* The staff at the Cortland County SWCD for hosting this event and the many hours that they put in behind the scenes to make it a success. Setting up classroom locations, setting up field visit sites, taking care of the



registrations, providing the New Employee luncheon and all the snacks during the week – the list goes on and on.

- \* The committee co-chairs; Mark Burger, Tom Eskildsen, John Persch and Christine Watkins.
- \* The full committee that determines the lineup of classes for the year and organizes the classes.
- \* The instructors that give their time to educate our participants.
- \* And most important, the financial support from the NYSCDEA, USDA NRCS and the Empire Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society.

The planning committee will be meeting in May 2015 to set up next year's workshop. If you are interested in serving on the committee or have training ideas, please contact one of the committee co-chairs.

## Large Animal Rescue Training

Mark Burger, Executive Director, Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District

√ Be prepared next time you find cattle loose on the road, or a horse trapped in a trailer wreck on the interstate.

√ Keep your response personnel safe as they respond to large animal emergency situations from mud rescues to confined space situations – and provide improved patient care to the victim.

That was the main message that rang out at the two-day training seminar October 3rd and 4th.

Almost 75 people attended the class at the NYS Fairgrounds. Among them were fire dept, police dept personnel, EMTs, and private horse owners. Dr. Rebecca Gimenez delivered a total mind and hands-on training event that focused on real horses and real situations while teaching better response tactics and incident communication in common emergency situations with large animals – trail riding, trailer wrecks, trapped in mud or ditches, and advanced handling skills. The class had the opportunity to learn and

understand the mechanics of a correct response to large animal incident scenes and interacting with professional emergency responders and animal victims in a safe manner! These techniques



and procedures have been tested in live rescues.

Dr. Rebecca Gimenez grew up with horses of her own, but

started her journey in natural horsemanship techniques in 1990 with a myriad of horse trainers and clinicians whose clinics she attended and whose techniques she studied and applied over the years. A Major in the US Army Reserves and a volunteer Firefighter, she has aggressively pursued her equine education, including a PhD in Animal Physiology (1997); concentration in equine ethology (behavior); and multiple training techniques. She trains her own horses to calmly accept physical restraint for [www.TLAER.ORG](http://www.TLAER.ORG) training demonstrations. She is an internationally recognized expert and a fascinating, innovative clinician.



## Division V Met, Ate, and was Merry

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

Division V met, ate, and was merry during the annual meeting on November 19 at the Adirondack Hotel in Long Lake. Partner reports from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Soil and Water Conservation Committee, and New York Association of Conservation Districts were shared by Division V representative Lenny Croote. Staff and board members from Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, and Warren County Soil and Water Conservation Districts exchanged ideas, gave wonderful presentations, and offered program and project assistance. The meeting room often filled with laughter (especially during Warren County District Manager Jim Lieberum's presentation), and a fabulous lunch was enjoyed complete with pumpkin pie.



## Barbland Dairy LLC Receives 2014 Conservation Farm of the Year Award

Mark Burger, Executive Director, Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District



Chip Engst, Luke Huysman and Bret Bossard, farm owners and partners of Barbland Dairy LLC were present to receive the "Conservation Farm of the Year" award on December 17<sup>th</sup> at the farm in Fabius, NY.

Alan Masters and Aaron Buchta of the Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District were joined by Craig Dennis, co-Chair of the District's Board of Directors; and David Knapp, Board member and County Legislator 12<sup>th</sup> District to present the award.

## Skaneateles Lake Watershed Ag Program Meets on "Farm Safety & Community Involvement"

Mark Burger, Executive Director, Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District

On December 11<sup>th</sup>, the Skaneateles Lake Watershed Ag Program held its annual meeting with 39 people attending. Two farmer panels presented, one on Farm Safety and another on Farmer Participation in the Community. The event drew representatives from 12 farms representing over half of the lake's watershed acreage.

The first panel presented their farm experiences and decision points with each of the topics. Jim Carabba presented Farm safety surveys available through New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (NYCAHM). Danielle Volles spoke on OSHA safety plans and training employees. Craig Richards covered working

with local volunteer fire departments. Erin Hull encouraged farm emergency preparations. The panelists also answered questions from the audience.

The second local farmer panel opened with Chris Fesko and

*See Meets, Page 6*

## Meets (from page 5)

Brian Reeves speaking on ‘Serving on a Board’. Nancy Hourigan shared on ‘ag education for realtors’. Andy Hourigan’s points on farms using social media to inform the public were presented. Luke Hysman shared about migrant labor relations with an on-farm soccer program.



A ‘local foods’ soup and sandwich luncheon was catered by Vernak Farms. After the lunch meal, Mark Burger, Program Manager, presented the 2014 ‘Environmental Steward of the Year’ award to John F. Tucker & Sons dairy farm. The award recognizes the farm’s high level of conservation excellence over the years. Mark Tucker, his wife Elaine, their son Stephen, and Mark’s brother Kirk Tucker were present to receive the award.

The Ag program’s mission is to carry out a cost-effective, innovative program for the farming community that upholds the high drinking water quality standards of Skaneateles Lake. The Skaneateles Lake Watershed Agricultural Program is a cooperative effort between the City of Syracuse, the Soil & Water Conservation Districts and Cornell Cooperative Extension associations of Onondaga, Cortland and Cayuga counties, the USDA Natural

Resources Conservation Service, and Skaneateles Lake watershed farmers. Principal funding is provided by the City of Syracuse.

For more information contact Ag Program Manager, Mark Burger. Tel: (315) 457-0325 or email: [mburger@ocswcd.org](mailto:mburger@ocswcd.org) or visit our office location at 6680 Onondaga Lake Parkway, Liverpool, NY 13088. Visit our website at: [www.ocswcd.org](http://www.ocswcd.org)

## Farewell

Judy Littrell

A new year always brings about new situations, and change. As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, as per the NYACD Board of Directors, I will no longer serve as the NYACD Executive Director. In the 6 years that I have served in this position, I have learned a great deal about Districts, and all that you can accomplish, which has just amazed me! As a farmgirl (ok maybe farmwoman), I did not realize the depth of programs beyond agriculture, that you successfully facilitate and implement. I have found Districts to be widely respected in many circles, particularly with legislative leaders at all levels. It was always “easy” to represent you in the advocacy roll that was a large part of my duties at NYACD.

The best part of this job has been becoming acquainted and building friendships with so many of you - the District employees and members of partnering organizations. You are dedicated and passionate about conservation, and sure have a lot of fun along the way! I truly appreciate all the support, guidance, assistance and friendship you have offered me, and to that I say “thank you”. My personal email is [judylit215@gmail.com](mailto:judylit215@gmail.com).

At this point, I’m not sure what my future holds, I hope that our paths will cross from time to time. I hope you all have a successful, healthy and happy New Year!

## Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District holds first ‘North County Farmers Meeting’

Eva Sztchemiler, District Technician, Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District

The Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District (District) is pleased to report the success of the first ever North County Farmers Meeting, held on November 18, 2014, and hosted in-part by the Town of Clay. The landscape of northern Onondaga County has been undergoing a dramatic transformation as prime agricultural land is subdivided and converted to residential housing lots at rates that threaten to overwhelm local infrastructure. Municipal leadership in the Town of Clay has recognized the value in preserving some of the agricultural character of its once rural landscape as issues such as storm water management and local food security continue to take the forefront in sustainable community development.

The District organized the meeting with the goal of facilitating an environment where farmers and landowners could meet with local agencies and organizations to discuss their



District employee Alan Masters works with landowners Terry and Roy Engels to answer land use questions.

specific needs and to begin addressing those needs with continued education, funding programs, and constructive discussions in order to keep their land in agriculture and their farms in business. The District promoted the Agricultural Environmental Management

(AEM) program which is a voluntary, incentive based program that enables farmers to make strong business decisions while conserving the State’s natural resources. The Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District was also available for those whose land runs into the neighboring county.

Also at the meeting were representatives from the USDA’s Natural Resource Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County, the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency, and the New York Agricultural Land Trust all of which promoted services ranging from conservation practices to farmland protection to tax benefits. Please feel free to contact any of these organizations if you have questions or would like more information on managing your agricultural land.

### Save the Date!

**Water Quality Symposium**  
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Syracuse  
March 10 - 13, 2015

### **SWCD Training Calendar**

[https://www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=lauren.prezorski%40agriculture.ny.gov&ctz=America/New\\_York](https://www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=lauren.prezorski%40agriculture.ny.gov&ctz=America/New_York)



### CDEA News needs **YOUR** news!

Send your articles, save the dates, special recognitions, or photos and captions to:  
[hcsxcd@frontiernet.net](mailto:hcsxcd@frontiernet.net).

The deadline for the March edition is March 6 at 4:30 PM.

## NYS Envirothon Gears Up for another Exciting Competition

Jennifer Clifford, New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee

*Donations and volunteers are integral to a successful competition.*



The New York State Envirothon Committee is excited to announce that the **2015 NYS Envirothon** will be held at **Hobart & William Smith Colleges in Geneva, NY on May 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>**. This year's current topic is Urban/Community Forestry. The value of trees are often overlooked yet they provide environmental, economic, and societal benefits making human habitats more livable. Urban and community forests can include the planting and care of urban parks, street trees, public gardens, river corridors, wetlands, nature preserves, shelter belts, greenways, and more. The management of these spaces is

becoming increasingly important in order to maximize benefits and protect against the threat of invasive species. Students will dive into urban/community forestry along with the annual topics; aquatic ecology, soil and land-use, and wildlife to prepare for this year's Envirothon.

The Envirothon Committee would like to challenge Districts this year to increase their support of the NYS Envirothon through providing committee members, volunteers, donations of goods, and registering teams for the competition. There were 48 teams that participated in the 2014 event. Encouraging teams to participate in the state

competition will provide opportunity for a greater number of students to participate creating a challenging yet rewarding competition for the students.

Donations and volunteers are also integral to a successful competition. The Committee would like to urge Districts to allow and encourage employees and Directors to volunteer for the 2-day event. If you would like to become more involved with the competition or have questions please contact Blanche Hurlbutt, NYS Envirothon Chair at [blanche\\_13335@yahoo.com](mailto:blanche_13335@yahoo.com) or at (607) 547-8337.

Celebrate good times (come on!)



On December 20, Lenny Croote, Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District Technician married Caitlin Edmonds at a beautiful ceremony in Little Falls, NY. Congratulations to you both! May you have a lifetime of happiness, laughter, and love.





## Happy Retirement Ted!

Gerry Smithson, Technician, Herkimer County Soil and Water Conservation District

We didn't take an official count but there were MANY visitors that attended Ted's Open House on December 18<sup>th</sup> at our office in Herkimer. Farmers, legislators, municipal officials, family, and SWCD friends all came to celebrate Ted's retirement. Many stories were shared, some of which went all the way back to Ted's days in ag. class at Mt. Markham School. It was



Ted and the District helped install many **BMP's on the** Schwasnick Farm through the years. Pictured here with Ted are Joe Schwasnick (also a former SWCD board member) and his son Kirk.

Mr. and Mrs. Claus came all the way from the North Pole to celebrate with Ted!



apparent that Ted was pretty taken back when Bear and Peggy from Delaware County walked through the door. It didn't take long for Ted and Bear to start telling stories from District Training session's held many years ago. To further commemorate the day, the County Legislature proclaimed December 18<sup>th</sup> as Ted Teletnick Day in Herkimer County. Enjoy the time on your beef farm Ted!

Your **awesome** story could be here!

Email your press releases, photos, save the dates, and special recognitions to [hcswcd@frontiernet.net](mailto:hcswcd@frontiernet.net).

Thank you for helping to make CDEA News a continued success!

# 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.”*

## **Executive Committee**

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### ***Vice President***

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Velynda Parker - Steuben County

### ***Treasurer***

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