

CDEA News



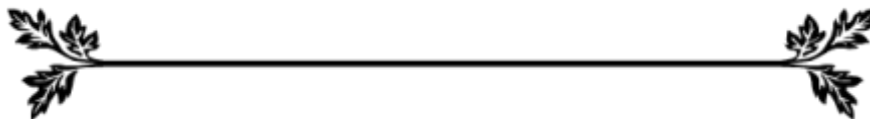
**NEW YORK STATE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION, INC.**

July 2021

Cover Photo

Location: Honeoye Lake

Alaina Robarge, Conservation District Educator, Ontario County Soil & Water Conservation District



New York State Conservation District Employees' Association, Inc.
New York State Fair Booth Volunteer Request
August 20, 2021 - September 6, 2021

Date: June 4, 2021

To: All NYS Soil and Water Conservation District Employees

From: Kristin White, Chairperson of the State Fair Committee

2021 STATE FAIR BOOTH SHIFT REQUEST

The NYSCDEA has had a booth at The Great New York State Fair for over 45 years! This booth is an educational display for fairgoers that promotes the great programs and projects of the Soil & Water Conservation Districts across the state. This year, the Governor has extended the fair to 18 days, where the NYSCDEA will need volunteers more than ever to help with this event!

The NYSCDEA State Fair Committee comes up with a theme that is used for two years. This year the theme is "Soil Health" where we have displays that correspond with the theme and include hands-on items for all ages of fairgoers. *Due to the COVID-19 Coronavirus we will be modifying the hands-on displays for 2021.

If you volunteer, there is a Booth Binder behind the counter that has instructions for opening and closing shifts, the shift schedule for the current and next year, committee contact phone numbers, public and volunteer comment pages, and sign in and sign out sheets.

COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic – A recent article put out by CNY Central states that the Horticulture Building will be one of the buildings open to the public. At this time we are uncertain if we will be asked to be a vendor within the building. We are moving forward and planning as if we will have a booth this year. This includes, but is not limited to, providing hand sanitizer and disposable masks that are available at the booth, however; it is recommended that volunteers bring their own masks. We also recommend that *if possible*, that each county SWCD work with someone from their same county for a shift. We will be following any CDC guidelines when it comes to vaccinated vs. unvaccinated persons.

<u>Location</u>	Our booth is located in the Horticulture Building.
<u>Tickets</u>	Admission and Orange Parking Lot tickets will be issued to all volunteers.
<u>Shifts</u>	There are 2 shifts you can choose from: 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM or 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM. We are looking to have 2 volunteers per shift.
<u>Incentive</u>	Volunteers are eligible to win \$50 cash incentive . The NYSCDEA State Fair Committee will draw 5 names from the sign-in/sign-out sheets. The winners will be notified via email.
<u>Shirts</u>	The committee will provide a shirt for each volunteer that is yours to keep and this year we have new shirts (Syracuse Orange)!

State Fair Committee:

Erica Schreiner, Oswego County SWCD
Kelly Emerick, Monroe County SWCD
Doug Kierst, Cayuga County SWCD
Kristin White, Monroe County SWCD
Eva Brown, Onondaga County SWCD

Empire Farm Days Committee:

Alaina Robarge, Ontario County SWCD
Tuker Kautz, Ontario County SWCD

New York State Conservation District Employees' Association, Inc.
New York State Fair Booth Volunteer Request
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HOW TO SIGN UP FOR A SHIFT

We are using SignUpGenius® for volunteer registrations for the State Fair Booth. The link can be found on our website at <https://www.nyscdea.com/state-fair-cfd/>. If there are 2 employees volunteering to work a shift, please input each name separately. This program keeps track of how many people sign up for each shift and once a shift is filled, it becomes unavailable. To submit, select the yellow Sign Up box for the shift(s) you want. Then select the Submit and Sign Up button at the bottom of the screen. Put your County in the "Comment" section (*leave the Quantity at 1*; each volunteer must be entered separately) and select your shirt size before clicking on the Sign Up Now button. Be sure to include your email. A reminder will be emailed to you and we will also use this email to inform you of any cancellations.

Information about The Great New York State Fair can be viewed from their website at www.nysfair.org
Please contact Kristin White with any questions, 585-753-7663 or KristinWhite@monroecounty.gov.



(Jeff Parker, Steuben County SWCD)





20TH ANNUAL NYSCDEA GOLF TOURNAMENT TO BENEFIT CDEA PROGRAMS

Each team that brings a
donation for prizes will receive
a *Mulligan*.
Please bring a
Donation!

*Free gift for
every participant*

50/50 DRAWING

**SKINS GAME
LONGEST DRIVE
CLOSEST TO THE PIN**

THURSDAY—August 12, 2021

10 am shotgun start

CASOLWOOD GOLF CLUB

Canastota, NY

\$65 per person

**Includes: Greens fees, cart, lunch at the
turn, and dinner (Casolwood steak bake,
salad, salt potatoes, lasagna, vegetable)**

Open to all SWCD & NYS employees, their families, and
all of our conservation partners

The perfect tournament for the avid golfer or the golfer
that plays once a year. Come out and join the fun!

Need directions? www.casolwoodgc.com



**Make checks payable to
NYSCDEA**

**Send check and registration
to**

**Franklin County SWCD
151 Finney Blvd.
Malone, NY 12953
C/O Golf Tournament**

Questions?

Contact:

Christine Watkins 315-782-2749

Doug Kierst 315-252-4171

Russell Smith 607-756-5991

CAPTAIN & CREW

County/Affiliation _____

Contact Telephone # (____) _____ - _____

(Please list your team members)

**Deadline
August 5**

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____



Have a wonderful retirement!

Chip McElwee, Broome County SWCD Executive Director, is retiring - his last day here will be Friday, June 25th. Chip has been with the District 25 years and decided it's time to move on to retirement.

Darcy Tone, the secretary for the Niagara County SWCD District is retiring. Darcy has done an outstanding job with the District for 31 years and she has decided to wrap up her soil and water district career. Her last day is June 29th.

After 41+ years of service to the good people of Wyoming County and the Wyoming County SWCD, I will be riding off into the sunset at the end of this day June 28th. I want to say thank you to everyone who has provided professional assistance and friendship over the years. I have enjoyed quite a ride since April 1980; however, now its time to do other things. If you want to drop me a message, use my new email address gmckurth1959@gmail.com as my current email will soon be deactivated. Wishes of Green Grass and High Tides to all of you!

Sincerely,
Greg McKurth

The John Wayne of New York State conservation

Troy Bishopp, Grazing Specialist , Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District

At the 2021 New York State Conservation District Employees' Association (NYS CDEA) annual training symposium and awards banquet, Steve Lorraine was honored with the prestigious Willard F. Croney Distinguished Service Award for excelling as the outstanding Conservation District Employee in the state.

According to last year's honoree and this year's presenter, Douglas Fisher, "Madison County's Soil and Water Conservation District Manager, Steve Lorraine, is the John Wayne of conservation. Steve has done it all for New York State and



Northeast Conservation," said Fisher. "He exhibits Wayne's 'true grit' and 'doing what must be done.' He has never sought this type of recognition, but has always been at the forefront of policy and programs beneficial to conservation."

Lorraine has served as NYS CDEA president, vice president and division rep, committee chair, symposium and skills workshop instructor as well as a Madison County district manager and valuable employee. Madison County SWCD Board Chair Doug Holdridge said, "He has a genuine concern for mentoring district employees as well as his un-

See John Wayne, page 6

John Wayne (from page 5)

relenting service to the agricultural community. The Madison County SWCD has garnered millions of dollars for customer projects and initiatives, added a diverse staff of certified professionals and has been recognized nationally for its achievements, all under the leadership of Mr. Lorraine.”

Assistant Director of the NYS Soil & Water Conservation Committee Brian Steinmuller said that he could always rely on Lorraine to give an unvarnished opinion on a proposed direction. Warren County SWCD District Manager Jim Liebrum said, “Steve asks the hard questions, offers sound advice and solutions and is a terrific person to have as a representa-

Wendy Walsh, district manager of Tioga County SWCD, credits Lorraine as bringing insight and value to the Upper Susquehanna Coalition meetings and is always working to support programming. “He embodies the tenacious, independent thinker mindset, fairness, stubbornness and a hard-working, rational implementer of conservation that Mr. Croney and farmers are proud of.”

“I am humbled to carry out the legacy of work by Mr. Croney and thank you for the recognition,” said Lorraine. He shared this honor with his wife Kim, son Greg, daughters Laura and Mattie, and new granddaughter Octavia, in addition to his district board and staff.



This year’s awards banquet also honored other deserving land stewards. The President’s Award was presented to Monroe County S&WCD’s Account Clerk Kristin White for her years of service to the association as treasurer and board member. The Partnership Appreciation Award was bestowed on Greg Albrecht from NYS Department of Ag & Markets. The District Director Award honored farmer John Wright, district chair of the Orange County S&WCD for his years of dedicated service. Division Merit Awards were awarded to Aliana Roberage of Ontario County S&WCD, Alexis Lyndaker of Lewis County S&WCD, Jennifer Kelly of Chenango County S&WCD, Maren Alexander from Warren County S&WCD and the Special Project Award went to the Urban Ag Fresh Connections out of Cortland County S&WCD.

tive of conservation districts in New York. In John Wayne fashion, he also gets right to the point and holds people accountable.”

Franklin County SWCD Manager Chasity Miller added, “Steve has always been involved and dedicated to improving the 58th New York State Conservation Districts in any way possible ... he has provided valuable on-the-ground knowledge and practical leadership to the New York State Conservation Committee, NY-NRCS, New York Ag and Markets, NYACD and a multitude of NGOs and legislators.”

To learn more and get connected to your local NYS CDEA staff, visit nyscdea.com.

Wise Words from our District Family

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

Paula O'Brien, Technician
Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District
27 years

I have been working for the Delaware County SWCD since November 1994, almost 27 years! I came to the District in a little bit of an unusual way. The Delaware County SWCD was in the infancy of developing the New York City Watershed Agricultural Program. They were going to need a relatively new (at the time) technology for the program, Computer Aided Design, or CAD. I was working for an electronics company helping them set up their CAD system when Rob Holbom, a NRCS Planner in the Walton office, reached out to me and asked if I might be interested in helping set up a CAD system for the NYC Watershed Program. I applied, and several months later, was interviewed and got the job.

My first day of work was a Monday in late November. I'm sure some of you are aware that hunting season used to start on a Monday in late November... I show up to work and no one was there! The few that were there sent me home. They didn't know what to do with me. Pretty good beginning, don't you think?

I spent the next year and a half getting computers and software ordered while trying to learn the al-

phabet soup that was our office – NRCS, SWCD, CCE, FSA... And then the Flood of 1996 hit. Our county was devastated by water. The District needed boots on the ground, accessing damage so we could get federal funding to help our farmers. I went out in the field with other technicians and helped with surveys and assessments. I liked it! Our District manager at the time, Rick Weidenbach, offered to hire me as a technician and teach me how to do the job. I took on the challenge. And here I am, 27 years later.



Being part of the NYC Watershed Agricultural Program from the very early days and seeing how far we have come in the work we do makes me the proudest. The technicians I have worked with and learned from are amazing conservationists! They have always been willing to explain why we do what we do, and how we do

it. So if I have any advice for the new technicians out there, listen to those experienced guys and gals in the office. They have so much to offer! (thank you to Gerry Clark, Lance Lockwood, Larry Underwood, and Brian Danforth for teaching me so much) And take any training they are offering. There is always something new to learn. Imagine being hired to install some computers and software, and staying for twenty seven years and learning how to design covered buildings and spring developments!

It's hard for me to comment on how the Districts have changed over the years. I've been assign to

the NYC Watershed Ag Program my whole career. I haven't had to work on grants, or do ag assessments. The computer is probably the biggest advancement in our jobs. Using GIS, and LIDAR to do research has made my job much easier. CAD has also improved over the years. But nothing beats getting out on the land and looking things over! I sure do respect the management and staff that do the other things needed in our county for our District! They make a difference for our farmers.

I've been lucky to have attended over twenty training sessions. I highly recommend them. I've met so many friends throughout the state. I love entering the bucket raffle and silent auction. I always learned something new each year. I have

many tales to tell, but most of my stories are probably better left in my memories. One piece of advice for the new attendees, pace yourself. No need to cram all the fun into one evening. There is always something fun the next day. Pace yourself!

One last story. I was out surveying with Lance Lockwood in a fairly swampy area. I was new to surveying. Lance crossed the swamp like a frog leaping from lily pad to lily pad, hitting every high, dry spot. He told me to follow. I hit every mud hole there was! I was in up to my knees! I even lost a boot at one point! Lance's advice? "Think Light!" So, as you work through life, follow Lance's words: "Think Light!"

**Velynda Parker, Secretary to the Board of Directors
Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District
27 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. I have only worked for one Conservation District (Steuben) for the 27 years as their Secretary to the Board of Directors.

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

A. I would say learning & growing to become an integrated part of our leadership team. Knowing that when the District Manager isn't available, I can oversee the office, provide assistance to our landowners/municipalities/partners with their needs and knowing the right people to call to find out answers if need be. Being able to understand the aspect of the each position

(manager/technician) beside the one I hold in our District. What the administrative person does is a very integrated portion of the manager/technician especially in my District so having an understanding their position helps me with what that position may need from me. Enjoy going out in the field meeting with our farmers on their crops or projects to assisting with pond site evaluation to survey of stream for permit. Each and every time I go out, I learn something new. Here is an instance, Jeff made a pond site evaluation appointment after work on our way home. We arrived to the landowners residence and he explained to the landowner what he would recommend doing in the area of the pond. A backhoe was onsite for digging test pits in four separate areas. First test hole was



dug, as I stood back and watch all of sudden there's Jeff with a hand full of soil and the landowner's wife asked why is doing that. I ex-

plained that he is checking for the clay consistency in the soil and its showing him that the soil is good. Jeff repeated this step at the next three spots and at one point he tossed me a soil ball asked me for my opinion of the soil before providing his. Mine opinion was on the mark with his. This is not in my job description but it shows one's willingness to grow professional and to learn a different trade sort to speak.

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

A. The diversity of tasks that Districts is involved – one minute you're working on agricultural then gears shift to landowner education on who we are and what we can do to providing technical assistance-streams, water runoff, etc..

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

A. When I began my professional career with Districts, there was only part A reimbursement, AgNPS, and WQIP which comes to mind right. Now, we have these programs and many others such as Part B & C, CRF and etc. Districts are changing to meet their local needs while at the same time addressing/protecting the environment. I know first-hand how Districts adapt to the changing need because when I was hired back in 1993, our district predominately focused on agricultural industry; however, that all changed – I believe it was 1996 - when our county was first hit with a major flooding disaster that affected/impacted our infrastructure. With forward thinking by our District Manager, he became the leader on building a partnership with all our local municipalities and DPW. From that point on, this partnership had expanded further than just providing technical assistance-it grow into our Shared Service program we have today. Not to mention, the educational programs on sediment & erosion control, and emergency stream intervention.

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

A. Read and familiar yourself with District Law and CDEA By-Laws & Policies as well as your Districts policy. Don't be afraid to ask questions – there is never a stupid question. Take every opportunity to keep learning there is always room for improvement to hone your skill set and be ac-

tive in your respective District programs and functions but also statewide, regionally & nationally. Don't do anything that could/would jeopardize your employment because it will come back to the District – been there with past co-workers.

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

A. My ex-father in law was a bulldozer operator for local construction company and he worked every day with the District/NRCS from building ponds to diversion ditches to obstruction removal.

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

A. My ex father in law knew my background was in the secretarial field so when the position for the District Secretary was available he encouraged me to apply. I didn't have any high expectation of getting the job because I didn't possess any college degree; however, I was interviewed by the newly appointed District Manager and District Conservationist which I can see the interview today as plain as day. When the call came in from the District Conservationist, I was in the middle of milking cows, informing me that I had the secretarial position if I wanted it. I was thrilled and shocked at the same time because I had thought that someone better qualified would get the position. As you can see, I'm still here 27 years later & still loving my job even with few minor bumps in the road.

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

A. Yes but a lot of it was on the job training. My colleagues worked and had a lot patience with me on learning the different aspect of what our two organization do and offer.

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

A. There are many but the one the comes to mind was when the Chairman, who was Murray Mahany, came to the office. Our office was located, at that time, within the County Office Building around the corner from the main entrance. My desk was positioned in a way that I could look out the windows to see whose walking

down the hallway. On this one particular day, I saw Murray, who always wore a cowboy hat and boots walking down the hallway, with a rolled up paper in his hand. With the look on his face, he was on mission. I was hoping he was going to the ASCS (FSA now) not to my office. Nope...the door open and in walked Murray. Small talk took place before he tossed the rolled paper which open flat once it landed on my desk and I notice they were our Board minutes then he stated "there are numerous spelling errors and I want these corrected before our meeting". The tone in his voice I knew he expected these changes to be made accordingly. At that moment, I was like ok holding my composure together until he left – then the flood gates open. I have never been spoken to like this before in a business sense and mind you I have never taken minutes then add a Wheel Write 6 typewriter (no computer at that time) in mix no wonder there were errors. I told myself that will never happen again. Needless to say, the corrections were made and permission was sought at the Board meeting to purchase the District's first computer to alleviate a situation like this to never happened again. Instead of letting this situation pull down, I grow from it.

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

A. Most epic memory was receiving the Division IV Merit Award in 2005. Jeff told me he had invited his brother (Glenn) and sister in law (Jeanne) to the Water Quality Symposium banquet night. I was little surprised but given they only live about thirty minutes away from hotel so I didn't think anything more of it. Day of the banquet comes and we meet up with Glenn and Jeanne during social hour which raffle tickets were purchased by them thinking they wouldn't win; however, that was the year, the Parker brothers came home with a lot items. We then proceeded to the banquet room to select our table while introducing them to our fellow conservation colleagues. When the awards ceremony began, I'm listening to each award being read & figuring out who the winner might be then comes Division IV. As the write-up is being read, I still had no clue until it mentioned something about FEMA disaster declaration and assistance provided to municipalities then it all came together as to why Glenn & Jeanne was there. This was truly a surprise and greatly appreciated to be nominated by my co-workers and Board but also being recognized by fellow conser-

vation colleagues as well is a really great feeling of accomplishment.

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

A. The only moment that stands out per say is when Jeff was the Division Rep and had to introduce me at the Water Quality Symposium that was held in Lake George – I believe. As he began his introduction, he mentioned the word bubbly. Well someone pick up on that – namely Bob Bower – from that point on every time we passed each other, he would whisper bubbles. Unbelievable that after all these years, this is the only humorous moment I can come up.

Q. If you were snowed in at your District office for a week with no hope of evacuating, who would you want to be snowed in with and what would be your top 3 survival items?

A. That would be my husband Jeff who is also the District Manager... this man has been through thick and thin with me over the years. He's my rock-the calm to my storm, and my sounding board for all things. Provisions - snack box would be raided along with drinks in the refrigerator, ear plugs for Jeff so he doesn't have to keep hearing me gripe about being stuck in the office and when are we going to be able to leave, lastly blankets & clothes – blankets to wrap up in and clothing to change into - nothing worse than wearing the same clothes for week.

Q. Do you have a hidden talent?

A. Unfortunately, I wasn't gifted with any talent ... so I enjoy everyone else's talent especially Jeff's which is the harmonica – to me that's music to my ears and it never gets old to listen too.

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

A. The friendships that were developed over the year with conservation colleagues and producers. The networking, collaboration, seeing colleagues progress in their career and listening to the producers talk about their farming experience and how they transitioned to where they are now is very enriching for me.

Q. Any concluding remarks?

A. I would encourage every Districts employees get involves at all levels – local, statewide, regional and nationally. I can honestly say I was one of those individuals that would say we don't need to get involved; however, I was wrong. It's an opportunity to collaborate, network, for internal/external growth, cultural experience, and better understanding how other Districts operate and

programs they offered. Don't look at just at our state – yes, we are very fortunate to have the funding programs/mechanism we have – other states are not as fortune as NY. I cannot stress enough get INVOLVE - attend the Northeast Regional Conference and NACD annual conference – maybe not every year at least once – this is great opportunity to develop new friendships with other Conservation District just on a broader scale - the CHOICE is yours.

CDEA Wine and Pint Glass Tour

We all love our CDEA wine and pint glasses. Here they are in action across New York State. Cheers!



Kelly Emerick's CDEA Pint Glass was in action showing support for our own Genesee Brewery. Founded in 1878, the Genesee Brewing Company, based in Rochester, New York, is one of the largest and oldest continually operating breweries in the United States! Kelly is the Executive Director of Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District.



Albany County Soil and Water Conservation District Administrative Manager Susan Lewis filled her CDEA wine glass with Meadowdale Winery wine.

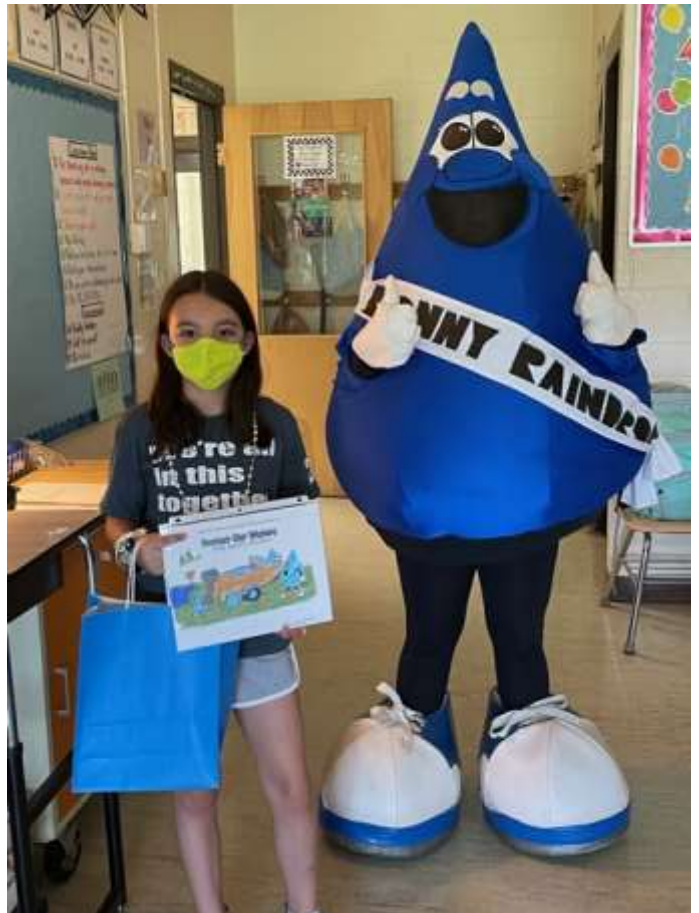


Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District's Caitlin Stewart enjoys a robust red in her CDEA wine glass.

Cortland County SWCD Holds Virtual Water Festival Coloring Contest

Barbara Miner, Fiscal Officer, Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District

Cortland County SWCD held a 2021 Virtual Water Festival coloring contest this June. Entries were mailed in from all local elementary schools. Ronny the Raindrop stopped by the school to present certificates and prizes to a couple lucky winners.



SAVE THE DATE

NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
CONSERVATION
DISTRICTS

2021 NORTHEAST
REGIONAL MEETING



OCT 31 - NOV 3, 2021
PORTSMOUTH,
NEW HAMPSHIRE

RESILIENT WORKING LANDS

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
IN A CHANGING ERA

June's Pasture Regrowth Monitoring Report

Troy Bishopp, Grazing Specialist , Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District

Hello Folks, I'm taking this opportunity to share our small statewide pasture regrowth monitoring project with you. It has been going on since the start of grazing season. You are welcome to copy and paste and share anything that has value for you and your farm customers. We are all learning together to offer a weekly perspective of growth rates for the grazing community and stimulate others to measure and monitor on their own farms. If you'd like to participate, Betsy can help you get that done.

To see the previous reports, resources and pontifications you can go to: <https://thegrasswhisperer.com/2021-nys-pasture-regrowth-monitoring-project/> or <https://cornell.app.box.com/s/yhrezmeb380m7klyx5sa375jakyv0apv>

Thanks GW Any questions gave me a ring.

Forestry Best Management Practice and Skidder Bridge Workshop Series

Kristin Ballou, District Forester, Franklin County Soil & Water Conservation District and Maren Alexander, District Technician, Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District

Franklin and Warren County Soil & Water Conservation Districts were awarded \$9,500 through a Lake Champlain Basin Program Education and Outreach Grant to host a series of Forestry Best Management Practice and Skidder Bridge Workshops. The first workshop in this series was held in Duane and Vermontville, southern Franklin County, on June 18, 2021. This workshop educated 25 individuals on the benefits of Forestry Best Management Practices (BMP's) and permit requirements. A field tour was conducted to view Forestry BMP's and each participant received a Forestry BMP Field Guide and a folder with permit information and skidder bridge specs. The afternoon of the workshop included the construction of a portable skidder bridge. Attendees included loggers, foresters, forest landowners, Department of Environmental Conservation staff, Soil & Water Conservation District staff, tribal employees and educators. Continuing education credits were offered through New York Logger Training and the Society of American Foresters. Following the workshop, the bridge was raffled to a logger in attendance, Herb Clark Logging and Excavating, Lewis, NY was the recipient. Herb plans to use the bridge on logging operations around the Lake Champlain Watershed. The second workshop is scheduled for July 30, 2021 in Hague, Warren County, NY. Registration is currently open for this workshop. For more information about this workshop, contact marenalexander@nycap.rr.com.

“This project has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under assistance agreement (LC-00A00695-0) to NEIWPCC in partnership with the Lake Champlain Basin Program.”



Meet the Newcomers!

Introducing the newest
Soil and Water Conservation District employees

Tim Schneider, Watershed Conservation Specialist, NYSESCCP Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District

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. I have been working at Cayuga County SWCD for 6.5 years, first as an intern in 2014, and then hired in 2015 as a watershed inspector for the Owasco Lake Inspection Program which was overseen by the SWCD, and then hired as a watershed conservation specialist in 2018.

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

A. My proudest accomplishments have been overseeing the WQIP grant program where I get to meet the public, identify their soil and water concerns, identify funding sources, design the project and then finally implement the project. It is very rewarding to see a project come together and then to have a landowner give their appreciation for all of the hard work makes it all worth it!

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

A. Working for Soil and Water allows me to get out in the field, allows me to experiment with different projects and challenges me to think out side of the box. We have a great team in Cayuga County and there is never a dull day and we always seems to find a good

time and work on unique projects with many partners. One day on can be on the shoreline of Lake Ontario, the next I can be surveying a stream, and the day after that I can be doing a stormwater inspection on an agricultural facility.

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

A. Within the last few years, there has been more attention and interest in streambank protection and stormwater management as they relate to water quality and harmful algal blooms. The last 5 years, Cayuga County waterbodies have seen an increase in the number of HABs and a heightened awareness from the community to look at all of the factors that impact water quality and nutrient loading. When 6 feet of streambank is lost in a given storm or 3 feet of water is flooding main street, the community begins to look for answers and solutions and they turn to us for support. I think it is save to say that everyone in our office has been receiving more phone calls each year, and that speaks volumes to the important work we are all involved in, the connection we can provide between private and public services, and the expertise that we can bring into the field.

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

A. I will echo the wisdom that others bestowed upon me, get involved and make connections! District employees are some of the best people to work with because we all share common interests, we all have stories to tell, and we all have a few tricks-of-the-trade that everyone is willing to share. I look forward to the March symposium every year because I see friends and colleagues that I have seen for an entire year, but we pick up right where we left off. I get to meet new people from all over the state and I get to share what I learned in the last year, while looking to others to give me a few ideas to bring back to my county.

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

A. I first hear about SWCDs through my college counselor while I was preparing for my senior capstone.

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

A. The job was right up my alley with being out in the field, working with streams and improving fish habitats, working with local farmers to improve their operation.

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

A. I would say yes and no. Yes because college provided me with all of the concepts and reasons for installing best management practice such as why we need to create shade along stream corridors, how urban development can impact flooding risk, as well as all of the political components behind conservation law. However, I feel that I have learned more on the job by learning from others, both of their triumphs and their mistakes, which has allowed me to develop my own style of doing things which I hope I have or can pass onto someone else.

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

A. In 2017, the southern part of

Cayuga County experienced 3 large storm events within a two week period that lead to widespread flooding and severe damage to streams and local infrastructure. Richardson Hill Road in Sempronius was just one example of a road that became compromised due to the flooding. A 5-foot round culvert was not able to convey the stream flows after receiving 4.5 inches of rain in 2 hours, resulting in the stream

to back up and overtop the road, resulting severe damage to the road and culvert. As the stream crested over the road, it eroded the southern road bank and dislodged a section of metal pipe. The town was able to temporarily fix the road, until funding was secured to fix the crossing and increase the size of the culvert. Fortunately, the Cayuga County SWCD and the Town of Sempronius were awarded a Multi-Modal Program through NYS that allowed for funding to be secured to assist the local highway improve the road for adequate travel and road safety. I was assigned the project and was able to conduct stream flow analysis to determine the size of pipe needed, while also assessing the stream reach to determine the type of crossing needed.



Based on the steep topography of the area and historic flooding records, along with a strong presence of brook trout and aquatic organisms, it was determined that a bottomless arch culvert to handle at least a 50-year stream flow would be the best option of the site for long term stability and flood mitigation.

We ran into many issues along the way including the bid for concrete footers coming in at 2 times the total grant funding which force me to scramble and find an alternative for the footers (I worked with a local company to construct precast footers), we had a delay in assembly of the culvert due to unforeseen circumstances with the pipe company which resulted in the road to be closed for 1 month rather than 1.5 weeks, difficult working conditions based on the large scope

of the project and limited areas to move with machinery, the lifting capacity of the crane for the precast concrete footers and the close proximity to the edge, and limited staff during a busy construction season. I described the project as pushing the boundaries on all aspects of the project, but when the final lift of the culvert took place, the culvert fit into the groves perfectly just as they were suppose to and the culvert was dead center to the middle of the

road. The highway superintendent for Sempronius came over and shook my hand and said “nice work young man, you made all of this happen” and it was at that moment that knew all the stress and the worrying was all worth it.

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

A. When I hear memory from the Water Quality Symposium, all I can think about is the smell of the smoked sausage in the hospitality room.

Connor Hubbard
Environmental Engineering Technician
Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District

Q. How long have you been working for your Soil and Water Conservation District?

A. Since August 2020

Q. Who inspired you to pursue the career you have today?

A. I went to school for civil & environmental engineering and I wanted to get into the field of environmental conservation since I think it is a very important issue to highlight

Q. What are your hobbies?

A. I play guitar, listen to a lot of music and podcasts, watch sports, and run (not as much as I should though)

Q. What’s on your bucket list?

A. I want to travel to all 50 U.S. states and as many foreign countries as possible.

Q. Hawaiian pizza with ham and pineapple: super gross or supersize my pie?

A. Super gross!!



Q. What is the best advice you give to other new District employees?

A. Always ask questions! There’s never a bad time to learn new things.

Q. How would you describe your job to a group of 5-year-olds?

A. I help farmers make the world a greener and cleaner place.

Q. What’s the most epic thing you’re working on right now at work?

A. I’m currently helping to oversee construction inspections on my first ever covered barnyard design.

Q. Coffee or tea?

A. Both

Q. Share a humorous or memorable moment you have experienced while working at your District.

A. There’s been a couple of times I’ve mixed up my directions and thought left was right. Not my proudest moment!

**Bailey Park
Natural Resource Assistant
Broome County Soil and Water Conservation District**

Q. How long have you been working for your Soil and Water Conservation District?

A. I've been with Broome SWCD for a little over a year now.

Q. Who inspired you to pursue the career you have today?

A. I've always loved nature and the outdoors; I feel my passion for the environment manifested when I was very young - playing in the creek, exploring my uncle's farm, and caring for critters of all types and sizes. I would say the actions of others have pushed me to pursue the career I have today, mostly because I want to make a positive difference somehow while I'm here on this Earth. I know, sounds cliché, but I truly care about the impacts we have as humans on the environment. If I can make a beneficial impact in my position through small conservation projects or educating others, I know I've chosen the right career!



Q. What are your hobbies?

A. Kayaking, gardening, beekeeping (small business: Bailey's Bees – Beeswax products), hiking/adventuring, nature journaling, designing (I've been a florist for 5 years now)

Q. What's on your bucket list?

A. I HAVE to and WILL be in the presence of a giant sequoia tree one day!!! Explore out West and all the national parks, go whitewater rafting in Arizona, and swim with sea turtles in Bora Bora.

Q. Hawaiian pizza with ham and pineapple: super gross or supersize my pie?

A. Ehhhh... skeptical, but I'd give it a try! Weird combination but, probably tasty.



Q. What is the best advice you give to other new District employees?

A. There's a reason why you sit where you do today; Always take advantage of new opportunities. Don't be afraid to dip your toes into something unfamiliar. The only way you will learn and improve is by giving it an old school try and

applying all of the knowledge and experience you've learned throughout the years the best you can. Don't hesitate to reach out to fellow coworkers and piers, build your resources and network connections, and stay open-minded to new ideas and techniques. Just be yourself!

Q. How would you describe your job to a group of 5-year-olds?



A. I help save the environment and plant trees! I'm kind of like a super hero for nature.

Q. What's the most epic thing you're working on right now at work?

A. I would say the most epic thing I'm working on right now would be a design for a spring development and winter watering system as part of our AEM Implementation program.

Q. Coffee or tea?

A. ICED COFFEE IS LIFE <3

Q. Share a humorous or memorable moment you have experienced while working at your District.

A. The pump wouldn't prime for the hydroseeder, so I went swimming in the river while waiting. I couldn't resist the refreshing

Annual NYS CDEA Fish On Challenge

The NYSCDEA is sponsoring a fishing challenge to all anglers out there.



Official Rules and Regulations

Participation Fee is \$10.00 per person and each participant will receive a pocket tape measure with the NYSCDEA logo on it. Registration is available for NYSCDEA members only and is between March 1, 2021 – May 31, 2021.

Register for the Fish On Challenge at

<https://forms.gle/9Hhdj36oWyRTH8Yq5>

Yes...you need to be registered prior to submittal of any fish. All entries need to be submitted between March 1, 2021 – February 28, 2022. There are six categories and prizes in each!

Categories:	Smallmouth Bass	Largemouth Bass	Northern Pike
	Brook Trout	Rainbow Trout	Jokers Wild (Unique Fish)

General Rules

- You are not eligible to enter a fish if you caught it while fishing in a tournament.
- Entries are limited to those caught from NY waters only (including boundary waters).
- Entries will be scored based on length except for the *Jokers Wild* category, which will be judged by NYSCDEA on uniqueness of species, size and location of catch. Participant will have to specify why they think the fish is unique and why it should win.

Winners of all categories will be announced at the 2022 WQS Banquet.

For each entry, the participant is required to submit the following information to Fishcdea@gmail.com:

- 1.Name
- 2.Date caught
- 3.Location (waterbody) ...don't give up your secret spot, so saying farm pond is OK!
- 4.Species
- 5.Length
- 6.Picture of fish with the NYSCDEA tape measure or you in it.
- 7.If entering the Jokers Wild category you must include why the fish is unique and why it should win the category.

Register for the Fish On Challenge at <https://forms.gle/9Hhdj36oWyRTH8Yq5>

This is for fun only, so be honest and fair! If you have any questions, comments or if you are interested in registering, contact Maren Alexander at: Fishcdea@gmail.com. Tell us more about your fishing adventures and check out CDEA Fish On Challenge on Facebook!

CDEA News **needs *your* news!**

Please email your stories, photos, save the dates,
and fun moments to
caitlinstewart@frontier.com



Special Columns!

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Your stellar photo could be on the cover of CDEA News. Submit seasonal photos of landscapes or conservation practices through summer, fall, winter, or spring. Include a few sentences describing the photo.

CDEA Wine and Pint Glass Tour

We all love our CDEA wine and pint glasses. Email photos of your glass in action. Cheers!

Where in New York is Ronny Raindrop?

Email your photos of Ronny with a brief description of what he's doing and where he is.

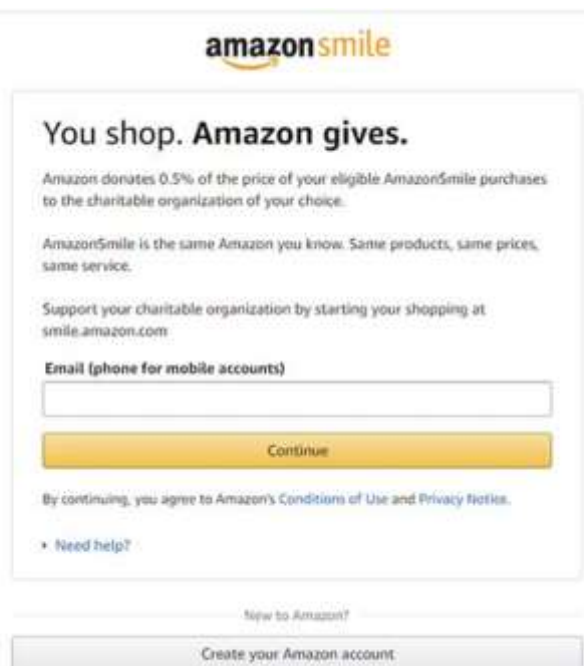
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Please keep you news rolling in!**

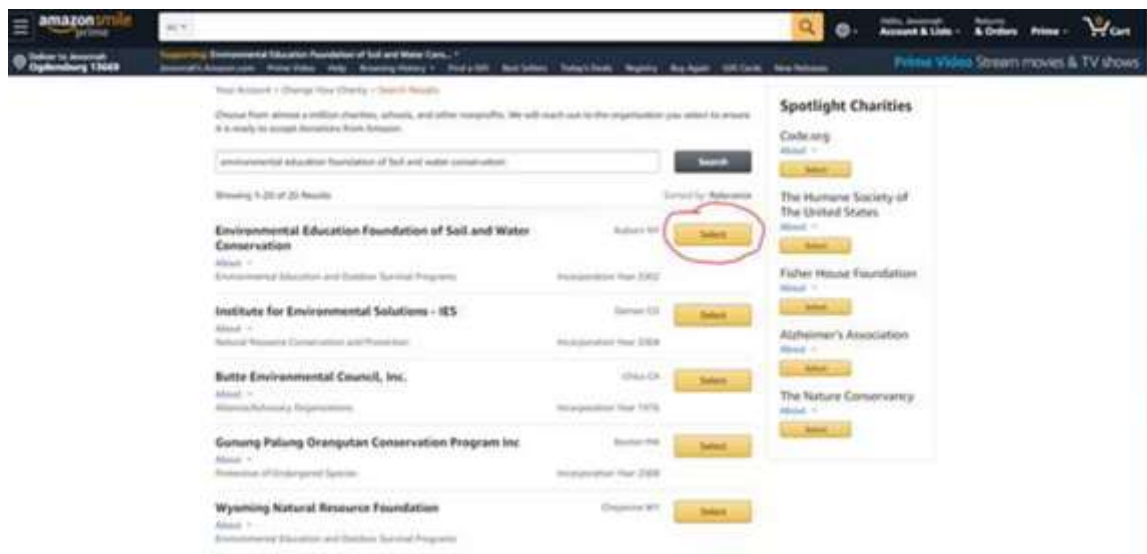
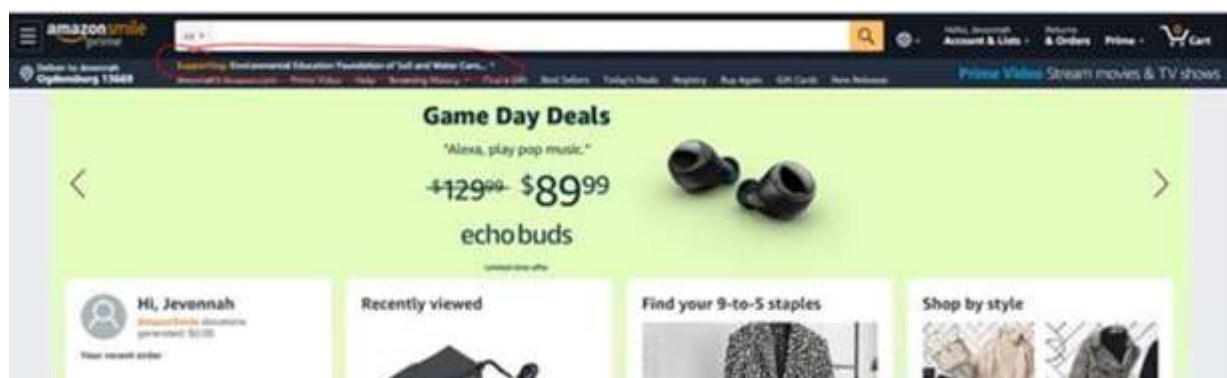
Support the NYS Envirothon with Amazon Smile

Chastity Miller, President, NYS Conservation District Employees' Association, Inc.

Did you know you can use AMAZON Smile to help the NYS Envirothon! Please use Amazon Smile to give back to the Environmental Education Foundation for the State Envirothon and the National Envirothon in 2023! Here is the link for amazon smile along with some screenshots of what it should look like. Once you have selected them, it works exactly the same as the regular amazon site. Just note that if you go to the regular amazon.com site or use the app the charity will not get any donations, you have to use the smile.amazon.com site. If you forget to go to the smile site and already have stuff in your cart (in app or on regular amazon site), you can still go to the smile site and login and the items in your cart will show up on that site too, I did it just to try! Go to: <https://smile.amazon.com> & Sign in with your amazon account. This account has already done it, so it shows that their supporting the EEF already, but if you haven't yet you should automatically be prompted to pick a charity. Then you just search for "Environmental Education Foundation of Soil and Water Conservation" and hit select. REMEMBER- note that if you go to the regular amazon.com site or use the app the charity will not get any donations; you have to use the smile.amazon.com site. Thank you so much! We need all the help we can get.



The screenshot shows the Amazon Smile login page. At the top is the Amazon Smile logo. Below it is the heading "You shop. Amazon gives." followed by a description: "Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice." It states that AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know with the same products, prices, and service. A prompt asks the user to support their charitable organization by starting shopping at smile.amazon.com. There is a text input field for "Email (phone for mobile accounts)" and a yellow "Continue" button. Below the button, it says "By continuing, you agree to Amazon's Conditions of Use and Privacy Notices." and a link for "Need help?". At the bottom, there is a link for "New to Amazon?" and a button to "Create your Amazon account".



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