

# CDEA News



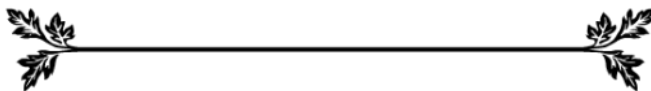
NEW YORK STATE  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION, INC.

OCTOBER 2023



## Cover Photo

Eatonville Falls in the Town of Greig, Lewis County NY. A popular camping, swimming and party spot that has been the focus of our cleanup efforts the past few years. The Lewis County WQCC collected 85lbs of Trash at the site during their 2023 Trash Bash on 9/26. Photo by Carla Yaw, Lewis County Soil & Water Conservation District.



## The CDEA Corner

**Caitlin Stewart, President, NYS CDEA, Inc.**

October greetings! Please take a few minutes to refill your coffee or tea mug and browse the October CDEA News.

### November CDEA Meeting

I warmly welcome SWCD staff, Directors, and all members of the 4-Way Partnership to attend our upcoming meeting. This meeting meets performance measure requirements, Part C of State Aid to Districts. Save the date: **November 27, 2023 · 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m., and November 28, 2023 · 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.** Meeting location and agenda to follow. CDEA meeting minutes, agendas, and annual reports are available [here](#).

### September CDEA Meeting Recap

CDEA and representatives from the 4-Way Partnership met in beautiful Schenectady to discuss new initiatives and long standing programs and events. A special thank you to Schenectady County SWCD Executive Director Nicholas Klemczak for providing a fantastic tour of the Compost and Recycling Facility. We also enjoyed a trip to the VIA Aquarium.



### 4-Way Fund Applications

Districts, we hear you and understand that the 4-Hour Fund application process is confusing. CDEA is working to revise the policy. Districts should not apply for funding to send their staff to CDEA events (Conservation Skills Workshop, Water Quality Symposium, Leadership Institute, Administrative Conference, etc.). 4-Hour funds are already supporting CDEA events by paying instructor fees and offsetting registration fees for all District staff. For example, funds will support 2 free Water Quality Symposium registration fees for the entire 2024 conference. Funding is intended for Conservation Districts to create, update, deliver, or attend a technical or educational workshop or program that will benefit the

*See Corner, Page 3.*

## Corner (from page 2)

entire state. For example, providing funding to a Conservation District to take several trainings on the same topic and combine them into a comprehensive statewide training module that is freely available to any other District in the state, or holding a specialized training event like a post-flood emergency stream intervention training or other training of statewide importance.

Application forms for use of funds generated from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Endorsed 4-Hour Erosion and Sediment Control Online Training are available on SharePoint. Submit your requests to me as soon as possible. Applications are reviewed at every bi-monthly CDEA meeting and must be received 2 weeks prior.

### Upcoming Events

[Administrative Conference](#) - November 6 - 7, 2023, DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Syracuse

[Water Quality Symposium](#) - March 12 - 15, 2024, DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Syracuse

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

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

Kindest regards,

*Caitlin Stewart*

Caitlin Stewart  
President, NYS CDEA Inc.







## New York State Erosion & Sediment Control Certificate Program Implementation Review Course

**LOCATION:** Ward W. O'Hara Agricultural Museum  
6880 East Lake Road  
Auburn, NY

**DATE:** November 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE:** November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023

The New York State Conservation District Employee's Association will be hosting the New York State Erosion & Sediment Control Certificate Program Implementation Course on Wednesday November 15<sup>th</sup> from 8:30am to 4:30pm and continuing into Thursday, from 8:30am to 1 pm. This course will be instructed by Kelly Emerick, Monroe County SWCD, Patrick Emerick, NYS Ag & Markets, Jim Lieberum, Warren County SWCD, Tim Schneider, Cayuga County SWCD, Jessica Verrigni Schuyler County SWCD and Jake Wedemeyer Ulster County SWCD. This session is intended to prepare individuals who plan to sit for the NYSESCCP exam.

This course presents details of the New York State Erosion & Sediment Control Certificate Program 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. Presentations include regulatory history, permit requirements, site planning and management, NYS Erosion and Sediment Control Standards, as well as site plan review and construction inspections. Participants will calculate soil loss impacts, stormwater runoff volumes, fertilizer and seeding quantities, and key design elements of runoff and sediment control practices. Participants should bring a scale, calculator, the most current copy of the NYS General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activity, and the NYS Standards and Specifications for Erosion and Sediment Control. More information regarding the program and course can be found <https://www.nyscdea.com/nysesccp/>

This class can be counted for Professional Development Units (PDU's) for those that retain stormwater certifications in Certified Professional in Stormwater Quality (CPSWQ), Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control (CPESC), and the New York State Erosion and Sediment Control Certificate (NYS ESCC). In addition, this class has been certified for 10 Professional Development Hours (PDH's) for New York State registered Professional Engineers by the Practicing Institute for Engineering.

The cost of attending this course is \$250/ per person without PDH credits and \$350/ per person with PDH credits. Pre-Registration is required. In order for this course to be offered, 10 attendees need to be registered otherwise the course will be cancelled. Return the bottom portion of this form, along with the registration fee, to Schuyler County SWCD, Attn: Jessica Verrigni, PO Box 326, Montour Falls, NY 14865. No refunds.

**QUESTIONS?** Contact Jessica Verrigni at 607-483-1944 or Email: [jessicaschuylerswcd@gmail.com](mailto:jessicaschuylerswcd@gmail.com)

**Methods of Payment:** Check Payable to Schuyler County SWCD

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NYSE&SCCP IMPLEMENTATION COURSE REGISTRATION November 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Course Registration Fee: \$250 without PDHs  
\$350 with PDHs

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_



## **New York State Erosion & Sediment Control Certificate Program Exam**

**LOCATION:** Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District (conference room)  
7413 County House Road  
Auburn, NY 13021

**DATE:** November 17<sup>th</sup> 2023- 8:30 am to Noon

NYS Conservation District Employee's Association will be hosting the New York State Erosion & Sediment Control Certificate Program Exam on November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

The New York State Erosion & Sediment Control Certificate Program Exam will test the applicant's knowledge of the fundamentals of erosion and sediment control, as well as the planning, design, construction, inspection and maintenance of erosion and sediment control practices. The exam is an open book exam and registrants have 3.5 hours to complete the exam and must achieve a score of 75 to pass.

Individuals must submit an application and be approved to sit for the exam. **APPLICATIONS FOR THIS EXAM DATE ARE DUE BY October 25<sup>th</sup>**. There is an application fee of \$150. If approved to sit for the exam, there is a \$100 exam fee. More information on the program can be found at <https://www.nyscdea.com/nysesccp/>

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**QUESTIONS?** Contact Jessica Verrigni, CPESC, CPSWQ at 607-483-1944 Email: [jessicaschuylerswcd@gmail.com](mailto:jessicaschuylerswcd@gmail.com)

**NYSE&SCCP EXAM REGISTRATION DEADLINE: November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**Exam Fee:** \$100

**Payment:** Check Payable to Schuyler County SWCD PO Box 326 Montour Falls, NY 14865

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

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Phone

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Email



## Soil & Water Conservation Society Empire State Chapter

### WHAT'S NEW IN CONSERVATION AG?

### JOIN US TO FIND OUT

### SAVE THE DATE!

### THURSDAY NOVEMBER 9, 2023

#### In-person location:

Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District Service Center  
Auburn, New York 13021

This event will have a virtual option for those unable to attend in person

Lunch and refreshments are included with in-person registration

CCA credits will be available

Registration details to come soon!



A. Ristow



Getty Images



E. Watson



K. Keenan

Contact: Aaron Ristow, President

[aristow@farmland.org](mailto:aristow@farmland.org)

(315) 748-5029



## ***The Just Right Challenge and the Warren County Envirothon***

**Bridget Lieberum, guest contributor, PT C/NDT Physical Therapist Langan School at Prospect Center**

In the world of physical, occupational and speech therapy, there are several concepts and frameworks around the “*Just Right Challenge*” regarding the pediatric population. The concept of having high demands during therapy results in an expectation and hope that the students will rise to the challenge. The *Just Right Challenge* is a phrase that describes a therapeutic activity at a level that is challenging enough to help an individual develop their skills, but not so challenging that it becomes frustrating or overwhelming. In the pediatric population, this concept

takes an additional spin in the world of school and academics. Engaging students of any age is difficult, engaging students with learning, physical, social, and emotional impairments can add many additional layers and steps.

Physical therapists are constantly considering ways to engage students while providing that higher level challenge. If students are not challenged, therapy is not beneficial and students may not progress. When students are nonverbal, have physical or sensory impairments, that challenge level is harder to discover and often their abilities are underestimated, especially in the non-therapy world. As a physical therapist at the

*See Envirothon, page 7.*



## Envirothon (from page 6)

Center For Disability Langan School at Prospect, I work with students who are nonverbal, use equipment for mobility, have sensory needs (overstimulated by noise, smells, touch), and use alternative ways to communicate.

Our school is a standalone school with whom surrounding school districts contract to meet the educational requirements of their students. Those students have needs that their home district is unable to provide be it nursing, smaller size classrooms, additional therapies, high sensory needs, mobility needs, and specialized trained staff. In many instances outside of our school, they face huge obstacles in attempting activities that many of us would take for granted. They are also resilient and some of the hardest workers one will find, but most of all they are simply kids and teenagers.

### ***Enter the Envirothon***

Most of you know that the national Envirothon program was created to increase high school student interest in the environment and environmental topics. I was introduced to the Envirothon as my mother worked for the New York Association of

Conservation Districts. In high school, our Envirothon team won the state Envirothon, and competed at the national event in Nebraska and placed 8<sup>th</sup>.

Several years ago, Prospect paired with the Warren

County Soil & Water Conservation District to complete a rain garden planting at a nearby park. The elementary age students involved were engaged, walking in the adaptive equipment over difficult uneven terrain and were sitting up by themselves. These activities previously required increased help, time and support to complete at school. Talking with Soil and Water employees, the concept of partnering for more projects was tossed around as the students and staff had a great time and the students rose to the challenge.

Fast forward to December 2022, Jim Lieberum reached out to invite Prospect to attend the 25<sup>th</sup> Envirothon at the Warren County Fish Hatchery. At that time, no one could imagine the impact the Envirothon would have on our school. Meetings were arranged between Soil and Water and Prospect

staff, to educate each other on the various programs and specific needs. Key points that came out of the meeting were that Prospect students would want to participate not just observe the event and that Soil and Water was willing to make this a memorable experience. A core group of therapists identified potential students for the first team to represent Prospect. Parent letters were drafted, sent home, and enough students received permission to attend that Prospect fielded 2 teams. Our students have different needs for mobility (wheelchairs,



*Focusing.*

*See Envirothon, page 8.*

## Envirothon (from page 7)

gait trainers/walkers), sensory (wear headphones, compression vests, require quiet breaks), dining (altered food textures, different equipment used), and communication devices (iPad, picture exchange cards). Many also require nursing needs (medication, monitoring) and staff support. Due to the multiple factors for each student to be successful, the therapists created a rough draft of necessary items.

As the day for the Envirothon was approaching, additional meetings with classroom staff therapists and administration were held. Planning for the event took a considerable effort on a subject that to almost everyone was an unfamiliar outdoor event with the possibility of rain. A second consideration was, although our students were rising to the challenge, the Envirothon was going to involve significant interaction with peers from the public schools. We did wonder how well this would play out for a full day event.

In order to increase the school's level of comfort, the SWCD offered to assist with educational materials and to review with students prior to the Envirothon. Jim and Jake Dunkley presented to our middle and high school aged students. The advice given to them was to make it

interactive, include all senses (touch, sound, sight) and educate students on topics that they would be tested on. Roughly 35 students and 20 staff (therapists, teachers, administration) members attended the presentation on trees and wildlife.

What was the end result? Students were engaged answering questions, touching pelts, handling skulls, identifying maple and pine trees, reasoning out what animals were on the trail camera videos and listening to and identifying animal sounds (and imitating!). Students who typically require noise canceling

headphones to tolerate being in a classroom, were able to participate in the hour-long presentation. Other students with physical impairments were able to sit up, reach and hold items of various textures for longer amounts of time without staff assistance, and moving farther with less support. Some students have difficulty maintaining personal space, interacting and/or



*A fun lunchtime.*

communicating with others. During the presentation, they were answering questions (through eye gaze, yes/no) not just with their familiar and trained staff, but with Jake and Jim. The students waited their turn, passed items to the next student when prompted, and watched/attended the presentation for the hour. Presentations in large groups are not uncommon, but for our students this was a big challenge that they met.

The day of the Envirothon arrived and this was going to be a challenge for students and staff, taking them out of their comfort zone for the longest and biggest field trip in Prospect history. Three vehicles with staff, students and equipment arrived at the Envirothon, with other

*See Envirothon, page 9.*



## Envirothon (from page 8)



school districts. In addition to the therapists and classroom staff, a behaviorist and a school nurse provided necessary support to navigate the terrain, dine/eat safely, communicate, and interact socially appropriately. Having researched adaptive Envirothons (there wasn't any information) and talking with Jake and Jim prior to the day, we discovered that this was uncharted territory. The National Envirothon did offer grants to adapt materials but there was not information on adapting an event. Prospect and the District strongly wanted this to be a successful, memorable, and beneficial day so that Prospect students could experience the Envirothon as their peers did. Several modifications were made to accommodate our students' needs, the number of questions were shortened to 5 with multiple choice answers, tests were untimed, and we did not rotate to the stations. Prospect staff and several Envirothon volunteers modified questions to suit each student's needs. Due to the usual inclement weather, SWCD staff reserved a portion of the main pavilion for "Prospect's home base." So our students got to see all the inner

workings which includes everyone's favorite – lunch.

As the day progressed, the Prospect community rose to meet our hopefully high expectations. Our two teams competing against each other requested a winner (the difference was 1 point). The team that lost, did so because they were laughing at an embedded joke in one of the answers. Kids will be kids! Outside of the competitive spirit that was observed and answering many questions correctly, other successes included:

- a student who frequently slept with his head down throughout a standard school day, was awake the entire time and watching and reaching for items during the different exams.

- students who at school would only answer 1-2 questions before taking a break, answered 10-15 questions with definitive answers (often communicating with eye gaze, vocalizations, and speech generating devices).

- A student who has difficulty walking 200' on smooth flooring, was able to walk across gravel, pavement, and uneven ground to view the fish hatchery.

- Students interacted not just with their familiar staff but SWCD staff and volunteers as well. I'll also note that the public-school districts gave a rousing welcome to our school, which was pretty cool.

- One student who is working on maintaining personal space, required less prompts/assist to maintain

*See Envirothon, page 10.*

## Envirothon (from page 9)

his personal space when interacting with unfamiliar adults.

Our students who sit in chairs at individual desks to dine, were successful at sitting with others at a picnic table or in camp chairs.

These successes ARE HUGE in the world of pediatric therapy and special education and the students realize they did something amazing.

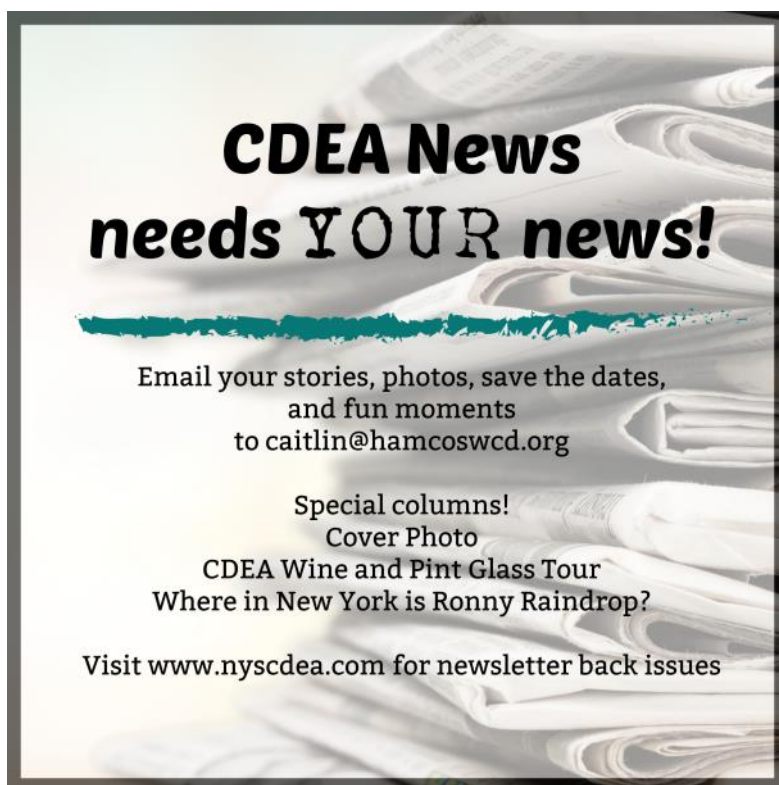
To be successful we had to bring additional materials for dining (blender, special dining utensils), mobility (wheelchairs, gait trainers/walkers, camp chair), sensory support (weighted vest/blankets, noise cancelling headphones, bean bag), and communication (ABCD choices for multiple choice, communication devices) and as state previously a school nurse accompanied us for any medical conditions. There were a few issues as some folks were cold/wet despite the advice to dress in layers, but students who were underdressed were given additional clothing. However having prior knowledge of the layout of the hatchery, not having to rotate to different stations, and being under a pavilion assisted with mobility and sensory concerns at the event, and certainly assisted with the day.

All our students and staff were exhausted at the end from being outside, out of their comfort zones, and existing in that “*just right*” level of challenge for the entire day. When presented with “that can’t be done,” as a therapist I reply “why not, let’s give it a try”. To some the Envirothon was considered unachievable for our students, but our students were able to participate with their peers in a community setting while challenging themselves to rise to the occasion. Translation from therapy speak: our teenaged students were outside on a field trip

answering questions about the environment and having fun.

To other districts, I ask you to include students not just from the general education population. If you invite others to participate in any capacity, you might just be surprised at what they can do. The first year is the toughest but once you try it, you will have the foundation to grow on.

*Addendum: While the Prospect students had aides and therapists to provide support and familiarity, they diligently answered the exam questions, voted for having a winner between the two teams, enjoyed the food that we provided and took a tour of the hatchery. The smiles on their faces and the laughter and excitement was obvious, and more fist bumps and high fives were seen that day than any other Envirothon. When our overall Envirothon winner was determined by three sudden death tie breaking questions, every student was excited, but I would say none more than ones from Prospect. I hope that I am preaching to the choir and that all the Envirothon’s have had their own Prospect School participate, but this was new for us. And I am glad that it happened. Jim L.*



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

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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



## For the Birds

**Tonnie Sauca Jr, District Technician , Albany County Soil & Water Conservation District**

Suzanne Treyger (Senior Forest Program Manager), Christopher Lajewski (Director of the Montezuma Audubon Visitor Center), and Claire Mann (Forest Program Senior Associate) shared their wealth of knowledge on various habitats, species of concern, and forest management planning and techniques with the 26 attendees from both Districts and NRCS. Reviewing portions of the Audubon Forester Training and Endorsement Program

complete stand  
landowner goals and  
gracious hosts and  
programs that may be  
landowners across the  
Friendly Maple Program  
producers with marketing  
following a forest  
habitat considered.  
opportunities for specific  
may be available as part  
Warblers program for

species such as Ruffed Grouse and American Woodcock as well as endangered warblers like the Golden-winged Warbler. Contact and program information can be found on the Audubon website.



and working in small groups to  
assessments and plan for both  
forest bird habitat. The most  
partners reviewed additional  
beneficial for Districts and  
state including the Bird  
which provides maple  
and publicity materials if  
management plan with bird  
Additionally funding  
areas of concern in the state  
of the Woods, Wildlife, and  
habitat restoration to help game





# Cover Crop Drone Seeding Project

Eric Jensen, Resource Conservation Specialist, Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District

Beginning August 21st, the Skaneateles Lake Watershed Ag Program (SLWAP) contracted with Auburn Ag Products to apply over 16,500 pounds of annual ryegrass cover crop seed on over 660 acres of standing corn silage fields in the Skaneateles Lake watershed. We used a large Hylio AG-130 drone with a hopper/spreader capable of applying seed on 0.8 acres per flight. The cover crop seeding project is in the first year of a 3-year NYS Climate Resiliency Farming grant. Eight Skaneateles Lake

will more than double the capacity and dramatically improve efficiency.

Annual ryegrass is shade tolerant, so it will germinate and establish under the canopy of corn leaves. It has a successful history of being applied by aircraft in the Midwest about 6 weeks before the crop is harvested. Rainy weather conditions can delay corn harvest or delay cover crop planting after the corn harvest. Without cover crop protection, the soil is vulnerable to erosion from storm and spring runoff events during the dormant season.



*Calibrating spreader on the drone.*

The agricultural fields selected for this project are in high priority watersheds of Skaneateles Lake that has a high impact on the quality of drinking water for over 200,000 city residents. Planting of cover crops with drone technology will allow for a quick establishment of a 'green carpet' of growing plants as enhanced protection for this great resource. Cover crops also increase infiltration of water into the soil profile to reduce storm water runoff potential from the fields. Another benefit is that cover crops increase soil aggregates and organic matter which increases overall soil health. This is a win-win for the farm and the environment.

For more information on drone seeding, contact the SLWAP & Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District office location at 6680 Onondaga Lake Parkway, Liverpool at (315) 457-0325.



*Flight operations of the drone in ag fields.*

watershed farms volunteered to test this technology for the project. Our experience is that advancing drone technology has promising uses on the farm as we learn how to use it effectively. The new models of drones



*Landowners evaluating the performance of the working drone.*



# 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 NYSCDEA 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*

### **Erin Peruzzini, District Manager Seneca County Soil and Water Conservation District**

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

A. *I started with Seneca County Soil & Water in May of 1999 as a Technician handling the non ag programs & permit assistance. In the fall of 2018 I became District Manager. So, I've been with Seneca County SWCD for a little over 24 years.*

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

A. *Since becoming Manager in 2018, we have almost doubled our County Appropriation and quadrupled our grant funding. I say we because this is not something I did on my own, we have an amazing team of talented and dedicated employees and it has been a team effort. So, the accomplishment I'm most proud of is the great group of people I get to work with.*

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

A. *I have always had great coworkers and a supportive Board and I loved being in the field and feeling like I'm helping people and making a difference. I also really believe in the SWCD mission and what we are accomplishing*

Q. How have you seen District programs, or their

focuses, change over the years?

A. *In Seneca County we've basically gone from installing sub-surface drainage tile to a large variety of programs and implementation projects. Our staff and County Appropriations have doubled over the years and we are now managing several million dollars in grant funds. I think a lot of this comes back to the State recognizing the importance in these practices and the value in SWCDs.*

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

A. *Learn the basics, shadow the experienced Technicians and learn as much as you can. Go to local meetings like WQCC and Farm Bureau and attend NYCDEA and SWCC meetings to meet people and learn about what's happening in your area and within the Districts.*

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

A. *My Hydrology professor (Dr Black) at ESF talked about SWCDs in his lectures.*

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

*See Wise, page 14.*

## Wise (from page 13)

your District?

A. *I was working for Seneca Lake Pure Waters and what is now called the Seneca Lake Intermunicipal Organization right out of college and I was getting tired of talking about what needed to be done and wanted to get in the field and start implementing projects.*

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

A. *Graduating from ESF gave me the basics but most of what I've learned was from other District employees and my hiring Manager, Phil Griswold.*

Q. Do you have a hidden talent?

A. *I'm a pretty good cook and I like to mountain bike but I don't know that either qualify as being talented.*

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

A. *I'd miss my coworkers, the people I've met and assisted in the County and being part of something that is making a difference.*



## M Graydon Dutcher, CPESC, CFM, Stream Program Coordinator Delaware County SWCD

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. *24 Years!! All at the DCSWCD*

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

A. *Helping our communities prepare and recover from Flooding with our excellent staff!*

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

A. *We get to make a real difference for Delaware County and beyond!! The projects we get to build and the communities that we help keep me here working with our highly dedicated staff*

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

A. *We used to build projects based on*

*conservation practices that sometimes had just a singular positive outcome. Today we look at much more than just the project itself. We, as districts look to measure the impacts of what we do using much more scientific rigor. Stream bank failures are looked at as nutrient losses as well as sediment losses for example. The losses are added up in watersheds to prioritize projects and outcomes to bigger state models. The same on agricultural projects, the benefits to the farming communities way of life is considered in implementation and not just the strength of the concrete.*

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

A. *Be creative!!! I remember designing the first covered barnyard in Delaware Co. They said it isn't the answer when me and my planning team*

*See Wise, page 15.*



## Wise (from page 14)

*put it forward... now many years later covered barnyards are built regularly. Remember retirement and planning for it starts when you get hired.... So remember the long haul!!! You can never learn enough or network enough. GO to the symposiums! I missed too many!!*

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

A. *I was a Sr at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse.*

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

A. *Peer pressure from friends that worked there!!! They steered me in the right direction I think...*

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

A. *Absolutely. I took classes like AutoCAD to be sure I was ready.*

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

A. *I was surveying with a young Bull in the field next to the barnyard.... Needless to say I flew over the fence... under my own power!! Young bull I Graydon 0*

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

A. *Waking up the morning after the banquet in Auburn and putting my feet down on 3" of popcorn everywhere.... That was just one of the times our room was the party room....*

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

A. *Zoom meetings... they are all humorous.... Gary Nightingale and his adventures that I probably cant do justice here...*

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. *I built a 1968 Thiokol 4T10 Snow cat so this question seems unlikely to ever happen!! I would stick with Lance Lockwood, a case of Whiskey, one guitar, and the snow cat. . Lance being there would insure that we would get out ahead of schedule the whiskey and the guitar would make sure you heard us before you saw us arriving at your house where you were snowed in. Maybe a dedicated pilot would be needed too...*

Q. Do you have a hidden talent?

A. *I can restore heavy equipment, Square body Chevrolets and I'm going to try a '69 Camaro for my Wife this winter. She has been patiently waiting for a few years now behind both boys trucks.*

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

A. *Making the local decisions to help communities become sustainable and resilient to flooding.*

Q. Any concluding remarks?

A. *There are many places that might pay better or bring more glamorous titles, but Districts get conservation done! That and a good balance of family is all you need to be happy.*

## 2023 Conservation Skills Workshop



Basic Survey class. Allen Fagan looks to be in shock!!!



Soil Health & Equipment. Class looks on as we talk about RUSLE2 STIR values along with primary/secondary tillage.



# 2023 Conservation Skills Workshop



Pollinator 2.0 class is locked into deep discussion.



Pasture class.



Pasture class.



## Conservation Field Day sparks enthusiasm to learn

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



*Assemblyman Smullen gives a warm welcome at the 44th annual Lynn Galusha Memorial Conservation Field Day.*

LAKE PLEASANT – The Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District's 44<sup>th</sup> annual Lynn Galusha Memorial Conservation Field Day sparked students' enthusiasm to learn about their environment on September 21. The District hosts the event annually on their Adirondack EcoTrail, and kids hike to six stations where they learn about exciting conservation topics from the natural resource experts.

### A WARM WELCOME

District Technician and event organizer Katie Whitkovits welcomed eighty-three fifth and sixth grade students, along with teachers, volunteers, and special guests, to the



*Florence Braunius (right), New York Rural Water Association, teaches students how to keep groundwater safe for drinking.*

event.

Assemblyman Robert Smullen gave an opening speech, toured the stations, and said, "It was beautiful in Hamilton County with fifth and sixth grade students from all of the school districts in the county learning about conservation efforts in the Adirondacks. I was so grateful to be included. As a member of the New York State Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee, it is important we teach our children sound principles of stewardship."

Senator Mark Walczyk also attended the event. He said, "Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District's 44th Annual Lynn Galusha Memorial Conservation Field Day was awesome. The fifth and sixth graders asked amazing questions about how to protect our soils, waterways, and environment. Hats off to the volunteers that help put this together each year."

### SPARKING ENTHUSIASM

"My students always enjoy attending this interactive Conservation Field Day," said science teacher Irene Sinicropi. "They have the opportunity to learn about several environmental concerns. It provides opportunities for them to analyze the ways humans impact the environment and teaches them actions that can be taken to prevent the waste of our natural resources. I have been able to build off of these mini-lessons (station topics) as we study topics like the water cycle, ecosystems, diversity, invasive species, and alternative energy sources."

### THE PRESENTATIONS

Florence Braunius, New York Rural Water Association,

*See Enthusiasm page 19.*



## Enthusiasm (from page 18)

showed students how to keep groundwater safe for drinking with an interactive model that detailed key features like wells, springs, the water table, and bedrock. Christine Campeau and Elyse Bennett, Adirondack Experience: the Museum on Blue Mountain Lake, asked students to select one of four management options to address beaver challenges.



*Caitlin Stewart, Hamilton County SWCD, uses a cereal box, colander, rubber ball, and toilet paper to teach students that wetlands provide essential services for people and wildlife.*

Matt Olson, Natural Resources Conservation Service, showed how different surfaces like pavement, bare soil, and grass absorb or cause runoff during a rainfall event. Caitlin Stewart, Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District, used a colander, rubber ball, toilet paper, and coffee filter to teach students that wetlands are important features in Hamilton County that provide essential services for people and wildlife.

Jamila Page, Cornell Cooperative



*Elyse Bennett (left) and Christine Campeau (right) of the ADKX ask students to select one of four management options to address beaver challenges.*

Extension of Hamilton County, presented Agriculture and Me, and students made a windmill craft at the Power of the Wind station with Matthew Plouffe, CCE Jefferson County.

Conservation District mascot Ronny Raindrop visited students, teachers, and elected officials, and reminded them to keep water clean.

The day wrapped up with a K-9 demonstration presented by DEC Environmental Conservation Officer Matthew LaCroix and his dog Web.

### THE CONTESTS

Students came to the event armed with clip boards and graphic organizers to help them take notes that they will use to create entries for the fifth grade poster and sixth grade essay contests. Entries focus on the topic that, in each student's opinion, best conserves Hamilton County's natural resources. Judges will rank the submissions, and District staff will schedule awards ceremonies to honor students' creative work.

### WITH THANKS

"I have many to thank for the success of this year's event," said WhitKovits. "Students were polite and eager to learn. District board members Vicki Buyce and John M. Stortecky took photos and sounded the horn to signal when teams hiked to their next station. Event sponsors include Oak Mountain."

The District has been working to manage and promote the wise use of natural resources in Hamilton County since 1965. For more information go to [www.hamiltoncountyswcd.org](http://www.hamiltoncountyswcd.org) or call 518-548-3991.



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



*Ronny Raindrop made a very special guest appearance at the 44th annual Lynn Galusha Memorial Conservation Field Day event held at the Hamilton County SWCD. After visiting with the fifth and sixth graders, he paused for a photo with presenters and special guests. From right: District Vice Chairperson John M. Stortecky, Senator Mike Walczak, Matthew Plouffe (CCE Jefferson County), Christine Campeau and Elyse Bennett (Adirondack Experience: the Museum on Blue Mountain Lake), Matt Olson (Natural Resources Conservation Service), and Florence Braunius (New York Rural Water Association).*

## 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 enjoyed a fantastic meal at the 151 Restaurant in Schenectady.



Caitlin Stewart ordered a plate from the Pop Up Oyster Bar Company at Oak Mountain's Oaktoberfest.



# 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!



Susan Lewis, Albany County SWCD, says, "Cheers!"



There's nothing better than fresh, local milk. This well-worn pint glass belongs to Caitlin Stewart, Hamilton County SWCD.



Artemis is a wine, and a dog. Caitlin Stewart, Hamilton County SWCD.







## Photo Album



Shawn Murphy Division 4 rep. hangs out with local penguins.



CDEA Meeting May 2023, Sunset boat tour.  
Photo by Jason Cuddeback, Cayuga County  
SWCD.



This is Flexamat material being installed along a steep roadside ditch leading to Honeoye Lake. The Town of Canadice installed the material as part of the WQIP Round 17 and the Ontario County DPW partnered to hydroseed the project upon completion. We have installed this material in several locations within the Honeoye and Canadice watersheds with a lot of success! Photo by Katie Lafler, Ontario County SWCD.





## Photo Album



Photos by Alaina Robarge, Ontario County SWCD.



District technicians surveying for a stream disturbance permit, Wiscoy Creek – Pike, NY. Photo by Rebecca Campbell, Wyoming County SWCD.



District Manager Al Fagan, hydroseeding Public Fishing Access stream site, with forested buffer, and newly installed access road. Photo by Rebecca Campbell, Wyoming County SWCD.





## Photo Album



District technicians, Rebecca Campbell and Emelyn Bell, checking out Wiscoy Falls – Alleghany County. Photo by Rebecca Campbell, Wyoming County SWCD.

Steve and Andy Haslauer do maintenance on no-till drill for cover crops. Photo by Troy Bishopp, Madison County SWCD.





# 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)

## CDEA Newsletter NYACD Updates

**2023 NYACD Annual Meeting Updates:** We are busy printing items for the annual meeting packets, receiving and recording the registrations. We presently have seventy-five (75) registered, which does not include all the instructors and guest speakers.

Scott Ryan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President and I reviewed the nominations for the annual awards and selected the winners. I will be working on the write-ups for the Board members that will be presenting the awards at the banquet. We were pleased with the number of nominations received.

I have been busy working on the annual booklet and preparing and proofing is complete. Next step is to send it off to the printer. We have more sponsors we are waiting to hear from to include in the booklet. Our present sponsors are Hickling's Fish Farm, NRCS, Alleghany Farm Services, Meadowview Tree Farm, Nursery LLC, DuBois & King, Inc., Steuben, Suffolk, and Onondaga SWCD's. The sessions are all set, and the instructors are preparing for this event. We have our guest speakers for the banquet as well. **DON'T** forget to donate a Silent Auction and Raffle item for our annual fund-raising event beginning Tuesday, October 24<sup>th</sup>.

**2025 NE NACD Annual Event:** This event will be in New York and hosted by NYACD, so once our annual meeting is over, I will start working on an RFP and potential locations to host this event. I will also reach out to folks in Maine who have hosted this event and NE NACD folks to get an idea of the number of folks attending and additional information.

**2023 NE NACD Event:** This past month I attended the NE NACD meeting in Portland, Maine, which folks from New York attended. The sessions held were informative and interesting. If you have the time to attend one of these Northeast events, you should attend. You learn just how advanced New York is in training, programs, and so much more.

**2024 Legislative Days:** I am waiting for the Legislature to complete their 2024 calendar for next year's Legislative Day. Once completed, we will set the 2024 Legislative Day event. I will keep you updated on that as we move forward.

**Stream C Bill:** The Stream C bills A4601 & S1725 as of this writing appears to be somewhere between Legislation and the Governor's desk. As reported in the past it has passed in both houses with the amendment. NYACD and Districts wrote letters to oppose these bills and the amendment to it. No word from the Legislature or the Governor presently.

**Other things:** Other things going on are meeting with SWCD Board members during their board meetings, answering questions, handling emails, phone calls, filing, and all the other things that go with working with NYACD projects, programs, etc.

Respectfully Submitted, *Blanche L. Huellburt*, NYACD Executive Director





**The NYS Envirothon  
And  
NCF Envirothon New York 2024  
October 2023 Report**

*By Blanche L. Hurlbutt, Chair*

**New York State Envirothon**

The New York State Envirothon is moving forward for the 2024 event to be held on Wednesday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> and Thursday, May 23<sup>rd</sup> at our new location SUNY Cortland, Cortland, NY. We are looking forward to this new campus location to host the event. The committee met with SUNY Cortland staff and selected the buildings needed during the event. Our testing site folks are working on the best location for the testing site. The other committee members are working on snacks, activities, t-shirts, registration, etc.

**2024 NCF Envirothon New York**

The 2024 NCF Envirothon committee has been busying moving forward with all that is required for New York to host this great event. Our committee has grown from six more folks volunteering to take part in presenting a great event. We are still working on funding and looking for more soil and water districts to step up and donate the requested \$3,000. We did finalize a contract for a good share of funding with NRCS, but we are still short of the over \$500,000 needed to pull this event off.

We have secured the college buses, guest speakers, anthem singer, test writers, activities for on and off campus. On the educational/fun day we will be transporting everyone to Niagara Falls to take a tour on the Maid of the Mist and visit Niagara Falls. The NYS Power Authority will be hosting a tour of their plant. We will be hosting an ice cream social after the opening event on Sunday evening and a campfire smores night on Thursday evening. On Friday evening we will be hosting a banquet awards dinner with a dance after. We still have much more to prepare for, but we are well on our way.

We still need to determine our t-shirt design, number of snacks needed throughout the week, order office supplies, name tags, name tag holders, water bottles, and have items for the guests goodie bags. The list is long, and the need is high, this is why we need the support of the districts.

We would like to increase our subcommittee members for this event, so if you'd like to volunteer to be on our subcommittee, please reach out to a committee member.

We will also need lots of volunteers throughout the week, so we're hoping that folks will volunteer and support this great event.



## NRCS New York Announces First FY24 Application Batching Date for Conservation Program Funding

October 4, 2023

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) New York announces **Friday, November 3**, as the first batching date for applications submitted for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 funding through the [Conservation Stewardship Program](#) (CSP), the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP), EQIP Initiatives including the [Great Lakes Restoration Initiative](#) (GLRI), [National Water Quality Initiative](#), [Working Lands for Wildlife](#) Golden-Winged Warbler, and [Agricultural Management Assistance](#) (AMA).

### Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

CSP helps farmers and forest landowners expand their conservation activities and take their conservation to the next level. Through CSP, agricultural producers and forest landowners earn payments for actively managing, maintaining, and expanding conservation and climate smart activities like **cover crops, forest stand improvement, tree and shrub establishment and pollinator and beneficial insect habitat** – all while maintaining active agricultural or forest production on their land. CSP also encourages the adoption of new technologies and new management techniques such as precision nutrient management, improved grazing systems, on-site carbon storage and planting for high carbon sequestration rate, and new soil amendments to improve water quality.

New York will be using ACT NOW for all CSP ranking pools in FY24. ACT NOW allows NRCS to expedite application approval and contract obligation in a designated ranking pool when an eligible application meets or exceeds a State determined minimum ranking score.

### Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP helps farmers and forest landowners integrate conservation into working lands. EQIP offers financial and technical assistance to eligible landowners and agricultural producers to implement practices which address resource concerns, including climate resiliency, soil health, water quality and habitat degradation. Focus areas include cropland, pastureland, forestland, the farmstead and wildlife. Examples of practices implemented include: **cover crops, reduced tillage, high and low tunnels, pasture management, early successional forest habitat, forest stand improvement and manure storage facilities**. Many practices now have cost scenarios for small farms so that the specialized costs needed for these operations can be better managed.

New York will be using ACT NOW for the High Tunnel and Conservation Planning Activity ranking pools in FY24. ACT NOW allows NRCS to expedite application approval and contract obligation in a designated ranking pool when an eligible application meets or exceeds a State determined minimum ranking score.

Natural Resources Conservation Service New York  
441 S. Salina Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Ste. 354, Syracuse, New York 13202  
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*Continued on page 29*





United States Department of Agriculture

### **Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)**

GLRI helps NRCS accelerate conservation efforts on private lands located in targeted watersheds affecting Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. Through GLRI, NRCS-NY works with farmers and landowners to protect watersheds and shorelines from non-point source pollution.

### **National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI)**

NWQI allows NRCS to target on-farm conservation investments and water quality monitoring to improve impaired watersheds. NRCS-NY is currently focused on using NWQI to enhance watersheds of the Cohocton River.

### **Golden-Winged Warbler (GWWA)**

The Golden-winged Warbler is migratory songbird that depends on early successional, young forest habitat for breeding and nesting. This habitat has declined as forests have aged. Landowners are assisting this at-risk bird by voluntarily improving the health and diversity of their forests.

### **Agriculture Management Assistance (AMA)**

AMA helps agricultural producers use conservation to manage risk and solve natural resource issues through conservation. NRCS-NY targets AMA funding to assist agricultural producers in urban areas.

### **How to Apply**

Submit applications at your local NRCS [Service Center](#). All applications are competitive and are ranked based on national, state and locally identified resource priorities and the overall benefit to the environment. Applications accepted after November 3, 2023, will be considered in the next batching period.

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## Announcing Application Dates for Agricultural Conservation Easement Programs

October 4, 2023

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) New York **announces November 29, 2023, and February 9, 2024**, as batching dates for applications submitted for Fiscal Year 2024 funding through the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – Agricultural Land Easement (ALE) and Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE). Applications received after November 29<sup>th</sup> will be batched with applications received by the February 9, 2024, deadline.

### **Agricultural Land Easements (ALE)**

Through ALE, NRCS provides funds to eligible conservation partners for the purchase of conservation easements on privately owned farmland. Eligible partners include state or local agencies, non-profits and Native American Tribes that have farmland or grassland protection programs. Private landowners interested in applying for ALE must work with an eligible partner who will apply to NRCS.

ALE easements protect critical natural resources and encourage private landowners to protect farmland through the voluntary sale of a conservation easement, which limits future development. Eligible lands include privately owned cropland, rangeland, grassland, pastureland and forestlands.

For more information, please visit the NRCS New York [ACEP Website](#) or contact Peter Gibbs at [peter.gibbs@usda.gov](mailto:peter.gibbs@usda.gov) or Erica Stach at [erica.stach@usda.gov](mailto:erica.stach@usda.gov).

### **Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE)**

Through WRE, NRCS helps private landowners and Tribal Nations restore and protect wetland ecosystems. Wetlands provide many benefits, including critical habitat for a wide array of wildlife species. Wetlands also store floodwaters, clean and recharge groundwater, sequester carbon, trap sediment, and filter pollutants, improving water quality.

Wetland conservation easements are either permanent or 30 years in duration. Tribal Nations also have an option for a 30-year contract. Eligible lands include farmed, converted or degraded wetlands that can successfully be restored, croplands or grasslands subject to flooding, and riparian areas that link protected wetland areas. NRCS and the participant work together to develop a plan for the restoration and maintenance of the wetland.

Interested participants should contact their [local NRCS field office](#) or visit the NRCS New York [ACEP Website](#) for more information.

Each application pool will be ranked and considered for funding separately. The highest ranked applications in each pool will be selected based on the availability of funds. Applicants may apply at any time, however applications received after the posted deadlines will be considered for funding during future application periods.

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