



Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District
 103 County View Drive, PO Box 166
 Lake Pleasant NY 12108
 518-548-3991
www.hamcoswcd.org

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

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes November 8, 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
 Chris D. Rhodes, Town Supervisor

District Staff

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

Absent

Betsy Bain, Town Supervisor
 Shawn Hansen, Member-at-Large
 Leonard Croote, District Technician
 Katie WhitKovits, District Technician
 Ryan Cunningham, Associate Environmental Analyst, New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee
 Tom Bielli, District Conservationist, Natural Resources and Conservation Service

- I. **Call to order** – Buyce called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.
- II. **Pledge of Allegiance**
- III. **Roll Call** conducted.
- IV. **Reading and approval of the October 17, 2023, meeting minutes** – The minutes were provided in advance of the meeting.
 - **A motion was made by J.M. Stortecky, seconded by Buyce to approve the October 17, 2023, meeting minutes. All in favor, motion carried.**
- V. **Treasurer’s Report** – Remias reviewed the Treasurer’s Report and distributed October expenses for Board review and approval for payment.

Balance	9/30/23	\$439,567.39
Receipts		19,536.11
Disbursements		101,310.89
Balance	10/31/23	\$357,792.61

- **A motion was made by J.M. Stortecky, seconded by Buyce to accept the Treasurer’s Report and approve the bills to be paid. All in favor, motion carried.**

VI. Executive Session to discuss website

- **A motion was made by J.M. Stortecky, seconded by Buyce to enter Executive Session to discuss the website at 9:32 a.m. All in favor, motion carried.**
- **A motion was made by J.M. Stortecky, seconded by Buyce to exit the Executive Session at 9:51 a.m. All in favor, motion carried.**

No Action taken

VII. Review and adopt the 2024 budget – Stewart provided the 2024 proposed budget in advance of the meeting and reviewed it line by line. Discussion ensued.

- **A motion was made by J.M. Stortecky, seconded by Rhodes to adopt the 2024 Proposed Budget. All voted in favor, motion carried.**

Board Member Rhodes left at 10:15a.m.

VIII. District Activities

- a. **NYACD Annual Meeting Review** – J.M. Stortecky reported that he thought the meeting and training were very well put together. He believes everyone is trying to do the right things for conservation regardless of political affiliations. J.M. Stortecky was nominated and elected as the new Division Director for Division V which encompasses Hamilton, Franklin, Clinton Essex and Warren Counties. He will be travelling to these counties to meet with Board Directors and be acting as a liaison and is honored to serve in this position. Hamilton County received an award for District in News for our annual Poetry Contest.
- b. **Gilmantown Road Bank Stabilization Project** – Stewart reported that the project is complete for 2023, and additional hydroseeding may occur in 2024. Lenny extends his thanks to the Hamilton County DPW for their partnership in this project.
- c. **July storm update** – Stewart reported that Croote worked to extend permit authorization and hopes to complete essential projects before winter.
- d. **Lake Monitoring Program** – Stewart reported that Adirondack Watershed Institute is completing lake sample analysis. Croote diligently worked since March to obtain required signatures from DEC for the Data Usability Assessment Report. Dr. Paul Bukaveckas of the University of Virginia used the District's lake monitoring data for research, and his paper, *The effects of climate change and variability on thermal regime and dissolved oxygen resources of oligotrophic lakes in the Adirondack Mountain region*, was recently published in the *Springer*

Nature journal. Stewart showed the Board a video WhitKovits put together for them of the October Lake Monitoring.

- e. **Trail Stewardship Program** – Stewart reported that she and Rhodes met with Department of Environmental Conservation staff to discuss the 2024 trail stewardship program. The District will not be signing a contract with The Department of Environmental Conservation for 2024.
 - f. **Sediment and Erosion Control Program** – Hydroseeding for the year is complete and the hydroseeder has been winterized.
 - g. **Agricultural Environmental Management** – Whitkovits submitted Round 18 Action Plan, and it was approved by the State Committee.
 - h. **Invasive Species Program** – Croote reported that he and WhitKovits treated Japanese knotweed with herbicide. Retreatment sites were on private and public land.
 - i. **Conservation Education Program** – WhitKovits and Stewart hosted a storytime and craft for the book *Stellaluna* at the Lake Pleasant Public Library for 15 kids and guardians. WhitKovits and Remias ranked the Conservation Field Day essay and poster contest entries. WhitKovits and Stewart presented Social Media and Websites at the CDEA Administrative Conference on November 6th to 20 District staff.
 - j. **Watershed partnership update** – Work continues.
 - k. **Directors' comments** – Director J.M. Stortecky reported that he met NRCS employee Dennis DeWeese at the NYACD annual meeting and showed him pictures of one of the high tunnels NRCS District Conservationist Tom Bielli facilitated in Hamilton County. J.M. Stortecky sees this as one of our successes that other Districts may want to pursue.
- IX. Staff reports** – Stewart disseminated and emailed copies of the staff reports. They are also appended to the minutes.
- X. District Conservationist's report** – Stewart reported that Bielli submitted the following: I won't be able to make it to your BOD meeting today. I'm meeting with Jim in Warren County this morning. I'll try to dial in at some point if I'm able. If I'm not able to break away, can you let the board know that we are offering EWP funding to the Town of Long Lake for the July storm to clean the debris out of Shaw Brook? Paula Bagley mentioned that Delaware County SWCD has assisted local municipalities there with EWP following previous storms. Just wondering if the Hamilton SWCD would be willing to entertain the idea of doing the same in this case.

- XI. New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee report** – appended to the minutes.
- XII. Correspondence** –
- a) Whitkovits received thank you notes from students and teachers for Conservation Field Day.
- XIII. Next meeting date** – Tuesday December 5, 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 J.M. Stortecky, seconded by Buyce to adjourn the meeting at 10:40 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
 - Preliminary 2024 budget
 - Assisted Tim Ellifritz with computer maintenance and updates
 - Met with contractor to tour the Adirondack Ecotrail and discuss recommendations on ADA compliance and green infrastructure
 - Submitted 2024 APOW and Part B request to SWCC
 - Assisted Katie with AEM Round 18
 - Elbow Creek grant
 - Disseminated solar and wind projects on prime farmland information to Districts and Directors for the NYACD annual meeting resolution
 - Began work on presentation for the Board of Supervisors
 - Website updates
- **Technical Assistance**
 - APIPP review for DEC

- **Watershed Coalitions**
 - FLOWPA – completed 2023-23 workplan, assisted Herkimer County with their program.
 - Upper Hudson River Watershed Coalition – assisted with grant application for website.
 - St. Lawrence River Watershed Project – nothing new to report
 - Mohawk River Watershed Coalition – DEC is nearing signage of the Action Agenda proposal for 1.5 million dollars. Polled members for interest in applying to the DEC invasive species grant. Hosted September 18 and October 16 meetings and discussed applying to the DEC invasive species grant.
 - Black River Watershed – Nothing new to report.
- **Meetings**
 - Headwaters Steering Committee Meeting
 - 2023 North Country Stormwater Tradeshow
 - 2023 NYACD Annual Meeting
 - Trail agreement meeting with DEC and Chris Rhods
- **Invasive Species**
 - Met with Brian Green, APIPP, to review iMAP Invasives
- **Conservation Field Day**
 - Assisted Katie with the event.
 - Presented Wonderful Watersheds
- **Conservation Education**
 - Bat storytime and craft for Lake Pleasant Public Library – 15 attendees
- **Lake Monitoring Program**
 - Assisted with the September and October rotation
 - Delivered samples to AWI
- **Press Releases**
 - Conservation Field Day
- **Water Testing Program**
 - Promoted program
- **Septic System Replacement Fund**
 - Submitted disbursement request to county, answered inquiries
- **Caring Through Conservation Mini-Grant Program**
 - Budget review
 - Answered applicant inquiries
- **Hamilton County Trail Stewardship Program**
 - Responded to meeting request from DEC
- **New York State Conservation District Employees Association**
 - Water Quality Symposium – Chaired Education Track, submitted ed classes
 - Website and Social Media presentation at the Administrative Conference – 15 attendees
 - Special meeting
 - CDEA News
 - New York Association of Conservation Districts meeting
 - Soil and Water Conservation Committee meeting

- 4-Way Partnership MOA is signed
- Recruitment and Retention – job fair
- Corresponded with new Division VIII Representative

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

General

Project Permit extension

7/10/23 Storm event

- Project Permit extensions
- Meeting with FEMA

Hydroseeding

- DOT Storm Damage
- County and Towns Roads

Invasive Plant Management

Winterized equipment

NY-LCB+ADK AOP Survey

Office Work

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

- Japanese Knotweed
 - Working on finalizing the manual with input from the rest of our staff
 - Put together a running list of landowners – will work on obtaining signed agreements and homeowners’ insurance to have on file for the next treatment season
- Lake Monitoring
 - I will work on organizing the data into our master data spreadsheet as time permits
- Agricultural Environmental Management
 - With help from Caitlin and Ryan our AEA I have submitted our AEM Round 18 Action Plan for approval
- Attended the NYACD Conference with Caitlin and John
- Attended Environmental Education Foundation meeting
 - Submitted an application for \$50,000 towards the 2024 NY National Envirothon from the Alfred Z Solomon Charitable Trust
- Attended the 2024 Stormwater Tradeshow with Caitlin and Lenny
- Attended APIPP roundtable meeting
- Attended Adirondack aquatic organism passage (AOP) stakeholder meeting in Keene Valley

- Attended Black River Adaptive Modeling stream sampling training with Caitlin
- Assisted Caitlin with her Socials for Districts class at the Administrative Conference
- Graded contest entries for Conservation Field Day with Marj
- Lakefront plants and stream landowner site visit with Lenny in Piseco
- Presented at Lake Pleasant Library with Caitlin on bats for Halloween
- Our Facebook page is still on Lockdown 😞 Facebook is primarily run by AI – no specific reason was given, and the page was in no way used inappropriately. We are hoping they will unlock it and we will be able to post again in the future.
 - Will be creating a new District Facebook page that ties directly to the Instagram page

**New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee
Region 4 Report – November 2023
Submitted by: Ryan Cunningham – Region 4 Associate Environmental Analyst**

NYS SWCC News

New NYS Grants Management System Coming: The SWCC wanted to make SWCDs aware that NYS is anticipated to launch a new integrated grants management system during the Month of January 2024. We expect to have more details on the transition to this new system in the coming weeks. The new system will effectively be replacing the grants gateway, and vendors (SWCD) that have registered in the old system to apply for grants will be rolled over to the new system automatically. At this time, we don't expect any changes in the application process for CRF or AGNPS. As we learn more about the new system, we will be sure to relay the information to SWCDs ASAP.

November SWCC Meeting: The next SWCC meeting is scheduled to convene at 10:00 AM on November 21st. 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.

2023 Part C Performance Measures: The end of the year is rapidly approaching, and you should be checking to make sure that your District is fulfilling its Performance Measure goals. Please contact your Regional AEA with any specific questions.

Reminder of Open Funding Opportunities: A reminder that these funding programs are accepting rolling applications.

- **Source Water Buffer Program:** Funding is available to support the purchase of development rights on agricultural land to support the protection of active public drinking water sources. More information can be found here, <https://agriculture.ny.gov/soil-and-water/rfa-0181-source-water-buffer-program>
- **County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Planning Grants:** Counties are eligible for grants up to \$50,000 for developing a county agriculture and farmland protection plan. Any county that has established an agricultural and farmland protection board and has not had an agricultural and farmland protection plan

approved in the last 10 years is eligible for funding. For more information and to assess your Counties eligibility, please visit: <https://agriculture.ny.gov/land-and-water/rfa-0262-county-agriculture-and-farmland-protection-planning-grants>

Other Events

2023 Northeast Region Agribusiness & CCA Conference: Including the Basic Training track for those preparing to take the CCA exams as well as the Advanced Training track for current CCAs. An in-person track will commence at the Doubletree Hotel, East Syracuse, NY on November 28th-29th, 2023, followed by a virtual track will commence on December 12th-13th, 2023, when additional programming will be offered. More information and a registration link can be found here, <https://www.nysaba.com/educational-meetings>

NACD 2024 Annual Meeting: Registration for The National Association of Conservation Districts' (NACD) 78th Annual Meeting is now open! Hosted in partnership with the California Association of Conservation Districts, the 2024 Annual Meeting will take place in San Diego, California, from February 10th – 14th, 2024. To learn more and to register, please visit: <https://www.nacdnet.org/news-and-events/annual-meeting/>

Great Lakes Action Agenda Sub Basin Work Groups – Save the Dates: NYSDEC has announced that dates and locations have been set for the Great Lakes Action Agenda Sub Basin Work group meetings. These work groups are being held in each of New York's Great Lakes Sub Basins to offer opportunities for stakeholders to learn, connect, and coordinate to support implementation of New York's Great Lakes Action Agenda, which was recently updated in 2023. Please let DEC know if you would like to attend in person or join remotely by emailing greatlakes@dec.ny.gov.

- Southeast Lake Ontario: Wednesday, 11/29/23, 1:00 - 4:00pm – McCrobie Civic Center, 21 Lake St. Oswego, NY
- Northeast Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River: Thursday, 11/30/23, 1:00 - 4:00pm – Massena Town Hall, Massena, NY
- Lake Erie: Monday, 12/4/23, 1:00 - 4:00pm – Tiff Nature Preserve 1200 Fuhrmann Boulevard, Buffalo, NY
- Southwest Lake Ontario: Tuesday, 12/5/23, 1:00 - 4:00pm – Seymour Library, 161 East Ave. Brockport, NY

Other Funding

Urban Farms and Community Gardens Grant Program – NYSAGM invites eligible organizations to apply for funding through the Urban Farms and Community Gardens Grant Program. Funding is available to support the development and expansion of community gardens, school gardens, and urban farms across the state. The deadline for applications is December 1st, 2023 (4PM). The program website supplies the RFP, FAQ, and an informational webinar recording (<https://agriculture.ny.gov/rfp-0318-urban-farms-and-community-gardens-grant-program>).

NOAA Transformational Habitat Restoration and Coastal Resilience Grant: NOAA recently announced that they will provide nearly \$240M to prioritized high-value, high-impact habitat restoration projects that advance resilience. The competition closes November 17th. For more information and to apply, visit, <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/240-million-available-transformational-habitat-restoration-and-coastal-resilience>

DEC Urban and Community Forestry Funding Available: NYSDEC is accepting applications for a total of \$12.9 million for urban and community forestry projects through the Inflation Reduction Act funding opportunity. Applicants may apply for funding under two categories, Community Forest Management Plan Implementation (\$10 million) and Ash Tree Management (\$2.9 million). The maximum request is \$500,000 per application and no match is required. All projects must take place in disadvantaged communities as identified by any of three Federal and State tools listed in the Request for Applications (RFA). The deadline to submit applications is Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2024. DEC's Urban and Community Forestry program is holding a virtual information session on Wednesday, Nov. 15th, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. to provide more information. The RFA can be found here: https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5285.html#Inflation_Reduction. Register here: <https://meetny.webex.com/webappng/sites/meetny/meeting/register/e9d8613039a14fac9460fd9ea65c74ca?ticket=4832534b0000000684ded2171befed1f26676dae10067ec1d683ebd24a06e2f60e6ae4650bc148bc×tamp=1699014406078&RGID=raf052a25587eccb5b719641845d549d1>