



Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District

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

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes March 6, 2024

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

Board of Directors

Victoria Buyce, Chairperson
John M. Stortecky, Vice Chairperson
Chris D. Rhodes, Town Supervisor-Zoom

District Staff

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

Absent

Shawn Hansen, Member-at-Large
Betsy Bain, Town Supervisor
Katie WhitKovits, District Technician
Ryan Cunningham, Associate
Environmental Analyst, Soil and Water
Conservation Committee
Vacant, District Conservationist,
Natural Resources and
Conservation Service

- I. Call to order and roll call** – Buyce called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m. Roll call conducted.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance** conducted.
- III. Reading and approval of the February 7, 2024, 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 February 7, 2024, meeting minutes. All in favor, motion carried.**
- IV. Treasurer’s Report** – Remias reviewed the Treasurer’s Report and distributed the expenses for Board review and approval for payment. She reported that we received our State Aid Part A reimbursement and Stewart reported that our 2023 Performance Evaluation Report met all the Performance Measures qualifying us for State Aid Part C funding and our claim for payment has been submitted.

Balance	1/31/24	\$214,371.27
Receipts		119,282.54
Disbursements		98,079.80
Balance	2/29/24	\$235,574.01

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

V. Disposition of records

- **A motion was made by Buyce, seconded by J. M. Stortecky to approve the disposition of records for fiscal year 2015. All in favor, motion carried.**

VI. Hydroseeding for landowners – Stewart reported that hydroseeding for landowners is challenging for the team because we have expanded other programs and services to the point where we are overprescribed for time, and complications frequently arise with scheduling, working on private property, and payment. The team agrees that terminating hydroseeding for landowners is in our best interest.

- **A motion was made by Buyce, seconded by J. M. Stortecky to discontinue hydroseeding for Hamilton County landowners. All in favor, motion carried.**

VII. District activities

- a. 2023 budget review** – Stewart reviewed the final 2023 budget.
- b. FLOWPA and NYACD Legislative Day review** – Stewart reported that she and WhitKovits attended FLOWPA Legislative Day and educated 8 assemblymembers and senators about the importance of this water quality program and how it supports Hamilton County. They thanked the legislators for their support. J. M. Stortecky reported that the day was a great success. He said he and Stewart met with a lot of great people in the capital. As he and Stewart came with “thanks” and not “asks” they made friends and created bonds that will be of mutual benefit. Stewart and Stortecky are brainstorming ideas to bring downstate legislators to our various events. Stewart mentioned that they gave out hard copies of our annual report to the legislators. JM Stortecky asked the Board, regarding his position as a representative for NYACD, for permission to take their by-laws to our county attorney to look over. Permission was granted.
- c. Snowmobile Mapping Project** – Croote dedicated time for GPS snowmobile trail mapping work in the Towns of Arietta and Wells. Arietta is completed and there is a small section remaining to do in Wells. Lack of snow has made it difficult for Croote to map the trails. With the information Croote provides that meets requirements, municipalities will receive reimbursement from the state.
- d. July and December 2023 storm update** - Croote submitted permits for 2024 projects, and is preparing for work this summer. He met with DEC this past Monday in Long Lake regarding ongoing projects.

- e. **Sediment and Erosion Control Program** – Nothing to report.
- f. **Adirondack Tree and Shrub Sale** – The District continues to receive orders. The order deadline is March 15, and the sale is April 27 in Lake Pleasant and Blue Mountain. WhitKovits coordinated advertisements for Facebook and the *Adirondack* and *Hamilton County Express* newspapers. Landowners will use plantings for wind breaks, habitat improvement, food for wildlife, and sediment and erosion control.
- g. **Agricultural Environmental Management** – WhitKovits submitted the Round 17 close out materials. She will be partnering with Warren and Franklin County SWCDs to conduct forestry site visits with landowners. One is scheduled for March 22. These site visits will help WhitKovits to develop a forestry program for Hamilton County.
- h. **Hamilton County Envirothon** - WhitKovits reported that the Envirothon will be held Thursday May 2, this year. WhitKovits is contacting advisors with registration reminders.
- i. **Invasive Species Program** – Croote and WhitKovits met with APIPP to discuss invasive plant management and the required permits necessary for forest preserve lands. WhitKovits assembled Japanese knotweed rental program kits, and Stewart showed a kit to the Directors. WhitKovits attended a Beech Leaf Disease training hosted by APIPP. Stewart and WhitKovits surveyed the Sacandaga Pathway trail for hemlock woolly adelgid and are thrilled to report no suspicious insects. APIPP requested an interview with WhitKovits that will be published soon. Stewart attended an Invasive Species Advisory Committee Executive Board meeting to discuss agenda items for the next meeting and 2024 priorities.
- j. **Conservation Education Program** – Stewart is working with Lake Pleasant Sacandaga Association to coordinate place-based learning presentations for the spring.
- k. **Lake Monitoring Program** – Stewart reported that we are still waiting for 2023 lake monitoring results from AWI.
- l. **Septic System Replacement Fund** – The District has not yet heard from DEC about the funding awards for 2024. WhitKovits has received 347 septic system surveys and continues to enter the data into the spreadsheet!
- m. **Watershed partnership update**
 - 1. **FLLOWPA** – Stewart and WhitKovits attended FLLOWPA Legislative Day in Albany on February 13. Their meetings with assembly people and senators were productive.
 - 2. **Upper Hudson River Watershed Coalition** – Nick Rowell, Warren Count SWCD, and Stewart applied to the Alfred Z. Solomon Trust requesting funds to create a website and were awarded a grant. Stewart ran the February meeting and provided feedback on the new website.
 - 3. **St. Lawrence River Watershed Project** – Nothing new to report.

4. **Mohawk River Watershed Coalition** – The February meeting was cancelled. The coalition continues waiting on the 1.5-million-dollar action agenda from DEC.
 5. **Black River Watershed** – Stewart attended the 2024 Black River Watershed Conference planning committee meeting to discuss event logistics.
- n. **Other** – The District received a (DEC) Non-Agricultural Nonpoint Source Planning Grant for up to \$50,000 for the Hamilton County Courthouse Complex Green Infrastructure Feasibility Study.
- o. **Directors' comments** – None.
- XIII. Staff reports** – Stewart disseminated and emailed copies of the staff reports.
- XIV. District Conservationist's report** – No report.
- XV. New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee report** – appended to minutes.
- XVI. Correspondence** –
1. Thank you to Stewart and WhitKovits from Kristy LaManche, FLOWPA Program Coordinator for attending FLOWPA Legislative Day in Albany.
 2. Fulton County Newsletter - featured our Cold Stream Project as they partnered with us on this.
 3. Thank you to Stewart from Kelly Emerick of Monroe County SWCD for her outstanding job as CDEA president this year.
- XVII. Next meeting date** – April 2, 2024, 9:30 AM, at the Hamilton County SWCD office (103 County View Drive, Lake Pleasant NY 12108) and virtually on Zoom.
- XVIII. Adjournment** – **A motion was made by J. M. Stortecky, seconded by Buyce to adjourn the meeting at 10:25 a.m. All in favor, motion carried.**

Respectfully Submitted



Marjorie Remias
Secretary to the Board/Treasurer

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

- **Administration**
 - Finalized and submitted SWCC Annual Reports, provided performance measure clarification
 - NYACD Legislative Day – met with 9 assemblymembers and senators
 - Coordinated safety committee meeting with PERMA
 - Elbow Creek Assessment Grant – general services contract
 - Board of Directors meeting preparation
 - Board of Supervisors meeting preparation
 - 2023 Infograph
 - Staff meetings
 - Reviewed budget with Marj
 - Assisted Tim Ellifritz with computer maintenance and updates
 - Completed and submitted SWCC Annual Reports
 - Website updates
 - Social media posts
- **Technical Assistance**
 - Perk test and high water mark information for a landowner
 - Lake monitoring data
 - Ronny Raindrop inquiry
- **Watershed Coalitions**
 - FLOWPA - Attended legislative day with Katie on February 13, submitted payment projections.
 - Upper Hudson River Watershed Coalition – Ran the February meeting, and provided feedback on the website, researched banks that do not charge fees on business accounts.
 - St. Lawrence River Watershed Project – Nothing new to report.
 - Mohawk River Watershed Coalition – Stewart assisted with the January minutes, canceled February meeting.
 - Black River Watershed – Nothing new to report.
- **Septic System Replacement Fund**
 - Staff meeting about mailing and survey
- **Adirondack Tree and Shrub Sale**
 - Reviewed order form, updated website online store
- **Conservation Education**
 - Wrote and submitted Conservation Field Day press release
- **Invasive Species**
 - Attended an Invasive Species Advisory Committee Executive Board meeting to discuss agenda items for the next meeting and 2024 priorities.
 - Hemlock woolly adelgid survey of the Sacandaga Pathways with Katie – none found.
- **New York State Conservation District Employees Association**
 - Completed and disseminated state-wide the February CDEA News
 - Water Quality Symposium
 - Annual meeting preparation
 - Finalized and disseminated by-laws for District review
 - Special Programs Advisory Committee meeting

- Soil and Water Conservation Committee meeting
- Cover and Flair special meeting
- Collected and submitted District comments on the DEC's draft bridge and culvert guidance document
- Discussed implications of Senate Bill S7854: Cooperative Watershed Management Program with Districts
- Discussed topics for the Municipal Assistance Subcommittee
- Civil Service – working to improve exam frequency and streamline job descriptions

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

General

7/10/23 Storm event

- Beginning steps of Shaw Brook Restoration
- Pine Brook TRP Tree Tally

GPS Arietta Snowmobiles trails

GPS Wells Snowmobiles trails

Permits for 2024 construction season

Trail Maintenance

Vehicle maintenance

2024 Tree and Shrub

Office Work

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

- Envirothon – Thursday May 2nd, 2024
 - Sent presenter invitations
 - Sent Envirothon registrations to all schools and homeschools
 - Invited CampStore to host hotdog lunch again
 - Invited Assemblymen Smullen, Senator Walczyk, and Chairman Wells
- Japanese Knotweed
 - will work on obtaining signed agreements and homeowners' insurance to have on file for the next treatment season
 - ordered additional parts for injector tool kits
- Lake Monitoring
 - Waiting for AWI's data to add to master data sheet
- Agricultural Environmental Management
 - Submitted Round 17 Closeout
 - Working with Warren County to shadow some forestry visits
- Water Quality Symposium

- Registered for full week of Water Quality Symposium, will also go Monday to help with setting up
- Held planning meetings and emails for CDEA Fish-On Challenge
- Planned and coordinated the Farmers Market Resource Fair

Other

- Met with Lenny and DEC for several stream projects in Long Lake
- Surveyed for HWA with Caitlin on the Sacandaga Pathways
- I was interviewed by APIPP for our Forest Pest Hunters program, and will be featured in an article
- Attended APIPP Beech Leaf Disease training
- Took the New MS4 Permit class
- Attended FLOWPA Legislative Day and planning meetings
- Attended Environmental Education Foundation meeting
- Met with APIPP to discuss permits for treating invasive species on Forest Preserve lands
- Attended Agricultural Assessments training by Ag & Markets

**New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee
Region 4 Report – March 2024**

Submitted by: Ryan Cunningham – Region 4 Associate Environmental Analyst

NYS SWCC News

AEM Leopold Conservation Award 2024: 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. New York’s award recipient will be presented with a \$10,000 award provided by the Sand County Foundation, in partnership with the Department, American Farmland Trust, and Cornell Cooperative Extension. Formal announcements and application materials will be emailed to Districts the first week of February 2024. The deadline for applications is **May 15th, 2024**.

March SWCC Meeting: The next SWCC meeting is scheduled to convene at **10:00 AM on March 19th**. 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.

2024 NCDEA Don Aron Scholarship Announcement: If you’re thinking about expanding your knowledge and professional growth with college/university classes, here’s a great opportunity for you. The NCDEA Don Aron Scholarship Award application is open to any conservation district employee or their immediate family member, along with a few other eligibility requirements. Applicants may request up to \$1,000 in assistance. Applications must submit all required documents to be eligible for review along with active/accessible contact information. Deadline to apply is **March 15th, 2024**. <https://www.ncdea.us/dascholarship>

District Operations Sub-Committee: The SWCC will be re-establishing the District Operations Sub-Committee to engage with SWCD partners on all matters relating to District Operations. We are tentatively planning to hold a meeting in April 2024 to start working on updating the District Operations Manual. As we prepare for an April meeting, we first need to develop a list of SWCD representatives. Ideally, we are hoping to find at least two SWCD representatives per CDEA Division that are willing to participate on this committee, so all regions of the State can be represented. Any interested candidate can reach out to Victor DiGiacomo (victor.digiacomo@agriculture.ny.gov) and Ben Luskin (ben.luskin@agriculture.ny.gov).

2024 NYS Envirothon Call for Volunteers: The NYS Envirothon Committee is pleased to host the 2024 NYS Envirothon at State University of New York in Cortland, NY, on May 22nd and 23rd. The Envirothon Committee is putting out a call for all volunteers. Volunteer position description can be found on the Envirothon website, <https://nysenvirothon.org/contact>

Please let the Committee know if you are willing to volunteer by completing the online volunteer registration at, <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScMFLrYPXZkYXm7qMQABYrUCCb7jYjR5nzi7Mx9Mu-6MKSzqg/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0>

Other Events

Training Opportunity - Social Media & Outreach Best Practices for Conservation Districts: The NCDEA's 2024 Virtual Training Series has begun. All conservation district employees and partners are welcome to join monthly virtual trainings focused on a range of topics addressing most pressing district needs. Please join NCDEA for their first virtual training of

2024, scheduled for **Friday, March 15th at 12PM EST**. The first topic will feature presentations and Q/A on social media and outreach best management practices. More info and registration link available at <https://www.ncdea.us/>.

New York State Drought Summit to be Held in Ithaca, NY: The Northeast Regional Climate Center at Cornell University, in partnership with the NYS Water Resources Institute and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, will host the New York Drought Summit on **April 16th and 17th in Ithaca, New York**. Discussions at this free event will cover the current state of drought monitoring in New York and ways to improve drought impact reporting and communication across the state. The summit will feature virtual and in-person options. The registration deadline is **March 20, 2024**. In-person space is limited.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc1h2YbTDL8MTjh5KP1XcyDMkerQ3jJIU5kb95HYf6k3QIMAw/viewform>

Manure Storage Cover and Flare Farm Tours: See different covered storage designs, speak with experienced farm operators, discuss design options, performance and maintenance questions. This farm tour, presented by Cornell CALS PRO-DAIRY and Cornell Cooperative Extension, will be offered on two dates at two locations. No registration is required.

- **1 to 3 PM | March 27th, 2024 Stein Farms, 8343 Gull Road, LeRoy, NY**
- **1 to 3 PM | March 28th, 2024 Fessenden Dairy, King Ferry, NY**

Jefferson County Ag Workshop: Thinking of Converting from Sand to Solid Bedding? Interested in manure covers and flares and related best management practices? Join us for a panel discussion on topics ranging from bedding options and cow health to farm infrastructure and funding sources. This free event will be held at Robbin's Gathering Barn, Sackets Harbor, on **April 3rd, 2024, from 9:30 am – 2:30 pm** with refreshments/lunch provided by Delta Keeney. The

discussion will include a farm panel as well as a funding panel. Hosted by Jefferson and Lewis County SWCD's, Cornell University and Cornell Extension. Registration [here](https://cornell.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_6F60icyaQ2m8faE5tpZMAQ#/registration): https://cornell.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_6F60icyaQ2m8faE5tpZMAQ#/registration or call Jefferson County SWCD at (315) 782-2749.

2024 NYS Wetlands Forum Annual Conference: Save the Date. The New York State Wetlands Forum 2024 Annual Conference and Business Meeting will take place on **April 16th and 17th, in Saratoga Springs, NY.** To register, please visit: <http://www.wetlandsforum.org/registration.html>

Other Funding

Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program: The Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program (GLSNRP) Request for Proposals was recently announced, for projects that reduce nutrients and sediments entering the Great Lakes. This year's program will focus on helping nonfederal units of government, tribes, or incorporated nonprofit organizations reduce phosphorus contributions to waters within the Great Lakes basin. Applicants are invited to submit proposals for sediment and nutrient reduction activities associated with one of two project types: 1) agricultural non-point; and 2) shoreline or streambanks. The due date for applications is **April 29th, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. EST.**
<https://www.glc.org/work/sediment/apply-2024>