



## 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

### April 2, 2024

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

Inlet Highway Department: 65 Limekiln Lake Rd, Inlet, NY 13360

Zoom

#### Board of Directors

Victoria Buyce, Chairperson

John M. Stortecky, Vice Chairperson

Chris D. Rhodes, Town Supervisor

Betsy Bain, Town Supervisor

#### Absent

Shawn Hansen, Member-at-Large

Leonard Croote, District Technician

District Conservationist, Vacant

Natural Resources and Conservation Service

#### District Staff

Caitlin Stewart, District Manager

Marjorie Remias, Clerk and Secretary to the Board

Katie WhitKovits, District Technician

Ryan Cunningham, Associate Environmental Analyst, Soil and Water Conservation

Committee - Zoom

**I. Call to order and roll call** – Buyce called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Roll call conducted.

**II. Pledge of Allegiance** conducted.

Technician WhitKovits had to leave early for a meeting, so she reported on the Envirothon and AEM. Her summaries are in the District Activities following motions. She will also be attending an Aquatic Organism Passage meeting with other districts to discuss top priority stream crossing projects in the hopes of obtaining future funding. WhitKovits left at 9:40am.

**III. Reading and approval of the March 6, 2024, meeting minutes** – The minutes were provided in advance of the meeting.

- **A motion was made by JM Stortecky, seconded by Rhodes to approve the March 6, 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. Remias mentioned we received state aid part c funding and the county allocation. She asked for a transfer of \$200,000 from the general checking to the general savings account. Rhodes inquired about savings interest versus CD interest rate. When investigated in December the CD rate was 5.05% and the savings interest rate runs at about .02%. The Board recommended investing \$100,000 in CDs and transferring \$100,000 to savings.

- **A motion was made by Bain, seconded by JM Stortecky to invest \$100,000 in Certificates of Deposit at the current interest rate. All voted in favor, motion carried**

Balance	2/29/24	\$235,574.01
Receipts		351,052.14
Disbursements		38,247.74
Balance	3/31/24	\$548,378.41

- **A motion was made by Buyce, seconded by Rhodes to accept the Treasurer’s report, approve the bills to be paid and transfer of \$100,000 from the general checking account to the saving account. All voted in favor, motion carried.**

V. **Senate Bill S7854** – The board reviewed the letter regarding Senate Bill S7854.

- **A motion was made by JM Stortecky, seconded by Buyce to approve the letter regarding Senate Bill S7854 that establishes the New York state cooperative watershed management program and send it to Hamilton County legislators. All in favor, motion carried.**

VI. **Spy Lake – 2024 Lake Monitoring rotation** – Stewart reported that she respectfully requests the Board’s consideration to remove Spy Lake from the lake monitoring rotation. Spy lake is difficult to access, and this will be a cost savings for water sample analysis. Croote spoke with Town of Arietta Supervisor Chris D. Rhodes in advance of today’s meeting as the lake is in his township.

- **A motion was made by Buyce, seconded by JM Stortecky to remove Spy Lake from the Lake Monitoring Program due to difficulties with access. All in favor, motion carried.**

VII. **Turbidity curtain** – Stewart reported that the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is requiring two turbidity curtains for stream projects. The turbidity curtain collects sediment and allows water to flow through it during stream restoration projects, keeping water downstream free of turbidity. Croote provided quotes per our procurement policy.

- **A motion was made by Buyce, seconded by Bain to approve the purchase of a turbidity curtain from JHB Supply, LLC in an amount of \$ 1,307.07. All in favor, motion carried.**

VIII. **Hydroseeding supplies purchase** – Stewart reported that Croote is preparing for the 2024 hydroseeding season and needs to purchase seed and fertilizer. Quotes were provided per the procurement policy.

- **A motion was made by Buyce, seconded by JM Stortecky to approve the purchase of seed and fertilizer for hydroseeding in the amount of \$4,330. All in favor, motion carried.**

IX. **District activities**

- a. **Water Quality Symposium Review** – Stewart reported that she, WhitKovits, and Croote attended the 2024 Water Quality Symposium. She thanked WhitKovits for her assistance with

the Farmers Market Resource Fair. Staff attended educational classes that bolstered their professional development and program skill set. Stewart oversaw the CDEA Annual Meeting that was well attended by over 300 people and assisted with the Awards Banquet. Record numbers of District employees and partners attended this year's event, and CDEA Vice President Jessica Armstrong is researching larger venues for next year.

- b. Quarter 1 Annual Plan of Work review** – Stewart disseminated the 2024 Quarter 1 Annual Plan of Work and said the first three months of the year were productive with preparations for spring and summer programs and events. She thanked the staff for their hard work and the Directors for their support.
- c. Seasonal Technician** – Stewart reported that Jacob Vander Pyl accepted the Seasonal Technician position and will begin after he graduates college.
- d. Snowmobile Mapping Project** – Croote is processing the GPS points and sending the data to the state. He assisted Town of Wells with mapping.
- e. July and December 2023 storm update** - Croote submitted permits for 2024 projects and is preparing for work this summer. He is working on the Shaw Brook Restoration Project in the Town of Long Lake, with 3 stages of permits.
- f. Sediment and Erosion Control Program** – Croote conducts weekly site visits for a Piseco logging operation at the request of DEC.
- g. Adirondack Tree and Shrub Sale** – Croote and Remias worked to complete orders. Staff will pack products and prepare for the April 27 sale in Lake Pleasant and Blue Mountain Lake. Croote reported that order numbers were in line with last year.
- h. Agricultural Environmental Management** – Stewart reported that WhitKovits submitted the Round 17 close out materials, and the District received funding for the program. WhitKovits shadowed Warren County employees for a Farm visit in March.
- i. Hamilton County Envirothon** – This year's event has been cancelled due to lack of registration. Only one team registered. The other schools declined to participate because of teacher absence and turnover issues.
- j. Caring Through Conservation mini grant** – Stewart updated the grant documents and met with WhitKovits to explain how to oversee the program. WhitKovits sent information to municipalities, and Stewart updated the website.
- k. Invasive Species Program** – Nothing new to report.

- l. Conservation Education Program** – Nothing new to report.
- m. Arbor Day Poetry Contest** – Stewart launched this year’s contest with a press release, letters to county senior centers, and the requirements posted on our website. This year’s theme is “Trees are Beautiful and Essential” in the form of a shape poem. Stewart renamed the event The Bob Tice Memorial Arbor Day Poetry Contest in honor of Bob Tice, a long-time contestant, supporter, and enthusiast of the event.
- n. Lake Monitoring Program** – Stewart reported that AWI sent the 2023 lake monitoring results, and Croote and WhitKovits followed up with questions. Stewart submitted the Quality Assurance Project Plan to DEC for review and approval. WhitKovits and Croote will begin work on the Data Usability Assessment Report once AWI answers their questions.
- o. Septic System Replacement Fund** – The data collected from the survey we sent out was submitted to DEC.
- p. Watershed partnership update**
  - 1. FLOWPA** – Stewart submitted the QAPP to DEC.
  - 2. Upper Hudson River Watershed Coalition** – Stewart hosted a special meeting to review financial errors for the Roadside Erosion Remediation Phase I grant and is preparing for the April meeting.
  - 3. St. Lawrence River Watershed Project** – Ensured participation on Northeast Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Sub-Basin Work Group Members
  - 4. Mohawk River Watershed Coalition** – Stewart is preparing for the April meeting.
  - 5. Black River Watershed** – Stewart will present Lake Monitoring during the 2024 Black River Watershed Conference.
- q. Other** – JM Stortecky reported that as NYACD representative for Division V, he is going to the four other counties in the division to introduce himself and see how NYACD may be able to help them. He is also looking into the by-laws of the organization.
- r. 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** – Cuningham clarified that the AEM award Stortecky asked about earlier in the meeting is the Leopold Conservation Award and it is awarded to a farmer around the state for dedication to ethical land, water, and wildlife habitat management in the amount of \$10,000. He asked that we consider volunteering for the state, and national Envirothons that are coming up

this year. Lastly the climate resilient farming grant is coming out in April. His complete report is appended to minutes.

**XVI. Correspondence**

- Thank you note from NYACD for attending Legislative Day
- Letter from Assemblyman Steve Stern saying to contact his office with concerns and issues of importance.

**XVII. Next meeting date** – May 7, 2024, 9:30 AM, at the Lake Pleasant Public Library (2864 NY-8, Speculator, NY 12164) and virtually on Zoom.

**XVIII. Adjournment** – A motion was made by Buyce, seconded by JM Stortecky to adjourn the meeting at 10:22 a.m. All in favor, carried.

Respectfully Submitted



Marjorie Remias  
Secretary to the Board/Treasurer

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

- **Administration**
  - PERMA Safety Committee meeting
  - Board of Directors meeting preparation
  - Board of Supervisors presentation – 2023 annual accomplishments
  - Quarter 1 APOW
  - Staff meetings
  - Reviewed budget with Marj
  - Assisted Tim Ellifritz with computer maintenance and updates
  - Website updates
  - Social media posts
- **Technical Assistance**
  - Wrote and submitted grant letter of support for Paul Smiths' College culvert program
  - Federal Emergency Management Agency flood hazard study for the Mohawk River Corridor
  - Water Quality Coordinating Committee reactivation for Rockland County SWCD
  - Culvert Designs: creating right-sized solutions training info to municipalities
  - Raquette Lake Preservation Foundation – additional monitoring sites
  - SUNY ESF soils course statewide interest

- Will support the NYS Envirothon by being an Oral Presentation judge
- **Watershed Coalitions**
  - FLOWPA – Updated and submitted the QAPP to DEC
  - Upper Hudson River Watershed Coalition – Hosted a special meeting to review financial errors for the Roadside Erosion Remediation Phase I grant, preparing for the April meeting.
  - St. Lawrence River Watershed Project – ensured participation on Northeast Lake Ontario- St. Lawrence River Sub-Basin Work Group Members
  - Mohawk River Watershed Coalition – preparing for the April meeting.
  - Black River Watershed – I will present Lake Monitoring during the 2024 Black River Watershed Conference.
- **Lake Monitoring Program**
  - Discussion with staff about lakes to omit
  - Adirondack Watershed Institute submitted the 2023 lake monitoring data
  - Updated and submitted QAPP to DEC
- **Water Quality Symposium**
  - Assisted with the registration table
  - Oversaw the 2023 Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet
  - Presented the New Employee Orientation at the Water Quality Symposium
- **Conservation Education**
  - Arbor Day Poetry Contest
- **Caring Through Conservation Mini Grant**
  - Updated materials and website
  - Meeting with Katie to review how to oversee the program
- **Invasive Species**
  - Prepared minutes for Invasive Species Advisory Committee
- **New York State Conservation District Employees Association**
  - CDEA special meeting
  - Welcomed new Division Representatives to the board and provided an overview
  - Soil and Water Conservation Committee meeting
  - New York Association of Conservation Districts meeting
    - Conservation with NYACD’s Scott Ryan – DEC permitting challenges and legislative outreach
  - Hosted Managers’ Forum during the Water Quality Symposium
  - Letter to legislators regarding adverse impacts to Districts if Senate Bill S7854: Cooperative Watershed Management Program is approved
  - Partnering with NYACD and SWCC to take a top down and bottom up approach with DEC to communicate and find a solution to District challenges with stream permit review
  - Coordinating Career Day at NCF International Envirothon with NRCS
  - State wide media training
  - 4-Hour funding request review
  - Reviewed and commented on minutes

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

**General**

7/10/23 Storm event

    Beginning Shaw Brook Restoration Plans

    Pine Brook Bridge Replacement Permits

GPS Arietta Snowmobiles trails

GPS Wells Snowmobiles trails

Permits for 2024 construction season

Elbow Creek restoration site visit

Started Hamilton County DUAR with Katie

Trail Maintenance

Vehicle maintenance

2024 Tree and Shrub

Office Work

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

- Envirothon – Event Canceled! 😞
  - The event was planned, but due to uncontrollable circumstances only 1 team signed up. We cannot host an event of this size for only 1 team.
- 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
  - Received data from AWI
  - Working with Lenny on the DUAR
- Agricultural Environmental Management
  - Working with Warren County to shadow some forestry visits
- Water Quality Symposium
  - Planned and coordinated the Farmers Market Resource Fair
  - Attended all week and took great classes
  - Presented awards for the CDEA Fish On Challenge

**Other**

- Stream visit in Hope, Wells, and Long Lake with Lenny
- Took the Stormwater Hydrology & The New Design Manual course class
- Attended Environmental Education Foundation meeting

**New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee**  
**Region 4 Report – April 2024**  
**Submitted by: Ryan Cunningham – Region 4 Associate Environmental Analyst**

**NYS SWCC News**

**New Water Quality Programs Manager:** We are pleased to announce that Jason Kokkinos will serve as our new Associate Environmental Analyst (AEA) for SWCC Water Quality Programs (AgNPS/CAFO/SWBP)! Many of you remember Jason as our Division's Program Analyst, where he assisted in the administration of the AgNPS, AEM and other programs. Since leaving the Department in 2022, Jason has been serving as an Environmental Analyst for the Lake George Park Commission. We are super excited to have Jason back on our team! Jason can be reached at (518) 457-7374 and at: [Jason.Kokkinos@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:Jason.Kokkinos@agriculture.ny.gov)

**April SWCC Meeting:** The next meeting of the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee will be on **Tuesday, April 16<sup>th</sup> starting at 10:30 AM**. This meeting will be held in person at the State Office Building in Utica, NY; lunch will be provided. Unfortunately, due to limited capacity, we are unable to offer a virtual call-in/teleconference option. The meeting agenda, DRAFT March meeting minutes, and DRAFT NYS SWCC Strategic Plan are available on the Department's website: <https://agriculture.ny.gov/soil-and-water/about-soil-water-conservation-committee> To ensure we have an accurate count of attendees, please respond to ([Bethany.bzduch@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:Bethany.bzduch@agriculture.ny.gov)) no later than **April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024**.

**AEM18 Tier 4 Cost-Share (CS) Track Project Packages are due May 1<sup>st</sup>:** Please upload your Tier 4 CS Track Project packages to your AEM18 SharePoint folder and email you Regional Coordinator and Greg Albrecht ([greg.albrecht@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:greg.albrecht@agriculture.ny.gov)) to let us know they're complete and ready for our review. Forms, including Tier 4 project related ones, have been updated for AEM18, so please use those posted to the [AEM R18 Management and Close Out Materials](#) folder within the AEM18 folder on SharePoint. The instructions (checklist) for putting together AEM18 Tier 4 project packages based on your AEM Tier 3 plans (or equivalent from other programs or regulations) are found in Section IV of the AEM18 Program and Contract Policy on pages 8 and 9. Contact your Regional Coordinator or Greg Albrecht if you have any questions along the way.

**NYS SWCC On-Demand Conservation Approval Authority:** Several training videos are available for District Technicians looking to learn new skills or take a refresher course. Some of these videos lead to a Conservation Approval Authority Certificate and some are background/prerequisite material. These videos are currently housed on Youtube and Udemy. We are actively working to transition all videos to the Youtube platform. The following courses are available on Youtube ([Soil and Water Conservation Committee Training - YouTube](#)): Basic Hydrology (ArcMap & QGIS editions), Culverts in HY8, Fence Design, Spreadsheet Stream Hydraulics, Conservation Tools and References Wiki (Short). The following courses are available on Udemy ([Tim Clark | Conservation Planning, Design & Implementation across NY! | Udemy](#)): Stream Crossing Design and Roof Runoff Structure Design. If you have any questions, please reach out to Tim Clark, [tim.clark@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:tim.clark@agriculture.ny.gov).

**Interim Reporting:** Interim reports for AGNPS Contracts (Round 21-Round 23), CAFO WSTSP (Round 1 and Round 2), CRF (Round 1 – Round 4) **MUST** be submitted by **May 1<sup>st</sup>**. Please submit these reports to the appropriate Program Manager and cc your AEA and Maureen Irish ([Maureen.Irish@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:Maureen.Irish@agriculture.ny.gov)).

**New NYS Grants Management System:** As a reminder, on January 16, New York State transitioned grants



management activities from the Grants Gateway to SFS. SFS is New York State (NYS) government's accounting and financial management system used to manage contracts and payments. SWCD roles established in the Grants Gateway have transferred to SFS with varying success. Districts are encouraged to check out the SFS Vendor Portal to be sure that access is available. If it is not, there are a variety of ways you can obtain SFS support, including virtual support calls, on-demand training materials, and the SFS Help Desk. Links to the SFS Vendor Portal and training material can be accessed through the Grants Management website <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/>

**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 the \$10,000 award provided by the Sand County Foundation, in partnership with the Department, American Farmland Trust, and Cornell Cooperative Extension. The application can be found at, <https://www.sandcountyfoundation.org/our-work/leopold-conservation-award/application-info>. The deadline for applications is **May 15th, 2024**.

**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 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> and is putting out a call for all volunteers. 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-6MKSzgg/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0>

### **Other Events**

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

**CREP In-Field Eligibility Training:** Meet up with USDA and local partners on the ground to determine site eligibility for Riparian Forest Buffers. Trainings will be held in Otsego County on **May 2<sup>nd</sup>**, Tioga County on **May 9<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>**, Jefferson County on **May 29<sup>th</sup>**, and Monroe County on **May 30<sup>th</sup>**. Check out the google form link for more information, and please fill out the form by **April 22<sup>nd</sup>**. Here is the google form to sign up: <https://forms.gle/7k5xcgTCedQncA849>

**Silvopasture Field Course:** Essex County SWCD is hosting a Silvopasture Field Day on **May 4<sup>th</sup>, from 8:30 AM to 3PM**. Subject experts will walk through the principles of site selection and planning before heading into the field where participants will meet with local farmers and foresters implementing silvopasture practices. Limited space – advanced registration required. To register, please contact Renee Clark at the Essex SWCD (518) 962-8225 or [rclark@essexcountyswcd.org](mailto:rclark@essexcountyswcd.org). Cost is \$20/person (lunch and refreshments provided).

**GLAA Sub-Basin Work Group Spring Meetings:** Meetings will be held throughout the basin this spring as follows. To request more information, or to request to be added to a regional sub basin work group, please email [greatlakes@dec.ny.gov](mailto:greatlakes@dec.ny.gov)

- [\*Southeast \(SE\) Lake Ontario\*](#): **4/23, 1-4PM** at the Cayuga County SWCD, Office, 7413 County House Road Auburn, NY
- [\*Northeast Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River\*](#): **4/24, 1-4PM** at the Gouverneur Community Center, 4673 NY-58, Gouverneur, NY 13642

- [Southwest \(SW\) Lake Ontario](#): **5/8, 1-4PM** Room 213 in the Chili Community Center, 3237 Chili Avenue, Rochester, NY 14624
- [Lake Erie](#): **5/9, 9AM – 12PM** in Room 108, Appletree Business Park, 2875 Union Rd, Cheektowaga, NY 14227

### **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 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. EST.**

<https://www.glc.org/work/sediment/apply-2024>

**NYSP2I 2024 - 2025 Community Grants Program: The New York State Pollution Prevention Institute (NYSP2I) is accepting applications for the 2024 - 2025 cycle of the Community Grants Program. This program seeks projects that raise awareness and understanding of pollution prevention, and that lead to implementation of best practices at the local level. Eligible applicants are able to receive up to \$20,000**