

## 2026 Water Quality Symposium Class Schedule At-A-Glance

Tuesday March 10	Wednesday March 11	Thursday March 12	Friday March 13
Registration 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Breakfast 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.	Breakfast 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.	Breakfast 7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.
Lunch 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.			
Opening Session 1:00 p.m. – 1:25 p.m.	8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Division Meetings 1:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	4. AEM Base Project Management & Tier 4 Showcase (Full)	17. Cropland BMP Design Tools & Techniques (Full)	28. Small Fruit & Vegetable Farm Mulching
2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	5. Wetlands	18. All About Cover Crops (Full)	29. Invasive Species
1. Tech Forum	6. USC Planting (Full)	19. ArcGIS (Full)	30. Drone
2. Clerk Forum	7. Reading Grading Plans	20. Water Quality	31. Cultivating Positive Intelligence: Building and Wellness for Administrative Professionals
3. Managers Forum	8. Accounting and Reporting for SWCD, and Budgetary Report Review	21. 4-Hour (full)	32. Interfering Vegetation Management
	9. Urban Forestry (Full)	22. Wildlife Habitat Improvement (Full)	33. Planting Forum
	10. New Employee Orientation	23. Meeting Matters: Law, Etiquette & Procedure	34. Conservation Communication with Purpose
	11. Emotional Intelligence	24. Conflict Resolution Skills	
Farmers Market / Resource Fair 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Lunch and Annual Meeting 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Lunch 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Checkout by 12:00 p.m.
Dinner 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.	2:00 p.m. - 5pm	1:00 p.m. 3:30 p.m.	<b><i>**Please print this page and circle your choices for your records and use during the Water Quality Symposium. There will not be any information handed out regarding your course selections at symposium. It is your responsibility to keep track of the courses you selected. **</i></b>
Game Night 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	12. Grant Writing	25. The Who, What, When, How of Credit Cards and Small business Development	
	13. Artificial Wetlands	26. Supervisory Development	
	14. Payroll and HR Forum	27. Educators Forum	
	15. ORID		
	16. Website Design for ADA Compliance		
	Dinner: 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Cocktail Hour: 4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.	
	Entertainment 7:30 p.m.	Bucket Raffle announced: 4:45 p.m. Silent Auction closes at 5:15 p.m.	
		Awards Banquet: 6:00 p.m. (Formal dress attire)	
		Entertainment 9:00 p.m.	

***NYS Conservation District Employees' Association, Inc.***  
***NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee***

**TO: SWCD Directors and staff, Water Quality Coordinating Committee members, and cooperating agencies, organizations, and partners**

**FROM: Jessica Armstrong, Vice President, NYS CDEA, and Bethany Bzduch, Executive Director, NYS SWCC**

**DATE: January 9, 2026**

**SUBJECT: 2026 Water Quality Symposium / NYS CDEA Annual Training Session**

Dear friends and colleagues:

It is our pleasure to invite you to the 2026 Water Quality Symposium and the NYS CDEA Annual Training Session on March 10 – 13, 2026 at the Hyatt Regency Rochester, 125 East Main Street, Rochester NY 14604.

The partnership between the Conservation District Employees' Association, Inc. and the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee makes the annual Water Quality Symposium possible. It takes the cooperation and dedication of many partners to make an event of this scale successful.

Annually, the Symposium provides space to share ideas and learn skills to advance natural resource conservation, watershed protection, and climate resiliency in all areas of New York State. While providing this array of training and education during the weeklong Symposium, the process can be challenging. Through a diversity of professionals from all over New York State putting together course ideas, training, and other aspects of the week this symposium is made possible. Partnerships that blend consistent funding with staff capable of delivering technical instruction are essential to the continuation of an event as unique as the Water Quality Symposium.

Some notes for this year's symposium:

- There is a parking garage with a maximum height of 7 feet. If your vehicle cannot fit in the garage, street parking and other parking lots are located around the hotel.
- Please bring your parking ticket to the registration table. We will validate the tickets so you will not have to pay for parking. This needs to be done BEFORE you leave the parking garage/pay for parking for it to be validated. If you are daily commuting you will need to do this daily. If you are there for the week you will need to do this upon check-in. If you plan on leaving the parking at any time and returning you will just need to validate your ticket again.
- For the respect of the hotel, instructors, and other participants there will be no animals allowed in the meal areas or in the classrooms unless a registered service animal.

- There will be no credit card payments this year. Payment will be received by check. If you have any questions regarding this, please reach out to Katy Kemmeren.

In this packet, you will find the Water Quality Symposium class schedule at-a-glance followed by class descriptions. **Registration is due by January 30, 2026, with no exceptions.** Please be advised of our registration and payment deadlines. There is a \$50 late fee for late payment.

[Click here to register.](#) Each instructor and attendee must register separately online.

Payment is due Friday, February 27, 2026. Make checks payable to: NYS CDEA, Inc., Chenango County SWCD, Attn: Katy Kemmeren, NYS CDEA, 99 North Broad St, Norwich NY, 13815.

For questions, please contact Jessica Armstrong: [Jessica.Armstrong@oneidacountyswcd.org](mailto:Jessica.Armstrong@oneidacountyswcd.org), 315-736-3334.

With gratitude,

Jessica Armstrong, Vice President, NYS CDEA, and Bethany Bzduch, Executive Director, NYS SWCC



## EVENT PAYMENT AND REFUND POLICY

### PAYMENT:

All attendance fees for the Water Quality Symposium Annual Training Sessions must be paid before the event. Full payment for Symposium attendance must be received or postmarked by **February 27<sup>th</sup>**. If the attendance fee is not paid by this date, a late fee of \$50 may be added.

### REFUNDS:

#### A. CANCELLATIONS MADE BY ATTENDEE:

If an attendee chooses not to attend an event, the cancellation must be made in writing to the NYS CDEA Vice-President by **March 2** to be considered for a refund.

#### B. CANCELLATIONS MADE BY NYSCDEA:

If the NYS CDEA cancels a class and that is the only class an attendee is attending, then a refund for the class will be granted. NYS CDEA will do its best to notify class participants that the class is canceled as soon as possible.

If the class is still held and the attendee does not notify the NYS CDEA Vice President by March 2, then no refund or partial refund will be issued regardless of the reason for missing the course (weather, life circumstance, etc.). If an attendee attends a class and is dissatisfied with the presentation or content, no refund or partial refund will be issued.

## REGISTRATION

**Online registration:** [Click here to register.](#)

**Registration deadline: January 30, 2026. Please register early.** No late registration forms will be accepted.

**Payment:** Payment is due Friday, February 27, 2026. Make checks payable to: NYS CDEA, Inc., Chenango County SWCD, Attn: Katy Kemmeren, NYS CDEA, 99 North Broad St, Norwich NY, 13815.

### Registration fees:

Description	SWCD	Outside Agencies
Full Conference Single (Includes all daily rates, all meals (with banquet), and parking)	\$600	\$900
Full Conference Double (Includes all daily rates, all meals (with banquet), and parking)	\$500	\$700
Single Hotel Room (Includes dinner for that night and parking)	\$175	\$185
Double Hotel Room (Includes dinner for that night and parking)	\$150	\$170
Banquet	\$50	\$50
Daily Rates for Tuesday and Friday (Includes breakfast (Friday), lunch, and parking)	\$175	\$230
Daily Rates for Wednesday and Friday (Includes breakfast, breaks, lunch, and parking)	\$200	\$300

## **Class Descriptions**

*For clarity, the class numbers on the online registration form and the class schedule at-a-glance correspond to the numbers in the class descriptions below.*

### 1. **Technician Forum**

**Date:** Tuesday: March 10, 2026

**Description:** This course is for field staff, technicians, and employees who are not in the categories of manager or clerk at their district. Q&A dedicated to hearing from conservation professionals on training needs, tools, procedures, opportunities and challenges to delivering cost effective conservation to customers. A questionnaire will be sent out prior to course to field topics of discussion.

**Instructors:** Jason Cuddeback; Cayuga SWCD, Shawn Murphy; Cortland County SWCD, Danielle Singer Tioga County SWCD, Teresa Link; Onondaga County SWCD, and Shamar Fitzpatrick; Otsego SWCD.

**CCA CEUs:** .5 SW, .5 NM

### 2. **Managers Forum**

**Date:** Tuesday: March 10, 2026

**Description:** This course is for Managers, Executive Directors, and Managers in training only. This will be an open forum to freely discuss your priority topics and issues. Come with questions, problems, and success stories to share. Email agenda topics to CDEA President Caitlin Stewart ([caitlin@hamocswcd.org](mailto:caitlin@hamocswcd.org)) by March 2, 2026.

**Instructor:** Caitlin Stewart, Hamilton County SWCD and CDEA President.

**CCA CEUs:** .5 SW, .5 PD

### 3. **Clerks Forum**

**Date:** Tuesday: March 10, 2026

**Description:** This session is for those that function as secretary-treasurer/clerks in their District. This will be an open discussion for clerks to get to know each other, share experiences, and ask questions. Come meet your counterpart around the State and participate in lively discussion about the good, the bad, and the “wait, we have to do what?” parts of the job.

**Instructor:** Diana Thron, Ontario County SWCD and Katie Pfeifer, Niagara County SWCD.

### 4. **AEM Base Project Management & Tier 4 Showcase**

**Date:** Wednesday: March 11, 2026

**Description:** With the start of the Agricultural Management Program (AEM) Round 19 at the beginning of 2026 and the deadline of May 1, 2026 for Tier 4 implementation projects to be in, this is a great time to see what districts are up to and how they are managing their programs. This class will walk a District through the AEM Base Program technical assistance paperwork, reporting, billing and all things implementations. We will also showcase many Tier 4 projects from heavy use areas, compost facilities, silage leachate system, forestry and much more. Come and get a few new ideas on how to utilize your AEM program and your Tier 4 funding.

**Instructors:** Chasity Miller; SWCC, Gideon Frisbee; SWCC, and showcase Districts (TBD).

**CCA CEUs:** 1 SW, 1 NM, 1 CM, .5 PD

5. **NYS DEC Wetland Regulations**

**Date:** Wednesday: March 11, 2026

**Description:** This morning session will build upon the wetland Jurisdictional Determination (JD) update class at the 2025 Water Quality Symposium and include the following: overview of the NYS Freshwater Wetlands Regulation; explanation of regulated vs. exempt practices/activities; mapping and determining regulated wetlands and the 2025 Jurisdictional Determination process; general wetlands permits, insurance standards, and processes; in-depth practice with the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Remote Jurisdictional Determination

(<https://dec.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2025-01/sopfwwremotejd.pdf>) to remotely identify regulated wetlands and assign wetland classifications on example parcels; and time for discussion throughout the topics. To enhance the learning experience, DEC will provide the parcel IDs and addresses of the case studies that will be discussed during the workshop. We encourage you to familiarize yourself with these locations ahead of time and consider attempting some preliminary analyses on your own. This proactive engagement will enrich our discussions and help you gain a deeper understanding of the material. **Class size is limited to 50 participants.** If you have any questions, please contact Greg Albrecht ([greg.albrecht@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:greg.albrecht@agriculture.ny.gov) or 607-229-4654).

**Instructors:** Kista Spohr and Wetland JD Specialist, NYS DEC Div. Fish and Wildlife.

**CCA CEUs:** 2 SW, 1 NM

6. **Tree and Shrub Planting Project: Planning, Design, and Implementation**

**Date:** Wednesday: March 11, 2026

**Description:** Are you looking to reforest areas in your county's landscape but unsure where to start? This course will cover planting plan development, from the first outreach to the landowner, to implementation, and finally, post-planting maintenance. We'll dive into species selection and site logistics as we consider programmatic requirements for design. Unique and innovative methods of planting will also be covered as we'll discuss planting in upland, riparian, and wetland areas.

**Instructors:** Lydia Brinkley- Upper Susquehanna Coalition, Molly Hassett- DEC, Gregg Sargis- The Nature Conservancy.

**CCA CEUs:** 1 SW, 1 CM, 1 PM, .5 PD

7. **Reading a Grading Plan**

**Date:** Wednesday: March 11, 2026

**Description:** This course will get students familiar with reading construction site grading plans through hands-on examples. First, we'll learn to draw contour lines ourselves by hand, learn about contour intervals, and measure them with an engineering scale. Those skills will help students to easily identify landforms on site drawings and accurately measure slopes. Students will learn to identify key features such as cut and fill areas, drainage patterns, and elevation changes, and we'll wrap up the morning with an in-class project.

**Instructor:** Tim Clark, SWCC.

**CCA CEUs:** 2 SW

8. **Accounting and Reporting for SWCD's and Budgetary Report Review**

**Date:** Wednesday: March 11, 2026

**Description:** This session will familiarize officials with the accounting and reporting processes for Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The discussion will include an overview of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), the Uniform Accounting System, measurement focus,

the Treasurer's Report, and accounting responsibilities and records. We will also discuss resources available from the Comptroller's Office to assist fiscal officers with their responsibilities. Following the presentation portion, we will review and discuss how to understand budget-to-actual reports. *Treasurers are highly encouraged to bring both their District's December 2025 and January 2026 budget-to-actual reports to participate in the discussion.*

**Instructor:** William Naylor, NYS Office of the State Comptroller.

**CCA CEUs:** 1 PD

## **9. Urban Forestry**

**Date:** Wednesday: March 11, 2026

**Description:** Urban Forestry is a growing sector and can be an easy way for Districts to diversify their offerings. This class will touch on the NYS Urban Forestry Council, DEC programming and grants, planting, basic pruning concepts, tree risk assessments, and showcase the City of Ithaca's urban forestry program.

**Instructors:** Christina McLoughlin; NYS DEC, Jeanne Grace; City of Ithaca, Rebecca Hargrave; SUNY Morrisville, Teresa Link; Onondaga SWCD.

**CCA CEUs:** 1 SW, 1 NM, 1 CM

## **10. New Employee Orientation**

**Date:** Wednesday: March 11, 2026

**Description:** Bring your helmets and high visibility shirts to the Crash Course for New Employees. Our target audience is all new employees, from clerks and managers to technicians and educators. Learn the who, what, where, when, and why of New York State Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Members of the 4-Way Partnership will share how they support Districts and their role in day-to-day operations. Network with other new employees, connect with partners, and pay attention for your chance to reign supreme at District Trivia! Come with your business cards to pass out, questions to solve and challenges and success stories to share.

**Instructors:** coordinated by Caitlin Stewart, Hamilton County SWCD and CDEA President. Members of the 4-way Partnership Soil and Water Conservation Committee, New York Association of Conservation Districts, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and Conservation District Employees Association).

**CCA CEUs:** 1 SW

## **11. Growing Emotional Intelligence through Constructive Communications**

**Date:** Wednesday: March 11, 2026

**Description:** Target Audience: Individuals from all walks of life who want to enhance the way they communicate—at work, at home and in their communities. It is especially valuable for anyone seeking to build more empathetic, authentic relationships. It is a fact that improved Emotional Intelligence (EI) skills dramatically lead to improved personal relationships, job performance and career growth. The purpose of this this interactive course is to deepen our awareness of Emotional Intelligence (EI) – the capacity to channel and express one's emotions, and to engage in interpersonal relationships effectively and empathetically. EI is being aware of our own feelings and actions, as well as being socially-aware of others. Through lecture, engaging conversations, storytelling and group activities, class participants will discover how they can transform the way they communicate, both verbally and non-verbally. EI Cultivates life skills, learning skills and leadership skills that can be applied to your personal and professional

relationships. EI is also foundational for improving job performance, developing high-performing teams and sustaining business results. After taking this course, participants can immediately apply foundational practices for empathetic and constructive communications.

**Instructors:** Richard D. Orth, Independent Learning Consultant.

**CCA CEUs:** 2 PD

## 12. Writing a Strong Proposal

**Date:** Wednesday: March 11, 2026

**Description:** Focusing on NYS SWCC grant programs, we will review proposal requirements for the Climate Resilient Farming and Agricultural Nonpoint Source Pollution Abatement and Control Programs and share key tips and ideas, provide references and tools that can help navigate through the complex process of finding documentation necessary to help build a strong proposal. This session will also include a panel of reviewers to address questions and discuss what they look for in a grant proposal. This will be a great opportunity to lean where points are being missed, what clarifications can be made to improve narratives, and how to build better maps that tell a story.

**Instructors:** Bethany Bzduch; Executive Director NYS SWCC, Jason Cuddeback; CCA Cayuga County SWCD, Chasity Miller; AEM Base Program.

**CCA CEUs:** 1 SW, 1 PD

## 13. “Constructed Floating Wetlands”

**Date:** Wednesday: March 11, 2026

**Description:** Constructed floating wetlands (*aka* floating treatment wetlands, artificial floating islands) are a young, nature-based solution to manage water quality in surface waters, whether stormwater or agricultural. Constructed floating wetlands use floating scaffolds to hold plants foliage above water, while roots extend within the water column. This biologically active wetland helps to manage water quality while providing habitat. You’ll learn the “what” and “why” of constructed floating wetlands during this session. Training will focus on the types of scaffolds (commercial and nature-based), appropriate plant selections based on the water quality of the receiving water body, design considerations, placement in water bodies, and maintenance considerations. We’ll also explore contaminant removal facilitated by constructed floating wetlands, opportunities for habitat creation (e.g., for pollinators and wildlife), and aesthetic considerations to enhance stakeholder support/community acceptance. The goal is to provide attendees with the tools to determine if constructed floating wetlands could be an appropriate management strategy for their local projects and be able to offer site-specific guidance on constructed floating wetland design to support healthy surface waters.

**Instructors:** Clare Entwistle, Utah State University, Sarah A. White, Clemson University.

**CCA CEUs:** 1 SW, 1 PD

## 14. Payroll and HR Forum

**Date:** Wednesday: March 11, 2026

**Description:** Human Resource and Payroll professionals will be speaking on the “extras” of payroll. Payroll taxes, W2’s, deductions, health insurance, loan payments, and the deferred compensation plan are some examples of what will be discussed. Questions that have been submitted to the clerk list have been sent to the presenters. Results of the payroll survey will also be discussed.

**Instructor:** Cara Cragg; President of Greater Rochester Area Payroll Association.

### **15. ORID- The Art of Focused Conversation**

**Date:** Wednesday: March 11, 2026

**Description:** This workshop is designed for anyone who leads, facilitates, or participates in conversations where clarity, reflection and effective decision-making are important. It's ideal for those looking to guide discussions with structure and purpose in both professional and personal settings. Too often, meetings drift, conversations ramble and decisions are made without real understanding. People leave meetings feeling unheard or unclear on next steps. Without structure, even the best intentions can lead to confusion and frustration instead of clarity. This interactive workshop introduces the ORID method, a practical framework that provides people with a structure for conducting a focused conversation that produces intelligent, meaningful decisions. This powerful, yet simplistic method – consisting of steps **Objective**, **Reflective**, **Interpretive**, **Decisional** – creates forward movement towards a point of resolution. The ORID conversation is led by a discussion leader who takes the person or group through a natural series of questions that lead to decision-making. Through this discussion method, participants learn how to use ORID to listen to each other's perceptions, gain a broader and deeper understanding of a common experience, explore implications and develop a plan to move forward. The method can be applied in a variety of settings, including meetings, coaching sessions, project reviews, event evaluations, educational settings, workshop debriefings and personal reflection. By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to design and lead conversations using ORID, ask effective questions at each stage, and apply the method to real-world situations in the workplace.

**Instructor:** Richard D. Orth; Independent Learning Consultant.

**CCA CEUs:** 1 PD

### **16. Website Design for ADA Compliance**

**Date:** Wednesday: March 11, 2026

**Description:** In this class, you will learn the fundamentals of web design, such as visual design principles, layouts, color contrast, imagery, and how to utilize common web design tools. This course will demonstrate how to design sites that meet American Disability Act (ADA) standards and how to apply proven accessibility best practices outlined by the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). Following the class, a workshop will be held to check your district's website for accessibility using automated techniques to find and fix issues. Prerequisites: basic computer literacy; no prior coding required, though a familiarity with web browsers and web hosting services is helpful. If you have any questions, please get in touch with the instructor at [srooney@nassauswcd.org](mailto:srooney@nassauswcd.org) or 516-364-5860.

**Instructor:** Sean Rooney; Nassau County SWCD.

**CCA CEUs:** 1 PD

### **17. Cropland BMP Design Tools and Techniques that will make you life easier:**

**Date:** Thursday: March 12, 2026

**Description:** This full-day class is intended to build upon itself cumulatively throughout the day. The class will start with exposing attendees to a variety of calculations, programs, tools and techniques that can be used to design structural Cropland BMP Systems. We will then shift towards using these tools to design a multi-BMP cropland conservation system in class. The class will wrap up with discussion on project stakeout and construction inspection techniques, as well as risk management strategies. The class will be interactive with participants having opportunities to perform calculations and design work throughout the day, so bring a laptop, sharpen your pencils and come ready to learn. Even better, we will provide the class with design templates,

drawings, and links that have been accrued over many years of project implementation work. This will include where to find standards & construction specifications. It will be impossible to leave this class without learning something new. Prior knowledge of planning structural Cropland Conservation BMPs (e.g, WASCoBs, waterways, diversions) will be helpful before taking this course. Attendees are encouraged to bring a laptop. This class is intended to lead up to additional field-based cropland BMP implementation training in the future.

**Instructors:** Tucker Kautz, Tom Eskildsen, Jeremy Paris, and Tim Clark.

**CCA CEUs:** 1 SW, 1 NM, 1 CM, .5 PD

### **18. All About Cover Crops; the good, bad, and even the ugly!**

**Date:** Thursday: March 12, 2026

**Description:** Everyone talks about planting cover crops but what kind of cover crops should be recommended, what do these things cost overall or what about termination? This class will dive into the cover crop underbelly on the good, bad and very ugly reality of implementing a great BMP. This class will also provide information on incorporating outreach & education into your Soil Health program. It will look at how to use education, outreach, and partnerships to enhance or even start an educational program along with providing guidance to work with more producers. It will also touch on organizing seminars, test plots, and utilizing the Comprehensive Assessment of Soil Health test (CASH) SH bench marking for planning. It will also connect what programs/grants are available to implement outreach/education materials and how to navigate that journey.

**Instructor:** Paul Gier; Tompkins County SWCD, Jason Cuddeback; Cayuga County SWCD, Dr. Joseph Amsili; Soil Health Program Coordinator.

**CCA CEUs:** 1 SW, .5 NM, .5 PM, 1 CM, .5 PD

### **19. ArcGIS Pro:**

**Date:** Thursday: March 12, 2026

**Description:** This class will build off previous offerings and GIS training sessions. The focus of this class will be to explore workflows for District ESRI tasks that are typically encountered in the field and in the office. The class will cover ESRI tools in 3-4 core areas of natural resources such as forestry, stream, and agricultural work. A portion of this class will demonstrate ways to utilize ArcGIS Online for file management, including sharing information and projects. Attendees will learn how these workflows can connect to mobile apps and leverage related content available from Esri's The Living Atlas. Lastly, a session has been allocated to address your specific GIS related questions and barriers. No matter what type of fieldwork you are apart of at your district, the tools and insights from this class will carry over directly to site review, project planning, and making well-informed management decisions in your technical role.

**Instructor:** Mark Brooks; Landmark Spatial Solutions LLC.

**CCA CEUs:** 1 SW, 1 CM, 1 PD

### **20. Water Quality:**

**Date:** Thursday: March 12, 2026

**Description:** An in-depth exploration of water quality monitoring in the surface waters before and after the implementation of constructed floating wetlands. Participants will learn how to develop clear, appropriate monitoring goals and objectives to be able to characterize baseline conditions of a waterbody and understand the constructed floating wetland effectiveness after installation. Participants will learn water quality monitoring considerations from case studies in both agricultural and

stormwater settings. Discussions may include design based on program goals, challenges of water quality monitoring, considerations based on contaminant loading, and protocols for monitoring. Lessons learned from real-world constructed floating wetland installations will be presented. Learn how to engage the public in monitoring efforts to help increase constructed floating wetland success, ensure long-term monitoring even after funding has ended, and build environmental stewardship and engagement in your communities.

**Instructor:** Clare Entwistle, Utah State University, Sarah A. White, Clemson University.

**CCA CEUs:** 1 SW, 1 NM

**21. Stormwater, Erosion, & Sediment Control:**

**Date:** Thursday: March 12, 2026

**Description:** This class will provide a review of the 2025 SPDES Construction General Permit (CGP) for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activity, including an overview of key changes and updates. This session will also cover new NYSDEC guidance for Solar Array projects and how these updates impact construction stormwater management. In addition, all SWCD staff who serve as instructors for the NYS DEC- Endorsed 4-Hour Erosion and Sediment Control Course are required to attend a mandatory instructor update session. The portion will provide an overview of the presentation changes, along with a discussion of the rationale behind them, led by NYS DEC staff.

**Instructors:** John Muthersbaugh and Julie Melancon; NYS DEC Central Office, Kelly Emerick; Monroe County SWCD, Don Stribick; Erie County SWCD.

**CCA CEUs:** 2 SW

**22. Wildlife Habitat Improvement:**

**Date:** Thursday: March 12, 2026

**Description:** With a recent increase in opportunities available to help landowners manage their forests, the main focus tends to be timber or carbon sequestration. Although those are important reasons to implement a project, it is vital to understand that owners often want to incorporate other goals beyond carbon and timber into their management plans, such as wildlife habitat improvement. This can involve large-scale projects or simple additions to a plan. This course will focus on incorporating wildlife management practices into forestry and riparian corridor projects. Instructors will cover wildlife ecology, management practices and habitat requirements for forest birds, white-tailed deer and other species. Presenters will also discuss planning requirements, funding opportunities and highlight existing work ongoing throughout New York State.

**Instructors:** Suzanne Treyger (Audubon Connecticut and New York), Timothy Russell (Green Fire Forestry & Wildlife Services, LLC.).

**CCA CEUs:** 1 SW, 1 CM, 1 PM

**23. Meeting Matter: Law, Etiquette & Procedures:**

**Date:** Thursday: March 12, 2026

**Description:** Participants will review the NYS Open Meetings Law and discuss compliance. Participants will also learn essential meeting etiquette and parliamentary procedures. We will discuss the relationship between the various parliamentary rules and understand how to preside over meetings that protect the rights of members. We will explore the relationship between delegated authority and the limitations of boards and committees in governing an organization, as well as, how to leverage them. The class will also practice the development and disposal of main motions and common subsidiary motions to prepare attendees for actively participating in

meetings. Participants will walk away with a better understanding of complying with NYS Open Meetings Law and the essential knowledge to actively engage in meetings where parliamentary procedures are being used. Participants can also engage with two insightful professionals with extensive experience during Q&A sessions on meeting matters.

**Instructors:** Kristin O'Neill, Deputy Director and Counsel for NYS Committee on Open Government; Adrian Stratton, MBA, CPP, CPP-T, PRP Professional Parliamentarian and Partner at GAACC; Danielle Singer, Tioga County SWCD.

**CCA CEUs:** 2 PD

**24. Navigating Workplace Conflicts with Confidence:**

**Date:** Thursday: March 12, 2026

**Description:** Target audience: Anyone who wants to handle conflicts with greater confidence and professionalism, whether with fellow colleagues, supervisors, managers or subordinates. Conflict in the workplace is inevitable, but it does not have to disrupt team dynamics or productivity. This interactive workshop equips individuals at all levels with tools and strategies to effectively handle disagreements and transform them into opportunities for growth. Participants learn to manage difficult conversations and create constructive resolutions that honor the needs of everyone involved. This workshop provides practical tools and techniques for diagnosing conflict and its triggers, communicating constructively and guiding employees toward mutually beneficial – and sustainable – solutions. Using real-life scenarios, participants learn to distinguish between the stated (apparent) needs and the deeper, often unvoiced (underlying) needs. The ability to discern both types of needs are foundational for lasting, positive change. Invest in your career. Move beyond avoiding conflict and discover a productive, professional approach for resolving disputes that channels tension into a catalyst for team growth and innovation.

**Instructor:** Richard D. Orth, Independent Learning Consultant.

**CCA CEUs:** 2 PD

**25. The Who, What, When, How of Credit Cards and Small Business Development**

**Date:** Thursday: March 12, 2026

**Description:** NY Small Business Development Center business advisors and a merchant representative from M&T Bank will be speaking on and answering questions about accepting credit cards as a form of payment. They will touch on credit card fees, processing options, how to handle in QuickBooks, and so on. Questions that have been submitted to the clerk list have been sent to the presenters. They will give an overview of NYSBDC and discuss options for conservation districts to work with NYSBDC.

**Instructors:** Lindsay Ward and Kristine Rudgers of NYSBDC and M&T Bank Rep.

**26. Enjoying a Culture of High Trust:**

**Date:** Thursday: March 12, 2026

**Description:** This session is geared toward leadership in the workplace and developing management/supervisory skills. It will focus on the link between high trust and successful organizations. We will focus on Leader behaviors required to: (1) Build a culture of high trust (2) Maintain high trust even in difficult times (3) Cash the benefits of trust (4) Repair damaged trust.

**Instructors:** Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD - "The Trust Ambassador" at Leadergrow; Alice Halloran, District Manager at Essex County SWCD.

**CCA CEUs:** 1 PD

**27. Educator Forum:**

**Date:** Thursday: March 12, 2026

**Description:** Working in this industry offers a unique and rewarding opportunity—not only to get outside and implement meaningful projects, but also to build relationships and educate the community about the real-world impact of our work. If you're interested in sharing ideas, learning from other educators' experiences, and engaging in an open, relaxed discussion about the challenges and successes of public education and outreach. In that case, this is the class for you. Join us as we exchange insights, explore effective strategies, and support one another in the ongoing work of community education.

**Instructor:** Alaina Robarge, Conservation District Educator at Ontario County SWCD; Leanna O'Grady, Education Program Coordinator at Columbia County SWCD; Nikole Watts, Educator at Chemung County DPW Stormwater.

**CCA CEUs:** 1 PD

**28. Mulching for Small Fruit and Vegetables: Orchard and Row Cropping**

**Date:** Friday: March 13, 2026

**Description:** This course will familiarize us with types of mulches and their applications. For soil moisture conservation during the dry months, weed suppression and compaction reduction. Let's explore mulching opportunities and how we can assist our producers on their farms. This class will also provide information on skills needed for outreach & education to incorporate mulching. It will look at how to use education, outreach, and partnerships to enhance an educational program along with providing guidance to work with more producers. It will also connect what programs/grants are available to implement outreach/education materials.

**Instructor:** Paul Gier- Tompkins County SWCD, Jason Cuddeback-CCA- Cayuga County, SWCD, Tom Eskildsen- Yates County SWCD.

**CCA CEUs:** .5 SW, .5 CM, .5 NM, .5 PM, .5 PD

**29. Invasive Species Monitoring and Management**

**Date:** Friday: March 13, 2026

**Description:** Part 1: District Invasive Species Management Showcase: Soil and Water Conservation Districts tackle a range of invasive species challenges. Participating Districts will cover programs focused on water chestnut, giant hogweed, purple loosestrife, and Japanese knotweed along with AIS education, boat stewarding, Clean Drain Dry stations, and AIS drop boxes. Part 2: Responsiveness in Action: Invasive Monitoring and Management in Otsego County: Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) disrupt habitats and ecosystem functions, and limit human use and enjoyment of our lakes, rivers, and wetlands. Otsego County Conservation Association has been employing low-tech, high-effort methods to eliminate and suppress the spread of invasives, including water chestnut, European frog-bit, and yellow floating heart. OCCA will review the history of OCCA's Invasive Species program, examine the effectiveness of our efforts, methods of aquatic species removal, and demonstrate how we've responded to shifting public interest and organizational constraints over the years.

**Instructors:** Onondaga, Oswego, Cortland, Lewis Soil and Water Conservation District Employees, Jeff O'Handley; OCCA Program Director, and Jacob Grillet; Otsego Watershed Manger.

**CCA CEUs:** 1 PM

**30. Drone Applications:**

**Date:** Friday: March 13, 2026

**Description:** This course will feature different ways that districts utilize their drones. Aimed towards districts who want to begin incorporating the use of drones and those who want to broaden their use, this course will cover topics such as drone programs, firsthand successes and failures, using drones for grant applications and reporting, and ways for districts to go about getting a drone, finding trainings, and certifications.

**Instructors:** Todd Anderson; Yates County SWCD, Curtis Davis; Seneca County SWCD, Abbey Hai; Cayuga County SWCD.

**CCA CEUs:** 1 SW, .5 PD

**31. Cultivating Positive Intelligence: Building and Wellness for Administrative Professionals:**

**Date:** Friday: March 13, 2026

**Description:** In the fast-paced world of work, administrative professionals play a pivotal role in all aspects of their office environment. However, the demands of the job can also weigh heavy, at times resulting in stress or burnout. This presentation aims to empower you with tools and strategies rooted in positive intelligence concepts to help you feel more engaged, confident, and balanced in your role. By fostering a positive mindset and prioritizing self-care, you can enhance your personal well-being and professional effectiveness.

**Instructor:** Heather Cosgrove.

**CCA CEUs:** 1 PD

**32. Managing Interfering Vegetation in Forests for Regeneration, Diversity, and Aesthetics:**

**Date:** Friday: March 13, 2026

**Description:** Native and non-native interfering plants are increasingly limiting forest regeneration and diversity across New York, driven by factors such as excessive deer browsing, abundant seed sources, and other site conditions. This session will give Soil and Water Conservation District staff a clear framework for recognizing these issues in the field and choosing the most effective and responsible management approaches. Participants will learn key principles of Forest Vegetation Management and compare mechanical, cultural, and herbicide-based control methods to better guide landowners and partners in addressing vegetation challenges in woodland settings.

**Instructors:** Peter Smallidge – Cornell Cooperative Extension NYS Forester, Brett Chedzoy – Cornell Cooperative Extension Schuyler – Senior Resource Educator/Forester, Kristopher Williams – Cornell Cooperative Extension Saratoga - Invasive Species Coordinator.

**CCA CEUs:** .5 CM, 1 PM

**33. Planting Forum:**

**Date:** Friday: March 13, 2026

**Description:** A new forum created for all things related to planting trees and shrubs on the landscape will focus on seed collection topics this year. Ontario County SWCD and Finger Lakes Community College speakers will present their experience partnering to hold a seed collection event and how they grew the trees out. Speakers from DEC will provide expertise on seed collection and how they utilize collected seeds at the Saratoga Tree Nursery. The class will wrap up roundtable style with attendees sharing their experiences with seed collection, questions they may have and comments on the topic. Ideas for future Planting Forum topics welcome!

**Instructor:** Lydia Brinkley, Upper Susquehanna Coalition & Tioga County SWCD; Megan

Webster, Ontario County SWCD; Maura Sullivan, Finger Lakes Community College; Personnel from NYS DEC - Colonel William F. Fox Memorial Saratoga Tree Nursery.

**CCA CEUs:** 1 CM

**34. The Human Side of Conservation: Communication & Collaboration that Drive Change:**

**Date:** Friday: March 13, 2026

**Description:** Effective communication is more than a leadership skill, it's the foundation for building trust in relationships, gaining support for new ideas, moving plans forward and creating networks or partnerships. This session brings together two critical themes: mastering clear, concise communication styles and applying systems-level thinking to create strong partnerships and networks. We'll explore how to translate complex or technical information into language that resonates with diverse audiences, understand your communication style, and practice active listening to strengthen relationships. Then, we'll connect these skills to strategies for Soil and Water Districts to improve connectivity, drive external collaboration, and leverage partnerships for greater impact. Participants will leave this session with practical tools for communicating effectively and building local networks that foster long-term success.

**Instructor:** Barbara Mink, Senior Lecturer at Cornell's Johnson Graduate School of Management and Deputy Area Director for Marketing and Management Communication; Marissa Jordan, Senior Behavioral Scientist at Evidn; Danielle Singer, Tioga County SWCD.

**CCA CEUs:** 1 PD