

CDEA News

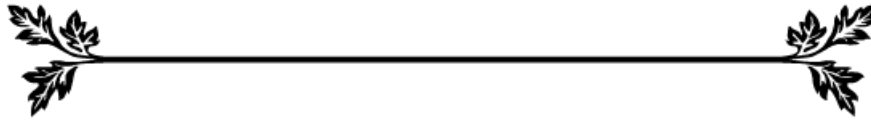


**NEW YORK STATE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION, INC.**

NOVEMBER 2022

Cover Photo

Niagara County SWCD's 2022 Clean Sweep was a success. They collected 200 lbs. of litter at Fisherman's Park! NCSWCD was joined by Cub Scout Pack #4 and Boy Scout Pack #4 to help pick up litter along the Eighteenmile Creek AOC. Many food containers, cans, bottles, plastic bags and cigarette butts were picked up. Over 25 yards of fishing line was also picked up...that's over 1/4 of a football field! Some different finds were hunks of porcelain, 10' PVC pipe, metal pipes, a tarp, and old saw blades!



From the President's Desk

I wanted to provide you an update on New York State Conservation District Employees' Association's efforts regarding the Watershed Health Coalition (WHC) that we informed you about several weeks ago. After our discussions at the annual New York Association of Conservation District's (NYACD) Annual Meeting, and following discussions with many Districts around the state, CDEA past President Chastity Miller, CDEA Vice President Caitlin Stewart, and I attended a listening session with the WHC on November 9 to make our intentions clear to them. We told them in no uncertain terms that we do not want, nor do we support, any attempt to amend District Law. We also informed them that we do not want them to represent that we have been involved with or support any future attempts to amend District Law.

It has also been brought to my attention that the WHC has been promoting their draft proposed amendments to District Law to watershed groups around the state. We were not aware of this, and they did not inform us of this during last week's listening session. I see this as a purposeful subterfuge to allow them to garner support while professing that we can work together as we go forward. As a result, CDEA is working to create a line-by-line review of the proposed changes and their effect on District operations. Look for this information to come out after Thanksgiving.

I have also gotten many inquiries from Districts asking what they can do to help with this issue. At this point in time, I ask that you inform your local watershed groups and lake associations of the WHC and their work to undermine Districts and insert themselves into our organizations. Let them know that we oppose any amendments to District Law, and that our commitment to conserving the natural resources of New York State is just as strong as when Soil and Water Conservation Districts were created 80 years ago.

Additionally, please let me know if you are contacted by the WHC, enabling CDEA to maintain a unified response in saying that we do not support amendments to District Law. Finally, continue to educate your Board of Directors on this challenge and ask them to stand ready to make their voices heard to our legislators. SWCDs rely on Directors for legislative lobbying.

I understand that many of you and your Boards are upset with what appears to be an attempt to alter the very fabric of who we are and what we do, as am I. At this moment, CDEA is attempting to persuade the WHC that many, if not all, of their stated goals are either already being met by Districts or can be achieved without legislative action. The apparent lack of knowledge of who we are and what we do by some members of this group is surprising and alarming. CDEA will continue to work on this issue as it develops, and we will keep you informed along the way. Rest assured that if the WHC introduces this legislation, CDEA, through our

See President, page 3.

President (from page 2)

partners at NYACD, will be asking for the aid of every SWCD and Director in New York State.

Please see the below update from CDEA Vice President Caitlin Stewart that documents up to date actions and how to prepare for our future response.

One final reminder: if the WHC presents legislation to amend District Law to legislators, lobbying **MUST** come from our Directors and NYACD. Under District Law, District employees cannot lobby.

Sincerely,

Dustin Lewis, CDEA President

CDEA Action Items

- The Executive Committee is in a perpetual state of contact to discuss this challenge and keep abreast of new developments
- Attended a listening session with the WHC on November 9
- Addressed the Watershed Health Coalition via email and stated NYSCDEA does not support the WHC's opening and amendments to NYS Soil and Water Conservation District Law
- Consulting with past CDEA presidents
- Sought a due-paying NYACD member to submit the attached resolution from the floor during the October annual meeting that was passed < New York State Conservation District Employees' Association Inc. and New York Association of Conservation Districts representatives are to be notified when any proposed amendments to New York State Soil & Water Conservation District Law are to be brought to Legislation forums>
- Documenting and archiving all correspondence with WHC

WHC Statements during the November 10 Listening Session:

- Some people may feel they are not welcome in SWCD offices
- Education through legislation is their goal
- Legislators are unaware of SWCD accomplishments
- A mentorship program is needed for underserved farmers
- This bill will help to leverage funding for NYS SWCDs
- They desire a soil health champion program
- SWCDs must look 30 to 50 years into the future to effectively plan for soil and watershed health programs
- Small farms are underserved and disadvantaged
- They believed that grants are ranked by SWCD and SWCC boards
- Diversity is an issue
- There are concerns for underserved and disadvantaged farmers
- They inquired how SWCDs track diversity, equity, and inclusion

See President, page 4.

President (from page 3)

Recent Developments

- NYACD posted draft District Law amendments and press on their website: <https://nyacd.org/>
- CDEA past president Chastity Miller informed Farm Bureau of the challenge and asked for an update on their plan
- The Grange published a press release opposing the changes
- WHC listed SWCDs as a stakeholder in the attached PowerPoint PDF o Note: To our knowledge SWCDs were not included in any discussions prior to draft District Law amendments being released
- WHC is contacting lake associations and watershed coalitions for support

Next Steps

- CDEA will meet November 30, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. at 305 Tom Miller Rd, Plattsburgh to discuss our course of action, and Districts, Directors, and partners are welcome to attend
- Please inform CDEA President Dustin Lewis immediately at dustinlewissaratogaswcd@gmail.com if the WHC contacts your District or if you see WHC information on the internet or in newsletters
- If WHC contacts you please respond: “Thank you for your message. I am not ready for a productive conversation. For further questions, contact CDEA president Dustin Lewis: dustinlewissaratogaswcd@gmail.com.”
- Kindly do not participate in listening sessions. If you do, please debrief CDEA.
- Many Districts are informing their Directors, local legislators, and boards of supervisors. Let’s keep our message unified. Share the first letter from NYSCDEA (attached), the draft proposed District Law amendments, press, and the SWCC’s 2021 Annual Report to educate and spotlight how we conserve soil and watershed health: <https://agriculture.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2022/10/2021_annual_report_0.pdf
- We will discuss this challenge at the Mangers’ Meeting on December 13 – 14.

Resources

- Draft proposed changes to District Law and press are available on the NYACD website: <https://nyacd.org/>
- Draft legislation changes threaten NY Conservation Districts press release: <https://countryfolks.com/draft-legislation-changes-threaten-ny-conservation-districts/>
- Empire State Granger Newsletter, page 4: <https://4goa48.a2cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/2022-11-November-December-ESG.pdf>
- Listening sessions advertisement: https://www.cayugalake.org/wp-content/uploads/clwn_nn_i2-3_2022.pdf

Onondaga SWCD's Water Chestnut Interview

Brian Steimmuller, Assistant Director, NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee

Mark Burger and the Onondaga Soil and Water Conservation District team were included in a water chestnut educational interview. Please click the link below for a YouTube video featuring Mark and the Baldwinsville Public Access station regarding Water Chestnuts and the NYS AEM Program (towards the end of the interview): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKOBfuZDuXg>

An Update from Rensselaer County SWCD

Megan P. Myers, District Manager, Rensselaer County Soil & Water Conservation District

Rensselaer County's USDA Service Center, including the Rensselaer County SWCD office, has recently moved from Troy to Brunswick. The new mailing and GPS address is 1612 NY – 7, Troy, NY 12180.

The Rensselaer County Soil & Water Conservation District held its first annual banquet since the pandemic started. This banquet was held in conjunction with the Rensselaer County Farm Bureau's Annual Meeting. During the banquet, Tom Sanford was awarded the 2022 Service to Conservation Award, Dale and Samantha Cornell of Cornell's Farm Stand were awarded the 2022 Service to Agriculture Award, Zack and Annie Metzger of Laughing Earth Farm were awarded the 2022 Conservation Farmers of the Year, and Brandon Trinkle, Ag teacher and Advisor of the Hoosick Falls FFA Chapter received the 2022 Ag Communication and Education award. In addition, the RC SWCD donated \$250 to the FFA Hoosick Falls chapter for their outstanding work and outreach.



Brandon Trinkle, FFA Hoosick Falls Advisor and Jessica Haynes, FFA Hoosick Falls Chapter President.

Satellite Manure Storage Installed

Alexis Lyndaker, Watershed Ag Conservation Specialist, Lewis County Soil & Water Conservation District

Lewis County Soil & Water Conservation District had a satellite manure storage installed through funding provided by the Agricultural Non-Point Source Abatement and Control grant program. This is a 4.9 million gallon storage located in the Town of New Bremen, and is approximately 9 miles from the home farm. The producer is pleased with this new storage facility as a lot of their land is in the area, and spreading at optimal times is easier achieved. Seeding around the berm was done by the District utilizing their FINN T75 Hydroseeder. Also included in this



project was the planting of a herbaceous buffer bordering the manure storage. The District planted 4.6 acres of buffer around both sides of a classified C(T) and C(TS) stream.

Starry Stonewort Clean-up in Chautauqua Lake

Cassandra Pinkoski , Grants Specialist, Chautauqua County Soil and Water Conservation District

Chautauqua County SWCD's Water Quality Technician, Hailey Laramie, conducted a starry stonewort clean up in Chautauqua Lake. Starry stonewort has been present in the Lake, but in the summer of 2022 was discovered in monoculture "meadows". The SWCD staff helped Chautauqua

Watershed Conservancy, Chautauqua Lake Association and the Chautauqua Lake and Watershed Management Alliance experiment with different collection techniques to remove as much biomass from the Lake. Even with poor water clarity, district staff were tasked with wading out and collecting starry stonewort into onion bags. After around four hours of work, the manual removal team had gathered approximately 12 large bags of starry stonewort (approximately 750 pounds of material to be disposed of).



Engineered Rock Riffle at the Smith Mills Dams

Cassandra Pinkoski , Grants Specialist, Chautauqua County Soil and Water Conservation District

An engineered rock riffle was installed at the Smith Mills Dams Site in the Town of Hanover, Chautauqua County. This project has been a couple years in the making, but this picture shows the structure working after a storm event! It is designed to transition Silver Creek from the elevation at the road bridge to flow through the old reservoir dam site. The riffle dissipates energy, leaving the Creek to meander through the property without eroding the sediments that accumulated behind the reservoir dam.



Tioga County Fall Trees for Tributaries Buffer Planting Season

Heather Scott, AEM Specialist, Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District

66 volunteers joined us this season! On October 6th 2022, the Volunteer Planting Event was held in Berkshire, NY with Newark Valley High School. On October 12th 2022, the Volunteer Planting Event was held in Berkshire, NY with Waverly Middle School. On October 18th 2022, the Volunteer Planting Event was held in Apalachin, NY with Owego Free Academy. On October 26th 2022, the Volunteer Planting Event was held in Apalachin, NY with Owego Free Academy. It was a great success!



Madison County SWCD Welcomes NYACD Annual Meeting with Tour

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

On a picturesque fall day, Madison County SWCD welcomed NYACD members, district staff and guests for a bus tour of diverse projects and a few area history lessons led by District Manager, Steve Lorraine. The group got a looksee at an organic dairy farm's covered barnyard project from last year and how it fared against some

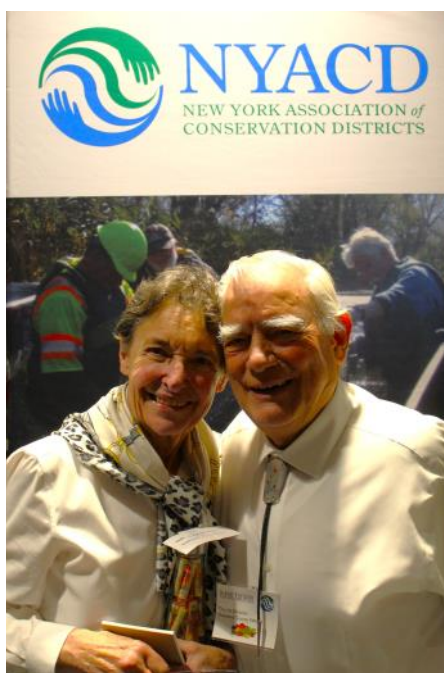
intense rain events with management changes and some redesign work during frozen ground scenarios. The 2 ½ hour trip also showcased several recently completed township stream culvert jobs, cover crop plantings, a laneway and silage leachate collection system for 280 organic cows and ending up at an ongoing heavy use area construction project with planted riparian buffer site for a 40 head cow/calf beef operation. The trip wouldn't be complete within the dairy county without milk and cookies for all the guests and a hardy thank you from Madison County.



2022 NYACD Annual Business Meeting

Blanche Hurlbutt, Executive Director, New York Association of Conservation Districts

Photos by Troy Bishopp, Grazing Specialist, Madison County Soil & Water Conservation District



The 2022 NYACD Annual Business Meeting was held Wednesday, October 19, 2022 at The Hampton Inn, 25 Lakers Lane, Cazenovia, NY. Guest speakers were Kim LaFleur, 2nd Vice President NACD along with our 4-Way Partners, Dennis DeWeese, NRCS Ass't State Conservationist (by Zoom), Brian Stienmuller, Ag & Mkts, and Dustin Lewis, NYCDEA President and Assemblyman John Salka, District 121. There were over ninety (90) folks present over the two day event. It was a great event and everyone had fun with the guessing game, silent auction/raffle. Many great items were provided by the Soil & Water Conservation Districts. Madison County SWCD once again put on a great tour of projects they have completed within their county. This year's NYACD award winners are: Appreciation Award Beth Meyer, American Dairy Assoc., NYACD Commendation Award Joe Chairvolotte-Oswego SWCD, Associate Member Award Dubois-King Inc., Partnership Award Garrett Koplun, NYS DEC, Diversity

See NYACD, page 9.

NYACD (from page 8)

Award Suffolk SWCD, Special Service Award Assemblyman John Salka #121, Distinguished Service Award Steven Olson-Wayne SWCD, Bob VanLare Award Blanche Hurlbutt, NYACD Ex. Dir., Media: Best Ed/Outreach Onondaga SWCD, Media: Best AEM Onondaga SWCD, Media : Best Core SWCD Mission Onondaga SWCD, Bill Peoples Award Maxine Applebly-Wayne SWCD. Thanks to everyone that attended, hosted a class, and sponsors!!! See you in 2023!!!!



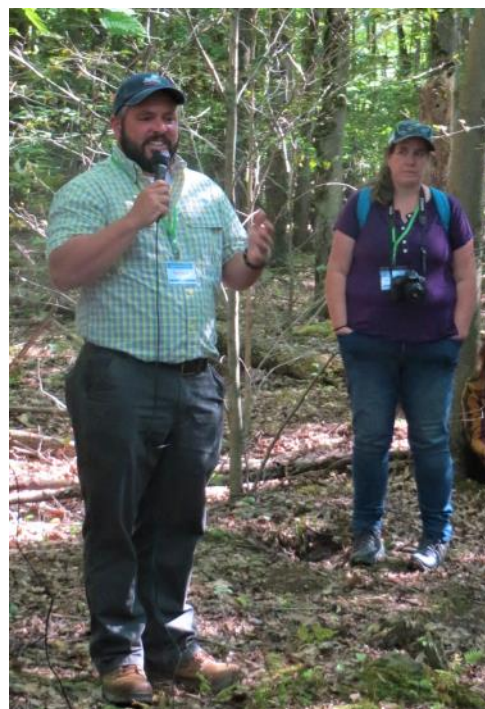
First New York State Silvopasture Showcase Tour a Huge Success

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

On September 15th, over 160 farmers, conservation district staff and agency professionals gathered from around the Northeast in Watkins Glen, New York for the inaugural Silvopasture Showcase Tour led by Brett Chedzoy and Peter Smallidge and organized by the Cornell Cooperative Extension SCNY Ag Team, with generous support from the National Grazing Lands Coalition, Society of American Foresters Kurt Gottschalk Science Fund, National Agroforestry Center, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Edwards Mother Earth Foundation, Propagate Ventures, Soil Carbon Partners.

The informative 2-day in-the-field program toured 4 practitioner's farms (Burns Family Farm, Kurtz Family Farm, Angus Glen Farm and Fieldstone Acres) in

various stages of silvopasture management contexts and experience. Along the way through the woods and pastures, there were mini-presentations led by experienced professionals focusing on a cornucopia of topics including: Silvopasturing goals & management, grazing principals for successful silvopasturing, keys to



See Silvopasture, page 11.



Silvopasture (from page 10)

a successful commercial timber harvest, value-added silvopastures, tree selection and residual stocking principals for silvopastures, professional resources for planning and implementation, managing post-harvest slash and interfering vegetation, benefits of adding functional trees into grazing systems, designing and implementing plantation silvopastures and using browse, fodder and coppice systems



in silvopastures and ending with “The good, the bad and the ugly of twenty years of silvopasture experimentation” at Angus Glen Farms.

To learn more about this topic or about the event, visit cornellforestconnect.ning.com or reach out to Brett Chedzoy, Sr. Resource Educator - Ag and Natural Resources CCE of Schuyler County at 607-535-7161 or bjc226@cornell.edu.



Game of Logging

Paige Lamb, Conservation Technician, Essex County Soil & Water Conservation District

Essex County Soil and Water Conservation District has been hosting Game of Logging and Storm Damage training for quite some time. These events serve as an opportunity for loggers of all experience levels to practice and improve chainsaw handling and logging skills.

The District reached out to the Workforce Development Institute to support and fund additional classes. The intent of these workshops is to bring skills to traditional loggers and other groups that are not as often represented in the forest products industry. Game of Logging I, II, and III are courses that effectively educate participants about the proper maintenance, safety measures, and protective equipment used in this trade while also



highlighting the importance of observing Best Management Practices.

This year, the District has been able to organize five workshops using the professional training services of the Northeastern Loggers' Association, ProCuts, and the Northeast Woodland Training Inc. Local farms such as Mace Chasm Farm, North Country Creamery, and Ben Wever Farm have been generous to provide host sites for these trainings.



Inflation Reduction Act

Blake Glover, USDA-NRCS NY State Conservationist

Partnership,

I wanted to be sure you saw today's [release](#) on the Request for Information (RFI) on the implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

The intent is to make sure NRCS has transparency in the process and an opportunity for partners and stakeholder to weigh in on implementation.



Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

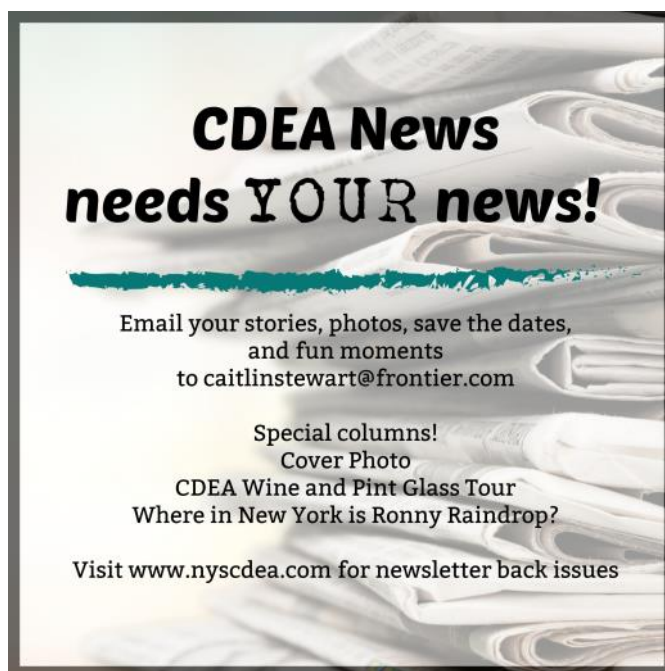
In particular, NRCS is looking for feedback on:

- how to best maximize benefits for climate mitigation, including targeting practices and programs that provide quantifiable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions;
- how to maximize, target, monitor, and quantify improvements to soil carbon, reductions in nitrogen losses, and the reduction, capture, avoidance, or sequestration of carbon dioxide, methane or nitrous oxide emissions associated with agricultural production; and
- how to further streamline and improve program delivery to increase efficiencies and expand program access for producers, especially underserved producers.

For more information, see the press release [here](#) or the Federal Register notice [here](#).

Thanks

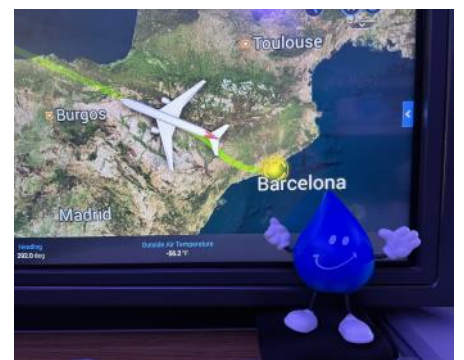
Blake



Where in New York is **Ronny Raindrop**?



Ronny Raindrop debuted a fresh, new look at the October CDEA meeting in Oswego. New costumes are being hand made by Liz Woods of Fine Character.



Ronny joined Erica Schreiner of Oswego County Soil & Water Conservation District on an adventure to Portugal and Spain. He thoroughly enjoyed the Mediterranean Sea!

*** REMINDER ***

TO ALL DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

Frank Bratt Scholarship

Application Deadline –December 1, 2022

Just to remind all of you, the Frank Bratt Scholarship deadline is December 1, 2022.

Did attend you a training between September and now and forgot to apply? You can apply before December 1st to be reimbursed for your registration.

Have a course you want to take next year? Apply now and have up to 2 years from the award letter to complete your course.

The scholarship can be used for:

- college courses (credit and non-credit)
- educational workshops
- conservation related seminars
- professional meetings

An application form is attached to this email, or can be obtained from the CDEA website at www.nyscdea.com. This round offers plenty of opportunity for applicants. Please be advised completed applications should be emailed or mailed to Scott Collins at Niagara County SWCD, 4487 Lake Avenue, Lockport, NY. If you have any questions on this program, contact Scott Collins, Division I Representative at (716) 434-4949 ext. 6258, or e-mail: scott.collins@ny.nacdnet.net.





Photo Album



An autumnal view of Canandaigua Lake and an recently installed water retention basin at a local vineyard. Photo by Megan Webster, Ontario County Soil and Water Conservation District.



Cool rainbow picture. Photo by Carla Yaw, Lewis County Soil & Water Conservation District

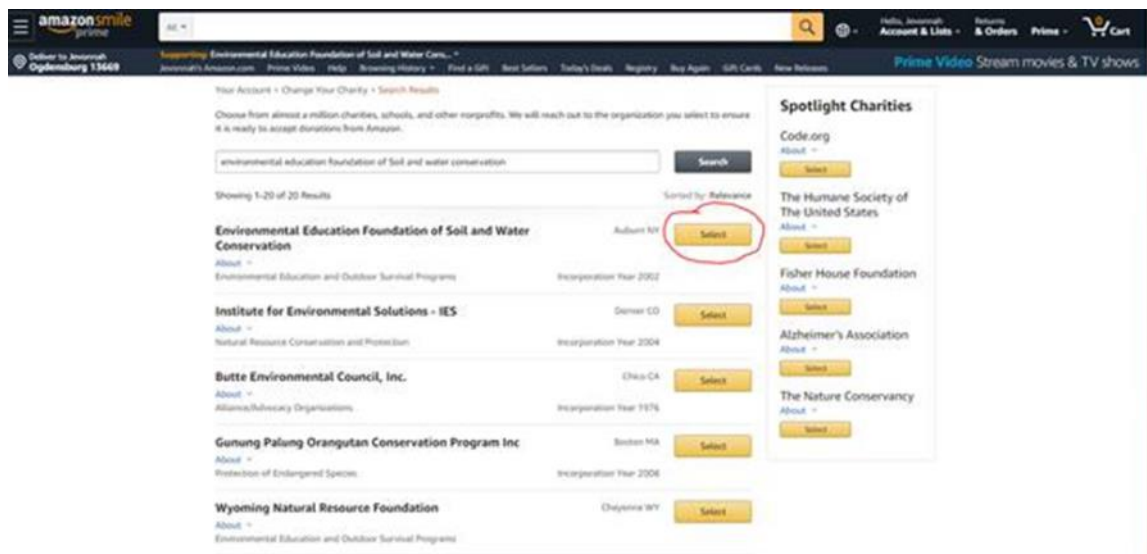
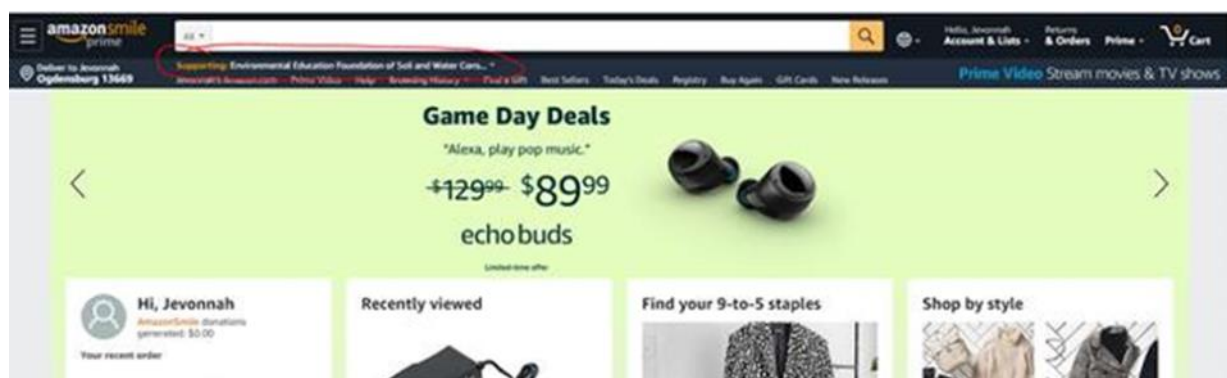


This photo “is a darn good reason to always enter the fish on contest.....19” Smallie... I can’t believe I didn’t get in! LOL!” Photo by Carla Yaw, Lewis County Soil & Water Conservation District

Support the NYS Envirothon with Amazon Smile

Chastity Miller, 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.



Annual NYS CDEA Fish On Challenge

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



Participation Fee is \$10.00 per person and each participant will receive a NYSCDEA pocket tape measure (**If you haven't received a tape already). Registration is available for NYSCDEA members only.

Register [HERE](#) for the Fish On Challenge by May 31, 2022

***New district employees can sign up anytime!

There are **Six Categories** and prizes in each:

Smallmouth Bass

Largemouth Bass

Northern Pike

Trout Special

→ **Comradery Catch!**
For the spirit of friendship and good times with the family!

Jokers Wild

General Rules

- You are not eligible to enter a fish if you caught it while in a professional tournament.
- Only one prize per fish.
- Entries are limited to those caught from NY waters only (including boundary waters).
- Entries will be scored based on length except for
 - *Jokers Wild* will be judged 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.
 - *Comradery Catch* will be judged based on species, fishing story (optional), location, etc.
 - Trout will be judged based on length, species, and location of catch.

Enter a Fish: the participant is required to submit the following information to [Google Forms](#) or Fishcdea@gmail.com:

1. Name
2. Date caught
3. Species
4. Length
5. Location (waterbody)
6. Picture of fish with you or a measuring tape!
7. If entering the... **Jokers Wild** category you must include why the fish is unique and why it should win the category.

*All entries need to be submitted between
March 1, 2022 – February 28, 2023*

Examples for pictures:



Winners of all categories will be announced at the 2023 WQS Banquet.

Register for the Fish On Challenge [HERE](#)

If you have any questions, comments or if you are interested in registering, contact Maren Stoddard at: Fishcdea@gmail.com.

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

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



Special Columns!

Cover Photo

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.

*Back issues are available on the CDEA website:
www.nyscdea.com/newsletter/*

**Thank you for making CDEA News a continued success.
Please keep you news rolling in!**

New York State Conservation District Employees' Association, Inc.



Executive Committee Members

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Caitlin Stewart, Vice President

Joann Burke, Secretary

Chastity Miller, Treasurer

Doug Kierst, Member at Large

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Jason Cuddeback , Division II

Raeanne Dulanski, Division III

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Kristin Ballou, Division V

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Erin Sommerville, Division VII

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