



Meeting Minutes

January 21 – 22, 2026

Hayatt Regency Rochester • 125 E Main St • Rochester, NY 14604

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, SWCC
Blake Glover, NRCS
PJ Emerick, SWCC
Kelly Emerick, Monroe County SWCD
Kristin White, Monroe County SWCD
Ryan Naughton, Madison County SWCD
Jennifer Kelly, Chenango County SWCD
Scott Davis, Montgomery County SWCD
Christos Galanopoulos, Otsego County SWCD
Amber Gray, Sullivan County SWCD
Alivia Bleu, St. Lawrence County SWCD
Erin Peruzzini, 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
Olivia Cunningham, Division VIII

Absent

Vacant, Division VII
Blanche Hurlbutt, NYACD



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 November 17 - 18, 2025 regular meeting, and November 24, 2025, December 8, 2025, and January 7, 2026, special meeting minutes – The minutes were provided in advance of the meeting for review.

- **A motion was made by Halloran, seconded by Armstrong to approve the November 17 - 18, 2025 regular meeting, and November 24, 2025, December 8, 2025, and January 7, 2026, special meeting minutes. All in favor. Carried.**

IV. Treasurer Report – Kemmeren emailed her report prior to the meeting, appended to the minutes. Stewart inquired about the 2025 Cons Skills Workshop. \$10,400.00 is on the Profit and Loss report, but the Cons Skills report lists total income as \$9,900, total expenses as \$16,309.09, and total amount needed from the 4 Hour Fund as \$6,401.09. Should the profit and loss equal expenses minus income totaling \$6,409.09? Does this include the NRCS contribution, and at what amount? Kemmeren stated she was unsure and thought she had included the NRCS contribution but would have to look into it. Yaw asked Kemmeren for the general fund balance as of December 31, 2025, as this number was needed to finish the 2026 budget. Kemmeren stated she provided us with the report. Yaw asked Kemmeren to show us on said report what the general fund balance was. Kemmeren stated she did not know.

- **A motion was made by Armstrong, seconded by Cuddeback to enter Executive Session at 12:09 p.m. to discuss NYSCDEA's Treasurer's position. All in favor. Carried.**
- **A motion was made by Brinkley, seconded by Halloran to exit executive session at 12:12 p.m. All in favor. Carried.**

Stewart stated the Board summarized their findings of the Executive Session as follows: We thank Kemmeren for her service to the NYSCDEA Board as Treasurer and have accepted her resignation. Past CDEA Treasurer Kristin White has offered to assist NYSCDEA with financials reports until a new Treasurer is appointed or elected. White will also assist with the 2026 budget. Stewart is grateful for Kelly Emerick and White's ability to assist.

Katy Kemmeren left the meeting at 12:12 p.m.

- **A motion was made by Cuddeback, seconded by Klemczak to table the Treasurer's Report. All in favor. Carried.**

White emailed the CDEA Board and mentioned that she had the 2015 and 2016 CDEA financial records. Stewart stated they could be destroyed, but White suggested to keep one year as a model for the new Treasurer. The records will be held onto.

Armstrong will pick up all CDEA files and equipment from Kemmeren and Jessica Pryda will pick up all Envirothon files and equipment.

Checks for Water Quality Symposium will be sent to Yaw at Lewis County SWCD. Armstrong

will send out a statewide email notifying Districts that all checks be sent to Yaw at this time. Kelly Emerick stated she thought it should be a current CDEA Board member who handles check until White gets the CDEA laptop.

- **A motion was made by Campbell, seconded by Armstrong to remove Kemmeren as a signatory and designate Yaw as our Water Quality Symposium check recipient and White as temporary Treasurer. All in favor. Carried.**

Jennifer Kelly entered the meeting at 12:20 p.m.

V. Partnership Reports

- a. New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee** – Bzduch emailed her report, appended to the minutes. She added that yesterday Governor Hochul released her executive budget proposal for fiscal year 2027. Some of the highlights of the proposed budget proposed amounts are: EPF - \$425 million, CRF – \$19.1 million, AGNPS - \$18.7 million, and SWCD - \$18.65 million. The first budget hearing is scheduled for January 27th. For more information on the budget hearing and testimony go to the NYS Senate website. PJ Emerick added that Round 31 AGNPS has \$25 million available and proposals are due April 20th. Annual reports are due February 15th. Districts with AEM Round 18 closeouts please call AEA, and they will come out to close them. For AEM Round 19 he suggested Districts get their claims for payment submitted before the blackout period. The next SWCC meeting is scheduled for February 17th. If any District has any questions or needs for training reach out to their AEA. Stewart thanked Bzduch for submitting the proposed budget to the budget committee. With an increase of \$650,000 that is amazing. It really shows that the Governor's office, our Senators, and Assemblymen understand who we are, what we do, and why we are important. They recognize the increase in costs to get the projects on the ground and conservation installed. She thanked Bzduch for her support of Conservation Districts. Brinkley asked where programs like Regenerate NY and other Division of Lands and Forests and reforestation programs are in the budget. Bzduch stated she thought they were through the EPF. Brinkley recommended that it is something Districts should start keeping track of. It is a program more Districts are helping with in her Division. It would be nice to know if it is going up or down as Districts are increasing technical assistance in these NYSDEC programs. Bzduch stated that it is an excellent point and she will make a note and when the budget gets approved by legislation, she will make sure to call those programs out and highlight them for Districts.
- b. New York Association of Conservation Districts** – Hurlbutt emailed her report, appended to the minutes.
- c. Natural Resources Conservation Service** – Glover reported that this is his first travel in 12 months. Since February 14, 2025, NRCS has lost sixty-seven people. Budget wise moving forward FY 2026, \$28 million in funds for EQIP and CSP. Part of the CSP funds

can manage roughly \$4-5 million each year and they gave them \$10 million. He doubts they will be able to spend that much on what contracts they have. If they do not spend it, they will have to send those funds back. The secretary of Agriculture recently announced the Regenerative Ag Program that will go through NRCS. The administration has identified fifteen new practices that will be primary practices which means that landowners will have to come in and sign up for one practice to be able to qualify for this program. These 15 practices include: Cover Crops, Conservation Crop Rotation, Contour Farming, Contour Orchard and Other Perennial Crop, Drainage Water Management, Forage Harvesting Management, Forest Stand Improvement, Irrigation Water Management, Mulching, Nutrient Management, Pest Management Conservation System, Prescribed Grazing, Residue and Tillage Management, No Till, Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced and Strip cropping. This is not a new program, and the money will come out of the \$18.7 million in EQIP. Next week, he and others will be in Indiana going over new program guidance that new administration wants them to move forward with. This is mainly Regenerative Ag and general Farm Bill work. After this meeting they will come back and train their folks. Glover spoke about appropriations. The federal government runs out of funds January 30th, but the agricultural title was approved during the first shutdown in appropriations so they should move forward hopefully after January 30th.

Stewart reported that Glover emailed her requesting that the CDEA Board consider allowing 6 NRCS staff members to attend the Tuesday half-day DEC Wetland Permitting class. NRCS contributes \$4,000 to the Water Quality Symposium but last year as well as this year staff were unable to attend. The six staff he is looking to attend this class provide guidance directly to NRCS field staff. They will only attend this class.

- **A motion was made by Halloran, seconded by Brinkley to allow six NRCS employees to attend the Water Quality Symposium NYSDEC Wetland Regulation Class. All in favor. Carried.**

Brinkley asked what NRCS's position is in new contribution agreements. Glover stated at this time there is none. In 3 months or so guidance may come out about how to move forward with partnership agreements. Agreements in place are still good here. Brinkley asked whether NRCS foresaw any hiring. Glover stated they had a data call for critical vacancies in which they identified ten. Currently they have 5 District Conservationist vacancies in the state that need to be filled but there is no movement at this time. Kelly stated she has lots of concern about her farmers in Chenango County not receiving their EQIP payments on completed practices in a timely fashion. One farm producer has an IRA EQIP contract and has been waiting for payment since September. She asked if National sent out a bulletin instructing how these payments will be made and what can they do to get payments made that are in the hopper? Blake replied that payments for RCPP and IRA contracts are being held up. General EQIP and CSP contracts have no problems with payments. Halloran stated she hopes NRCS can renew and move forward

with the 4-way partnership.

VI. Division Representative Reports

- a. **Division I** – Campbell reported she just returned to work and did not have a report.
- b. **Division II** – Cuddeback shared his report, appended to the minutes. Kelly Emerick asked Division Reps to send an email out to their Division members reminding them that the 4-Hour Erosion and Sediment Control Online Training is free for district employees. White stated if they do sign up to contact her at Monroe County SWCD so she can add the course to their profile. Emerick also stated they are doing a complete overhaul on the 4-Hour training module, and it will be presented at Water Quality Symposium. If you are an instructor, you need to attend this mandatory class to continue as an instructor.

Christos Galanopoulos entered the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

- c. **Division III** – Yaw shared her report, appended to the minutes. Yaw added that Herkimer County is experiencing a staffing shortage and will be down to three.
- d. **Division IV** – Brinkley shared her report, appended to the minutes. She stated that she is not seeking re-election this year. She also stated that NYSDEC is developing a reforestation plan and CDEA needs to be engaged.
 - **A motion was made by Klemczak, seconded by Armstrong to designate Brinkley as the Reforestation Plan subcommittee chair and function as a conduit and bring progress forward and continue to submit input to the plan. Brinkley abstained. All in favor. Carried.**

Bzduch stated that she recently received an email from Molly Hassett that says they are working on the reforestation plan and hoping to get it out later this year.

Kelly left the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Christos Galanopoulos entered the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

- e. **Division V** – Stoddard shared her report, appended to the minutes.
- f. **Division VI** – Klemczak shared his report, appended to the minutes.

Scott Davis entered the meeting at 1:20 p.m.

- g. **Division VII** – Vacant. Stewart reported that in consulting the Bylaws that state, “Vacancies shall be filled by appointment of the President. The appointed representatives must be selected from within the Division they represent and will serve

until the next annual meeting. Cunningham reported she had one lead but due to capacity they were unable to commit. Halloran stated she talked to two counties, and they were going to talk amongst themselves. Stewart asked the Board for recommendations from employees with at least 5 years of experience with their District to fill the vacancy until the 2026 Annual Meeting when an election can be held.

- **A motion was made by Brinkley, seconded by Cuddeback to permit Stewart to contact Joel DuBois of Greene County SWCD to fill the Division VII Representative position. All in favor, motion carried.**

h. Division VIII – Cunningham shared her report, appended to the minutes.

Meeting suspended at 1:28 p.m.

Meeting reconvened at 1:38 p.m.

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 District employees, the 4-Way Partnership, and beyond: November 19 NYACD meeting, December 4 4-Way Partnership meeting, November 24 and December 8 CDEA special meetings, December 9 CDEA Managers' meeting, December 11 and January 20 New York State Invasive Species Advisory Committee meeting, December 16 SWCC meeting, and January 5 CDEA Bylaws meeting. At the 4-Way Partnership Meeting, discussion items included 2026 NYACD Legislative Days, the NRCS Contribution / Cooperative Agreement process, pending NRCS IRA contracts, and Arc Pro licenses for SWCDs. They also discussed challenges that arise from the shortage of engineers. Bzduch spoke with SUNY ESF, and she will spearhead a workgroup to discuss how to connect engineering students with SWCDs. Stewart suggested that SWCD contact information be included on college websites under Careers in Engineering and make an information packet for engineering students highlighting careers in SWCDs. SWCDs could also offer shadowing days to make connections with students and promote SWCD careers. Stewart reported that she answered numerous inquiries regarding County District policy, NYACD vacancies, and the Bylaws.

b. Vice President – Nothing to report.

c. Secretary – Nothing to report.

d. Member at Large – Nothing to report.

VIII. Standing Committees

a. New York State Fair/New York State Farm Show Committee – White emailed her report, appended to the minutes. Stewart encouraged everyone on the CDEA Board to sign up to volunteer at the NYS Fair. Discussion ensued concerning the purchase of

banners for Districts like the ones that are used at the NYS Farm Show and NYS Fair booths.

- **A motion was made by Halloran, seconded by Campbell to allow Kristin White to order banners now to distribute to Districts at Water Quality Symposium. All in favor. Carried.**
- b. **NYS DEC Endorsed 4-Hour Erosion & Sediment Control Online Training** – White emailed her report, appended to the minutes. She stated she has received the new laptop and software. Discussion ensued concerning payments to CDEA.
- **A motion was made by Yaw, seconded by Brinkley that contract payments be held until new Treasurer is elected. All in favor. Carried.**
- c. **NYS Erosion and Sediment Control Certificate Program** – Verrigni emailed her report, appended to the minutes. Kelly Emerick explained the difference between the 4-Hour Erosion and Sediment Control Online Training and the Erosion and Sediment Control Certificate Program.
- d. **Conservation Skills Workshop** – Eskildsen emailed his report, appended to the minutes. Stewart reported that the budget for 2026 will go unchanged. The financial review of 2025: Total Income = \$9,900, Total Expenses = \$16,309.09, Total amount needed from 4-Hour Funds = \$6,401.09. The initial request was \$14,000.00.
- e. **Administrative Conference** – Lewis emailed a report, appended to the minutes.
- f. **Legislative Committee** – Stewart reported that Lewis is looking for a new chair as he is unable to continue.
- g. **Frank Bratt Scholarship** – Campbell emailed a report, appended to the minutes. She thanked Brinkley for taking over Frank Bratt while she was out. She stated one application was lost and the email was not forwarded to Brinkley. She asked if this application could be paid for since it was her mistake.
- **A motion was made by Yaw, seconded by Halloran to approve the Frank Bratt Scholarship application for \$500 to Drew Hoag. All in favor. Carried.**
- h. **Water Quality Symposium** – Armstrong reported that she, Klemczak, and Cuddeback met with the hotel in December. Discussion ensued concerning food and beverages.
- **A motion was made by Stewart, seconded by Klemczak to offer milk as a beverage at \$4 per consumption. All in favor. Carried.**

Annual meeting will be held on Wednesday at lunch. We will need to pay attention to time. Stewart suggested assigning times limits. Entertainment was discussed. Armstrong is going to move karaoke to Thursday night. For Wednesday night, trivia and a band are options. Registration deadline is end of January. Discussion ensued concerning colleges attending Water Quality Symposium.

Peruzzini, Gray, and Bleu left the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

- i. **New York State Envirothon Committee** – Kemmeren emailed a report, appended to the minutes. Stewart reported that Dustin Lewis sent her a message that Kemmeren reached out to the NYS Envirothon Committee stating she is no longer involved in the committee as Treasurer. He requested all Treasurer items be picked up. Discussion ensued on Envirothon scholarships be a cash prize payment instead. Discussion ensued with the Treasurer position.
 - **A motion was made by Stewart, seconded by Armstrong to nullify Treasurer’s appointment. All in favor. Carried.**
 - **A motion was made by Klemczak, seconded by Campbell to appoint Kristin White as the Interim Treasurer. All Division Representatives in favor. Carried.**
- j. **Environmental Education Foundation Committee** – Burke reported that the next meeting is February 3rd.
- k. **Civil Service Committee** – Stewart reported that she has not followed up with the Commissioner of the New York State Department of Civil Service response she had received.
- l. **New York State Invasive Species Advisory Committee** – Stewart reported that as Secretary, she attended and took minutes for the December 11 and January 20 meetings. The ISAC reviewed species under Part 575 and agreed on regulated, non-regulated, and prohibited status, and we will provide our recommendation to the Invasive Species Council for their consideration.
- m. **Municipal Assistance Subcommittee** – Stewart reported that she received an email update from SWCC AEAs P.J. Emerick and Ryan Cunningham. Currently, they are working with a few SWCD Certified Trainers and DEC staff to review and update the 4-hour course presentation to be consistent with the updated stormwater permit. They anticipate adding in the comments and changes and then releasing the updated presentation at WQS. Certificate holders are required to attend - if they don’t, they must do another training and shadow an active certificate holder while they teach a class.

- n. **Technical Advisory Committee** – Cuddeback reported he attended a meeting on December 18th, and the committee created a list of what tools and resources are available for Districts.
- o. **CDEA State Programs Advisory Committee** – Kelly emailed her report, appended to the minutes. White reported that BlackBoard has been in contact with Chastity Miller on training modules being uploaded to BlackBoard.
- p. **Northeast Association of Conservation District Employees** – Parker emailed her report, appended to the minutes.

Meeting suspended at 4:06 p.m.

Meeting reconvened on January 22, 2026, at 8:00 a.m.

Executive Committee Members

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

Partners and Guests

Bethany Bzduch, SWCC
 Blake Glover, NRCS
 PJ Emerick, SWCC
 Tyler Knapp, SWCC
 Danielle Singer, Tioga County SWCD
 Gideon Frisbee, NYC Watershed Ag Program
 Jennifer Kelly, Chenango County SWCD
 Scott Davis, Montgomery County SWCD
 Amber Gray, Sullivan County SWCD
 Alivia Bleu, St. Lawrence County SWCD
 Erin Peruzzini, Seneca County SWCD
 Brittany Ward, Seneca County SWCD
 Corrinna Aldrich, Washington County SWCD
 Victoria Bray, Montgomery 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
 Olivia Cunningham, Division VIII

Absent

Vacant, Division VII
 Blanche Hurlbutt, NYACD

- q. **Leadership Institute** – Singer and Knapp reported that they along with Frisbee Gideon, Jennifer Kelly, and Teresa Link have held a few planning meetings and are looking for some feedback on whether to push date of Leadership Institute until 2027 in hopes that NRCS employees will be allowed to attend. This event is sponsored by the 4-way partnership, and attendees are supposed to be coming together to build relationships.

Currently, it sounds like NRCS funding is there, but employees are not allowed to attend for 2026. They are also looking for feedback on leadership courses to offer and what attendees are looking to get out of this event. At this time, they are not ready to ask for a budget request as they are looking for instructors and do not know what their costs will be. Knapp stated that if we put the Leadership Institute off until 2027, we may need to revise the budget. Currently, the 4-way partners contribute \$3,000 each. They are considering either asking the 4-way partners for more funding or increasing the registration fee due to possible increase in instructor costs. Knapp and Frisbee have been working on searching for instructors. Registration fee last time was \$400 for a week. Stewart recommended to hold off until 2027 so the committee can do more planning. Halloran asked when the NRCS contribution agreement expired. Knapp stated in 2028. Stoddard is concerned about increasing the cost. Feedback she has gotten is that this is a valuable event. She recommended that they look at their budget and being mindful of the cost to register and maybe CDEA can alleviate this cost barrier. Singer stated they are planning to set a date for possibly June 2027 so that Districts can budget for the Leadership Institute and save the date. Stewart suggested a class on Conflict Mediation.

Jennifer Kelly entered the meeting at 8:21 a.m.

IX. CDEA Activities

- a. **2026 Budget update** – Discussion ensued. Budget will be completed as soon as financial records are sorted out.
 - **A motion was made by Klemczak, seconded by Halloran to remove Katy Kemmeren as a signatory on CDEA bank accounts and add Kristin White, Jessica Armstrong, Joann Burke, and Caitlin Stewart as signatories. All in favor. Carried.**
- b. **SFY 2026-27 Environmental Protection Fund update** – Stewart reported that the state released the SFY 26-27 Executive Proposed Budget, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts are listed at \$18.65 million, a \$650,000 increase from SFY 25-26 enacted budget. She thanked all Districts and the New York Association of Conservation Districts who sent letters to Governor Hochul thanking her for her support of Districts, and the SWCC for providing the proposed SWCD budget.
- c. **Lobbyist update** – Stewart reported that funds were included in the 2026 CDEA budget for the lobbyist. She inquired if this should be included as an agenda item for Districts to vote on during the 2026 CDEA Annual Meeting. The Board was in favor of including this in the agenda. If it gets voted down the money in the budget for lobbyist will go to the unassigned reserves.
- d. **Attorney update** – Stewart reported that at the request of the Board, she forwarded the Attorney's priority items and invoice. She asked if there were any issues the attorney

needed to look into. Brinkley stated an issue that needs to be investigated is an MOU agreement between CDEA and Districts so CDEA can receive money from private entities and disperse to Districts. Stewart stated lawyer sent guidance on that. She will reshare the correspondence with Brinkley.

- e. **NYS Retirement update** – Stewart again encouraged District Managers or Boards to send the NYS Retirement reform letter to their Assemblymembers and Senators. Retirement reform will come from legislators. She mentioned that she hoped NYACD will include this as a talking point during 2026 Legislative Days and support the three resolutions that were passed at the 2025 NYACD Annual Meeting calling for retirement system reform.
- f. **4-hour Fund application review and approval** – None received.
- g. **CDEA Bylaws update** – Stewart thanked Stoddard and Warren County SWCD for providing an in-person space to host the hybrid meeting held January 8. Stewart added all suggestions that board members brought forward during the meeting. The Board read the Bylaws and discussion ensued.
 - **A motion was made by Yaw, seconded by Brinkley to approve the updates to the New York State Conservation District Employees' Association Bylaws and permit President Caitlin Stewart to send them to the membership. Carried.**

Victoria Bray entered the meeting at 9:45 a.m.

- h. **CDEA News** – Armstrong reported that she met with Victoria Bray from Montgomery County SWCD. Stewart is still working on the Autumn 2025 edition. Bray introduced herself and stated she is excited to take over the newsletter. If any District has any news articles or pictures they would like to include in the newsletter to please sent it to her at mcswcd.aed@gmail.com.
- i. **Management Development Certification Program** – Halloran stated nothing new has happened.
- j. **Ronny Raindrop®** - Stoddard reported that there is nothing to report.
- k. **CDEA Golf Tournament** – nothing new to report.
- l. **Fish On Challenge** – Stewart mentioned that Hamilton County SWCD Technician Katie WhitKovits administers the Fish On Challenge. Registration is \$10, and anglers receive a NYCDEA pocket tape measure. SWCD employees can register online here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeUTqy7pqCZKBhj2qZajTrCpi0MI1j3aHaNofUIIeuPA5wJcA/viewform>. Entries must be submitted by February 27, 2026.

m. Water Quality Symposium continued – Armstrong reported that John Persch needs approval to move forward with the gun raffle.

- **Stewart made a motion, seconded by Halloran, to permit John Persch, Fulton County SWCD to proceed with overseeing the gun raffle during the Water Quality Symposium. All in favor. Carried.**

Armstrong stated after yesterday's meeting they met with the event coordinator who stated that the sales representative offered a discounted upgrade for breakfast. He also stated we could offer yoghurt at breakfast at \$4 per consumption.

- **A motion was made by Yaw, seconded by Stewart to upgrade the breakfast with the addition of yoghurt and milk. Carried.**

X. Other –

- **CDEA Managers' Meeting** – Stewart reported that the next CDEA Managers' Meeting will be held February 27, 2026, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 50 West High St. Ballston Spa NY 12020.

XI. Correspondence – Jennifer Kelly emailed the board, and Stewart followed up with a phone call. The email is appended to the minutes.

XII. Next Meeting – March 11, 2026, 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. • Hayatt Regency Rochester • 125 E Main St, Rochester, NY 14604

XIII. Adjournment

- **A motion was made by Brinkley, seconded by Yaw to adjourn meeting at 9:51 a.m. Carried.**

Respectfully submitted,



Joann Burke

NYS DISTRICT EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION

Balance Sheet

As of December 31, 2025

	Dec 31, 25
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
2024 NCF Envirothon Checking	207,991.26
4HR Online Sed & Erosion	775,357.86
Envirothon Scholarship Savings	16,105.57
Frank Bratt Scholarship Savings	44,380.07
NYS Envirothon-Savings	2,001.26
NYSCDEA-REG CHECKING	
General NYSCDEA Funds	41,374.70
Golf Tournament	3,807.43
Leadership Conference	2,463.13
NYS Envirothon	26,889.93
NYS Fair	1,820.74
NYSESCC Program	24,361.53
Sunshine Fund	416.42
Total NYSCDEA-REG CHECKING	101,133.88
Total Checking/Savings	1,146,969.90
Accounts Receivable	
Accounts Receivable	132,422.10
Total Accounts Receivable	132,422.10
Other Current Assets	
Prepaid Expenses	16,360.00
Total Other Current Assets	16,360.00
Total Current Assets	1,295,752.00
Fixed Assets	
Fixed Asset	-1,900.00
Total Fixed Assets	-1,900.00
TOTAL ASSETS	1,293,852.00
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Equity	
Retained Earnings	1,105,781.94
Net Income	188,070.06
Total Equity	1,293,852.00
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	1,293,852.00

NYS DISTRICT EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION
Profit & Loss

January through December 2025

	Jan - Dec 25
Training Sessions.	
4 HR Approved Trainings	27,915.72
Administrative Training	12,394.19
Conservation Skills Workshop	16,301.09
Misc. Training Sessions	174.91
NYSESCC Program	8,700.50
Online 4 Hour Course	118,606.52
Water Quality Symposium	246,796.63
Total Training Sessions.	430,889.56
Total Expense	563,018.72
Net Ordinary Income	188,070.06
Net Income	188,070.06

NYS DISTRICT EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION
Profit & Loss

January through December 2025

	Jan - Dec 25
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Self Sustaining Programs	
2024 NCF Envirothon, New York	113,422.10
Envirothon Scholarships	3.72
Fertilizer Tablets	5,600.00
Fishing Challenge	740.00
Frank Bratt Scholarship	7,094.00
Golf Tournament	2,462.52
State Envirothon	67,710.70
State Fair	6,939.98
State Farm Show	2,544.09
Total Self Sustaining Programs	206,517.11
Training Sessions	
4-Hour Online Class	475,122.14
Administrative Training	7,800.00
Conservation Skills Workshop	10,400.00
NYSESCC Program	13,975.00
Water Quality Symposium	34,500.00
WQS Resource Training	2,774.53
Total Training Sessions	544,571.67
Total Income	751,088.78
Gross Profit	751,088.78
Expense	
Division Meetings	
Division IV	418.09
Division V	882.09
Division VI	1,356.49
Total Division Meetings	2,656.67
Executive Board	6,471.67
Insurance	3,639.18
Legal Fees	11,293.75
NACD-NE	2,858.76
NCDEA	200.00
Newsletter	0.00
Office Supplies/Postage	429.61
Promotion	291.18
Ronny Raindrop	8,036.02
Self Sustaining Programs.	
2024 NCF Envirothon, New York	0.00
Fertilizer Tablets	5,597.47
Fishing Challenge	255.90
Frank Bratt Scholarship	3,234.29
Golf Tournament	2,763.87
State Envirothon	65,896.80
State Fair	8,742.14
State Farm Show	2,875.37
Total Self Sustaining Programs.	89,365.84
Sunshine Fund	111.48
Taxes & Audit Review	6,775.00

NYS DISTRICT EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION
Balance Sheet
As of January 15, 2026

	Jan 15, 26
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
2024 NCF Envirothon Checking	341,413.26
4HR Online Sed & Erosion	775,357.86
Envirothon Scholarship Savings	16,105.57
Frank Bratt Scholarship Savings	44,380.07
NYS Envirothon-Savings	2,001.26
NYSCDEA-REG CHECKING	
General NYSCDEA Funds	30,874.80
Golf Tournament	3,807.43
Leadership Conference	2,463.13
NYS Envirothon	26,889.93
NYS Fair	1,820.74
NYSESCC Program	24,361.53
Sunshine Fund	416.42
Total NYSCDEA-REG CHECKING	90,633.98
Total Checking/Savings	1,269,892.00
Accounts Receivable	
Accounts Receivable	16,050.00
Total Accounts Receivable	16,050.00
Total Current Assets	1,285,942.00
Fixed Assets	
Fixed Asset	-1,900.00
Total Fixed Assets	-1,900.00
TOTAL ASSETS	1,284,042.00
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Equity	
Retained Earnings	1,293,852.00
Net Income	-9,810.00
Total Equity	1,284,042.00
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	1,284,042.00



**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
January 21-22, 2026**

NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee Report

State of the State 2026, Proposed Executive Budget FY26-27 and Budget Testimony/Budget Hearing Information

- Governor Hochul delivered her 2026 State of the State Address on January 13, 2026. Here is a link to a recording of her address: [2026 State of the State Address](#) and here is a link to the 2026 State of the State book: [2026StateoftheStateBook.pdf](#)
- The Proposed Executive Budget for fiscal year 26-27 is expected to be announced soon. Per the 2026 State of the State book, it is expected that the Governor will propose \$425 million in funding for the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF).
- Following the announcement of the proposed executive budget, budget hearing sessions will be scheduled and testimony written regarding the proposed budget.

Program Updates:

- Round 9 Climate Resilient Farming Program proposal ranked list will be presented to the NYS SWCC for approval in February
- EBM Stream Corridor Management RFP will closed on December 8, 2025. Application review and scoring is taking place.
- Round 31 Agricultural Nonpoint Source Pollution Abatement and Control Program was announced in January 2026. Applications are due April 20, 2026.
- State Aid to Districts - Annual Reports are due February 15th.
- **Claim for Payment Black Out Period Approaching:** We are approaching the "Blackout Period" for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. We encourage Districts to consider what projects may be implemented in 2026 and what projects are eligible for advances or reimbursements. If you will need to request a 25% Advance, 65% BMP Implementation Payment, Subsequent/Interim Payment, or Final Payment prior to the start of the black out period, please email the CFP packet to the appropriate State Committee program manager, regional coordinator and Maureen Irish by **Friday, February 20th, 2026. Please remember to only submit claims for payment for contracts that have been fully executed.**

Other Projects/Initiatives

- SWCC approved AEM Technical Tier 1 and Tier 2 documents to support near shore aquaculture projects.
- SWCC staff are assisting with the development of a Conservation District Technician training program. Workgroup met on January 6th and the next meeting is scheduled for February 2026.
- Working on 2025 SWCC/AEM Annual Report. We are hoping to publish the report in May/June 2026.
- Formed a small workgroup with SWCC Advisory members, SWCDs, and private engineers to discuss engineering concerns/issues.



**Department of
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Upcoming Meetings

- NYS SWCC State Programs Advisory Committee – February 5, 2026
- NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee – February 17, 2026, locations in Albany, Syracuse and WebEx



New York Association of Conservation Districts

c/o Steuben County SWCD

415 W. Morris Street

Bath, NY 14810

NYACD January 2026 Report

December kept NYACD busy with meetings and holiday activities. Having a few days off was welcome, but now it's time to return to important tasks. I'm excited about the year ahead, including plans to attend the NACD annual conference in San Antonio, Texas, Legislative Days in February, the Water Quality Symposium in March, several 4-Way Partners meetings, and fulfilling my responsibilities on the special Great Lakes Commission Committee.

The special Great Lakes Commission committee has nearly completed the development of a survey focused on soil and water conservation. This survey is intended for district directors and staff from each committee's respective state to address their concerns, needs, and related topics. Each participant should expect the survey to take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The goal of this study is to identify obstacles and opportunities affecting the effectiveness of soil and water conservation districts across the Great Lakes states, with an emphasis on recruitment, training, retention, and collaboration among conservation professionals. Participation is voluntary, and all responses will remain confidential. To ensure anonymity, individual responses will not be linked to specific district names.

Division Representation Efforts: At the NYACD December meeting, we discussed the lack of Division III, V, VI, VII, and VIII representation on the board. We are encouraging affected Directors and Districts to appoint representatives and plan to reach out to offer assistance.

NYACD By-law Review Meeting: A by-law meeting is scheduled for January by NYACD to review and propose amendments, which will be communicated after compilation. Additionally, I have contacted other states to gather information on their by-law structures in order to identify and implement necessary improvements to our own.

CDEA Meeting Participation: I plan to join the January CDEA meeting via Zoom and share NYACD updates.

Upcoming Legislative Days: Legislative Days are set for Monday, February 9, 2025, and Tuesday, February 10, 2025. I am currently arranging meetings with Legislators, with forty-nine appointments already scheduled and awaiting responses from twenty more. Nineteen districts have registered to participate in the two-day event. NYACD is signed up for the “Taste of New York” on Monday evening, where we will host a display for attendees to enjoy. Soil and Water Conservation Districts that are joining Legislative Days are welcome to attend. On Tuesday, February 10, 2026, appointments run from 8:30 a.m. to the final meeting at 3:30 p.m.

I've finished the 2025 NYACD Legislative booklet, which is currently being printed and should be ready for pick up this week (January 8, 2026). I plan to mail copies to districts and legislators next week and have ordered extras for appointment handouts.

Upcoming NYACD Board Meeting: The next NYACD Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 28, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. Directors and staff are welcome to attend and will receive the meeting link if we have their contact information.

Respectfully submitted, *Blanche*, Blanche L Hurlbutt, NYACD Executive Director



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

Onondaga & SLWAP:

- Looking to hire 6 seasonal aides
- Prepare annual reports (~15 in total)
- Working on designs for stream bank stabilization in Tully Valley
- Working on designs to reconnect streams to their flood plains in Oneida Lk. Watershed
- Completed ~2.5 ac wetland to attenuate stormwater near Shotwell Brook/Skaneateles Lk.
- Completed cover crop inspections and payments for 2025, 8,414ac of cover crops for 2025
- Preparing for harvesting and chemical treatment of Water Chestnuts on Seneca River system and other waterbodies in Onondaga County
- Closing 2025 books and preparing for annual audit

Monroe County:

- NYS Fair Committee Member – NYS Farm show is being held February 26-28th at the NYS Fairgrounds. For more information or to sign-up to work a shift, contact Paul Gier, PGier@tompkins-co.org. Each employee will receive a free polo shirt, ticket for entrance and a parking pass;
- 2 board members are attending the National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting and Conference in San Antonio, Texas from February 15-19th;
- Accepting orders for our 2026 Conservation Tree & Shrub Program – over 179 orders received so far;
- Working on NYSSWCC reports;
- Monroe County Envirothon will be held May 19th at Monroe County's Ellison Park;
- Maintaining the CDEA website as a Division II member. If you have updates, please reach out;
- Continue as the Treasurer and member of the Genesee River Watershed Coalition of Conservation Districts (GRWCCD) and interim coordinator – next Coalition meeting is being held in March - date TBD;
- Continue to work with NYS DEC on a watershed strategy/implementation plan for the Genesee River;
- Working with our Stormwater Coalition on the new MS4 permit requirements;
- Continue to serve as a Steering Committee Member for the NYS Erosion and Sediment Control Certificate Program – continuous recruitment of instructors to teach the review course; details regarding the program and the upcoming events can be found on the NYS CDEA website <https://www.nyscdea.com/nysescpp/>;
- Continue to maintain an updated list of instructors from SWCDs throughout NYS for the 4 Hour E&SC Course – check out the CDEA website for updated list of instructors https://www.nyscdea.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/NYS-DEC-Endorsed-4-Hour-ESC-Trainers_10.2025.2.pdf;
- Continue managing the NYS CDEA online 4-hour E&SC course;
- NYS DEC Endorsed 4 Hour E&SC Training session being held January 20th with another scheduled for February 19th; Reminder that SWCD employees can attend the online version of this course for free through the CDEA <https://www.nyscdea.com/nys-dec-endorsed-4-hour-erosion-sediment-control-online-training/>;
- The 2026 WNY Stormwater Management Training Series will soon open for registration with the first course being held on February 25th and continuing with a total of 5 classes through May 20th - <https://www.monroecountyswcd.org/wny-stormwater-management-series/>; these are great courses to have employees apply for Frank Bratt scholarship funds!
- Continue to serve on the Urban Ag Working Group in Monroe County - our spring Urban Ag Conference in the City of Rochester is being held March 21st;



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- Completed final project under WQIP Round 12 for a regional stormwater pond facility;
 - Part of an AEM Urban Ag working group that is initiating development of worksheet (s) and a process for urban farms and community gardens; Next meeting is January 27th;
 - Final draft of the County's Farmland Protection Plan update is being sent to the Farmland Protection Board for approval and recommendation to the County Legislature;
 - Completed our 5-year AEM Strategic Plan;
 - Closing out AEM Tier 4 Cost-Share project for a Prescribed Rotational Grazing System;
 - Planning for our Urban Agriculture project under NYS Part B has for 2026; Applications for funding released January 6th to urban gardens/farms;
 - Coordinated a tour at Colby Homestead Farms for a family from Venezuela;
 - Planning and design for two streambank restoration projects using FLOWPA funding;
 - Planning for spring tree planting under our USFS GLRI grant.
- Submitted by, Kelly Emerick, Executive Director, Monroe County SWCD

Yates County:

- Show video
 - Ag. & Markets reached out to PJ (AEA) as part of the commissioner Ball state of the Ag. report and wanted to highlight a CRF project. Yates has a unique Rd. 8 CRF for frost fan implementation which is a different usage of funds compared to most other CRF proposals.
- CRF (Frost Fan project) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x0vdWrmAx9A&t=58s>

Cayuga County:

- Tree Sale- last day to order is April 28, 2026
 - <http://www.cayugaswcd.org/annual-tree-shrub--groundcover-sale.html>
- AEM Rd. 18 closeout
- Rd. 31 Ag. NonPoint
- Certified Crop Advisor (CCA)
 - Training in Syracuse- Embassy Suites
 - Dec. 9-10th in person
 - Dec. 16-17th virtual
 - Training is broken down into 5 different categories
 - Pest Management, Nutrient Management, Soil & Water Management, Crop Management, Professional Development
- Completed a stormwater pond/basin on firelane 17 in the Town of Scipio. Runoff from the surrounding landscape concentrated in a single area resulting in severe washouts and sediment deposition less than 50 feet from Owasco Lake. This system should allow for sediment capture and nutrient reduction.
- Completed 4 conservation mowing projects



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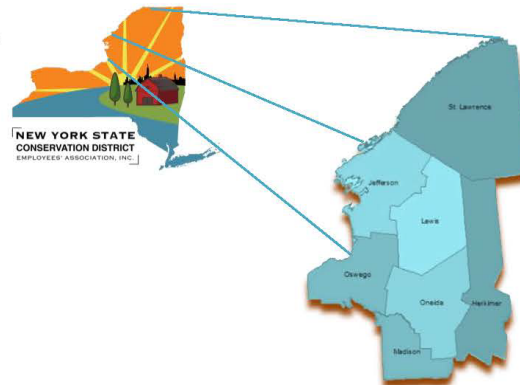
- Began preparing for shoreline projects in the Town of Venice along Owasco Lake, but weather is keeping us at bay from moving forward with these projects. We did get a grant extension through March 2026 to complete these projects. Firelane 1,2,3.
- Started hauling rock for Ryan Walczak on firelane 18E in Niles for a rock lined channel. Once completed, the major of the work on this firelane will be completed and we will reassess the finances.
- Equipment maintenance and plowing
- Guys took time off around the holidays and the weather has made things slow for December.

Livingston County:

NYS CDEA DIVISION III REPORT

January 21, 2026

*Respectfully Submitted by
Carla Yaw, Division III Representative*



Herkimer County SWCD

No Report

Jefferson County SWCD

No Report

Lewis County SWCD

Submitted by Carla Yaw

Educational Programs

- Planning for the 2026 Progressive Agriculture Safety Day

In the office

- 2026 Tree Sale is Live
- Annual Reporting
- Ag Value Assessments
- Tax Filing

Technical Assistance

- July 2024 Storm FEMA assistance to townships
- Multiple SEQR forms for offroad trail additions

Grants

- AEM Base Closeout
- Round 31 Grant application
- Successful in assisting the County with an application to receive funding for a feasibility study for the East Martinsburg road which is closed several times a year due to flooding.

Madison County SWCD

No Report

Oneida County SWCD

No Report

Oswego County SWCD

Submitted by Joe Chairvolotti

General Updates:

The District has recently filled a vacant position and welcomed Ben Gephart to the staff as a Conservation Aide. Ben is working on our water quality related programs and will be assisting the public and municipalities, pursuing grants for project planning and implementation, and getting introduced to our agricultural programs.

Agricultural Assistance Program: One AEM Base Round 18 implementation project for a short-term manure storage structure was completed in the last part of 2025. One CRF Round 8 project was started in 2025 and should be completed this year. Continuing to assist farmers throughout the county with water quality related issues.

Water Quality and Other Technical Assistance: OCSWCD staff have several projects in the planning stage around the county including culvert replacement projects in the Towns of

Williamstown and Redfield, and a bridge installation at Deer Creek Marsh Wildlife Management Area. One grant project was wrapped up late in 2025 and involved developing 3 stormwater designs to mitigate flooding issues in the Village of Pulaski. The District is in the planning stage for a municipal outreach effort to learn more about the water quality needs of municipalities and develop additional working relationships with the towns and villages in Oswego County.

District staff participated in several wetland delineations with DEC personnel throughout the fall with the intention of conducting them for the public and municipalities in the future.

Forestry: The District continues to assist landowners and municipalities with forest management and disease/insect issues within the county. The last few months of 2025 involved administering 2 active Regenerate NY Contracts, completing a successful timber sale bid on 35 acres of Reforestation property, and developing 3 forest management plans for private landowners.

Invasive Species: In the summer of 2025, a successful water chestnut control program was completed. Approximately 65 acres of dense plants were treated and more than 100 acres were visited by a team of interns that resulted in the removal of approximately 10,000 lbs of chestnuts. The later months of the year involved reporting on iMapInvasives.

OCSWCD staff also coordinated a giant hogweed control project at approximately 60 sites in Oswego County. The fall involved reporting to the NYS DEC to wrap the program up.

Education: The Conservation Field Day was held in September of 2025 at Selkirk Shores State Park. More than 350 fifth graders attended five different stations and learned about various conservation related topics.

Planning and Committees: District staff have been involved in several planning efforts by reviewing plans and related documents, and/or by serving on committees for various municipalities. These include the following: Sandy Creeks Watershed 9 Element Plan, Oneida Lake Watershed 9 Element Plan, Town/Village of Mexico Farmland Protection Plan, Town of Granby Lake Waterfront Revitalization Plan, Village of Pulaski Drinking Water Source Protection Plan, Oswego County Comprehensive Plan and the Oswego County Emergency Preparedness Assessment.

St. Lawrence County SWCD

Submitted by Alivia Bleau

St. Lawrence County Soil and Water has been staying busy! We had a busy summer filled with education & outreach, including at the local fair, A day at the farm, a local governance conference, a health and wellness fair, conservation field days, a career presentation to SUNY Potsdam, and more. We were awarded and finished out a grant with SLELO PRISM to control invasive species on a piece of county land. Speaking of SLELO PRISM, our office also did a water chestnut pull with them on a local river over the summer. We are on our last leg of a multi-year long project to remove ash and hazard trees from county right-of-ways. Winter has been slower in some ways, busier in others, with lots of Ag values, reports, annual newsletter, close-outs, etc. Like other counties, our annual tree sale is now live. We are already anticipating spring!

CDEA Division IV Report

January, 2026

Lydia Brinkley, Division IV Representative

Districts reporting: Delaware, Chenango, Schuyler, Tompkins, Tioga, Cortland.

4 SWCDs responded by answering the following questions:

1. Thoughts on a CDEA-sponsored certification program?

Districts generally supported CDEA-sponsored certification programs, but differed in their opinions of the types of certifications available. Many thought that districts should lead this course, and recognized that hiring individuals to specifically be trainers would relieve the pressure on staff to carry out the courses. Course suggestions included Technician trainings, Certified Floodplain Managers, CPESC, Rosgen Certs, Forestry, and there was a lot of support for a Wetland Certification. There were questions about how this would be supported- would districts have to pay for it, or do the certifications need to be approved by the board? There was great feedback about training staff potentially before they come in to work for SWCD, so they can hit the ground running, and for the state to support the certification(s) as an incentive to stay at SWCD instead of getting trained and then moving on to work for DOT, Ag and Markets, DEC, etc.

However, seasoned staff questioned whether or not certifications would be required and whether grandfathering in some certifications would be considered. Would these certifications be permanent?

Lastly, utilizing the training session we have currently could be a point of focus for more folks and could be better utilized.

2. If Envirothon funding were available, what would you like to use it for? Examples have included models for schools, transportation, and teacher stipends.

Districts suggested that the funds be used for the state Envirothon so that districts don't have to cut a check for that annually, while others thought that using it for transportation and teacher stipends would help get more schools engaged. Lastly, there were suggestions to fund districts to conduct workshops to help students study for the Envirothon, either in the classroom or off-site. Offering schools the funds would increase interest, much like schools get funding for sports!

3. Are you or your SWCD attending Legislative days? If not, do you regularly check in with your local reps to convey SWCD successes and barriers to conservation?

Sounds like several districts are attending legislative days in February, and most of them also keep in communication with their local representatives, stating that they are strong supporters of SWCD work. Many responded with plans to both attend legislative days and then to follow up locally again. It was noted that it's challenging to continue to educate legislators, post-election, when a new crew comes in. County budgets are being scrutinized harder than in the past. So much of the education and engagement of/to representatives is falling on district managers and staff. It was mentioned that districts would like for more leaders and Board of Directors to be engaged with supporting districts at the state level.

4. Who is looking to sign up for the CDEA legislative committee?

District managers generally responded that their plate is full and engaging in another committee would be another commitment that they can't fully dive into. Some districts supported someone at the state-CDEA level, perhaps a new hire, to keep track of state legislation. Several folks within Division IV are interested in serving on this committee.

Otherwise, some districts did provide some specific updates, they're included here:

Tioga SWCD staff are working on wrapping up several AGNPS grant closeouts, our planning and engineering staff are busy working on projects for future rounds of funding, and implementation this year, everything from buffers to farmstead practices to stream restoration. We have been completing SWPPP review for solar projects in the county, the most recent 160 acre project, with more to come. We are working in conjunction with other county partners and American Farmland Trust to hold a series of workshops on farmland leasing, and farm succession planning, workshops have been well attended and getting some great questions/feedback, with goal to provided resources to farms and land owners in the County.

Division V Report

January 2026

Clinton County – No Report

Essex County –

- annual reports, closing out several grants and AEM Round 18
- planning for AEM Round 19
- awarded grant for buffer program from LCBP
- new Board member - one Supervisor retired
- planning educational events and partner projects

Franklin County –

- Hosted an AEM Strategy meeting to review the updated strategy and solicit comments and feedback
- Wrapping up AEM 18 and compiling the final report
- Planning for AEM 19 implementation projects
- Beginning AgNPS Round 31 application process for multiple projects
- Closing out 2 AgNPS Grants
- Developing Annual Report and completing Annual State Reporting
- Submitted 1 application to LCBP for Organizational Support
- Looking into a variety of potential funding sources to support our growing Environmental Education Program
- Currently hiring a Watershed Coordinator for the Champlain Watershed Improvement Coalition of NY (CWICNY) Applications are due by February 20, 2026 at 4pm (see our website for more information)

Hamilton County –

- Submitted a \$100,000 Ecosystem Based Management grant for the Forked Lake Road Culvert Restoration Project
- AEM close out and strategic plan
- Adirondack Tree and Shrub Sale
- Conservation Field Day essay and poster contest awards ceremonies

Warren County –

1. Annual SWCC report(s) development
2. We have received a new forestry grant and closed out several grants the past few months.
3. Actively working to increase AEM Base program, looks promising with changes.
4. Conducting a multitude of 4-hour courses
5. Continue to have strong WQSC, quarterly meetings and average 25 attendees in person and on line.
6. All staff will be covering Maren's absence on projects and projects.

Question(s): None

Respectfully submitted by,

Maren Stoddard

Natural Resource Specialist

Warren County Soil & Water Conservation District

NYS CDEA Division V Representative



NYSCDEA Meeting January 21 & 22, 2026
Division VI Report
Albany, Fulton, Montgomery, Rensselaer,
Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, and
Washington

Montgomery County SWCD:

- Ag Economic Development Specialist
 - Coordinated and participated in meetings related to Harvest Connection to support farmer market access, digital tools, and local food promotion.
 - Supported farmers market planning and resiliency efforts, including regular coordination meetings and software opportunities.
 - Conducted grant monitoring and outreach, tracking and sharing information on multiple state and federal agricultural grant programs and deadlines.
 - Attended regional and statewide educational and partner meetings focused on food system innovation, composting partnerships, value-added processing, and regional economic development webinars.
- Technician Update/ AEM Program
 - November/December happenings – The closeout of AEM yr 18 kept our district very busy. We had multiple projects trying to be completed before the end of the year and the weather was not very cooperative. But we did manage and got all our farmers paid.
 - Scott Davis has been working diligently to get the tree sale ready to be mailed in early January.
- Miscellaneous
 - As the year drew to a close, we had to bid farewell to John VanDerwerker, who submitted his resignation to pursue an opportunity with Farm Bureau. We wish him and his family all the best in his new endeavors. He will be missed.

Schenectady County SWCD:

- Working with the Schenectady County Legislature to appoint a new legislative board member.
- Working to complete state reports.
- New Laborer brought on in December.
- Building wildlife houses for the Tree & Shrub Sale.
- Presenting in February at the NYS Farm to School Summit in Saratoga.
- Planning Earth Day and Arbor Day events.
- WQCC is working on 4 educational stormwater videos.
- Serving on the Mohawk River Steering Committee and working with DEC and other members to update Mohawk River Action Agenda.
- Working with NYACD Division Rep to plan a joint training.

No other Districts provided reports

Respectfully Submitted by:
Nicholas Klemczak
Division VI Representative

New York State Conservation District Employees' Association, Inc.

STATE FAIR COMMITTEE REPORT

NYSCDEA November 2025 Meeting

2025 NYS Fair Committee Members

**Kristin White, Monroe County SWCD
Kelly Emerick, Monroe County SWCD
Paul Gier, Tompkins County SWCD**

**Erica Schreiner, Oswego County SWCD
Doug Kierst, Cayuga County SWCD
Jason Cuddeback, Cayuga County SWCD**

The New York State Soil & Water Conservation Districts Booth

The committee met on December 12, 2025 via Zoom. The committee approved the Proposed 2026 Budget. This budget was presented to the NYSCDEA Board in November.

We're going to carry over the theme from 2025, *"Conservation Districts: Then and Now"*.

Due to the decreasing number of entries for the coloring contest for the past five years, the committee has decided to retire this activity and use the resources for something else for the booth.

We will be working on selecting new shirts and giveaway items to have at the booth.

We already have 13 people signed up for shifts this year!!

New York Farm Show

Paul Gier has sent out a statewide request for volunteers to work at this event. So far, Friday's shifts are covered. The dates of this event are February 26th – 28th, 2026. We will be handing out pens and notepads along with agricultural materials.

Submitted by,

Kristin White, Chair



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

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

**Administrator Report
January 2026**

I received an email from Square and the fees will be increasing as of January 1, 2026. The fees will be increasing from 2.9% + 30¢ to 3.3% + 30¢ (\$7.55 to \$8.55). This is due to the new Square pricing structure. So far, I haven't seen this increase yet.

I've got the lap top and purchased the software needed to upgrade the 4-Hour Training. It's taking some time because I have to transfer the audio and place it into the new presentation. The ispring upgrade is allowing me to transfer text to speech for slides that are new or have new notes on them and we don't have any recorded audio.

All-in-all everything is running well.

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

Kristin White
Principal Office Account Clerk
Monroe County SWCD

**MONROE COUNTY SWCD
NYS CDEA ONLINE 4-HOUR TRAINING
BANK ACCOUNT REPORT
November through December 2025**

	<u>Nov - Dec 25</u>	<u>Sep - Oct 25</u>
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Checking/Savings		
TOMPKINS MUN SAV (CDEA 4-HOUR)	15,118.77	8,311.69
Total Checking/Savings	<u>15,118.77</u>	<u>8,311.69</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>15,118.77</u>	<u>8,311.69</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>15,118.77</u>	<u>8,311.69</u>
INCOME		57,073.78
EXPENSE		-1,766.70
OCTOBER CC SALES		1,500.00
CONTRACT PAYMENTS		<u>-50,000.00</u>
ENDING BALANCE		15,118.77

**MONROE COUNTY SWCD
NYS CDEA ONLINE 4-HR TRAINING
P&L REPORT - NO CONTRACT PYMTS
November through December 2025**

	<u>Nov - Dec 25</u>
Income	
NYS CDEA ONLINE 4-HOUR INCOME	57,073.78
Total Income	<u>57,073.78</u>
Gross Profit	<u>57,073.78</u>
Expense	
NYS CDEA ONLINE 4-HOUR EXPENSE	1,766.70
Total Expense	<u>1,766.70</u>
Net Income	<u><u>55,307.08</u></u>

BREAKDOWN:

INCOME

REGISTRATIONS - 228	57,000.00
INTEREST	73.78
TOTAL INCOME	<u>57,073.78</u>

EXPENSE

SQUARE FEES	1,766.70
CONTRACT PAYMENTS	50,000.00

**MONROE COUNTY SWCD
 NYSCDEA ONLINE 4-HOUR TRAINING
 CONTRACT PAYMENTS
 November through December 2025**

	<u>Type</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Memo</u>	<u>Amount</u>
4HR ADMIN CONTRACT-NYSCDEA DUE TO NYSCDEA					
	Bill	11/18/2025	NYSCDEA, INC. {VENDOR}	CONTRACT PYMT	-25,000.00
	Bill	12/22/2025	NYSCDEA, INC. {VENDOR}	CONTRACT PYMT	-25,000.00
Total DUE TO NYSCDEA					<u>-50,000.00</u>
Total 4HR ADMIN CONTRACT-NYSCDEA					<u>-50,000.00</u>
TOTAL					<u><u>-50,000.00</u></u>

**MONROE COUNTY SWCD
NYS CDEA ONLINE 4-HOUR TRAINING
P&L COMPARISON REPORT
November through December 2025**

	Nov - Dec 25	Nov - Dec 24	\$ Change	% Change
Income				
NYS CDEA ONLINE 4-HOUR INCOME	57,073.78	46,648.33	10,425.45	22.35%
Total Income	57,073.78	46,648.33	10,425.45	22.35%
Gross Profit	57,073.78	46,648.33	10,425.45	22.35%
Expense				
NYS CDEA ONLINE 4-HOUR EXPENSE	1,766.70	2,411.85	-645.15	-26.75%
Total Expense	1,766.70	2,411.85	-645.15	-26.75%
Net Income	55,307.08	44,236.48	11,070.60	25.03%

NYS Erosion and Sediment Control Certificate Program
January 2026 Report to CDEA Board

- Currently there are:
 - 74 Active Certificate Holders
 - 5 Suspended Certificate (2024 & 2025)
 - 16 Terminated Certificates (suspension longer than 2 years and people not renewing due to retirement or new jobs)
 - 6 applicants approved to sit for exam

- 2026 Renewals were sent out mid-November for renewal by January 1st. At this time 66 individuals have renewed and 8 have not. Certificate suspension letters will be going out by January 15th.

- 2025 Certificate holder Professional Development Hours (PDH) Audits will be conducted later in the month. Every year 5% of certificate holders are audited to assure compliance with the Professional Development Policy.

Financial report for the program.

NYSCDEA NYSE&SCCP Account	\$24,361.53 – Nov. 2025 no money has been directed here recently
Schuyler SWCD Account	\$16,750.00
Total	\$41,111.53

Please feel free to contact me if there are any questions regarding this program.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Verrigni, CPESC, CPSWQ



**Soil and Water Conservation Districts
in New York State**

Protecting Today, Preserving Tomorrow

**Yates County Soil & Water
Conservation District**

417 Liberty Street
Penn Yan, New York 14527
(315) 536-5188
tom@ycsoilwater.com

January 12, 2026

JANUARY 2026 CDEA REPORT

CONSERVATION SKILLS WORKSHOP

Financial review of 2025

- Total Income = \$9,900
- Total Expenses = \$16,309.09
- Total amount needed from 4 Hour money = \$6,401.09 (initial request was \$14,000)

The budget for 2026 will go unchanged. Expenses for instructor fees has tripled due to increased need to hire private instructors for many classes. Attendees would have their overnight expenses reimbursed at a rate of \$75/night flat fee with proof of hotel stay. Funding request from NRCS stays at \$1500. Traditional request from NYACD has been zeroed out.

Tom Eskildsen & Jason Cuddeback (with assistance from Jessica Armstrong) will develop an RFP for hotels during the winter months. Auburn has two hotels with meeting room spaces available. This will include room blocks during the event, classroom availability, and audio/visual equipment for the meeting rooms.

Sumbitted

Tom Eskildsen
Senior District Technician

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

NYSCDEA Meeting
January 2026

By-Laws

The Northeast Association of Conservation District Employees (NACDE) has updated their By-Laws to include a Member at Large position. The NACDE felt it was necessary to include this position to allow an individual that's interested and engaging with NACDE activities to be on the board. This NACDE voted Doug Beri, District Manager of the Indiana Conservation District to serve in the capacity of Member at Large.

Northeast Conference

Delaware Association of Conservation District (DACD) will be hosting the northeast conference at **Chase Center on the Riverfront in Wilmington, DE** from **August 24 – 27, 2026**. The theme for this year conference is **The Adaptive District in a Changing Landscape**. The focus will be on sharing real-life success stories and practical, implementable solutions to the most pressing challenges facing conservation districts today, from securing new revenue and implementing cutting-edge technology to adapting to complex land-use changes like solar development. In addition to our core tracks, we are pleased to offer a dedicated Leadership Training Breakout Track designed specifically for managers. This specialized session will equip current and future leaders with essential skills to develop an effective leadership style that drives overall district performance. Join us to gain the actionable knowledge and connections needed to future-proof your district.

The DACD invites conservation district leaders, partners, and technical experts to submit presentation proposal for the northeast regional conference. they are seeking proposals that detail implementation, measurable results and actionable strategies that can be immediately applied by peers. Area topics included:

- Funding the Mission: Expanding Revenue & Capacity
- Adapting to New Land Use; Emerging Conservation Issues in Developed Land Uses
- Smart Conservation: Innovative Tools & Technologies for Implementation
- Engaging the Community: Outreach, Education & Urban Growth
- Policy in Action: The District's Role in Legislative Change

If any district is interested in presenting, please visit dacdnet.org/2026nacde/ for view the guidelines and to submit a proposal.

Registration Stipend

I would like to point out that the NACDE will again offer a registration stipend which helps support district employees to attend the northeast region conference. This stipend will cover the registration and tour fees.

Scholarship

As a reminder, the Don Aron Scholarship Award which is offered to conservation employee and their immediate family who is participating in a resource conservation curriculum while enrolled in an accredited college or university. The eligibility consists of employed for one year by Conservation District, demonstrated integrity, ability a competence of work through training & experience and providing information substantiating enrollment at an accredited college or university. The individual applying could receive up to \$1,000 and applications are due March 15. Applications can be found at <https://www.ncdea.us/dascholarship>. If you have further questions regarding the Don Aron Scholarship, please contact the NCDEA Executive Director at timothy.riley@ncdea.org.

I continue to encourage every conservation district to support sending board & staff to attend the Northeast Region Conference. 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

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

Respectively Submitted,
Velynda Parker
Vice President/CDEA Representative

Frank Bratt Memorial Scholarship Report
January 21st, 2026

- 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.
Alex Marks	September 2025	345.00	Trees in all Seasons
Amber Gray	September 2025	495.00	Pond Management
Teresa Link	September 2025	135.00	ReLeaf Conference
Reya Mertz	September 2025	525.00	AutoCAD/Civ3D
Olivia Cunningham	December 2025	249.00	Trees in all Seasons
Ashley Leeman	December 2025	357.08	Stormwater Manager
Jacob Sullivan	December 2025	750.00	60 Hr. CDL Training

Total Pending Expense: \$5,100.08

- September 1st Round: Received four applications, however only three applications were reviewed for the Round totaling ~\$1,356.08, these applications left a balance of ~~\$143.92~~ in the budget. Therefore, all three scholarships can be fully funded.
- The fourth application was submitted on 10/22/2025 by Megan Myers, DM of Rensselaer County on behalf of Drew Hoag requesting \$500 for a 30-hour Pesticide Applicator training course. This application was lost in translation during my maternity leave shuffle; I would like to discuss potential to fund the application given that the mistake was on our end and not the applicants.

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
\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,356.08

Respectfully Submitted by,

Rebecca Campbell
Division I Representative

CDEA State Advisory Sub-Committee Report

Presented by: Jennifer Kelly

January 13, 2025

Summary: We'll be discussing the idea of assigning program leads that align with SWCC programs. A technician training sub-committee is working with SWCC staff to develop a Technician Training Level I curriculum.

Feedback from the CDEA about the desired outcome - Do you want this training to be a certification program or to develop a foundational training program for staff with no certification process?

Next Meeting:

The next CDEA SPAC sub-committee meeting is scheduled for January 27th and 2pm. I would like urge anyone who has a topic they wish to discuss in detail ahead of the SWCC SPAC meeting to please email me at jkelly@chenangoswcd.org so we can add it to the agenda.

We'll be talking about the idea of assigning program leads that align with SWCC program areas. I'm proposing a program lead for AgNPSPA&CP, CRF, AEM, State Aid, and District Operations. Each program lead will serve as the primary liaison with the corresponding SWCC program manager. Their role would be to work with district staff to understand the issues, concerns, and needs to implement and support new programs policies, procedures and guidelines.

Technician Training:

The Technician Training sub-committee, made up of District technicians and managers, SWCC AEAs, SWCC Program Managers, Tim Clark, and Bethany Bzduch, have met twice to plan a tiered training program for technicians. The group has identified core competency areas that new technicians must understand before progressing to design phase of various BMPs. These competencies will serve as prerequisites. Team members are working on developing course descriptions, determining course length and format, outlining homework requirements (if any), and deciding who will review the assignments.

Additionally, we met with Kristin White to explore using CDEA's Blackboard® subscription as a training method. Blackboard offers several benefits including; users can automatically receive a certificate of completion to track their progress, interactive questions can be incorporated with the training modules, and users can easily pause the program and resume at their convenience. One of the downsides of using Blackboard is the initial set-up and formatting of each module is time-consuming and difficult.

The team has developed a list of existing resources on the subjects and will determine if they match the needs of the training as we develop the description and curriculum.

Below is a list of courses under development:

1. Surveying – Levels and Lasers
2. Soils – (a focus on applied soil science)

3. Basic Farming
4. Basic Hydrology
5. Introduction to Mapping and GIS
6. Math Refresher
7. Communication Skills – (focus on communicating to the public)
8. Intro to Construction Materials

Our next technician training meeting is scheduled for February 25th, 2026. Feedback is welcome and encouraged!



Report for CDEA Meeting January 21-22, 2026

Submitted by: Leadership Institute 2026 (or 2027) Committee

Planning work for the next Leadership Institute (LI) is underway. The previous LI committee has recruited new members to plan the next event. The new committee consists of Jennifer Kelly (Chenango County SWCD), Tyler Knapp (SWCC), Danielle Singer (Tioga County SWCD), Teresa Link (Onondaga County SWCD) and Gideon Frisbee (SWCC) who are Alumni from the 2023 event.

One planning meeting (1/6/26) has been held so far with another scheduled for 1/20/26. Discussion was focused on timing and brainstorming for purpose, content, instructor ideas and delivery of program. There was also discussion about creating long-term value and impact of the program through on-going Alumni events and mentorship beyond the class. The committee is working on updating the program proposal for the approaching LI and will share highlights at the upcoming CDEA meeting.

The committee is also doing follow-up with the 4-Way partners to determine if holding the LI in 2026 is feasible or if we should wait for 2027. We want to ensure NRCS employees will be able to attend. This will be discussed at the CDEA meeting.

The committee is also looking for feedback about what managers, supervisors and attendees might be looking for in a leadership course and how we could possibly engage more staff in various job positions. We will solicit feedback from various groups and people in different roles to gain a holistic understanding. We welcome feedback at the CDEA meeting as well.

The first step in creating the budget will be finding out instructor costs and confirming Ranger School room and board costs. The committee has not determined a budget until the timing of the LI is confirmed and follow up on those items is completed.

From: Jennifer Kelly <jkelly@chenangoswcd.org>

Sent: Tuesday, December 16, 2025 9:02 AM

To: Caitlin Stewart <Caitlin@hamcoswcd.org>; Jessica Armstrong

<jessica.armstrong@oneidacountyswcd.org>; Alice Halloran

<ahalloran@essexcountyswcd.org>; Joann Burke (joann-burke@madcoswcd.com) <joann-burke@madcoswcd.com>; Rebecca Campbell <rcampbell@wcdswcd.onmicrosoft.com>; Jason

Cuddeback <jcuddeback@cayugaswcd.org>; Carla Yaw <carlawaw@lewiscounty.ny.gov>; Lydia

Brinkley <lbrinkley@u-s-c.org>; Maren Stoddard <marens@warrenswcd.org>; Nick Klemczak

<nickklemczakswcd@yahoo.com>; Olivia Cunningham <ocunningham@nassauswcd.org>

Cc: Katy Kemmeren <kkemmeren@chenangoswcd.org>

Subject: Improving coordination with the CDEA Treasurer

CDEA Board Members,

I hope you are all doing well. I'm writing this morning to address a concern that has come up several times regarding coordination with the CDEA Board's Treasurer. This past year, there have been several instances where programs or events were released without notifying the Treasurer or without honoring timing requests she has previously communicated. This has resulted in avoidable time management challenges that make it difficult to stay ahead of the workload.

As our Association becomes more active and volunteer capacity continues to be stretched, this naturally places additional pressure on key roles. Truly, I appreciate the extra responsibilities each of you have taken on, however, the Treasurer's position require closer coordination in order to function effectively.

I know there have already been discussions around how to ease workload issues associated with the Treasurer's role. One practical step that would be very helpful is ensuring that the Treasurer is included early in planning stages and that her timing requests are taken into account when scheduling payments, registrations, or other and administrative tasks. Small adjustments and collaboration can make a significant difference in helping her plan ahead, manage the flow of work and avoid burnout.

I am reaching out as the CDEA Treasurer's manager and hope this matter can receive appropriate consideration. Please feel free to call me if you'd like to discuss it further.

Happy Holidays,

Jennifer

Jennifer Kelly

District Manager

Chenango County Soil & Water Conservation District