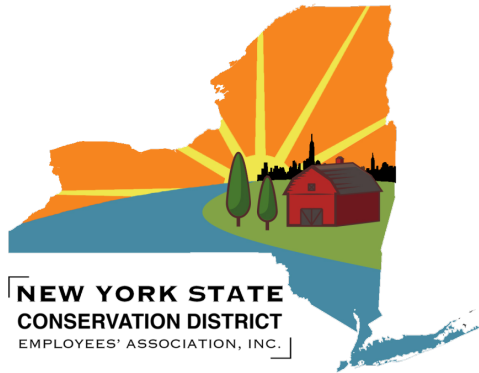




Meeting Minutes

August 19 – 20, 2025

Onondaga County Department of Emergency Management

420 Electronics Pkwy • Liverpool, NY 13088

Zoom

Executive Committee Members

Caitlin Stewart, President

Jessica Armstrong, Vice President

Joann Burke, Secretary

Katy Kemmeren, Treasurer

Alice Halloran, Member at Large

Partners and Guests

Bethany Bzduch, NYSSWCC

Blanche Hurlbutt, NYACD

James, J. Gascon, CDEA attorney, Partner,
Costello Cooney & Fearson, PLLC.

PJ Emerick, NYSSWCC

Scott Fickbohm, NYSSWCC

Ben Luskin, NYSSWCC

Brittany Ward, Seneca County SWCD

Kristin White, Monroe County SWCD

Katie Pfeifer, Niagara County SWCD

Ashley Leeman, Washington County SWCD

Jim Deidrich, Chemung County SWCD

Erin Peruzzini, Seneca County SWCD

Curtis Davis, Seneca County SWCD

Division Representatives

Rebecca Campbell, Division I

Jason Cuddeback, Division II

Carla Yaw, Division III

Lydia Brinkley, Division IV

Maren Stoddard, Division V

Nicholas Klemczak, Division VI

Travis Ferry, Division VII

Absent

Blake Glover, NRCS

Olivia Cunningham, Division VIII



Minutes

I. Call to order – President Stewart called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

II. Introductions – Conducted.

III. Reading and approval of the June 4 – 5, 2025 regular meeting, and July 10, 2025,

special meeting minutes – The minutes were provided in advance of the meeting for review.

- **A motion was made by Armstrong, seconded by Brinkley to approve the June 4 – 5, 2025 regular meeting, and July 10, 2025, special meeting minutes. Carried.**

IV. Treasurer Report – tabled until next meeting.

V. Partnership Reports

- a. New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee** –Bzduch shared her report, appended to the minutes.
- b. New York Association of Conservation Districts** – Hurlbutt shared her report, appended to the minutes. Stewart thanked NYACD for their continued support for the NYS retirement letter that was sent out to managers as well as New York State Retirement System. To be able to add NYACD as a partner bolstered the credibility of that letter. Halloran asked how many division representatives have vacancies on the NYACD Board. Hurlbutt stated that Division 3,5, 7, and 8. Halloran stated that director participation is low, and she thinks that is more on the directors, but she was wondering if NYACD is working more proactive on getting more participation. Hurlbutt stated that there has been an increase in director attendance at the last few months meetings. Sam Casella has been working with the Division Reps in reaching out to encourage more participation. She has been reaching out to Directors in those vacant divisions. Halloran added that sending out the meeting information before the meeting has been helpful. She asked if NYACD would solicit feedback on the updated strategic plan. Hurlbutt stated she would ask the board, but it is not a bad idea.
- c. Natural Resources Conservation Service** – No report submitted. Stewart reported that NRCS State Conservationist Blake Glover attended the 4-Way Partnership meeting on August 7, and he mentioned that NRCS’ absence from meetings in the last couple of months is by design because he wants to ensure that he is able to communicate the correct direction and prevent missteps in communication as changes are happening rapidly at the federal level. When things settle down, he will make an effort to attend partner meetings and be there in support of partners.

VI. Division Representative Reports

- a. Division I** – Campbell shared her report, appended to the minutes.
- b. Division II** – Cuddeback shared his report, appended to the minutes. He added there were a few hiccups with Conservation Skills Workshop this year they did not see coming. One being that the hotel would not block rooms for all 4 days. It is in conjunction with the walk out of the prison system. They still have military and nonresidents staying at surrounding hotels. The first two days of the workshop they have rooms available and that is it. He suggested calling early and often to get a room. White reported for Monroe County they had a successful farm tour that dealt with legislative and assembly that was well attended. They went to three different farms, one being their board of director Chuck

Colby's dairy farm, an apple producer that produces apples for Motts, and third one farm produced cabbage, cantaloupe, and a few other products. This farm hosted them for dinner like farm to table.

- c. **Division III** – Yaw stated she just got back from being out of the office for 10 days, but she reached out to her division asking for questions or concerns. She received some feedback, and items will be brought up as they come up in the meeting.
- d. **Division IV** – Brinkley stated she did not receive any feedback from her division. She stated they are all busy. She mentioned that Upper Susquehanna Coalition is the footprint of Division 4 and encompasses Madison and Oneida Counties. Four stewardship workdays. Pruning, vegetation management, tube management, etc. 150 + people attended, and 1500 acres were stewarded. Anyone is welcome to attend any of these She recently had a meeting with SUNY ESF and was able to get one of their interns that ESF and SUNY pay for. She got the intern and will provide them with a project. This led to further discussion about getting more students engaged with Districts. They suggested that we come in during the busiest time of the lunch period and have a table. Large career fairs as a small organization do not work for us. She is more than happy to have a table if interested. Late September she will be at the job fair and if any District has any job opportunities she can share them. Stewart replied this is a great opportunity for seasonal recruitment and asked if any Division is interested in having a table. Stoddard stated they helped at the Ranger School Professional Development classes. It was different businesses and organizations that allowed a lot of face-to-face interaction with the students. Stewart added that Bzduch shared another tabling opportunity for Veteran outreach that she sent out to the CDEA board and asked for it to be shared with your Divisions.
- e. **Division V** – Stoddard shared her report, appended to the minutes. She added that the North Country Tradeshow and Conference is taking registrations. CDEA has been great in supporting this great opportunity last year and again this year. Halloran added that NYS DEC forester, Josh Del Rio contacted her about shadowing them. He came out and it was great. Stoddard stated she just met with him and wants to shadow the districts to see how they work. Stewart stated that this is where it starts and as Fickbohm always says this is where relationships start building and a great opportunity to make these connections to start networking. Josh focused on ReLeaf and planting all the trees for the governor's office. Brinkley mentioned that Region 7 held a resource fair with a picnic with presentations.
- f. **Division VI** – Klemczak shared his report, appended to the minutes.
- g. **Division VII** – Ferry shared his report, appended to the minutes.
- h. **Division VIII** – Ferry contacted Nassau County SWCD Manager Derek Betts, who reported that Cunningham is slated to return from maternity leave on September 29.

VII. Executive Committee Reports

- a. President** – Stewart reported that she attended or facilitated the following meetings and provided updates to ensure CDEA's support of and contribution to SWCD employees, the 4-Way Partnership, and beyond: June 6 SWCC Regional Managers' Meeting; as secretary, took minutes for the June 10 and July 28 meetings; June 17 and July 15 – 16 SWCC meetings, June 26 meeting with CDEA's new attorney; July 3 CDEA By Laws Committee meeting; July 10 CDEA special meeting; July 30 NYACD meeting; August 6 SWCC District Operations Committee meeting; August 7 4-Way Partnership meeting; August 8 CDEA SPAC meeting; and August 13 CDEA Managers' Meeting. She thanked Cuddeback for attending the SWCC TAC meeting on July 28.
- b. Vice President** – Nothing to report.
- c. Secretary** – Nothing to report.
- d. Member at Large** – Halloran stated it would be helpful if all committees would share their meeting minutes to the Board. An issue brought to her was a blanket license for online GIS, but she does not know how that works. Stoddard stated the biggest barrier is the cost of the license. NRCS only offers GIS desktop. The online GIS has a limit to how many in your office can be on it. She suggested that CDEA look into online GIS licenses because one day NRCS may not share their GIS. Klemczak stated it would be helpful to know how many district employees are looking for online GIS license. Stoddard will reach out to Tyler Knapp and get the survey poll they had sent out a few months ago.

VIII. Standing Committees

- a. New York State Fair/New York State Farm Show Committee** – White shared her report, appended to the minutes.
- b. NYS DEC Endorsed 4-Hour Erosion & Sediment Control Online Training** – White shared her report, appended to the minutes. Stewart asked what the total income to date for this year was compared to last year. White replied \$303,599.43 for last year and \$328,292.77 for this year. White has seen a lot of repeat registrations.
- c. NYS Erosion and Sediment Control Certificate Program** – Verrigni sent an email prior to the meeting stating that nothing has happened since the last CDEA meeting. Halloran stated that NYS DEC emailed a list of all instructors. Stewart is going to invite Kelly Emerick and Verrigni to come to our next meeting to explain the difference between NYS DEC Endorsed Erosion & Sediment Control Online Training and NYS Erosion and Sediment Control Certificate Program.
- d. Conservation Skills Workshop** – Glover emailed Stewart to inform her that, unfortunately, NRCS will not be able to participate in this training this time, and they look forward to future trainings. Stewart thanked Chairperson Tom Eskildsen and the entire committee for their hard work organizing what is sure to be another beneficial and fantastic event. The event will be held October 6 – 9 in Auburn, NY, registration is due

by September 5th with payment due September 30th. Fourteen training courses ranging from Wetland Identification and Growing Strong Forestry Programs to Stream Assessment Basics and Basic NMP will be held.

- d. **Administrative Conference** – Stewart reported that the 2025 Administrative Conference will be held October 28 – 29 at the Hampton Inn and Suites Cazenovia. Registration is due August 28, and payment of \$150 is due October 1. The trainings will include Understanding the Budget Process and Annual Reporting, Procurement, Clerks' and Manager's Forums, HR and Harassment, Change, Chaos & Communication: Surviving and Thriving in the Workplace, and the New Manager's Panel. Stewart thanked Chairpersons Diana Thorn and Dustin Lewis, and the entire committee for their hard work organizing what is sure to be another beneficial and fantastic event.
- e. **Legislative Committee** – Stewart reported that there is no update.
- f. **Frank Bratt Scholarship** – Campbell reviewed her report, appended to the minutes. A special zoom meeting is scheduled for September 17th to approve the September Frank Bratt applications. Brinkley volunteered to take on Frank Bratt Scholarship applications while Campbell is on maternity leave.
- g. **Water Quality Symposium** – Armstrong reported that she has signed the 2026 contract with the hotel but has not signed the 2027 contract. She would like to find someone interested in running for Vice President to look at it with her. Billing is the same as last year except for only one down deposit payment. They will direct bill after Water Quality Symposium. Stewart mentioned to Gascon that one of the items the board is interested in him reviewing is contracts like this one. In the past, we have been docked by some hotels, and some have sneaked in charges that were not appropriate. Gascon replied that it will be worth him reviewing it. Armstrong discussed the beverage, snacks, and the food options. The board agreed to seek donations for snacks and milk. The chef will meet with Armstrong in January before the board meeting on the menu instead of the 2 weeks prior like last year. She has met with all of the track chairs and will be meeting with track committee members in classes in the coming weeks. Discussion was made about what the registration fee should be. NRCS will not be participating nor contributing \$4,000. Discussion was made on the schedule of the week for classes, annual meeting, banquet, and division meetings. Classes will start Tuesday morning around 9-9:30. Division meetings will be on Tuesday at lunch, annual meeting will be Wednesday at lunch, and the awards banquet will be an hour early. The thought of Tuesday morning classes would be the various forums. Stewart reported that Per the CDEA Bylaws Article XI: Meetings Sec. 1: The annual meeting shall be held at a time and place prescribed by the Board of Representatives and Vice President. Discussion was made on the costs of the Water Quality Symposium.
- **A motion was made by Yaw, seconded by Stoddard to prescribe the New York State Conservation District Employees' Association Annual Meeting on Wednesday March 11, 2026, at 12:00 p.m., in conjunction with the Water Quality Symposium.**

All CDEA Board of Representatives and Vice President in favor, none opposed. Carried.

- **A motion was made by Stewart, seconded by Yaw that NYSCDEA pay Rochester Hyatt \$16,360 down payment for the 2026 Water Quality Symposium. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.**
- **A motion was made by Stewart, seconded by Campbell the CDEA Board set the 2026 Water Quality Symposium registration fees follows: for District staff keeping the same fee as last year and all other attendees will pay the approximate actual cost in the spreadsheet, appended to the minutes. All in favor, none opposed. Carried.**

Meeting suspended at 2:15 p.m.

Meeting reconvened at 2:34 p.m.

- i. New York State Envirothon Committee** – Stewart reported that she is in receipt of New York State Envirothon Committee Membership Forms. Blanche L Hurlbutt, Volunteer, None of the above, Registration/County Coordination; Victor DiGiacomo, AGM – SWCC, NYSSWCC, Oral Presentation/Judge Coordination; Allen Fagan, Wyoming County SWCD, NYSCDEA, Site Coordinator; Bob Shenk, SWCD Retired – Volunteer – Advisory member, None of the above, I am willing to be on any committee that needs assistance; Chastity Miller, NYS AG and Markets, Publicity/Information Liaison, Oral Presentation/Judge Coordination, T-shirts; Danielle Parker, Schoharie County SWCD, NYSCDEA, Volunteer Coordination; Dustin Lewis, Saratoga SWCD, NYSCDEA, Site Coordinator; Ernie Swift, NYACD; JoAnn Kurtis, An environmental or conservation group or organization, Tests Coordinator; Katy Kemmeren, Chenango Co SWCD, NYSCDEA, Scoring; Melissa Rutter, Cortland County SWCD, NYSCDEA, I am willing to be on any committee that needs assistance; Natalie Shudt, USDA NRCS, Registration/County Coordination; Ryan Cunningham, NYS SWCC (AGM), NYSWCC; Scott Fickbohm, NYS SWCC, I am willing to be on any committee that needs assistance; Susan Odell-Pepe, Suffolk County SWCD, NYSCDEA, Education / Recreational Activities; and Scott Fickbohm, NYS SWCC and/or New York State Soil and Water Conservation Society. Halloran asked for a list of voting members. Hurlbutt stated Al Fagan, Susan O'Dell Pepe, Danielle Parker, Ernie Swift, Melissa Rutter, JoAnn Kurtis, Katy Kemmeren and Ryan Cunningham. Gascon stated that per By Laws there should be fifteen total voting members: 8 NYSCDEA, Treasurer, NYSWCC, NRCS, State Committee, NYSDEC, and Educational Professional. Divisions 2, 3, 5, and 7 do not have a representative on the committee. Stewart asked that Division Representatives that do not have a representative on the Envirothon Committee to email their divisions to see if anyone is interested in applying to sit on this committee.

- **A motion was made by Burke, seconded by Cuddeback to approve the following 2025 - 2026 New York State Envirothon committee members: Blanche L Hurlbutt, Volunteer, None of the above, Registration/County Coordination; Victor**

DiGiacomo, AGM – SWCC, NYSSWCC, Oral Presentation/Judge Coordination; Allen Fagan, Wyoming County SWCD, NYSCDEA, Site Coordinator; Bob Shenk, SWCD Retired – Volunteer – Advisory member, None of the above, I am willing to be on any committee that needs assistance; Chastity Miller, NYS AG and Markets, Publicity/Information Liaison, Oral Presentation/Judge Coordination, T-shirts; Danielle Parker, Schoharie County SWCD, NYSCDEA, Volunteer Coordination; Dustin Lewis, Saratoga SWCD, NYSCDEA, Site Coordinator; Ernie Swift, NYACD; JoAnn Kurtis, An environmental or conservation group or organization, Tests Coordinator; Katy Kemmeren, Chenango Co SWCD, NYSCDEA, Scoring; Melissa Rutter, Cortland County SWCD, NYSCDEA, I am willing to be on any committee that needs assistance; Natalie Shudt, USDA NRCS, Registration/County Coordination; Ryan Cunningham, NYS SWCC (AGM), NYSWCC, I am willing to be on any committee that needs assistance; Susan Odell-Pepe, Suffolk County SWCD, NYSCDEA, Education / Recreational Activities; and Scott Fickbohm, NYS NYS SWCC and/or New York State Soil and Water Conservation Society.
Discussion ensued.

Halloran stated she doesn't want to approve the committee members until issues on expenditures were discussed. She doesn't like to be put in a position to approve expenditures that are questionable. Gascon stated per By-laws, Envirothon committee will approve expenditures and send them to CDEA Member at Large.

- **A motion was made by Brinkley, seconded by Stewart to table the approval of the 2025-2026 New York State Envirothon Committee Members. Carried.**

Discussion ensued about the remaining solicited NCF-Envirothon sponsorship funds. Kemmeren stated that she is still waiting for NRCS payment of \$143, 909.80. At the last Envirothon Committee meeting a motion was passed to transfer NCF funds from CDEA account to Environmental Education Foundation. Yaw stated she has received emails from Districts that donated towards the NCF Envirothon, and they would like the money they donated returned to them. Hurlbutt stated that NCF funds has nothing to do with CDEA. CDEA only had the money in their account because Environmental Education Foundation Treasurer did not want to handle the magnitude of money in and out of the account. Gascon stated this an issue he needs to review. Stewart asked all Division representatives to forward emails to her from Districts they have received concerning NCF funds.

Suspended the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Meeting reconvened at 8:00 a.m. August 20, 2025

Executive Committee Members

Caitlin Stewart, President
Jessica Armstrong, Vice President
Joann Burke, Secretary
Alice Halloran, Member at Large

Partners and Guests

Blanche Hurlbutt, NYACD
James, J. Gascon, CDEA attorney, Partner,
Costello Cooney & Fearson, PLLC.
PJ Emerick, NYSSWCC
Brittany Ward, Seneca County SWCD
Katie Pfeifer, Niagara County SWCD
Melissa Woods, St. Lawrence County SWCD
Scott Collins, Niagara County SWCD
Erin Peruzzini, Seneca County SWCD
Brianna Rosanilia, Rockland County SWCD

Division Representatives

Rebecca Campbell, Division I
Jason Cuddeback, Division II
Carla Yaw, Division III
Lydia Brinkley, Division IV
Maren Stoddard, Division V
Nicholas Klemczak, Division VI
Travis Ferry, Division VII

Absent

Katy Kemmeren, Treasurer
Bethany Bzduch, NYSSWCC
Blake Glover, NRCS
Olivia Cunningham, Division VIII

- j. Environmental Education Foundation Committee** – Burke reported that the committee is busy seeking for donations, and they are looking for a non-District representative for the committee that has fundraising expertise. The next meeting is September 2nd.
- k. Civil Service Committee** – Stewart reported that she emailed and mailed NYS Civil Service Commissioner Timothy Hagues, sharing the following concerns of SWCD employees: Tests have not evolved to employee work duties, and a request to kindly update current exams; a shift to training and experience tests; while exams have been requested, they have not been offered for 10 or more years, and this delay creates feelings of nervousness and anxiety for many District staff who continue to wait for the exam to be announced; and CDEA offered to help update the pool of testing questions or transition to Training and Experience tests to better reflect current technology and subject matters.
- l. New York State Invasive Species Advisory Committee** – Stewart reported that as Secretary, she attended and took minutes for the June 10 and July 28 meetings and met with the Executive Board to plan for meetings and discuss challenges. The 2025-26 Work Plan and Objectives document was adopted, Stewart was elected to serve as Secretary and approved by the Invasive Species Council for another one-year term, federal funding cuts have adversely impacted spotted lanternfly, box tree moth, and European cherry fruit fly programs while funding for golden nematode and Asian long horned beetle has increased. A new provider for iMAP Invasives is close to being finalized, and full transfer will occur in early winter. The ISAC will present to the ISC recommendations on NYCRR Part 575 regarding prohibited, unregulated, and regulated invasive species.

Registration is now open for the 2025 NYS Invasive Species Expo, September 14 – 16 at Saratoga Spa State Park. The Expo creatively uses Park’s scenic outdoor spaces and historic buildings to offer dynamic, hands-on experiences alongside traditional presentations and posters. Connect with leading resource experts to explore and learn the latest updates and advancements in invasive species management. For more information, agenda, and registration, visit [2025 New York Invasive Species Expo – NYIS](#)

- m. Municipal Assistance Subcommittee** – Emerick reported that Ryan Cunningham and himself are considering holding an in person meeting in November possibly in Albany to include partners like NYS DEC. Some of the topics will be FEMA emergency action planning, NYS DEC permitting issues, solar and wind alternative energy construction inspection opportunity, and drainage law. Stewart stated she is still hearing from Districts that they are waiting over a year for permit approval from NYS DEC.
- n. Technical Advisory Committee** – Cuddeback reported that at the last meeting went over the Soil Health Initiative, 2-year review for cover crops standard and forestry standard.
- o. CDEA State Programs Advisory Committee** – Kelly submitted a report, appended to the minutes.
- p. Northeast Association of Conservation District Employees** – Parker submitted her report, appended to the minutes.
- q. Leadership Institute** - Place holder until 2027.

IX. CDEA Activities

- a. Attorney** – Stewart introduced James, J. Gascon, Partner, Costello Cooney & Fearson, PLLC. Gascon stated he has been practicing law for 39 years extensive civil litigation experience. He is the attorney for Towns of Spafford, Camillus, and Marcellus. He also represents OCCRA. Stewart stated the CDEA Board inquired about By-laws ARTICLE IX: Finances Sec. 9, “Before the dissolution of CDEA, the board will consult with a lawyer or attorney regarding the disbursement of any unencumbered funds.” Specifically, the board inquired if unencumbered funds could be disseminated evenly amongst all New York State Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Gascon reviewed the procedure for voluntary dissolution of a not-for-profit corporation with assets, including a dissolution plan approved by the Attorney General. Gascon stated if CDEA dissolves the money can go back to Districts. Stewart will update the by-laws on dissolution.

Discussion ensued about focus areas for the attorney to research.

- **A motion was made by Brinkley, seconded by Yaw to approve the following priority focus areas for James, J. Gascon, Partner, Costello Cooney & Fearson, PLLC: NYS CDEA hiring a lobbyist and how would SWCD employees who are union members be adversely impacted if CDEA hires a lobbyist, NCF remaining funds, and CDEA**

act as a conduit to receive funding from private and public sector. All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

- b. National Association of Conservation Districts Northeast Region Meeting and New York Association of Conservation Districts Annual Conference** – Stewart reported that the 2025 National Association of Conservation Districts Northeast Region Meeting, hosted with the New York State Association of Conservation Districts, will be held September 21-25, 2025, at the Double Tree By Hilton Hotel Syracuse in East Syracuse, NY. The meeting will feature an array of sessions covering conservation topics across the Northeast, a lunch cruise along the Erie Canal, and plenty of networking opportunities with fellow conservation professionals and partners. Stewart is presenting Market Your Conservation District and will also provide a report as President of the NYS Conservation District Employees Association during the Annual Meeting. Hamilton County SWCD paid for her registration, and she respectfully asked the board for reimbursement, totaling \$871.00 for the entire conference. CDEA board members Nick Klemczak will present Watershed Partnerships, Alice Halloran will attend the entire conference, and Lydia Brinkley and Joann Burke will host a CDEA table during the conference. Stewart reported that the total cost for all CDEA board members to attend the NACD NE conference is \$1,837, well under the \$2,500 budget.
- **A motion was made by Yaw, seconded by Armstrong to approve the 2025 National Association of Conservation Districts Northeast Region and NYACD Annual Meeting registration or reimbursement of CDEA board members Caitlin Stewart, Nick Klemczak, and Alice Halloran in the amount of \$1,837.00. Stewart, Klemczak, and Halloran abstained. All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.**
- c. 4-Way Partnership meeting review** – Stewart reported that she attended the August 7 meeting with SWCC's Bethany Bzduch, NYACD's Blanche Hurlbutt, and NRCS' Blake Glover. Stewart shared the following highlights. Update on SWCD/SUNY survey and next steps – Bzduch reviewed results from her SWCD survey. Glover and Stewart shared challenges with recruiting young employees as they lack public speaking, writing, and communication skills. Hurlbutt is serving on the Great Lakes Commission and is developing a needs survey that will include recruitment and retention questions. Stewart will create a list of NYS colleges and universities to advertise job vacancies and internships. Communicating Districts Value, Total Conservation Investment Leveraged through SWCDs – Discussion about relaying the economic value of SWCDs to county boards and legislators. Advocate for SWCD funding on a state-wide level by showing how much money SWCDs can leverage with State Aid Parts A, B, and C. Hiring an economist to conduct a study was suggested. The impacts of federal funding cuts to SWCDs were discussed. DEC Wetland Permitting – Glover reported that NRCS is struggling with this as clients are experiencing long waiting periods because of a backlog, and ag exemptions should be investigated. Bzduch reported that SWCC is working with NRCS and DEC to sort out the regulations. Stewart reported that DEC is considering a general permit for SWCDs to install practices that would result in the enhancement of wetland areas, and if SWCDs have the ability to act as a consultant, we can determine a

jurisdictional determination, and DEC mentioned that anyone who feels comfortable delineating wetlands is validated by DEC staff.

- d. **CDEA Associate Manager** – Stoddard reported that a revisit of this job description is important. It might not be the right time to hire one but when it is we will be ready. Stewart suggested putting a line item in the budget and starting to set money aside in anticipation of hiring manager in future.

Meeting suspended at 9:39 a.m.

Meeting was reconvened at 9:56 a.m.

- e. **2026 Budget** – Stewart stated that work will begin on the preliminary 2026 CDEA budget and she will reach out to committee tracks and subcommittees to submit their budget requests by September 15th. Kemmeren and Yaw will then start to work on the preliminary budget. Yaw stated that the board needs to decide on an amount for the reserves and the line item for event coordinator.
- f. **Procurement policy** – Stewart called on the CDEA board to develop a procurement policy before the annual meeting. Gascon stated he can share guidance from NYS Authority Budget Office. Ferry will review the Authority Budget Office procurement policy guidelines, and the Upper Susquehanna Coalition and PICKNE procurement policies and report back to the board at the November meeting.
- g. **4-hour Fund application review and approval** – Stewart reported that Dustin Lewis withdrew his application as Montgomery County will hold a forklift training. She continued that in 2025, the CDEA board has approved three applications totaling \$22,280.00 and the 2025 budget is \$20,000. She recommended not promoting the 4-Hour Fund application.
- h. **CDEA Welcome Packet for new Managers and CDEA Onboarding** – Stewart reported that Saratoga County SWCD Manager Dustin Lewis suggested that CDEA develop a Welcome Packet for new Managers. Stewart inquired if a CDEA Onboarding packet would be helpful to new board members. Halloran stated this is a great idea but there was talk about one for new employees. She added that at Water Quality Symposium there is new employee training and at the Administrative Conference there is a new manager panel. All agreed this was a good idea and Stewart will work with Lewis on developing a welcome packet for new managers.
- i. **CDEA By-Laws update** – Stewart reported that she, Armstrong, Halloran, Stoddard, and Amanda Barber met on July 3 to review and update the By-Law Articles. The next step is to review and update the policies and procedure manual. The By-Laws will be sent to Gascon to review before they will be sent to SWCD employees in advance of the 2026 Annual Meeting for review, then voted on at the meeting.
- j. **CDEA News** - Stewart reported the Spring edition of the CDEA News is available on the website at <https://www.nyscdea.com/newsletter/>. News submissions for the Summer

edition are due to her September 5. She thanked Kristin White for updating the CDEA website.

- k. Management Development Certification Program** – Halloran stated nothing new has happened.
- l. Ronny Raindrop®** - Stoddard reported that she has the final three costumes and they look great. There are Districts that are interested in owning their own costume. She would like to know beforehand the total number before contacting the costume designer as she had mentioned she would like to build them in steps. Armstrong stated the older costume shoes need to be replaced as they are dangerous to walk in. She suggested putting money into the 2026 budget to replace them. Stoddard will devise an email that Division representatives can send to their Division to gauge what Districts are interested in their own costumes.
- m. CDEA Golf Tournament** – Cuddeback reported that there were ten teams and Watertown team won the tournament. Next year will be the 25th year and the committee is looking for suggestions on how to celebrate it. Next year's event will be held on August 6, 2026. Stewart stated that at a previous manager's meeting it was recommended to have a manager's meeting beforehand. She thanked Doug Kierst and all those involved with hosting another fun event.
- n. Skeet/Trap Tournament** – Burke reported that as of Monday there were only two registered. If at least twenty do not register for the event it will be canceled.
- o. Fish On Challenge** – Stewart mentioned that Hamilton County SWCD Technician Katie Whitkovits administers the Fish On Challenge. Registration is \$10, and anglers receive a NYSCDEA pocket tape measure. SWCD employees can register online here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeUTqy7pqCZKBhj2qZajTrCpi0Ml1j3aHaNofUIIeuPA5wJcA/viewform>. Entries must be submitted by February 27, 2026.

X. Other –

- **CDEA Managers' Meeting** – Stewart reported that Managers have requested more meetings, and she facilitated a CDEA Managers' Meeting in Ballston Spa on August 13. She thanked Dustin Lewis for coordinating the meeting space and lunch. She will follow up soon with her notes and action items. The meeting was not recorded. The next meeting will be held at the Administrative Conference that will not have a virtual option.
- **NYS Retirement letter** – Stewart thanked Gerry Smithson, Dustin Lewis, and Carla Yaw for reviewing the letter. The CDEA and NYACD boards approved this letter communicating the challenges Districts face with NYS and local retirement systems. The letter can be adapted to tell how the retirement system has adversely impacted your employees and sent to local and state officials. Use it as a talking point checklist when meeting with legislators. She mailed the letter to NYSLRS. Per the fixtier6.org website, "the power to get changes to Fix Tier 6 is with the New York State Assembly and

Senate.” Directors should follow up with state lawmakers. The letter is appended to the minutes and Stewart emailed it to SWCDs. She received a response from Matthew Martini, the Assistant Director of Affairs for Labor Affairs for the Comptroller Office. This email is appended to the minutes. Comptroller Office cannot make the changes to Tier 6 or any other tiers until it is passed by the legislature. It is recommended that Districts reach out to their legislators and state assembly. Stewart mentioned that this is why CDEA needs to hire a lobbyist. Stewart also added that a District has sent a resolution to NYACD for their annual meeting. Stoddard stated that a few Districts are looking for training to prep employees for retirement and suggested offering a class at Water Quality Symposium. Yaw stated that there are calculators on NYS Retirement System website after you log in.

- **SFY 2026 – 27 EPF** - Stewart reported that in February, she strongly recommended that the SWCC, NYACD, and CDEA partner to carry the Environmental Protection Fund funding message of approving the SWCD line item at SWCC’s full request at \$500 million, and NYACD work with SWCC and CDEA to submit budget hearing testimony for the 2027 EPF. Bzduch recommended that CDEA propose our ask for the SWCD line item in the SFY 2026-27 EPF and emailed potential dates for a budget meeting with NYACD. FY23 Executive Budget was \$15,000,000 enacted was \$14,500,000. FY24 Executive Budget was \$16,000,000 enacted was \$16,000,000. FY25 Executive Budget was \$18,000,000, and enacted was \$17,250,000. FY26 Executive was \$18,000,000, Enacted was \$17,250,000. During the Managers’ Meeting, there was strong consensus that our request for 2026 should be \$20,000,000. Stewart sought feedback from the CDEA Board.
 - **A motion was made by Armstrong, seconded by Campbell to allow Stewart to request the Soil and Water Conservation District line-item request for the SFY 2026 – 27 Environmental Protection Fund budget at \$20,000,000 if EPF recommended is \$400 million or \$25,000,000 if EPF recommended is \$500 million. All in favor, motion carried.**

Stewart would like to put Part B & C projects showcase packet that CDEA can take to legislators. It would be our document not State Soil and Water Conservation Committee. Stoddard suggested that Divisions collect projects from each District for Division updates for the annual report.

- **Banners for SWCDs** – Monroe County SWCD’s Kristin White asked CDEA to purchase banners for all Districts that would like to have them for their fair displays or any other display venue they may have. She was thinking about the Soil & Water Districts banner. Not all Districts would want one and she would be willing to put out a survey to see who would be interested. Recently, Niagara County borrowed this banner for their fair. If this is a possibility, Districts could pick them up at the 2026 WQS. If they are not going to be attending the WQS, their AEA will and can take the banner for them and give it to the District the next time they are at a Board meeting. Cuddeback reported that Cayuga County SWCD purchased 7ft x 4ft tabletop banners for \$288.00 from A&M Graphics,

Auburn NY. Alaina Robarge, Ontario County SWCD, emailed that 33"x81" retractable vinyl standard banner for the Farm Show cost \$155.99 per unit through Vista Print. Stewart stated this is not in the budget but put it in the 2026 budget. She will reach out to White and ask for how many banners for the budget.

- **Virtual 5K Race** – Armstrong stated she is interested in hosting a virtual 5K race around Earth Day and the cost of the event would go towards Frank Bratt Memorial Scholarship. Stewart and Halloran thought this was a great event. Klemczak suggested incorporating it with trash pickup. Who can pick up the most trash on the way. Campbell suggested offering a step challenge for the nonrunners. Armstrong will get information together to bring to the next meeting.
- **Division Meeting Budget** – Brinkley asked if Divisions had a meeting but did not expend all the funds budgeted could they have another meeting. Stewart stated yes.

XI. Correspondence – Ferry forwarded an email from Suffolk County SWCD Manager Corey Humphrey to Stewart. Humphrey is concerned that if CDEA hires a lobbyist, Suffolk County SWCD employees would be alienated as they already belong to the AME Union who lobbies on their behalf. The letter is appended to the minutes.

XII. Next Meeting – November 17 and 18, 2025 at Delphi Falls New Woodstock, NY

XIII. Adjournment

- **A motion was made by Brinkley, seconded by Halloran to adjourn meeting at 11:24 a.m. Carried.**

Respectfully submitted,



Joann Burke



**Department of
Agriculture and Markets**
Soil and Water
Conservation Committee

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

RICHARD A. BALL
Commissioner

MATT BROWER
Chair

**NYS Conservation Districts Employee's Association
August 19 and 20, 2025**

NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee Report

District Staff Capacity/SUNY Survey – The District survey results were shared with the Provost's Office on June 5th. I have recently followed up to see about the possibility of scheduling a follow up meeting with SWCC staff and CDEA representatives.

NYS SWCC Staff Updates

- CNMP Specialist has started. An e-mail will be sent to Districts soon.
- Still in the process of hiring a 6th regional coordinator. I am working with the other Regional Coordinators to draft a memo to be sent once the 6th coordinator is on board. The memo will include a copy of the new regional map, as well as, some guidance regarding the transition process.

Program Updates:

- Round 8 Climate Resilient Farming Program – Contracts for projects that were originally funded with state funding are being reviewed by Counsel's Office and are being sent to Districts for signature. Regarding Track B projects, we've received approval from Department of Budget and next we are awaiting OSC's approval on the use of the state funds to cover these contracts. Once we have OSC approval we can move forward with the regular contract process: internal counsel review (this has already started to move this step along), signature from District, OSC/AG approval, contract is executed.
- Round 9 Climate Resilient Farming Program is anticipated to be released in September.
- Round 31 Agricultural Nonpoint Source Pollution Abatement and Control Program is slated to be released in January 2026. The timeline was pushed back to accommodate the delays in releasing Round 9 of CRF to avoid overlapping program rounds.
- AEM Round 19 Contracts have been drafted and are ready to be sent for internal review. We need to wait for OSC's approval before we can start the contracting process.

Other Projects/Initiatives

- SWCC staff are working with Suffolk County and other partners to develop AEM Technical documents to support near shore aquaculture.
- No movement on the Zero Food Print Initiative. We still intend to schedule a meeting with schedule a meeting with CDEA representatives to discuss a path for funding if Zero Food Print Ag Conservation Program is established in NYS.
- I spoke with Marianne Hassan who is the Chief of Staff with the Office of the Provost for SUNY. We discussed the overall goal is to make more students aware of aware of the Soil and Water Districts, and to get more students interested in internships and full- or part-time jobs in with the Districts. In addition, increasing faculty awareness and collaboration would be beneficial for all parties.
 - SUNY recently hired a new internship coordinator who can help identify career/internship contacts at the campuses to pass along to the Districts; discuss ways in which Districts can register their internships and job postings on campus; and possibly set up information sessions



**Department of
Agriculture and Markets**
Soil and Water
Conservation Committee

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

RICHARD A. BALL
Commissioner

MATT BROWER
Chair

for students and/or career office staff to learn more about your Districts' opportunities. She is working on putting me in touch with the new coordinator. Once that happens, I would like to include CDEA/District reps in that discussion.

- To increase faculty awareness and collaboration, Districts can identify projects that might be suitable for either undergrad capstone projects or independent study. Project descriptions (title, short problem statement, District and point of contact) can be sent to the Provosts Office and we can try to make connections with the academic communities in the District or region.
- I was also provided lists of campuses that have agricultural/environmental majors. I can share these with CDEA if helpful.
- In response to the CDEA Training Request that was received by the SWCC in June 2025, Tim Clark has met with Jennifer Kelly and Tom Eskildsen to discuss potential opportunities.
 - Duplicate the field hydraulics (Diversion/Waterways/WASCOB) course that Tucker K. and Tom E. have done in Ontario county a couple times. This would be an intermediate course where the students would already need to know surveying and hydrology.
 - Resurrect the boot camp format where we take a brand-new technician with absolutely no knowledge of farming, surveying, hydrology, drafting, etc. and get them up to speed on those basics.
 - Both courses would be a mix of instructors with the goal of pairing senior technicians with newer technicians in each region.

Upcoming Meetings

- NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee – September 16, 2025, locations in Albany, Syracuse and WebEx
- Technical Advisory Committee – September 30, 2025, remote option only.
- State Programs Advisory Committee – October 16, 2025, 1:00 PM to 3:30 PM



New York Association of Conservation Districts
c/o Steuben County SWCD
415 W. Morris Street
Bath, NY 14810
www.nyacd.org

August 2025 Report

NYACD and the NACD NE representatives are finalizing preparations for the annual NACD NE Conference, scheduled to take place from Sunday, September 21 to Wednesday, September 24, 2025, at the DoubleTree, East Syracuse. Participants are encouraged to register online and secure accommodation at their earliest convenience. Please note, the NYACD Annual Meeting is planned for Tuesday morning, September 23, 2025.

Efforts are ongoing to secure sponsorships and additional funding to offset event costs. We are organizing a vendor event and currently have eight vendors confirmed, who will present information relevant to the Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Organizations interested in sponsoring the event are invited to contact any NYACD Board member.

Kindly remember to register for this key event. Please also reserve your hotel room promptly.

Event registration link:

[NACD NE Region and NYACD Annual Conference](#)

Hotel registration link:

<https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/syrdtdt-nac-cc06e6c9-ad80-459c-821d-233fb94965e4/>

Sam Casella, NYACD President, attended the recent NACD Summer Meeting, where he learned about farmer-driven conservation and water quality initiatives. Presenters from Wisconsin highlighted agricultural promotion efforts, while No-Till Farmers and Cover Crop Strategies discussed significant developments in no-till agriculture. The meeting also explored opportunities for integrating the Inflation Reduction Act conservation investments into Farm Bill conservation programs through the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. Collaboration on natural resource challenges and effective conservation strategies was emphasized throughout the discussion.

Additionally, I participated in the Great Lakes Commission meeting on Monday, July 7th, where we addressed upcoming survey questions focused on improving recruitment and retention for Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Once finalized, this information will be distributed to Directors and Staff for further feedback.

On Thursday, July 10th, an Executive Director's meeting was convened to discuss current developments within Soil and Water Conservation Districts across the United States.

On Monday, August 25th Sam and I will meet with the Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District to address any concerns related to NYACD activities.

Please note, the NYACD Board will review the organization's By-laws on Tuesday, August 26, 2025, and propose amendments, if necessary, for consideration at the September annual meeting.

On August 7th I attended the 4-Way Partner's meeting where we discussed many topics of concern for NRCS related to loss of employees, update on SUNY working with SWCD's to better understand and prepare students for districts, discussed the survey that was sent to districts related to this topic, discussed the DEC Wetland permitting and other topics.

NYACD has been discussing possible changes to or additions to the Legislative booklet, strategic plan, and other topics of interest related to Districts.

The next NYACD Board meeting is **Wednesday, August 27, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. by Zoom.**
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82086984997?pwd=jzmVVQ5NnM8fiPkGm62ZZj3cdBP1bM.1>

Meeting ID: 820 8698 4997 Passcode: 969731

Sincerely,

Blanche

Blanche L Hurlbutt, NYACD Executive Director

Division I Report
Onondaga County Dept. of Emergency Services
420 Electronics Pkwy, Liverpool, NY
August 19th -20th, 2025

Niagara County District Report
August 4th, 2025

- Field work continues to take up most of the days, similar to other Districts
- Excellent turnout at Niagara County Fair, particularly extra interest in their interseeder, and Trivia with Ronny was fund for the kids
- Niagara County Awarded two AEM Farms of the Year during the fair
- Hosting an orchard walk and two pasture walks this fall to showcase different projects; you can contact their office to sign up (see attached flyer)
- Eighteenmile Creek AOC is removing the third Beneficial Use Impairment (degradation of benthos), leaving only two BUI's to go



Orleans County District Report

July 30th, 2025

- Ronny Raindrop met up with his friend Orly the Ox at the Orleans County Fairgrounds to take pictures with fairgoers and remind them of the importance of clean water.



Wyoming County District Report

July 31st, 2025

- Maintaining existing programs – AgNPS, CRF, AEM, etc.
- Managing FLOWPA Contracts FY23-24 & FY24-25
- Managed and staffed the Wyoming County Fair August 9th -16th, in Pike, NY
- Two technicians will be working at the State Fair Booth on August 25th
- Recent submission of one WQIP grant for a Salt Storage replacement in the Town of Middlebury
- Completed AEM Strategic Plan Update in conjunction with the Wyoming County Water Quality Strategy Update
- Finalizing a streambank stabilization and habitat restoration project on the Wiscoy Creek with USFWS, and NYSDEC – this project will utilize woody debris for a majority of the stabilization as an alternative to rock

Respectfully Submitted by:
Rebecca Campbell
Division I Representative



New York State Conservation District Employees' Association, Inc.

www.nyscdea.com

Soil and Water Conservation Districts provide ongoing programs and services to conserve, enhance, and protect soil and water resources in communities.

Monroe, Livingston, Wayne, Yates, Ontario, Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga

Cayuga County:

- **NYSABA 4R Field Day**
 - Cornell University Ruminant Center- Aug. 27th 2025- 9:00am – 3:00pm
 - Agenda attached
- **AEM Awards**
 - Five farms awarded AEM signs and plaques
 - Finger Lakes Nut Farm, Kyle Farm, Minturn Farms, Scipio Springs Dairy, Sierzenga Farms LLC
 - Farms tour at Minturn Farms and Scipio Springs
 - Lunch at Yawger Brook
- **Soil Health Seminar**
 - Aug. 7th 2025
 - 120 people in attendance (farmers, SWCD, NRCS, FSA, CEC)
 - Modifying Cropping Systems to maximize benefits from cover crops, Tillage, Covers & Nitrogen: How Farmers are improving soil health- Farmer panel, Success & Lessons from on-farm research.
 - Demo Plots-
 - Roots, residue and resilience- The Bio-strip concept
 - What lies beneath- Compaction impact on corn and soybean production.
 - Spot it, stop it- Weed ID & Machine cleaning action
- **Con Skills 2025**
 - Site locations for classes
 - Oct. 6-9, 2025
 - Registration form is available
- **NYS Fair**
 - Starts Wednesday Aug. 20th, 2025
 - Display was set up on Aug. 15th by the committee
- **Ag. NonPoint Rd. 30**
 - Webinar
 - Cayuga awarded 2 out of 6 proposals
 - Rank 9th (Hidden Meadow Ac.), rank 17th (Cayuga/Tompkins SH)
- **AVC Program**
 - Underway
 - Cayuga Lk. is finished- below average for weeds
 - Owasco Lk. is underway- a lot of weeds
- **NYS Soil & Water Conservation Committee**
 - July 15th 2025
 - Cornell University
 - Dairy Emissions Measurement & Monitoring Project
 - SH Initiative
 - Cornell SPEAR
 - NYS Water Resources Institute



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Soil and Water Conservation Districts provide ongoing programs and services to conserve, enhance, and protect soil and water resources in communities.

Monroe, Livingston, Wayne, Yates, Ontario, Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga

- Cornell Local Roads Program
- Cornell Small Farms
- Cornell University Dept. of Natural Resources Workforce Development

Ontario SWCD:

- chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclefindmkaj/https://www.ontariocountyswcd.gov/_files/ugd/e6fc30_98f790593ddd4aac9c021867d05e6fd6.pdf
- Summer newsletter link



Division V Report August 2025

Division Updates: Some folks from our division are interested and have started their Wildland Fire Training!

Clinton County – Rocking it up north!



Essex County – Being All-Stars!

Franklin County – Dedicated team to helping staff with field work and kittens!



Hamilton County – Being a boss at Invasive species education, water testing, and more!





Warren County – Chugging along!

1. Developed proposed budget for 2026, county meeting end of August.
2. Summer projects are going well.
3. Looking forward to increased availability for AEM in 2026.
4. District is being asked to assist with more forestry assistance with invasives, forest regeneration, storm damage and new landowners.
5. Hiring our part time clerk to full time beginning Sept 1st.
6. Development of 2026 APW.
7. Significant work on the Ms4 program through contracts that we have with communities.

Respectfully submitted by,

Maren Stoddard

Natural Resource Specialist
Warren County Soil & Water Conservation District
NYS CDEA Division V Representative



NYSCDEA Meeting August 19-20, 2025
Division VI Report
Albany, Fulton, Montgomery, Rensselaer,
Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, and
Washington

Albany County SWCD

- Prepping for our booth in the Ag & Science Building at the Altamont Fair. August 12-17.
- Starting to complete NAACC assessments within the Mohawk River Watershed.
- Field staff have been recently trained on the RRAMP app and will begin completing assessments this summer/fall.
- Participating in the Plan Management Teams for the DWSP2s in 3 municipalities. Doing targeted Ag Environmental Management outreach to the agricultural operations located within the DWSP2 areas of concern.
- Recently contracted with a private planner to complete 2 CNMPs (one beef, one dairy).
- Worked with the NYS Grown and Certified Program Specialist to get 9 farms in the county up to date on their recertification paperwork to stay in the program.

Montgomery County SWCD Report

- **Ag Economic Development Specialist** - We are pleased to welcome our new Ag Economic Dev Specialist, Victoria Bray, who has quickly begun contributing to our team. Below is an update on her recent initiatives and activities.
 - As the Agricultural Economic Development Specialist for Montgomery County SWCD, I work to strengthen our local food system, support farm businesses, and connect the community with agriculture through education and outreach. Currently, I'm collaborating with farmers to expand market access through the Harvest Connection platform, planning engaging soil and water conservation demonstrations for youth events, and promoting agritourism opportunities that showcase the county's rich agricultural heritage. One highlight on the horizon is Sundae on the Farm, where families can enjoy a day on the farm, learn about local agriculture, and, of course, share a sweet treat together... Victoria
- **AEM Program**
 - Working on finishing projects for AEM yr 18 before the end of the year. 3 out of 7 projects have been completed with 4 ready to go.
 - AEM yr 19 action plan has been approved by the board. The district has been awarded \$720k for the 3-year contract.
 - Strategy being updated for 5-year cycle.
- **Technician Update**
 - Field work is in full swing.
 - Hydroseeding and NoTill drill programs have kept the technicians busy.
 - Meetings with landowners for drainage and pond sites.
- **Topic of Concern for CDEA Discussion**
 - DEC Wetlands - recent changes regarding DEC wetland regulations

Schenectady County SWCD:

- Numerous NAACC Assessments completed throughout Schenectady County.
- Staff trained on RRAMP app and assessments are now being completed across Schenectady County.
- Many trail projects completed in the County Preserves
- Tabled at the inaugural Kids Can Craft Upcycling Event.
- Continued administration of the AEM, AGNPS, and CRF programs
- Participation on stakeholder group for a Drinking Water Source Protection Plan.
- Working with DEC, County DOH, and a local Town to address water quality issue on a lake in Schenectady County.

Schoharie County SWCD:

- NAACC assessments
- Hydro-seeding
- Stream surveys
- A few active small mini-grant farm projects are underway.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Nicholas Klemczak
Division VI Representative



**NYSCDEA Division VII Annual Report
Ulster, Orange, Sullivan, Greene, Dutchess,
Columbia Counties**
Respectfully submitted by Travis Ferry, Division VII Representative

Ulster County:

- Completed Access Road improvement Round 18 AEM project to improve access to rotational grazing ground on a sheep farm (see pictures below).
- Progressing Round 18 AEM Tier 4 implementation designs
- Technicians have been busy maintaining riparian buffer projects, assisting AWSMP with field surveys.
- Preparing for fall cover crop and no-till season, fall riparian planting projects.
- Received our CRF8 contract, working on executing mulching and cover crop projects with that funding.

No other counties gave reports.

Division VIII – Covering for Olivia while on Maternity leave

- **Nassau County** – Derek reported that Olivia is expected to return from maternity leave at the end of September.
- No other counties gave reports.



Access road before improvement



Access road in same location after improvement



**New York State Conservation District Employees'
Association, Inc.**

**NYS DEC Endorsed 4-Hour Erosion & Sediment Control
Online Training**

**Administrator Report
August 2025**

I have been working on creating separate sections of this training to make it easier for people to take. I have run into issues with iSpring that I am working with our IS Department and iSpring to figure out what's going on. It should be as easy as renaming the project file, deleting slides and audio, but something isn't working. iSpring customer service is working with me to help resolve this issue.

I've had a couple of people use the old payment link and reaching out to me asking where the link to the training is. I was refunding these payments through Square and having them follow the new platform's registration process and pay again through Genius. I have since figured out a way where I don't need to refund them through Square and I can add the course to their Genius Dashboard.

Registration sales have gone up by 7.69% (\$5,967.15) when comparing last year's sales between June and July (2025-\$83,598.31 and 2024-\$77,631.16).

As always, if anyone has any questions, please feel free to reach out to me.

Kristin White
Monroe County SWCD

**MONROE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
NYS CDEA ONLINE 4-HOUR TRAINING BANK ACCOUNT REPORT
June through July 2025**

	<u>Jun - Jul 25</u>	<u>Apr - May 25</u>
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Checking/Savings		
TOMPKINS MUN SAV (CDEA 4-HOUR)	28,836.99	24,230.18
Total Checking/Savings	<u>28,836.99</u>	<u>24,230.18</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>28,836.99</u>	<u>24,230.18</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>28,836.99</u>	<u>24,230.18</u>
 INCOME		83,598.31
 EXPENSE		-2,991.50
 CONTRACT PAYMENTS		-75,000.00
 MAY CC SALES		1,250.00
 JULY CC SALES		-2,250.00
 ENDING BALANCE		<u>28,836.99</u>

**MONROE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
NYS CDEA ONLINE 4-HR TRAINING P&L REPORT - NO CONTRACT PYMTS
June through July 2025**

	<u>Jun - Jul 25</u>
Income	
NYS CDEA ONLINE 4-HOUR INCOME	83,598.31
Total Income	<u>83,598.31</u>
Gross Profit	83,598.31
Expense	
NYS CDEA ONLINE 4-HOUR EXPENSE	2,991.50
Total Expense	<u>2,991.50</u>
Net Income	<u>80,606.81</u>
 INCOME:	
REGISTRATIONS - 334	83,500.00
INTEREST	98.31
TOTAL	<u>83,598.31</u>
 EXPENSE:	
SQUARE FEES	-2,491.50
REFUNDS	-500.00
TOTAL	<u>-2,991.50</u>

**MONROE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
 NYSCDEA ONLINE 4-HOUR TRAINING CONTRACT PAYMENTS
 June 1 through August 1, 2025**

	<u>Type</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Memo</u>	<u>Amount</u>
4HR ADMIN CONTRACT-NYSCDEA					
DUE TO NYSCDEA					
	Bill	06/12/2025	NYSCDEA, INC. {VENDOR}	CONTRACT PYMT	-25,000.00
	Bill	06/25/2025	NYSCDEA, INC. {VENDOR}	CONTRACT PYMT	-25,000.00
	Bill	07/17/2025	NYSCDEA, INC. {VENDOR}	CONTRACT PYMT	-25,000.00
Total DUE TO NYSCDEA					<u>-75,000.00</u>
Total 4HR ADMIN CONTRACT-NYSCDEA					<u>-75,000.00</u>
TOTAL					<u>-75,000.00</u>

MONROE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
NYS CDEA ONLINE 4-HOUR TRAINING INCOME & EXPENSE REPORT
June through July 2025

	<u>Jun - Jul 25</u>	<u>Jun - Jul 24</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Income				
NYS CDEA ONLINE 4-HOUR INCOME	83,598.31	77,631.16	5,967.15	7.69%
Total Income	<u>83,598.31</u>	<u>77,631.16</u>	<u>5,967.15</u>	<u>7.69%</u>
Gross Profit	83,598.31	77,631.16	5,967.15	7.69%
Expense				
NYS CDEA ONLINE 4-HOUR EXPENSE	2,991.50	2,344.45	647.05	27.6%
Total Expense	<u>2,991.50</u>	<u>2,344.45</u>	<u>647.05</u>	<u>27.6%</u>
Net Income	<u><u>80,606.81</u></u>	<u><u>75,286.71</u></u>	<u><u>5,320.10</u></u>	<u><u>7.07%</u></u>

MONROE COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
NYS CDEA ONLINE 4-HOUR TRAINING INCOME COMPARISON REPORT
January 1 through August 19, 2025

	<u>Jan 1 - Aug 19, 25</u>	<u>Jan 1 - Aug 19, 24</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Income				
NYS CDEA ONLINE 4-HOUR INCOME	<u>328,292.77</u>	<u>303,599.43</u>	<u>24,693.34</u>	<u>8.13%</u>
Total Income	<u>328,292.77</u>	<u>303,599.43</u>	<u>24,693.34</u>	<u>8.13%</u>
Gross Profit	<u>328,292.77</u>	<u>303,599.43</u>	<u>24,693.34</u>	<u>8.13%</u>
Expense				
Net Income	<u><u>328,292.77</u></u>	<u><u>303,599.43</u></u>	<u><u>24,693.34</u></u>	<u><u>8.13%</u></u>



New York State Conservation District Employees' Association, Inc.

STATE FAIR COMMITTEE REPORT

NYSCDEA August 2025 Meeting

2025 NYS Fair Committee Members

Kristin White, Monroe County SWCD

Kelly Emerick, Monroe County SWCD

Jason Cuddeback, Cayuga County SWCD

Erica Schreiner, Oswego County SWCD

Doug Kierst, Cayuga County SWCD

Paul Gier, Tompkins County SWCD

The New York State Soil & Water Conservation Districts Booth

Paul Gier from Tompkins County has graciously accepted the invitation to join this committee. We are excited to have him on this committee.

The committee met on July 18, 2025. The committee put together the give-away bags for each shift. This year we used shrink bags to reduce the amount of space they would take in the booth.

The committee met at the NYS Fair Grounds on August 15, 2025 to set up the booth in the Horticulture Building. We're sticking with the same theme we did last and are focusing on Soil & Water Districts through the years and the different careers within a SWCD. New this year is a Ronny Raindrop® stand-in photo board for children to get their pictures taken with. We also have a description of Ronny Raindrop® on display that states this is his 35th Birthday.

New York Farm Show

Paul Gier will be the lead for organizing our table at this event. He comes with years of experience at this event and brings with him many ideas.

Submitted by,

Kristin White, Chair

Frank Bratt Memorial Scholarship Report

August 19th & 20th, 2025

- Deadlines: March 1st, June 1st, September 1st, December 1st
- Active Frank Bratt Scholarships:

Name	Award Date	Amount	Course
Abigail Hai	December 2024	750.00	Elementary Spanish 1
Nate Woodworth	March 2025	744.00	Beaver Wetland Course
Laura Bestehorn	June 2025	300.00	QuickBooks Training
Mark Gaston	June 2025	450.00	Basic Wetland Delin.
<i>Alex Marks</i>	<i>September 2025</i>	<i>499.00</i>	<i>Trees in all Seasons</i>
<i>Amber Gray</i>	<i>September 2025</i>	<i>495.00</i>	<i>Pond Management</i>
<i>Teresa Link</i>	<i>September 2025</i>	<i>135.00</i>	<i>ReLeaf Conference</i>
<i>Reya Mertz</i>	<i>September 2025</i>	<i>525.00</i>	<i>AutoCAD/Civ3D</i>

- September 1st Round: Received four applications (as of 8/12/25) for the upcoming Round totaling ~ **\$1,654.00**, these *pending* applications will be reviewed and ranked after the September first deadline, tentatively may receive more applications.
- Seeking a CDEA rep to manage the December 1st Round while I am on leave, all applications will be forwarded to the individual for input into the spreadsheet and management of the ranking/award process. I'd be happy to host a zoom call and review the process/documents in greater detail.

Each round of the Frank Bratt Scholarship is a minimum of \$1,500. Unspent funds from the previous round can be rolled over into the next round to reach the annual limit of \$6,000. Here is a summary of each round that was funded.

March 2025	June 2025	September 2025	December 2025
\$1500.00	\$1500.00	<i>\$1,654.00</i>	-

Respectfully Submitted by,

Rebecca Campbell
Division I Representative

CDEA State Advisory Sub-Committee Report

Presented by: Jennifer Kelly

August 19, 2025

Summary: The CDEA SPAC Sub-Committee continues to discuss and strategize on how best to communicate District needs, concerns, and feedback on SWCC programs. One of our biggest challenges is determining how to provide messaging to the SWCC that is unified and poignant. The amended Soil Health Policy and the Post Tree Planting Policy has been a topic of discussion, with some recommendations provided by the Committee and will be presented to the SWCC Board for approval in September. The Sub-Committee is working with Tim Clark regarding the CAA Training request and with SWCC staff regarding annual reporting.

Soil Health Policy:

The Soil Health Policy includes flat rates for Nutrient Management Application Practice Scenarios as part of the NRCS NY CPS 590. These practices include manure injection, manure incorporation and precision nutrient application of fertilizer. These practices can only be used in a manner that demonstrates an improvement in their current management using new, purchased equipment. This payment method was created to alleviate some of the concerns raised by Districts regarding equipment purchases.

Post Planting Stewardship Policy:

This policy has remained consistent regarding flat rates. The rates indicated on the table show the 100% cost and should be distributed on the budget forms appropriately depending on C/S percentages. Actual rates can be used with proof of costs if necessary.

AgNPSA&CP Rnd. 31:

The SWCC continues to seek feedback from Districts about the program and potential changes and/or ideas about the program. The program is extremely overprescribed, causing workload issues with everyone involved. The SWCC is seeking feedback on several aspects of the program including potentially limiting the number of proposals that a district can submit, creation of a CAFO track, change in preference points, adding points for having a design already completed, and changes to the application narrative, and scoring criteria.

Districts largely are not in favor of limiting the number of proposals or the addition of extra points for having a completed design for the project. District attitudes are split regarding creating a CAFO track as many CAFOs provide a high percentage of match.

CAA Training:

-Meeting with Tim Clark and Tom Eskildsen on 8/18 to begin brainstorming the program.

Annual Reporting Tools:

-I will be meeting with Tyler, Bethany and Ben in October when Tyler returns from leave to discuss reporting methods and improving efficiency with the reports.

Northeast Association of Conservation District Employees (NACDE)
"Together We Achieve the Extraordinary"

NYSCDEA Meeting
August 2025

Northeast Conference

NACDE has been working on finalizing the following items:

- Bour Tour (fundraiser)
Erie Canal Lock 24 will take place on Sunday, September 21 from 1-4 PM. To date, 16 individuals have registered. We hoping that more individuals will register to participate.
- Awards – four individuals will be recognized for the District Employee Award (Regional); the District Employee Award (Local) and District Leader Award. These individuals are doing an outstanding job working as district professionals on a local/regional basis, helps obtain the goals of NACDE and the regional partnership, and assists in expanding employee professional development.
- To help support district employees to attend the Northeast Annual Conference, the NACDE has awarded two stipends which will cover the cost registration and NACDE tour fee. The recipients of the award were from Rhode Island and Massachusetts.
- NACDE will he hold officer elections at the annual meeting on Monday, September 22 for President, Vice President, Treasurer, & Secretary for a two-year position. The executive officers have discussed adding At Large position in an effort to bring on individual that's interested and engaging with NACDE activities. This position will be voted on at the annual meeting.

In closing, I would like to encourage very conservation district, board & staff, to attend the Northeast Conference. As of you know, conservation districts are the linchpin for local led-conservation and the bridge between producers, communities and business to protect our natural resources. This meeting is one way to add tools/resources to your toolbox. Another great opportunity to meet fellow conservation district staff/directors within our northeast region on the following:

1. Net-working on a broader scale
2. Programs being offered/created
3. Challenges faced and how they persevered
4. Non-traditional funding possibilities
5. Friendships developed

The special room rate at the hotel is only available until 12 noon on Thursday, August 21.

Hotel for event link: <https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/syrdtdt-nac-cc06e6c9-ad80-459c-821d-233fb94965e4/>

Make sure to **register before September 5** for the event!

Registration for event link: <https://forms.gle/hzSLmabwidAGemCRA>

If anyone has any questions, I can reach via email at vparker@steubenswedny.com or telephone (607) 776-7398, Ext. 5.

Respectively Submitted,

Velynda Parker

Vice President/CDEA Representative

Correspondence

Suffolk SWCD has a concern with CDEA hiring a lobbyist as it would alienate our District and Staff. We at SCSWCD are AME Union members and the organization lobbies on our behalf. I have confirmed with our union that if CDEA is to begin lobbying on the employee's behalf, ALL of the SCSWCD staff members would have to register as lobbyists and follow the guidelines of lobbying accordingly. If CDEA moves ahead with the concept of securing a lobbyist, I recommend that extreme consideration be taken as it relates to ALL CDEA members.

Sorry to drop this on you Travis, but it is an important issue for us in Suffolk County as it would very likely impact our future as employees and as a Department.

Happy to discuss further.

Corey Humphrey
Suffolk County Soil & Water Conservation District

From: Matthew Martini <mmartini@osc.ny.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, August 19, 2025 10:46 AM
To: Caitlin Stewart <Caitlin@hamcoswcd.org>
Subject: Introduction & Information

Good Morning Ms. Stewart:

I hope this email find you well.

My name is Matthew Martini and I am the Assistant Director for Labor Affairs for the NYS Comptroller's office.

I was recently shared on a letter sent to the NYS Comptroller's Office from the New York State Conservation District Employees' Association Inc. regarding Tier 6 recruitment/retention issues, dated August 12, 2025. The Comptroller's office will be sending you a formal response in the coming days, but I wanted to reach out to give some further detail.

The Comptroller's office administers the NYS Retirement system, the laws and guidelines that govern the different tiers are determined by the Legislature and passed into law. Last year some changes were made to Tier 6 that was signed into law by the Governor. Unfortunately, the Comptroller's office cannot make changes to Tier 6 or any other tiers until it is passed by the legislature. I would recommend reaching out to the NYS Senate and NYS Assemblymembers for those respected counties/regions to discuss the issues regarding retention/recruitment.

I also wanted to share with you that the Comptroller's office has Regional Directors throughout New York State that can help members with retirement issues they are having. For example, if a member is attempting to buy back previous years of service one of the Regional Directors could work with the staff in the retirement system to help that member. Here is a link to the Intergovernmental and Community Affairs Team: <https://www.osc.ny.gov/igca>

Thank you for reaching out to the New York State Comptroller's office.

Have a great day!

Sincerely,

Matthew A. Martini

Assistant Director for Labor Affairs

Office of the New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli

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