



**Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District**  
 103 County View Drive, PO Box 166  
 Lake Pleasant NY 12108 518-548-3991  
 hcswcd@frontiernet.net [www.hcswcd.com](http://www.hcswcd.com)  
 Find us on Facebook and You Tube

*Working to manage and promote the wise use of natural resources in Hamilton County since 1965.*

## **Board of Directors Meeting Minutes** **May 2, 2023**

Hamilton County SWCD office, 103 County View Drive, Lake Pleasant NY 12108  
 and on Zoom

**Board of Directors**

Victoria Buyce, Chairperson  
 John M. Stortecky, Vice Chairperson  
 Betsy Bain, Town Supervisor

**Absent**

Chris D. Rhodes, Town Supervisor  
 Shawn Hansen, Member-at-Large  
 Leonard Croote, District Technician

**Partners**

Ryan Cunningham, Associate Environmental Analyst,  
 New York State Soil and Water Conservation  
 Committee  
 Tom Bielli, District Conservationist,  
 Natural Resources and Conservation  
 Service

**District Staff**

Caitlin Stewart, District Manager  
 Marjorie Remias, Clerk and Secretary to  
 the Board  
 Katie WhitKovits, District Technician

- I. Call to order with introductions** – Buyce called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance** conducted.
- III. Roll Call** conducted.
- IV. Reading and approval of the April 4, 2023, meeting minutes** – The minutes were provided in advance of the meeting.

Approving April 4th minutes was tabled as there was not a quorum present that attended that meeting.

**V. Treasurer’s Report** – Remias reviewed the Treasurer’s Report.

|                      |                |                     |
|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <b>Balance</b>       | <b>3/31/23</b> | <b>\$487,718.47</b> |
| <b>Receipts</b>      |                | <b>73,891.44</b>    |
| <b>Disbursements</b> |                | <b>51,682.34</b>    |
| <b>Balance</b>       | <b>4/30/23</b> | <b>\$509,927.57</b> |

- **A motion was made by Stortecky, seconded by Bain to accept the Treasurer’s report, and approve the bills to be paid. All voted in favor, motion carried.**

**VI. Water Testing Program** – Stewart reported that the Mohawk Valley Water Authority prices increased.

- **A motion made by Bain, seconded by Stortecky to set the 2023 Water Testing Program prices as follows: Total Coliform / E. coli – qualitative - \$30, Total Coliform / E. coli – Quantitative - \$45, Lead and Copper - \$45, Water Chemistry Panel (alkalinity, total hardness, calcium hardness, fluoride, chloride, conductivity, sulfate, and turbidity) - \$105. All in favor, motion carried.**

**VII. District Activities**

- a. Draft watershed health and farming justice legislation update** – Stewart reported that she, Stortecky, and WhitKovits attended the Hamilton County Board of Supervisors meeting April 6, and the resolution opposing District Law amendments passed unanimously by those supervisors in attendance. Stortecky also attended and encouraged the supervisors to oppose the proposed district law changes. WhitKovits gave an update to the supervisors for the programs she is heading.
- b. Adirondack Tree and Shrub Sale** – Stewart reported that Croote, WhitKovits, and Remias have packed trees and will be assembling orders. Order Pickup is Saturday, May 6, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. at the Blue Mountain Fire Station (3454 NYS Route 28) and at the Brown Shed across from the Lake Pleasant Fire Hall (South Shore Rd).
- c. Lake Monitoring Program** – Stewart reported that she and Croote met with Adirondack Watershed Institute’s Laboratory Director Elizabeth Yerger and Brendan Wiltse to discuss 2023 sampling analytes, including bottom water samples for lakes with confirmed harmful algal blooms. AWI will draw up the contract for laboratory services that will be reviewed at next month’s board meeting. Stewart completed and submitted the Quality Assurance Project Plan to DEC for review.
- d. Agricultural Environmental Management** – WhitKovits reported that not much has happened since the last meeting.
- f. Trail Stewardship Program** – Stewart reported that she and Croote held an interview for the only applicant that applied, and hired Jacob Vander Pyl who begins May 22. Bill Farber assisted with coordinating trail training with the Adirondack Mountain Club. Stewart provided salary information to Rhodes for a DEC funding opportunity. Stewart has not heard

from any towns about projects for the seasonal technician.

**g. Watershed partnership update**

1. **FOLLOWPA** – Stewart attended the full board meeting on April 12. There has been change in personnel that we send reports to so there may be delays in getting our closeout approved.
2. **Upper Hudson River Watershed Coalition** – Stewart hosted the April 13 meeting where the roadside erosion grant was reviewed.
3. **St. Lawrence River Watershed Project** – Nothing new to report.
4. **Mohawk River Watershed Coalition** – Stewart hosted the April 17 meeting. DEC is nearing the signing of the Action Agenda proposal for 1.5 million dollars.
5. **Black River Watershed** – Stewart and WhitKovits presented stormwater pollution prevention with pervious pavers at Arrowhead Park, Inlet, during the Black River Adaptive Modeling Field Trip. They also reviewed the Lake Monitoring Program. Information will be provided to the consultants on tributaries and bathymetry.

**h. Hamilton County Envirothon** – WhitKovits reported that we have received \$900 in donations for the event, and we will be providing lunch for everyone for the first time. There are eight teams signed up to participate, although three teams chose not to compete as it is their first time attending. Brian Wells, County Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, is scheduled to give the opening remarks. There will be five stations where the students will be tested on their knowledge of soil, forestry, wildlife, aquatics, and climate change. Board members Stortecky and Buyce as well as Joyce and Tom Whitcomb have volunteered to assist with the event.

**i. Arbor Day Poetry Contest** – Stewart reported 22 senior citizens entered Japanese Lantern poems with the theme “Hope Grows Through Trees.” Kathy Stewart will judge the poems, and the Arbor Day Awards Gala will be held at the Long Lake Public Library.

**j. Conservation Education Program**

1. Croote, WhitKovits and Stewart will present streambank stabilization through the lens of Warner Brook to Lake Pleasant Central School’s 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> graders. After learning about the project in the classroom, students will plant trees in the field. This presentation is in partnership with the Lake Pleasant Sacandaga Association, who sponsored half of the expense for tree planting bars.

**k. Other**

1. **Logo** – We had contracted with Adirondack Website Design to develop a new logo. Stewart presented the proposed new logo. Discussion ensued. It was decided not to use the new logo as the goal was simplification of colors and design and the proposed logo did not fit these criteria. As there was a set fee involved it was decided that we would pay the fee although we will not be using the logo.
  2. **Water Quality Coordinating Committee** – WhitKovits reported that a Water Quality Coordinating Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday June 5, at the Lake Pleasant Library from 9am to 12pm. There will be two speakers and hopefully there will be some meaningful discussions on what needs are and how to address them. Municipalities and lake associations have been invited. Anyone concerned with water quality is welcome and encouraged to attend. There are flyers posted throughout the county publicizing the event.
  3. **Invasive Species Awareness Week** – Is the week of June 5th. Stewart and WhitKovits have developed a mosaic contest to commemorate this week. The contest is open to all ages and any medium can be used. They are hoping it will be a fun way to get kids and adults involved and raise awareness of invasive species.
  4. WhitKovits and Stewart attended the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program’s spring meeting in Keene Valley. WhitKovits spoke with Terrestrial Coordinator Becca Bernacki about coordinating a knotweed stem injector program for Hamilton County landowners.
  5. Lenny was unable to attend today because he is meeting with a landowner this morning. He's getting calls for hydroseeding, landowner assistance for sediment erosion control, and invasive plant inquiries are coming in. Lenny hopes to get a couple of stream projects on the ground this summer. With our FLOWPA funds, he's working with the Town of Inlet, on a proposal to put in a rain garden to help soak up some more of their stormwater. We could hopefully take this county wide with Inlet being our pilot project for this green infrastructure.
- IX. Staff reports** – Stewart disseminated and emailed copies of the staff reports. They are also appended to the minutes.
- X. District Conservationist’s report** – Tom Bielli reported that they have funded all the EQIP applications in Hamilton County. One being a high tunnel and pasture and the other a high tunnel. On the personnel side there will be a new Soil Conservationist starting in Ballston Spa at the end of July. There are also vacancy announcements for two more soil conservationists. Bielli also explained the Local Working Group and asked for interest or possible leadership. There will also be a second round of funding for the conservation stewardship program. Bielli also reviewed the Inflation Reduction Act.

- XI. New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee report** – appended to minutes.
- XII. Correspondence** – Thank you notes from NYACD for attending legislative day.
- XIII. Next meeting date** – Tuesday June 6, 2023, 9:30 AM, Hamilton County SWCD office, 103 County View Drive, Lake Pleasant NY 12108 and virtually on Zoom.
- XIV. Adjournment** – A motion was made by Stortecky, seconded by Bain to adjourn the meeting at 10:25 a.m. All in favor, carried.

Respectfully Submitted



Marjorie Remias  
Secretary to the Board/Treasurer

**District Manager's report  
Submitted by Caitlin Stewart**

- **Administration**
  - Board of Directors meeting preparation
  - Staff meetings
  - Reviewed budget with Marj
  - Board of Supervisors meeting preparation
  - Assisted with computer maintenance and updates
  - Updated District Law resolution for Board of Supervisors
  - Completed Q1 Annual Plan of Work
- **Technical Assistance**
  - Assisted the public with other conservation inquiries
  - Lake Association requested 2022 monitoring data
- **Watershed Coalitions**
  - FLOWPA –finalized and mailed close-out materials
  - Mohawk River Watershed Coalition – meeting with DEC and Fulton County SWCD to review Action Agenda proposal
  - Black River Watershed – Provided information for Black River Adaptive Modeling, attended conference planning meeting.
- **Hemlock Woolly Adelgid** survey with Katie
- **Conservation Field Day** – submitted press release that was published in the Hamilton County Express and Adirondack Almanack

- **Adirondack Tree and Shrub Sale** – Facebook advertisement, updated info for PayPal
- **Hamilton County Envirothon** – assisted Katie with inviting legislators to the event and with sponsorship requests.
- **Arbor Day Poetry Contest** – updated materials for the 15<sup>th</sup> annual event, invited senior citizens to participate
- **Conservation Education**
  - Assisted with coordinating a stream table demo with Herkimer County SWCD for Maintain the Chain
  - Working with Katie to coordinate a lake and stream monitoring place-based learning day for Lake Pleasant Central School in partnership with Lake Pleasant Sacandaga Association
- **Hamilton County Trail Stewardship Program** – Updated vacancy announcement, Facebook and website promotion, advertisement for Hamilton County Express, promoted vacancy at 2 job fairs.
- **Septic System Replacement Fund**
  - Replied to inquiries, updated materials for Round 3
- **New York State Conservation District Employees Association**
  - Save the Date for May meeting, updated contact list
  - Water Quality Symposium – organized and hosted the Water Quality Symposium. Over 340 people from across the Northeast attended the 4-day training event in Syracuse. 34 classes were held across tracks including agriculture, non-agriculture, forestry, clerk / admin, and education to enhance knowledge and facilitate partnership discussions.
  - Gave reports during Annual Meeting
  - Soil and Water Conservation Committee’s March meeting
  - New York Association of Conservation District’s March meeting
- **Lake Monitoring Program**
  - Program review with AWI
  - Reviewed a draft manuscript for Dr. Paul Bukaveckas, Virginia Commonwealth University, describing changes in temperature and dissolved oxygen of Hamilton County lakes.
  - Finalized data to Raquette Lake Preservation Foundation, assisting with updating their monitoring program
  - Provided Lake Adirondack data to Adirondack Lake Advisory Weed Board
- **Water Quality Coordinating Committee** – assisted Katie with updating contact list and agenda
- **Events, Meetings, Trainings, and Partnerships**
  - Assisted Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program with their new Tier 1 species list
  - Updated guidance for ag practices and stormwater permit

**District Technician's report  
Submitted by Lenny Croote**

Project Permits

Tree and Shrub

- Finalized tree & shrub orders
- Picked plants up
- Packed plants

Straw Delivery

Trail Maintenance

Culvert sizing and pricing for county

Site inspection for stormwater BMPs

**District Technician's report  
Submitted by Katie WhitKovits**

- Lake Monitoring
  - Meetings and prep
- Envirothon – Wednesday May 3<sup>rd</sup> – Tomorrow!
  - 8 teams are signed up! Indian Lake, Long Lake & Wells are participating
  - All set and ready to go, we will have a hotdog lunch provided by Campstore!
- Mobile Interactive Display – ClearTouch
  - Placed the order on 4/4/23
  - Shipping date estimated 5/25/23 due to manufacturing
- Agricultural Environmental Management
  - Not much new – hope to start making site visits in May!
- WQCC meeting is scheduled for Monday June 5<sup>th</sup> at the Lake Pleasant Library 9am-12pm
  - Flyers sent out via email to Lake Associations, CCE, APIPP, LCLGRRPB, DEC, AWI, NRCS, SWCC, Municipalities and more
  - Round Goby & Well Water Program speakers
  - 12 currently signed up to attend, there will also be virtual option
- NYSISAW – New York State Invasive Species Awareness Week June 5<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>
  - Mosaic Contest- Open to all ages throughout Hamilton County
    - Any medium can be used, see flyer!
- Japanese Knotweed
  - Working on a “rent a gun” program, where landowners can rent/borrow injector guns to treat their own knotweed

- It's no longer a priority species with APIPP, so we'd like to put the responsibility in the landowners hands with our guidance
- Attended a Board of Supervisors meeting with Caitlin and John
  - Brian Wells will attend opening remarks of our Envirothon
- Presented "Life Box" craft activity to students from town of Wells
- Attended APIPP partner meeting with Caitlin
- Attended planning meetings for Black River Watershed Conference – June 14<sup>th</sup>
- Trucked straw and handed it out to Indian Lake straw bale gardeners with Lenny
- Packed trees with Lenny
- Facebook posts about Arbor Day Poetry Contest, WQCC meeting, Life Box presentation with Wells students, Vernal Pools, Envirothon, Invasive Species Mosaic Contest, Earth Day, Black River Watershed Conference, Straw delivery & LOTS more from Caitlin!
  - Continuing to share on Instagram as well
  - Hamiltoncountynyswcd – Follow if you're on Instagram!

**New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee  
Region 4 Report – May 2023**

**Submitted by: Ryan Cunningham – Region 4 Associate Environmental Analyst**

**NYS SWCC News**

**SFY 2023-2024 Environmental Protection Fund:** The Enacted SFY 2023-2024 Budget is now available at [www.budget.ny.gov](http://www.budget.ny.gov). In total, this year's approved EPF budget is yet another very strong showing of support for conservation programs. Overall appropriations for the FY 2023-2024 EPF were approved at level funding of \$400 million. Proposals of interest to SWCC/SWCDs in this budget include the following:

- \$19.5 million for Agricultural Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Projects, including \$2 million for Cornell IPM, \$500,000 for the CCE of Suffolk County and \$250,000 for Cornell's Pesticide Management Program
- \$16 million for Soil and Water Conservation Districts (**\$1.5 million increase over last year's levels**)
- \$15.25 million for the Climate Resilient Farms Program, including \$500,000 to support Carbon Sequestration Projects and \$500,000 for the Cornell Soil Health Program
- \$22 million for Water Quality Improvement Program
- \$22.5 million for Oceans and Great Lakes (EBM Program funding)
- \$14.275 million for Waterfront Revitalization Program
- \$21 million for Farmland Protection

**Climate Resilient Farming Program Round 7:** \$15 million is available to support projects. The RFP and associated documents are now available on SharePoint,



<https://nysemail.sharepoint.com/sites/Agriculture/SWCC>. All questions related to the RFP and the required attachments shall be addressed to Jennifer Clifford [jennifer.clifford@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:jennifer.clifford@agriculture.ny.gov) by **June 5th, 2023**. Applications for funding must be submitted through the NYS SWCC SharePoint website by **4:30 PM August 7, 2023**.

**Agricultural Non-Point Source Program Round 29:** \$13.5 million is available to support agricultural water quality conservation projects across the State. The RFP and associated documents are now available on SharePoint, <https://nysemail.sharepoint.com/sites/Agriculture/SWCC>. All questions related to the RFP and the required attachments shall be addressed to Bethany Bzduch [bethany.bzduch@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:bethany.bzduch@agriculture.ny.gov) by **May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023**. Applications for funding must be submitted through the NYS SWCC SharePoint website by **4:30 PM June 26, 2023**.

**May SWCC Meeting:** The next SWCC meeting is scheduled to convene at **10:00 AM on May 16<sup>th</sup>**. Further details and an agenda for this meeting will be sent out shortly. Reminder – participation at a SWCC meeting is eligible toward PM1, Part C of State Aid to Districts.

**Spring Managers Meetings – Save the Date:** The following dates have been set for regional manager’s meetings this June! Meetings will be from 10am-2pm. Please participate in whichever date and location is most convenient but please RSVP to the AEA for that meeting. As always Directors are invited to attend as this meeting can count towards Performance Measures.

- **June 12<sup>th</sup>** - Region 3, Scott Fickbohm ([scott.fickbohm@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:scott.fickbohm@agriculture.ny.gov)), Eastern NY – Montgomery County Emergency Services, 200 Clark Dr, Fultonville, NY
- **June 14<sup>th</sup>** – Region 2, PJ Emerick ([patrickj.emerick@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:patrickj.emerick@agriculture.ny.gov)), Central NY – Cortland SWCD office, 100 Grange Pl., #205, Cortland, NY
- **June 15<sup>th</sup>** – Region 5, Ben Luskin ([ben.luskin@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:ben.luskin@agriculture.ny.gov)), Southeast NY – Dutchess SWCD office, 2715 Route 44, Suite 3, Millbrook, NY
- **June 16<sup>th</sup>** – Region 1, Victor DiGiacomo ([victor.digiacomo@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:victor.digiacomo@agriculture.ny.gov)), Western NY – Genesee County Office Building #2, 3837 West Main Street Road, Batavia, NY 14020
- **June 21<sup>st</sup>** - Region 4, Ryan Cunningham ([ryan.cunningham@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:ryan.cunningham@agriculture.ny.gov)), Northern NY – Adirondack Park Agency office, 1133 NYS Route 86, Ray Brook, NY

**AEM Leopold Conservation Award 2023:** NYSAGM is partnering once again with the Sand County Foundation to present the AEM Leopold Conservation Award to recognize landowners who inspire others with their dedication to ethical land, water, and wildlife habitat management on agricultural land. The deadline for applications is **May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023**. More information for Districts can be found on the SWCC SharePoint site (<https://nysemail.sharepoint.com/sites/Agriculture/SWCC/SitePages/Home.aspx>, then Resources for Districts > Agricultural Environmental Management > AEM Leopold Conservation Award > 2023) and for the public, here ([www.sandcountyfoundation.org/uploads/NY-CFN-23.pdf](http://www.sandcountyfoundation.org/uploads/NY-CFN-23.pdf)).

## **Other Events**

**2023 Practical Pasture Management Training:** This opportunity is advertised as a unique grazing training that will offer hands-on learning and strategies to help peers help farmers implement resilient grazing systems. Trainers will be addressing a multitude of pasture management topics in a light-hearted and hands-on manner. Hosted by the Bishopp Family Farm, Oneida and Madison SWCDs, convening on **May 18<sup>th</sup>, 10am to 3pm**, at 2809 Rt. 12-B, Deansboro, NY. To register for this training, email Troy Bishopp at [troy-bishopp@verizon.net](mailto:troy-bishopp@verizon.net) or contact Madison County SWCD at (315) 824-9849.

**2023 Conservation Leadership Conference - Save the Date:** NYSCDEA has announced that The 2023 Conservation Leadership Conference will commence from **July 18<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>**, at The Ranger School of the College of Environmental Science and Forestry located in Wanakena, New York. The program is open to all board members and staff of the sponsoring 4-way partnership and is geared towards: new managers or leaders, those with anticipated leadership responsibilities and those simply interested in personal development. Please save the date, more information will be available shortly.

**2023 NACD Northeast Regional Conference - Save the Date:** This year the conference will be held in Portland, ME at the Portland Sheraton at Sable Oaks on **September 17-20, 2023**. Further details will be available shortly.

**The Riparian Opportunity Assessment Tool** webinar took place last month and the recording is available at: [Webinar: Using the Riparian Opportunity Assessment Tool - YouTube](#) The link to the NY Natural Heritage Program Riparian Opportunity Assessment tool is <https://www.nynhp.org/projects/statewide-riparian-assessment/> For questions and comments about using the tools in project and resiliency planning, or to participate in the needs assessment for updating the tool, please reach out to Emily Fell at [Emily.fell@dec.ny.gov](mailto:Emily.fell@dec.ny.gov) or Kristen Hychka at [kch235@cornell.edu](mailto:kch235@cornell.edu)

### **Other Funding**

**Federal Funding Available for Urban and Community Forestry:** The USDA Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry Program is a technical, financial, and educational assistance program assists State Forestry agencies and partner organizations in addressing and applying nature-based solutions to chronic and emergent economic, social, and environmental challenges in communities. **Approximately \$1 Billion** is expected to be awarded under this program nationally. All proposals must be received by **June 1, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. EDT**. For more information and to apply, visit: <https://iraucfgrants.urbanandcommunityforests.org/>