

# CDEA News



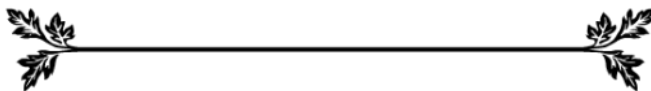
NEW YORK STATE  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION, INC.

AUGUST 2023



## Cover Photo

This photo shows a new silage leachate collection and VTA just nearing completion. The project is supported by AgNPS 24. Photo by Peter Hagar, District Manager, Clinton County Soil & Water Conservation District.



## The CDEA Corner

Caitlin Stewart, President, NYS CDEA, Inc.



I hope you are doing well and avoiding the rain as much as possible. Please take a few minutes to refill your coffee or tea mug and browse the August CDEA News.

### September CDEA Meeting

I warmly welcome SWCD staff, Directors, and all members of the 4-Way Partnership to attend. This meeting meets performance measure requirements, Part C of State Aid to Districts. **September 6, 2023 · 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m., and September 7, 2023 · 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.** Join in person: Glenville Municipal Center Court Room, 18 Glenridge Road • Glenville, NY 12302 or join on Zoom. Visit to the VIA Aquarium: September 6 after meeting concludes. Tour of the Schenectady County SWCD's Compost and Recycling Facility hosted by Executive Director Nicholas Klemczak: September 7 after meeting concludes. CDEA meeting minutes, agendas, and annual reports are available [here](#).

*See Corner, Page 3.*

## Corner (from page 2)

### **We need YOU for CDEA's Erosion and Sediment Control Programs!**

CDEA offers two epic Erosion and Sediment Control Programs that benefit District employees.

#### **1. NYS DEC Endorsed 4-Hour Erosion and Sediment Control Online Training**

- This training is for SWCD staff who help farmers, foresters, municipalities, and landowners with erosion and sediment control issues.
- Registration is at no cost to SWCD employees
- Learn how to and understand why it is important to implement erosion and sediment control practices correctly.
- In-person and Zoom trainings are also available in addition to the online training
- Learn more about and register for the 4-hour online course here: <https://www.nyscdea.com/nys-dec-endorsed-4-hour-erosion-sediment-control-online-training/>
- Speak with a committee member: Jim Lieberum, 518-623-3119, [jiml@warrenswcd.org](mailto:jiml@warrenswcd.org) and Kelly Emerick, (585) 753 7380, [KellyEmerick@monroecounty.gov](mailto:KellyEmerick@monroecounty.gov)

#### **2. NYS Erosion and Sediment Control Certification Program**

- Heighten your proficiency in erosion and sediment control, perform qualified inspector construction site duties, enhance your technical and professional credibility, increase your personal value, recognition, and marketability, and encourage greater commitment to protecting New York's natural resources!
- Purpose: to establish and maintain a process to identify and recognize individuals who are capable of developing, designing, inspecting, and maintaining erosion and sediment control plans on projects that disturb soils in New York State.
- This certification will allow you to instruct on the 4-hour Erosion and Sediment Control training.
- This can be a great earned income program! SWCDs with board support, host 4-hour ESC trainings as an earned income program, and generate upwards of \$50,000 annually from registration fees.
- For more, visit <https://www.nyscdea.com/nysesccp/>
- Speak with a committee member: Jessica Verrigni, Phone: 607-535-0878, [jessicaschuylerswcd@gmail.com](mailto:jessicaschuylerswcd@gmail.com)

### **Upcoming Events**

- 1st Annual CDEA 5-Stand Shooting Tournament: October 11 at the Vernon National Shooting Preserve
- Administrative Conference: held in November or December, details coming soon.
- 2024 Water Quality Symposium: March 12 - 15, 2024, Double Tree Hotel, East Syracuse.

### **4-Way Partnership Corner**

#### **1. SWCC**

- NYS SWCC Meeting: September 19, 2023 – In person locations will be offered, as well as, a WebEx option
- Round 29 AGNPS Program: scoring is underway and will be wrapped up at the end of August. We expect to present the ranked list to the NYS SWCC for review and approval in September.
- Round 7 CRF Program: Round 7 closed on August 7. NYS SWCC staff are conducting internal reviews for eligibility and completeness.
- AEM Base Round 18 Update: As relayed by Greg Albrecht's email to Districts on July 24th, AEM Base Round 18 was approved at the July 18th State Committee meeting and will be released with an email, updated program documents on SharePoint, and a webinar to Districts in September pending review by AGM's attorneys, so keep an eye for those communications. In the meantime, here's a SharePoint link to that email summary and the AEM18 Program and Contract Policy approved by the State Committee (note, also found by going to <https://nysemail.sharepoint.com/sites/Agriculture/SWCC/SitePages/Home.aspx>, then Resources for Districts, then Agricultural Environmental Management, then AEM Base Program Materials, and then AEM Base Round 18

*See Corner, Page 4.*

## Corner (from page 3)

- Materials): AEM Base Program Round 18 Update for Districts (7-24-2023).msg
- SWCC Operations Sub-Committee: The SWCC is preparing to re-establish the Operations Sub-Committee to discuss various SWCD operations issues, assisting SWCDs with the development of operational policies, and defining a set framework to illicit good operational practices. A major component of the sub-committee's focus is directed at the upkeep of the SWCD Office/Operations Manual. District's should reach out to their Regional AEA if they are interested in serving on the sub-committee.
  - SWCC CAA Training: The CAA trainings on basic conservation practices are being updated and transferred to YouTube. The Hydrology, Culverts and Fence courses are all updated with more on the way. They are a great way to get new employees up to speed on basic design skills. Check them out at <https://www.youtube.com/@nysdepartmentofagriculture9462/playlists>.

## 2. NYACD

- Annual Meeting and Training: October 24-26, The Hampton Inn, 110 Mace Street, Penn Yan, NY, [register here](#). This meeting meets performance measure requirements, Part C of State Aid to Districts. Early bird special registration due September 15, 2023 (save \$25.00). On-time registration due September 23, 2023. If you will attend the tour, meet in the lobby at 12:45 p.m. Tour to load and leave by 1:00 p.m.

Please contact your Division Representative or me with questions or concerns.

I wish you all a successful and safe August, and hope to see you at an upcoming meeting training!

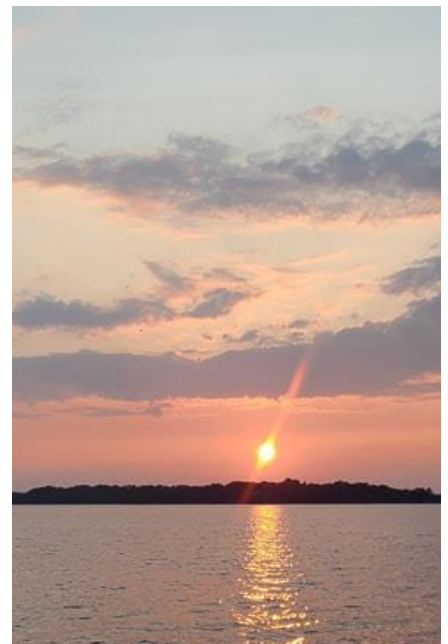
Kindest regards,



Caitlin Stewart  
President, NYS CDEA Inc.



or





## Review of the NYS Conservation Partners Leadership Institute

Cayce Salvino, District Manager, St. Lawrence County Soil & Water Conservation District

How many trainings a year do you attend? How many have you attended in your career? Willing to bet it is a fairly high number. I, myself, have probably been to over 50, more if I start counting webinars and virtual trainings. You attend trainings to learn how to do a specific task, or about a specific topic, usually related to work programs, or maybe a hobby.



Sometimes you get to walk away with a bit of tangible knowledge, other times you may feel like you did not quite get your money's worth.

How many of those trainings felt life changing? Probably not most. Perhaps I am overstating a bit about the impact of the recent Leadership Institute has had on me. But truly, I have thought about some aspect of that week every day since leaving. I even set my background to the group picture we took to remind me the power of connection.

Logistic-wise, the leadership institute had the perfect set up – take 22 conservation professionals all at varying stages of their lives and career and send them back to college in the middle of summer in the Adirondacks. Complete with dorm room living, roommates, shared bathrooms, dining hall meals, and a hang-out house. The set-up was crucial to the success of this event. Taking everyone out of the day-to-day minutia, limiting phone and computer access, and setting them up in a place of learning. The impact of the week would not have been the same if we were in a hotel and learning in conference rooms.

Creating the right atmosphere was also essential. Here is where the schedule design became so impactful, “relationship building time,” specific time etched out in between classroom sessions to connect with the other attendees. This is where the backdrop of SUNY-ESF Ranger School really sets the experience apart. Relationship building time for us meant, canoeing across the Oswegatchie, hiking to the large white pine, playing ultimate frisbee, holding a basketball tournament, swimming and swinging off a rope swing, climbing the fire tower, working out in the gym, or just sitting around the campfire with a drink and copious amounts of sour patch kids. These informal moments are where the greatest connections were forged. Often, we do not get to enjoy these types of interactions with our

*See Institute, page 6.*

## Leadership (from page 5)



coworkers and colleagues. However, I know that these moments set-up the connection and trust that allowed for the classroom activities to reach the depth they did – the point of a few tears shed.

In the classroom sessions we covered topics from personality types, to managing conflict, to personal goal setting. Our facilitators did not just lecture on concepts though, they asked pointed, thought-provoking questions and gave us ample time to consider, split into groups, and

then share. Sharing the responses is what truly placed this experience in a league of its own. Often, we are only told to self-reflect, but in sharing our responses, it allowed further connection with others and to see just how many experiences we share.

At times, the lessons were punctuated through play-based learning. We started off the week with a game of names, maybe one you have played at camp, where you say an adjective to describe you, your name, and a movement. Easy enough, until you consider 22 people in a circle with a wide variety of movements to memorize (someone even made us spin with his name!). I am notoriously not great at remembering names, so this game was slightly terrifying to play. Usually, I hear a name and my brain immediately dumps that information somewhere unretrievable. However, thanks to that first

game, I learned 23 peoples' names in a day without the use of name tags.



The capstone of the course was a short presentation on a leadership quote that resonated with us, either individually

or within our small groups. While going through the depths of what leadership means to us, things got emotional at times. Turns out, vulnerability is a huge part of leadership. This

*See Institute, page 7.*



## Leadership (from page 6)

idea was echoed time and time again in our final play-based exercise of sharing the impact of this course with each other. The combination of discussion, sharing, and games together created such an environment that by the end, even the nay-sayers were convinced of the power.

On behalf of all the attendees, I want to extend thanks to the four-way partnership (NYS Conservation District Employees Association, the NY Association of Conservation Districts, the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service) for their financial contributions which kept attendance affordable even through rising costs. And thanks to the class of 2016 Leadership Institute graduates who did the heavy lifting of organizing the event, you rock!

An enormous amount of gratitude goes to our facilitators, Sally Crosiar and Carla Stough-Huffman. Their insight, enthusiasm, and vulnerability truly made this event special.

Finally, thank you to the SUNY-ESF Ranger School for providing the absolute best backdrop for this training to take place. Some may take stars away from a review for not having reliable cell service, but in this context, it was a gift.

No matter where you fall in your career, just starting out to well-seasoned, there is a great deal to be gained from attending the Leadership Institute. I do hope you will apply for the next offering!







CHAMPLAIN WATERSHED  
IMPROVEMENT COALITION OF NEW YORK  
CLINTON | ESSEX | FRANKLIN | WARREN | WASHINGTON | COUNTIES

*is pleased to announce it will be hosting its*

## 18th Annual **North Country Stormwater Tradeshow & Conference**

**When:** October 19th 2023, 8:30am-4:30pm

Registration begins at: 7:30am

**Where:** Great Escape Lodge

89 Six Flag Drive Queensbury, NY 12804

### **Registration Fee:**

- Early Registration Fee (by September 29th) - **\$125**  
Municipal/Non-Profit Registration Fee (proof will be required) - **\$100**
- Late Registration Fee (by October 5) - **\$150**

**Interested in being a VENDOR?**

Contact: [kballou@fcswwd.org](mailto:kballou@fcswwd.org), (518) 651-2097



**\*SIGN ME UP!\***



### **A Quick Glimpse at the Conference Line-Up...**

#### **Schoharie Stream Restoration - A 10 Year Review**

Pete Nichols, District Manager Schoharie County Soil & Water Conservation District

This session will include highlights on a variety of stream bank restoration projects, including failures or challenges that the District has faced, including highlights of large scale, post flood, and small scale projects.

#### **Stormwater BMP's in Agriculture**

Amber Luke, District Technician Washington County Soil & Water Conservation District

We will discuss a variety of stormwater BMP's and how they apply to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of Agricultural Best Management Practice Systems. Solutions can be as simple as subsurface drainage that conveys groundwater around a manure storage or as complicated as a series of detention basins and rock lined diversions collecting and filtering water.

#### **Porous Pavement & Green Infrastructure**

Thomas Baird, Senior Associate Barton & Loguidice

The presentation will summarize the development of the porous asphalt system during the Lake George projects and provide changes and new guidance on design and construction methods. Maintenance recommendations, cold and hot weather technology, warm mix, and common pitfalls to avoid will also be discussed.

Other presentations include case study reviews and Stormwater Design Manual updates with industry professionals!

\*\*\*4.0 Practicing Institute of Engineering Credits are pending!\*\*\*

This project has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under assistance agreement (LC 00A00981-0) to NEWPCC in partnership with the Lake Champlain Basin Program.

Find us at [www.cwcnny.org](http://www.cwcnny.org)



## **Is your District's Website Accessible?**

**Sean Rooney, Conservation Technician , Nassau County Soil & Water Conservation District**

Conservation Districts are required to meet ADA accessibility standards. Conservation Districts are regarded as a special government agency and could lose all federal funding if we are sued for not meeting ADA compliance. To prevent this from happening, it is recommended to use the WAVE Accessibility tool to check if all webpages follow (ADA) standards.

### **WAVE Website ADA Accessibility Tool**

Here is a list of the types of ADA compliance issues it checks for.

- Captions and Alt-text describing photos.
- If the Website Functions for a screen reader software (ARIA)
- All content is easily understandable, links are clear and visible, no short and nondescript buttons ( ex: "click here" "learn more" )
- Conform to design standards for the size of headings (heading are in an ordered list, large headings first, smaller heading second)
- All text should be able to be selected (even in PDF's and Photos, Adobe Acrobat Pro has a feature to auto detect text in a photo and convert It to a selectable format)
- Contrast errors (text is not easily readable/visible), font is easy to read for the dyslexic.
- To learn more, visit <https://wave.webaim.org/>

### **Guidelines for providing services and order forms**

- Any order forms need a summary page before a payment is made.
- Give Reassuring feedback anywhere users can interact with website ( ex: "thank you for submitting this form" )
- Don't require exact spelling for form submissions.

### **Additional Best Practices for meeting ADA**

- Do not use Accessibility Overlay Tools - These have been found to not meet ADA standards.
- Videos or pop-ups cannot contain sudden loud noises - PTSD trigger.
- Social Media Posts need to be ADA compliant.
- Do not use any Copyright Photos or other materials, instead use Open-Source material. Resources for Open-Source Photos: 123 RF, Pixibay, Wikimedia Commons

To use this tool, simply paste your webpage URL into the WAVE search bar and view the errors. Each error can be selected in the details tab with additional information on how to fix them. Learn more about the ADA <https://www.ada.gov/>

## **Suffolk County SWCD's new employees**

**Susan L Odell Pepe, Administrator I, Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District**

Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District has hired two new employees in June and July 2023. We welcome Environmental Planner Kaitlyn Ann Boyle and Soil District Technician LeighAnn Montaglione. Ann Marie Calabro resigned from the SC SWCD in June 2023 to further her career on a new path in Environmental Conservation. We wish Ann Marie great success in her new career.

# Meet the Newcomers!

Introducing the newest  
Soil and Water Conservation District employees

**Devin Normandeau, District Technician**  
**Franklin County Soil and Water Conservation District**

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

A. *I interned for two summers when I was in college but started full time in April of last year.*

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

A. *My coworkers at Franklin County SWCD!*



Q. What are your hobbies?

A. *Mountain biking, skiing, fly fishing, and travelling.*

Q. What's on your bucket list?

A. *Buying a property and building my house.*

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

A. *Super gross, not a fan of pineapple.*

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

A. *Talk with other district employees, sharing knowledge is a key part of this job and will help you with the projects you're working on.*

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

A. *We help farmers take care of their land and animals.*

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

A. *Our soil health workshop we recently had!*

Q. Coffee or tea?

A. *Coffee.*

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

A. *Hydroseeding is always memorable. Something interesting always happens!*





## Soil Health Seminars

Jason Cuddeback, Grazing Specialist, Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District

July 13th 2023 Soil Health Seminar at Rodman Lott Farms Seneca Falls. Cover Crop demo with zone tillage side by side conclusion. Zone tillage on the left and soil compaction on the right. ONE application utilizing zone tillage eliminated the compaction in the sunflower cover crops.



Cover Crop demo with zone tillage side by side conclusion. Side by side view of the sunflower cover crop root mass. Root mass on the left shows large tap root with secondary crown roots. Root mass on the right shows no tap root with secondary twisted balled up crown roots.

*See Seminars, Page 11.*



## Seminars (from page 10)

- 93 people attended.
- Speaker/Topics:
  - ◊ Kathryn Bushley - Biological Control of Soybean Cyst Nematode
  - ◊ Matt Ryan - Cover Crops for Sustainable Ag.
  - ◊ Vipin Kumar - Fresh Look at Weed Management
- 2 DEC credits available
- 2 CCA credits
- Cover Crop test plot
  - ◊ 25 single and mix options for beginner to advanced farmers
  - ◊ Zone test plot with cover crop
  - ◊ Inter-seeding in 30" vs 60" row spacing





# 2023 Buffer Steward Season in the Upper Susquehanna Watershed

Ava Glasser, USC Buffer Steward Coordinator

The buffer monitoring season is now in full swing as 10 stewards from across the upper Susquehanna watershed are hard at work caring for riparian tree & shrub plantings. This year, 8 counties are participating in the Upper Susquehanna Coalition buffer steward program, which assists



*Otsego County Soil & Water Conservation District employees planting trees at a workday in Tioga County.*

in the hiring and training of seasonal workers to provide support for districts in the form of riparian forest buffer maintenance and survival monitoring. Buffer stewards are out in the field managing invasive and competing vegetation, performing survival assessments, fixing plant



*Stewards from Delaware, Otsego, and Tioga counties at a rainy workday in Delaware County.*

supports and taking detailed notes to help each buffer reach program goals, and mature into a healthy forest.

As a part of ongoing training and team building, group workdays are hosted throughout the season in each participating district's county and are open to all district staff and interested volunteers from other agencies. So far, we have done lots of replanting, monitoring, practicing tree ID, invasive plant

removal and weed whacking as a crew to get our buffers on track for success. To date, we have planted 550 trees, stewarded 45 acres, and hosted over 50 participants at these workdays, with more to come! The group work days, when combined with all the independent stewardship being done in each county, provide a huge amount of assistance to many acres of riparian buffer in need. Stewardship is an important aspect of making sure trees & shrubs thrive- without active maintenance, buffers can easily be taken over by invasive plants, crowded out by competing grasses, chewed down by deer or toppled over if shelter & support are missing. Stewards are on the front lines of making sure our waterways become forested and stay forested.

We're so glad to have all our amazing stewards on the job this summer.



*Stewards from Delaware, Broome, Otsego, and Bradford counties at a workday in Broome County.*



*A Delaware County buffer steward and Madison County FSA volunteer install willow stakes at a workday in Madison County.*

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



Ron Thorn, Conservation Field Manager, Wayne County Soil & Water Conservation District, traveled to Ireland earlier this summer with family and stopped at the Guinness Storehouse for a tour. He brought his Rainy Raindrop koozie along, but had to use it on a pint glass instead of a can or bottle.

## Update from NACDE

Jeffrey Parker, President, NACDE

The [NACD 2023 — Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation District \(cumberlandswcd.org\)](http://cumberlandswcd.org) site is live! The registrations are being processed through Cumberland County SWCD Conservation Shop. The conference appears in their Events tab and the link to the Portland Sheraton at Sable Oaks is included on the event page, with the group reservation code listed as "MNA". The code for our federal partners should be shared appropriately and the code is "GRC".

I would like to remind you that the Northeast Association of Conservation District Employees (NACDE) is offering another fundraiser tour. This tour will be a two-hour cruise on Casco Bay via Portland Discovery on Sunday, September 17 from 2-4 PM. There is a cost of \$75/pp. The funds raised allow NACDE provide the travel stipend to conservation district employees to attend the conference.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me at [jgparker@steubenswcdny.com](mailto:jgparker@steubenswcdny.com)



# NYS Erosion & Sediment Control Certificate Program

Jim Lieberum, CDEA Erosion and Sediment Control Committee

Have you considered becoming NYSESCC? This is a great opportunity for District staff to receive a certification for their work and expertise in erosion & sediment control. The NYS CDEA and program's

committee is encouraging any eligible staff to apply to take the exam. This effort encourages employee growth and if successful, provides a certified staff person in your District to assist you and your municipalities with erosion and sediment control concerns. The certificate provides a level of professionalism and can provide a new earned income opportunity for the District. <https://www.nyscdea.com/nysesccp/>

## Wise Words from our District Family

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

Q. How long have you been working at your SWCD?

A. 24 years with Herkimer County SWCD. (15 years as a Technician and 9 years as District Manager).

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

A. Adding programs, adding staff, developing an employee evaluation system, adding equipment, overall growth in capacity.

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

A. I can physically see the benefits of the projects and programs we take on. I feel good about working somewhere that has a direct impact on preserving and enhancing our country's food production.

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

A. When I first started, the total NYS Reimbursement was \$15,000. Boy has that increased, and so has the diversity of programs.

*To think we are moving towards air quality, energy efficiency, and climate resiliency. That's a long way from diversion ditches, strip-cropping, and percolation tests. In the late 90's I would say 80% of what we did here was*

*agricultural, now efforts have expanded into hydroseeding, invasive species, hazard mitigation, and water sampling. There are more funding sources available now, and watershed coalitions have been a major asset. I can't believe how far the AEM Program has grown. It was a "young" program in 1999 and now it's huge!*

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

A. Most days are overwhelming. Let it be overwhelming, let yourself be ok with not finishing everything in a day or a week. This is conservation work, it's never done. Enjoy as many days as

*you can working with people who care about many of the same things you do. Listen to people closely and give yourself time to process what is*



See Wise, page 16.

## Wise (from page 15)

*being asked of you. You don't always need an immediate answer.*

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

A. *I graduated in 1998 from the College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse. I took a grassroots conservation course, and the instructor was none other than Mr. Peter Black. I was hooked immediately.*

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

A. *A few months after I graduated, I saw an ad in the local newspaper for an open technician position with Herkimer County Soil & Water. I had some background knowledge of Conservation Districts from what I learned at college. As a young lad, I also worked on a few farms picking rock, fixing fence, throwing hay, cleaning calf pens, feeding cows, and shoveling manure into the spreader (no barn cleaner). I often heard the farm owners talk about the erosion and drainage projects they had completed. I thought it might be a cool job, to work outside a lot in farm fields. I was young and hoped if nothing else it would be good experience. Here I am 24 years later.*

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

A. *Yes and No. I did get exposed to some grassroots conservation in college. Biology and ecology gave me a strong background for the science behind what we do. There really is no substitute for good on the job training with experienced co-workers. I learned a lot from some of the old school guys that installed conservation practices back in the 70's and 80's for the District and SCS (NRCS). Those guys could lay out fairly complicated systems with just a hand level.*

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

A. *In general, when I'm in a vehicle with younger staff, friends, or family driving across any part of Herkimer County, it turns into a "tour" of sorts. "Look at that rock rip-rap Ted and I designed", "we built that manure storage with Round 12 Ag Nonpoint Source Grant funds", "that's the first dry hydrant I designed: RC&D funds paid for the supplies at that time". My wife rolls her eyes at me a lot.*

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

A. *Whistlin' Willy in Auburn. For those who saw that in person, it's hard to forget....totally hilarious! I also have fond memories of playing guitar with Brian Davis in the hospitality room while Jeff Parker wailed on the harmonica.*

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

A. *I attended Conservation Skills Workshop very soon after starting with the District in 1999. I took Basic Surveying with Phil Griswold and Rick Ayers. I didn't really know anyone at that point but those guys, by constantly tormenting me in a wide variety of ways, loosened me up and made my first District training experience a good one. They convinced me there was a final exam that I needed to pass. There was also a very irritating magic trick called "hot quarters" that had me up in arms for at least 3 days. I laughed about it later, but they really had me sweating it for a while.*

Q. Do you have a hidden talent?

A. *I play guitar.*

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

A. *Mostly I will miss working with all sorts of great people including District employees all over the state.*



# Good Eats



4-Way Partners travel all over the state, and we get hungry! These ice cream parlors, pizza joints, diners, food trucks, ethnic restaurants, dive bars, and farm to table establishments come highly recommended. Stop in for a bite the next time you're in the area.



CDEA Division II Representative Jason Cuddeback stopped at the Wright Diner (Rt. 12 Depauville), on his way to the July CDEA meeting. He recommends their open face prime rib sandwich with fries.

Anytime Warren County SWCD's Manager Jim Lieberum is down Amsterdam way he goes to Cronies' Diner in Hagaman NY. Probably his favorite burger and fries that he's ever had. *"Yes ma'am, gravy on the side!"*  
Cronies' Restaurant  
111 Pawling Street Hagaman  
<http://www.cronieshagaman.com/>



## **Madison County SWCD welcomes new District Clerk**

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

Madison County SWCD welcomes our new District Clerk, Amy Hayduke, to the team of conservation professionals. Amy is originally from Madison and now lives in Hamilton. She has spent the last 20 years as an office professional in the insurance and property management industries. She is proud to call Central New York her home. The vibrant community, picturesque surroundings, and close-knit community have made an ideal place for Amy to flourish both personally and professionally. Amy is enthusiastic about conservation and loves being active in the outdoors through gardening, hiking and kayaking with her fiancé and two daughters.



## **Buffer Project Spotlight**

**Tommy Conklin, Madison County SWCD Buffer Steward**



The Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff finished a stream project with a buffer planting in Brookfield, NY. The planting area was roughly 0.18 acres and bordered a stream bank stabilization project completed earlier in the year. The planting was performed by operating a New Holland skid loader with an auger to assist in drilling holes. A total of 10 trees, and 35 shrubs were planted at the site. Some of these species include sugar maple, Northern red oak, ninebark, nanny berry, and button bush. Each shrub received a 2ft x 2ft weed mat, 2ft shrub tube, and 5ft stake. While, each tree only received a 2ft x 2ft weed mat. After the planting was completed, SWCD staff stopped periodically at the site throughout the late spring/early summer to water and check the state of the tree survivability.



## Emergency Work in the Watershed

**Mark E. Burger, Program Manager, and SLWAP Staff**

On April 5 and again on April 26, the northern portion of the watershed received a high-intensity, two inch, two year rainfall event. But, this all occurred on already saturated soils, which caused substantial runoff events from farm fields, forests, and overflow of streams in the watershed.

The SLWAP staff and Watershed Coordinator Rich Abbott immediately sprang into action. The team met with landowners and farmers in the affected areas. Emergency plans were developed, meetings were held with the City's Watershed Agricultural Program Review Committee (WAPRC) Board of Directors (BOD) to review the technical merits of the emergency work. Meetings were held with the Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) BOD to release funding to address the technical work approved by the WAPRC.

SLWAP staff put the work out to bid to contractors immediately with the caveat that all projects

had to be done within one week of the site showing. Only contractors that could work within that tight timeline were considered.

Projects were implemented immediately followed by the SWCD critical area seeding crew. They immediately seeded and mulched the exposed soil with the goal of getting roots in the ground as quick as possible to help hold the soil together, knowing that summer storms would hit the area hard, as they always do from June through August.

Unfortunately, the extremely dry weather pattern hit the area and no appreciable rainfall occurred over a three week period. Therefore, the SLWAP staff and their summer crew sprang into action and hauled water in a 250 gallon cube to each job site and watered the site with portable pumps. The goal was to make sure that vegetation was growing and roots were substantially in the ground to help hold the newly exposed soil together. The plan worked great and all emergency work has been on schedule. Please see the before and after photos and captions that explain the work that has been done.

**MANY THANKS TO THE CITY OF SYRACUSE FOR HAVING A DEDICATED STAFF TO ADDRESS MATTERS LIKE THIS IN THE WATERSHED OVER THE LAST 29 YEARS! AND, PLEASE KNOW THAT THIS WORK WOULD NOT / COULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED WITHOUT THE DIRECT FUNDING FROM THE CITY OF SYRACUSE!**

(Between their own funding with that funding used to leverage grant applications, over \$20 million has been invested over the past 29 years to protect the City's drinking water supply for Syracuse at Skaneateles Lake!

## Water Chestnut Hand Harvesting Project

**Jenna Canipe, Co-Crew Leader**

The water chestnut hand harvesting project at OCSWCD is vital and important to maintaining and preserving the livelihood of the not only the residents of Cross Lake and Seneca River, but also the wildlife. Water chestnuts are a fast-spreading invasive species that originated from Europe, Asia,



and Africa, they first made their appearance in the United States in the 1870s. Water chestnuts thrive in slow moving freshwater at depths up to 16 feet. One single plant can produce 15-20 seeds and each seed can produce up to 15 stems. This means one plant has the potential to produce up to 300 plants in the following year. The seeds of these plants make them even more of a nuisance. They are extremely sharp and can stay viable in the mucky substrate for up to 12 years. This requires a site with water chestnuts to be monitored for at least 12 years to be sure the plant is eradicated from the area.

See Chestnut page 20.

## Chestnut (from page 19)

In the U.S. water chestnuts do not have any natural predators to control the spread. This allows them to form dense mats that are hazardous to boaters, kayakers, swimmers, and other water related activities. These mats also have major impacts on wildlife. Native aquatic plants that create habitats for fish, waterfowl, insects, and others are outcompeted by this invasive and are often unable to grow. The water chestnuts shade out and do not allow sunlight to penetrate the water to reach native plants. The air-water interface of oxygen exchange into the water is also greatly reduced. In the fall these massive mats begin to die off. This causes an increase in the depth of organic material at the bottom of the water body. It also creates a reduction in dissolved oxygen levels in the water which

can cause a fish to die off.

Our job this summer is to hand-pull as many water chestnuts out of Cross Lake and the Seneca River system as possible. We use a 14-foot john boat and a kayak to pick the water chestnuts out of the water and place them in bins that weigh 35lbs each when full. As of July 14th of this year, we have harvested 20,220 wet pounds of water chestnuts. These pulled plants are then dumped at local participating farm fields to provide nutrients and organic matter to the soil. It is very important the community also does their part to help reduce the spread. This can be done by hand pulling water chestnuts in the area, cleaning watercraft, including tailer, and detecting new infestations early.



## 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!



Amber Luke Washington County SWCD says, "Titos and Cranberry always makes a rough Monday a little better." We couldn't agree more!



Chas Miller, Franklin County SWCD, enjoys a refreshing drink in her CDEA pint glass.



Susan Lewis, Albany County SWCD, is the champion for the CDEA Wine and Pint Glass Tour. Can you dethrone our all-star? Send in your photos!



## Earth Day Garden Planting and Clean-up and Seedling Planting

Teresa Link, Conservation District Technician, Onondaga County

On April 21<sup>st</sup> District staff revitalized a garden at the office and picked trash around the building for Earth Day. Staff dug up the existing few plants in the unmaintained garden, placed cardboard as a weed barrier, added a few inches of compost, replanted, and mulched the garden all in 1.5 hours. Staff brought in plants from their own gardens to add to the office garden. Species that have medicinal uses and are beneficial to

pollinators were planted along with the three sisters that were planted by Tina from the Skanonh Center. Staff then picked up trash around the building before enjoying some burgers grilled by our very own Mark Burger. Stop in to see the garden as we add more plants!



In April, 454 seedlings were planted at Highland and Pratt's Falls as part of the Onondaga County Ash Tree Management Program. 200 of the deciduous trees were protected with tree tubes at Highland and the rest of the trees were conifers. Species includes sugar maple, red maple, red pine, white pine, tulip tree, redbud, white flowering dogwood, swamp white oak, and apple trees.



As part of our continuing efforts to add buffers in the Upper Susquehanna Watershed, 170 elderberry, four redbud, and five river birch were planted this April at Cummings Park in the Village of Tully and on Hoffman Road. The larger trees were acquired from the Upper Susquehanna Coalition (USC) which assists in funding many of the buffer projects in the watershed. The District will also be conducting mortality assessments on past buffer plantings in the Tully area this summer.



## Districts Partner to Inspire Youth at Waterville Central School

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

Ben Franklin said, “Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn”. Involvement with natural systems is a hallmark of folks working in local conservation efforts. And so is sharing hands-on learning with the next generation of conservationists. Education is as close as one’s eyes, hands and heart.

In an effort to give Waterville students a glimpse of career pathways in the environmental field, the Oneida and Madison County Soil and Water Conservation Districts partnered with teachers and 6th and 7th graders to show some specific examples of basic conservation husbandry practices. “It all starts with the soil and keeping it healthy and covered with living roots”, said Madison County SWCD Grazing Specialist, Farmer and Waterville Alumnus, Troy Bishopp.

His tabletop demonstration had students pouring water into a rain simulator over bare and sod-covered soil to see the effects of erosion potential, water holding capacity and resiliency opportunities for a whole watershed. “The raindrop can be destructive if not intercepted by a leaf parachute”. Students saw first hand, the popular “Slake Test” as they dropped chunks of soil on a screen immersed in a water column and witnessed how the presence of organic matter (water holding capacity) contributed to the soil’s structural integrity.

Bishopp described how the biological processes such as earthworm activity, root growth and sticky exudates from fungi

and bacteria all contribute to soil aggregation and the stability of macropores which allow better infiltration of water into the soil, reducing water runoff and erosion. In practice, he works with farmers to manage pasture systems, plant cover crops, improve nutrient cycling and install riparian forested buffers, grassed waterways and contour farming practices.

Students transitioned to the popular “Stream Table” where Oneida County SWCD Water Quality Specialist, Payton Reese and District Forester, Jessica Pyrda taught what a watershed is and how a stream naturally wants to flow through a landscape and its floodplains. Students then placed houses and debris along the watercourse mimicking realistic scenarios while the conservation professionals

released the water to show students how the velocity affects streambank erosion and how it changes a community. As the two recited the 3 s's of stormwater management: “Soak it in, spread it out, and slow it down”, they inspired students to keep banks covered and trees in place, maintain natural flood zones, break up impervious surfaces with water catchment practices and consider not building near streams. Their careers surround working with residents,

See Inspire, page 21.





## Inspire (from page 21)



agriculture, watershed groups and municipalities on a variety of watershed planning tools, monitoring, designing systems and installation of resilient practices to mitigate weather events.

Jessica introduced her “tree cookies” and described the many jobs within the forestry context. She had the students count tree rings and relate it back to their own growth. She passed around local tree species and their importance within a watershed. Students then exercised making their own growth rings from a paper plate and showcased their artful creations.

The pursuit and partnership of knowledge and hands-on learning was enhanced after the program by an ice-cream social donated

by Waterville’s Stewart’s Shops. Education never tasted so good!

## Niagara County SWCD Pitches a Tent at this year’s Niagara County Fair

Katie Pfeifer, District Clerk, Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District

With so much happening, Niagara County SWCD decided to switch it up this year for their county fair booth. The fair space went from a 10’x10’ indoor exhibit to a

20’x20’ tent right by the livestock show ring. Niagara SWCD was able to display a hands-on watershed model, the invasive species being fought in Niagara County, the Eighteenmile Creek Area of Concern project, FSA/ NRCS, FL-LOWPA water quality monitoring, a USFS Tree Grant that replaced trees lost to the emerald ash borer, AEM and other grant opportunities, plus all the fun stuff residents love to see! Outdoor signs helped encouraged people to stop in whether it was for Japanese knotweed control, cover crops, or just seeing a new tent up.

“We were able to have good conversations with people that were very interested in what we do. We were also able to showcase more of the programs that we have available for residents and farmers! It was great to be so close to our office and the people we help.”





## 2023 CDEA Golf Tournament



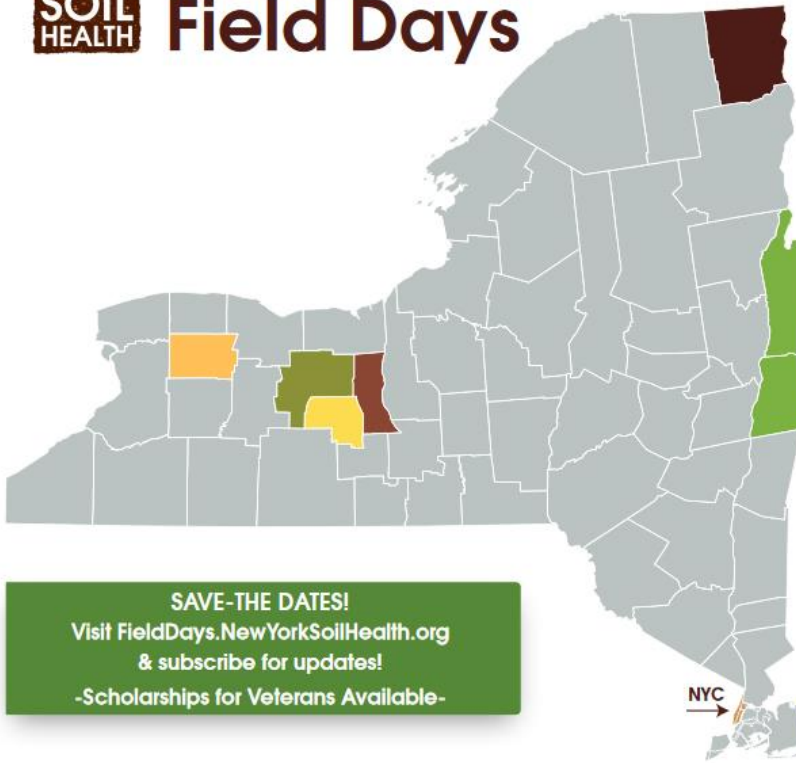
Team Name	Individuals	Paid (Y/N)	Skins	Mulligan Eligible (Y/N)	Gr
SWCC #1 16	Tyler Knapp, Ben Luskin, Scott Fickbohm, Alec Sovocool ✓	N (D/O)	No	✓	
NRCS #2 13	Sam Ly, Dave Adams, Mike Adams, Dennis Deweese ✓	N (D/O)	✓	✓	
USDA-NRCS 12	Becca Hare, Mark Hare, Jonathan Burns, Jon Jerome	Y	✓	✓	
Chenango SWCD 15	Jennifer Kelly, Jacob Welsh, Riley Krupitza, Ewen Kelly	Pay 100% ?	✓	✓	
Cayuga, Cortland NYSSWCC 1A	Doug Kierst, Russ Smith, Ryan Cunningham and Sean Ward ✓	N (D/O)	✓	✓	
Retirees 14	Don Lake, Ron Kaplewicz, Pat Lake, Jean Swisher	Y	✓	✓	
Delaware County 17	Gideon Frisbee, Dan V., Nate Townsend, Mike Worales	Y	✓	✓	
Wayne SWCD 10	Scott DeRue, Ron Thorn, Chris Hotto, Ian Priestly	Y	✓	✓	
SWCC #2 13	Ron Bush, Tim Bush, Frank G, H Lamson	Y	✓	✓	
CDEA 11	Dustin Lewis, Theresa Lewis, AnnMarie C., Joann Burke	?	15 ✓	✓	
Oneida 14	Tim Wimmer, Jeremy Langner, Rick Ronaldo, Josh Hornesky	Y	✓	✓	

Skill Prizes and Awards





# 2023 Soil Health & Climate Resiliency Field Days



- JUNE 22-23 | 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM (both days)**  
Central NY – Canandaigua | Ontario County Fair Grounds  
Topic: biochar for agriculture, demos, tours
- JUNE 28 | 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM**  
New York City – Harlem | Harlem Grown  
Topic: soil biology, urban soil health
- JULY 13 | 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM**  
Central NY – Seneca Falls | Rodman Lott & Son Farms  
Topic: cover crops, reduced tillage, soil health, pest mgmt
- JULY 19 | 1:00 PM - 6:00 PM**  
Eastern NY – Washington & Rensselaer Cos. | Landview Farm  
Topic: Interseeded cover crops, reduced tillage, farm tour
- AUGUST 16 | TBD**  
Northern NY – Chazy | Miner Institute  
Topic: Interseeded cover crops, reduced tillage, farm tour
- AUGUST 24 | TBD**  
Central NY – Penn Yan | Martens Farm  
Topic: organic, cover crops, reduced tillage
- AUGUST 31 | TBD**  
Western NY – Le Roy | Branton Farms  
Topic: planting green, biostrip till, weed management
- SEPTEMBER 12 | 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM**  
Long Island – Suffolk County | TBD  
Topic: soil amendments

**SAVE-THE DATES!**  
Visit [FieldDays.NewYorkSoilHealth.org](https://FieldDays.NewYorkSoilHealth.org)  
& subscribe for updates!  
-Scholarships for Veterans Available-



## CDEA News needs YOUR news!

Email your stories, photos, save the dates,  
and fun moments  
to [caitlin@hamcoswcd.org](mailto:caitlin@hamcoswcd.org)

Special columns!  
Cover Photo  
CDEA Wine and Pint Glass Tour  
Where in New York is Ronny Raindrop?

Visit [www.nyscdea.com](http://www.nyscdea.com) for newsletter back issues

## Save the Date

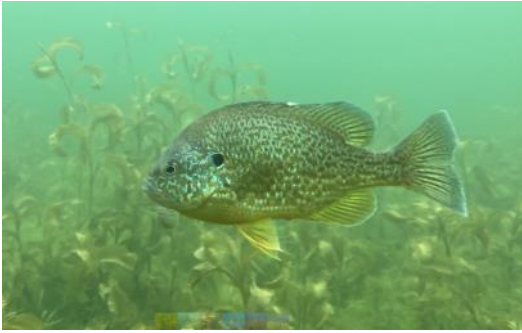
### NACD Northeast Regional Conference

Portland Sheraton at Sable Oaks  
200 Sable Oaks  
Portland, ME 04106

**September 17 - 20, 2023**



## Photo Album



Dive photos by Nick Rowel, Warren County SWCD.



Luke Gianforte testing out his homemade interseeder into corn as a CRF program participant. Photo by Troy Bishopp, Madison County SWCD.



USC region district buffer stewards look over tree planting survivability. Photo by Troy Bishopp, Madison County SWCD.





## Photo Album



Swede Mountain.



Red eft.



Family fishing .



Photos by Jim Lieberum, Warren County SWCD.

## Beaver River Central School Career Showcase

**Carla Yaw, Treasurer, Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District**

Michael Durant (District Technician) and Alexis Lyndaker (Watershed Ag Conservation Specialist) from Lewis County SWCD attended Beaver River's 1st Annual Career Showcase. This was a full day event



for students in grades 7-12. The first part of the day was career exploration for students to have the chance to explore a variety of careers and interact with the professionals. There were over 40 local businesses in attendance. The afternoon session consisted of mock interviews with Juniors and Seniors. Mike & Alexis conducted four interviews during the afternoon. Not only were they impressed with the professionalism and curiosity of the students, but the questions that were asked. Mike & Alexis are already looking forward to next year as it was a successful and rewarding event.



# Annual NYS CDEA Fish On Challenge

The NYSCDEA is sponsoring a fishing challenge to all the Soil & Water Conservation District 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. CASH Preferred!

Register [HERE](#) for the Fish On Challenge by **May 31, 2023**

*\*\*\*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](mailto: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, 2023 – February 28, 2024*

Examples for pictures:



Winners of all categories will be announced at the 2024 WQS Banquet.

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

CASH Preferred!

If you have any questions, comments or if you are interested in registering, contact [Fishcdea@gmail.com](mailto:Fishcdea@gmail.com)





**New York Association of Conservation Districts**  
c/o Steuben County SWCD  
415 W. Morris Street  
Bath, NY 14810  
[www.nyacd.org](http://www.nyacd.org)

## **News from NYACD**

Updates on what NYACD has for you.

**Stream C Bills** ..... The Governor should have the Stream C bill now that it has passed both houses. There has been no word on how the Governor ruled as of today (7/13/2023). NYACD Board elected to send a letter to the Governor asking her to veto this amended Stream C bill. Once I hear what the final decision is I will share with the districts.

**2023 NYACD Annual Meeting** ..... We are in full swing with the planning of the NYACD Annual meeting. We have a tour scheduled for Tuesday afternoon, October 24<sup>th</sup>. Currently there are ten (10) classes on the schedule. We have a couple guest speakers lined up. The event is scheduled for Tuesday, October 24<sup>th</sup> – Thursday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at the Hampton Inn, 110 Mace Street, Penn Yan, NY.

The registration packets should be completed and in the mail in the middle of August. Once again, we are offering a discount to first-time Directors to attend.

We have another great training session and annual meetings in store for you, so we hope to see you there!

Folks should have received the packet with the award nomination forms in early July. We're hoping that folks will take the time to consider someone for the NYACD awards. We know that there are plenty of great folks out there deserving of these awards. So, if you haven't done so already, please take a few minutes out of your busy schedule and nominate someone.

DON'T forget to send in any resolutions you might have!!!!

Respectfully Submitted,

*Blanche*

Blanche L. Hurlbutt  
NYACD Executive Director



## New York State Envirothon

### Great News!!

The NYS Envirothon team from Mount Academy, Ulster County SWCD took 8<sup>th</sup> place overall at the 2023 NCF Envirothon - New Brunswick. We are very excited for this young team to have taken 8<sup>th</sup> place. This year's team had only one returning member and four new members. They did great representing New York at this event.



Their Advisor, Neal Horning was nominated and awarded the "Wave of the Future" award at this year's 2023 NCF Envirothon – New Brunswick, which made us double proud of this team. What a great job Mr. Horning has done working with his team each year and was very deserving of this award.



The NYS Envirothon is scheduled for Wednesday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> and Thursday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024. The location will be determined at our August meeting. We are looking forward to another great year at the new location.



We have four (4) new committee members:

Karl Struse, USDA-NRCS, Marie Ross, USDA-NRCS, Natalie Shudt, USDA-NRCS, & Ryan Cunningham, NYSSSWCC.

All our former committee members are coming back for another great year. Our total committee is up to fourteen. We were sorry to lose Josh Teeter, NYS Parks due to his job commitment and Fred vonMechow has stepped down after serving over twenty-years on the committee as the NYS DEC and retired volunteer. We will miss these two guys that made sure the oral presentation was run properly according to the rules and regs.

More information to come in the next few weeks, so keep an eye out.

Respectfully submitted,

*Blanche*

Blanche L. Hurlbutt, NYS Envirothon Chair

## 2024 NCF Envirothon – New York

The committee is working very hard preparing for this great event set for Sunday, July 28<sup>th</sup>-Saturday, August 3, 2024, to be held at Hobart & William Smith Colleges, Geneva, New York.

Last week four committee members traveled to the 2023 NCF Envirothon – New Brunswick in Sackville, Canada to learn the dos and don'ts of this great event. Each one of us came back with a good understanding of the amount of work that goes into creating a great event and the number of volunteers needed.



We **NEED YOU!** Yes, we do. We are going to need lots of volunteers from setup, oral presentation judges, to ice cream scoopers. It is our hope that every one of you district folks will be able to volunteer for one, two, three days or all week at this event. We need many hands to make this a great event and with your help we can do it.

We have committee members working hard searching for funding to support this program. We **NEED** your financial support. If your district hasn't paid the requested \$3,000, we are hoping you will do so. At this point we have twenty-four (24) districts that have paid all or most all the requested funds. Which leaves twenty-four (24) districts still considering supporting this program. PLEASE support this program so we can make it the best it can be. There are many required things needed to pull off this event, so your support is important.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to the committee members. We'd be happy to answer any questions or concerns you might have.

Respectfully submitted,

*Blanche*

Blanche L. Hurlbutt,  
2024 NCF Envirothon – New York Chair



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**Division VIII: Vacant**